



**COLLECTION of
outdoor activities**





INTEGRATEU:

Summer schools

on environmental protection, sustainability & ecological behavior to support the integration and inclusion of migrants & refugees in the higher education – enhance the university professors competences

Erasmus+ KA2 Cooperation Partnerships in Higher Education

Collection of outdoor activities

Enhancing Social Inclusion and Environmental Awareness in Higher Education

**Coordinated by
University of Catania, Italy**



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

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Contents

HANDBOOK structure	5
1. Introduction.....	6
1.1 What do we mean by outdoor activities?.....	7
1.2 How are these activities integrated into the summer school program?	8
1.3 How do they contribute to environmental awareness?.....	9
1.4 How do they promote social and cultural integration?.....	11
1.5 How can environmental awareness and social integration be combined?.....	12
2. The outdoor activities collection framework	14
2.1 Key terms in IntegratEU activities and strategies.....	16
3. Motivational and engagement strategies	19
3.1 Experiential learning and cultural immersion.....	20
3.2 Social engagement and group collaboration	21
3.3 Tangible outcomes and hands-on involvement	22
3.4 Interdisciplinary learning and physical engagement.....	23
3.5 Sustained long-term engagement through follow-up initiatives	23
3.6 Personalised and adaptive learning.....	24
4. Outdoor Activity Sheets.....	26
4.1 Activities for environment	27
4.1a. Clean-up of beaches, rivers, and lakes	27
4.1b. Community tree planting.....	28
4.1c. Flower Garden installation and maintenance	29
4.1d. Interactive games for ecological awareness	30
4.1e. Mountain hiking and excursions groups	33
4.1f. Sustainable agriculture program.....	34
4.1g. Urban Farming Program	35
4.2 Activities for integration.....	37
4.2a. Chess sessions	37
4.2b. Cultural heritage summer school.....	38
4.2c. Exploring European governance and decision-making	39
4.2d. Exploring non-governmental support for migrants and refugees.....	40

4.2e. Football sessions	42
4.2f. Holistic sports training.....	43
4.2g. Language and cultural exchange programs	44
4.2h. Maintenance of outdoor spaces in community settings.....	45
4.2i. Outdoor game about the European Union.....	46
4.2j. Sports and fitness groups session	48
4.2k. Walk book about Europe and European integration.....	49
4.2l. Walking tours and city explorations.....	50
4.2m. Winter sports and activities	51
4.3 Activities for environment and integration.....	52
4.3a. Community gardening and urban farming	52
4.3b. Food and experience factory	54
4.3c. Sustainable development advocacy in coastal regions	55
4.3d. Volunteering in Nature Reserves.....	56
References	58



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HANDBOOK structure

This handbook is structured to offer a systematic overview of the IntegratEU outdoor activities collection, guiding readers through their objectives, methodological framework, and practical applications. The report is organised into 4 key sections.

The introduction outlines the purpose and significance of the IntegratEU project, emphasising the role of outdoor activities in supporting migrants and refugees in their integration process. It also highlights how these activities contribute to environmental awareness, sustainability, and intercultural dialogue.

The framework section explains the pedagogical principles and research methodologies that shaped the development of the outdoor activities. It also clarifies the process of standardization and collaboration among partner institutions, ensuring coherence and quality across all proposed initiatives.

The motivational and engagement strategies section presents effective learning strategies for outdoor education, highlighting some key factors such as experiential learning, cultural immersion, teamwork, and personal agency. It provides guidelines for educators to enhance participant motivation and sustain engagement in immediate activities and beyond.

The outdoor activity sheets compose the core section of the handbook. Each sheet follows a structured format, including objectives, implementation guidelines, expected outcomes, and best practices for facilitators. The section is structured by categorising the activities into three thematic groups. The first is centred on environmental awareness and contains activities related to ecological education, conservation efforts, and sustainable practices. The second is focused on social and cultural integration, encompassing activities that foster community building, cultural exchange, and personal development. The third group covers activities that blend environmental responsibility with social inclusion, promoting shared sustainability efforts that encourage teamwork and cross-cultural collaboration.

1. Introduction

The IntegratEU project is designed to increase the integration of migrants and refugees into European society by fostering environmental awareness, sustainability education, and social inclusion. Migrants and refugees often face barriers to education, employment, and social participation, making integration a complex and multidimensional process (Ager and Strang, 2008). The project recognises that a successful integration requires more than just formal education. The integration also depends on creating opportunities for meaningful engagement, community participation, and skill development (Berry, 2005). Outdoor activities play a crucial role in this process by offering dynamic, interactive, and experiential learning experiences that help participants in developing practical skills, building social connections, and engaging with their new environment in both educational and empowering ways. Thus, in this context, these activities represent powerful educational and integrative tools that align with the project's broader goal of enhancing environmental consciousness while promoting social and cultural cohesion.

Outdoor activities in the IntegratEU summer schools serve multiple functions. Firstly, they aim at integrating migrants and refugees into higher education and community life with a dynamic, interactive, and experiential learning approach, which is naturally coherent with outdoor activities. Secondly, they are structured to enhance knowledge and awareness of environmental issues, to provide hands-on learning experiences, and to facilitate intercultural exchanges between participants from diverse backgrounds. Finally, they act as a bridge between formal education and real-world application, allowing participants to engage with sustainability practices while creating social connections with peers, educators, and the local community.

Outdoor activities should be understood as powerful way to promote intercultural contact and dialogue by creating shared experiences that encourage collaboration and mutual understanding. Their use during the summer schools is designed to bring together participants from different cultural, linguistic, and educational backgrounds. Outdoor learning environments offer a neutral and inclusive space where individuals can interact beyond formal discussions. Through group-based projects, interactive storytelling, and community engagement activities, participants are engaged in peer learning, share their own knowledge, traditions, and perspectives while also gain insight into the cultural and environmental practices of their host society. This approach strengthens social bonds, encourages the exchange of ideas, and fosters a sense of collective responsibility toward sustainability and social cohesion. Moreover, outdoor activities are also capable to enhance emotional resilience. For many migrants and refugees, relocation often involves experiences of uncertainty, trauma, and social alienation. Therefore, exposure to nature, social interaction, and hands-on engagement succeeded in reducing stress and anxiety, improving self-esteem, and fostering a sense of stability (Louv, 2008).

The activities described in this handbook are carefully designed to balance educational contents with participatory engagement. They focus on themes such as ecological behavior, urban and

rural sustainability, community-building, and cultural integration. By moving learning beyond the classroom and into natural and urban spaces, the project fosters a deeper sense of connection to the environment, to the host community, and to the principles of sustainable development. As already said, outdoor activities provide physical and psychological benefits, helping participants to reduce stress, to build confidence, and to improve overall well-being crucial results for individuals who have experienced displacement and uncertainty. Through structured outdoor activities, the IntegratEU project promotes environmental education, strengthens social ties, and supports migrants and refugees in adapting to a new cultural and ecological context. Hence, these activities serve not only as learning experiences but also as opportunities for empowerment, engagement, and long-term commitment to sustainability and inclusion.

1.1 What do we mean by outdoor activities?

Outdoor activities in the IntegratEU project are conceived as structured educational experiences designed to take learning beyond the traditional classroom setting. These activities are not merely recreational but intentionally designed to be immersive, participatory, and directly connected to the project's overarching themes: environmental sustainability, social inclusion, and cultural integration. The underlying idea of the project is that engaging participants in real-world scenarios and outdoor learning fosters experiential education, direct engagement with the environment, and hands-on sustainability practices, reinforcing ecological awareness and social responsibility. In fact, unlike conventional classroom learning, which often relies on passive information absorption through lectures and written materials, outdoor activities focus on active participation and direct interaction with the subject matter (Dewey, 1986). Participants are encouraged to apply their theoretical knowledge in practical settings, creating a dynamic learning experience that enhances motivation, retention of knowledge, and emotional connection to the themes explored. This approach is particularly valuable for migrants and refugees, as it allows them to learn by doing, to interact with diverse communities, and to develop skills directly relevant to their daily lives and future opportunities. Outdoor education provides an inclusive and adaptable environment where language barriers, cultural differences, and traditional educational challenges are minimised, enabling all participants to engage meaningfully regardless of their backgrounds or prior knowledge.

The diversity of outdoor learning environments proposed, further enriches the experience. Activities may take place in natural settings where participants are engaged in promoting biodiversity conservation, ecological restoration, and sustainable practices. Alternatively, learning can occur in urban spaces where participants explore the intersections of sustainability, community development, and cultural heritage. By bridging natural and urban environments, outdoor activities allow participants to develop a more comprehensive understanding of sustainability and integration, recognising the impact of human actions on both ecosystems and societies. Consequently, within the IntegratEU project, outdoor activities are designed to cover a broad spectrum of learning experiences, ranging from environmental conservation and sustainability education to social and cultural engagement. Some activities focus on

environmental restoration efforts which allow participants to contribute to tangible ecological improvements while learning about conservation strategies. Other activities emphasise community engagement, encouraging participants to strengthen their connections with local communities (Berg et al. 2023). The project also incorporates physical and experiential learning elements which provide participants with opportunities to develop a sense of place and belonging while increasing their awareness of environmental and cultural landscapes.

One of the most significant advantages of outdoor activities is their alignment with holistic education principles, ensuring that learning is not limited to intellectual development but also encompasses physical, social, and emotional growth. Through movement, exploration, and collaboration, participants develop a deep, practical understanding of sustainability and integration, strengthening their ability to apply what they have learned in meaningful ways. The participatory nature of these activities also fosters teamwork, personal agency, and leadership skills, as individuals take active roles in shaping their learning experiences and contributing to shared goals. Beyond the educational benefits, outdoor activities contribute to the overall well-being of participants who have experienced displacement and instability and can regain confidence, establish new social connections, and develop a sense of belonging within their host communities (Barton and Rogerson, 2017).

The project recognises that true integration and sustainability education require ongoing engagement and active participation. Outdoor activities are therefore designed to be inclusive, adaptable, and impactful, ensuring that all participants, regardless of background or experience, can actively contribute to and benefit from these learning experiences.

1.2 How are these activities integrated into the summer school program?

Outdoor activities are seamlessly integrated into the IntegratEU summer school curriculum, ensuring that learning extends beyond theoretical discussions and becomes an immersive, hands-on experience. The diverse summer school modules and their learning objectives align with specific outdoor activities, ensuring that theoretical content is always complemented by experiential learning. By combining structured academic sessions with direct, real-world engagement, the program creates a blended learning environment where participants can apply sustainability and social integration concepts in practical, meaningful ways (Mattijssen et al, 2018).

This approach reinforces knowledge retention, fosters deeper emotional connections to the subject matter, and equips participants with the skills and confidence necessary to navigate environmental and social challenges. Personal agency and leadership development are crucial. Outdoor activities are designed not only to teach concepts but to empower participants to take on active roles within their communities. Summer schools provides structured opportunities for individuals to step into leadership positions, whether by mentoring peers, guiding activities, or taking responsibility for specific actions of sustainable projects. This gradual transition from

learner to active contributor fosters self-confidence, autonomy, and long-term engagement. By taking ownership of certain aspects of the learning experience, participants develop a sense of control over their own integration process, and become more likely to remain involved in sustainability and community-building efforts beyond the duration of the program. Moreover, integrating also reflection and knowledge-sharing sessions, the summer schools' programs allow peer exchanges, group dialogues, or digital storytelling formats, ensuring that participants can document and share their insights with a broader audience. Reflection helps to further solidify learning and ensures that outdoor experiences are not isolated events but rather stepping stones toward continuous personal and professional development.

The summer school schedule should be carefully structured to balance classroom instruction, fieldwork, and interactive learning experiences, creating a dynamic and inclusive educational environment. Workshops, guided explorations, and participatory events provide participants with opportunities to engage with local communities, explore urban and natural landscapes, and immerse themselves in sustainability practices. These activities are intentionally designed to accommodate different learning styles and abilities, guaranteeing that all participants can fully engage regardless of their background or experience. Multilingual facilitators and peer-led initiatives further enhance accessibility, allowing for meaningful interaction and knowledge exchange among participants from diverse linguistic and cultural contexts. Beyond the immediate summer school experience, follow-up activities may also be incorporated to play a crucial role in ensuring long-term engagement and impact. Participants are encouraged to continue their involvement in sustainability and social initiatives by taking part in community-based projects, mentorship programs, and knowledge-sharing networks (Carlà et al., 2023). These initiatives allow individuals to maintain connections built during the summer school, apply their newly acquired skills in real-world contexts, and contribute to lasting environmental and social change.

By embedding outdoor learning within a structured yet flexible framework, the IntegratEU program aims at creating a summer school holistic and transformative educational experience (Jensen and Kirchner, 2020). Through resilience-building, intercultural dialogue, and personal empowerment, the program goes beyond traditional education providing participants with practical skills, social networks, and making them confident to engage with their communities in meaningful ways. Outdoor activities do not stand alone, they are instead intertwined into a broader educational strategy that supports sustainable integration, lifelong learning, and civic participation.

1.3 How do they contribute to environmental awareness?

IntegratEU outdoor activities effectively foster environmental awareness by immersing individuals in hands-on experiences that highlight the importance of conservation and sustainability. Direct engagement with nature deepens participants' appreciation for ecological systems while reinforcing the need for environmental protection. Experiential learning,

particularly in outdoor settings, is one of the most impactful ways to cultivate pro-environmental attitudes, as it enables individuals to form emotional and intellectual connections with nature (Thompson Coon et al., 2011). This approach bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, making environmental concerns more tangible and personally relevant. Interactive ecological games offer an engaging way to enhance environmental consciousness. For example, “Find the Exit” simulates survival scenarios, teaching skills like water purification and plant identification while demonstrating the long-term consequences of environmental degradation (Louv, 2008). Similarly, “The Second Life of Things” encourages participants to repurpose discarded materials, fostering creativity and promoting a culture of waste reduction and resourcefulness. By merging experiential learning with interactive sustainability initiatives, these activities promote circular economy principles, increasing participants’ awareness of their environmental impact.

Beyond individual experiences, structured educational programs reinforce environmental awareness. Initiatives like On-Wheels Summer Schools (OWSS) integrate sustainability-focused curricula that combine theoretical learning with hands-on outdoor activities. These programs enhance ecological literacy, particularly among marginalised groups such as migrants and refugees, by educating participants on conservation and sustainability policies while encouraging practical application. Moreover, they highlight the connection between social inclusion and environmental responsibility, fostering a sense of community through shared environmental engagement. This holistic approach ensures environmental awareness is reinforced through participatory experiences. Volunteer-based conservation initiatives, such as volunteering in nature reserves for habitat restoration and biodiversity monitoring, allow participants to directly engage in ecological preservation, gaining insights into the impact of human actions on ecosystems. These efforts empower individuals as active contributors to conservation. Community-driven initiatives, like urban gardening and reforestation, further promote collective action and commitment to sustainability. By engaging in such activities, participants gain practical skills and knowledge, fostering long-term environmentally responsible behaviours (Ganzevoort and van den Born, 2023).

Outdoor education programs complement these efforts through sustainability workshops, guided nature walks, and discussions on ecological responsibility. For example, sustainability workshops educate participants on topics such as climate change, renewable energy, and responsible consumption, while nature walks provide sensory and observational learning experiences that strengthen participants’ emotional connection to the environment (Thompson Coon et al., 2011). This experiential learning model, as emphasised in environmental education frameworks such as IntegratEU, enhances environmental awareness by encouraging participants to internalise sustainability principles and incorporate them into their everyday decision-making processes.

Ultimately, by participating in these activities, individuals develop both the knowledge and the motivation to become active environmental stewards. These experiences foster an enduring personal connection to nature, which is a critical factor in sustaining pro-environmental attitudes and behaviours over time. This engagement not only leads to immediate positive changes, such

as waste reduction and water conservation, but also contributes to broader societal shifts toward sustainable living and ecological preservation. Through these diverse educational and participatory opportunities, outdoor activities play a fundamental role in shaping a more environmentally conscious and responsible society (Ganzevoort and van den Born, 2023).

1.4 How do they promote social and cultural integration?

The proposed outdoor activities play also a fundamental role in fostering social and cultural integration by creating inclusive spaces where migrants, refugees, and host communities can interact, collaborate, and develop mutual understanding. These activities break down cultural barriers, promote intercultural dialogue, and encourage meaningful social connections, contributing to more cohesive and inclusive societies. Through structured group experiences, outdoor initiatives provide migrants and refugees with opportunities to engage with locals, improving their sense of belonging and participation in their new communities. By integrating physical, educational, and recreational activities, these programs support not only social adaptation but also personal and linguistic development (Berry, 2005). One effective method of promoting integration is through organised group activities such as walking tours, sports, and urban farming. Programs like “Migrantour”, where migrants and refugees act as cultural guides in city tours, foster an exchange of knowledge and experiences while enhancing their communication and leadership skills. These initiatives help dismantle stereotypes by enabling them to share their cultural heritage while learning about their new environment.

Urban farming projects, for example, encourage collaborative agriculture where migrants, refugees, and locals grow crops, exchange techniques, and build community resilience through sustainable practices (Huss, 2024). Working together in green spaces strengthens social bonds and fosters solidarity, highlighting the power of cooperative efforts in integration. Sports and recreational activities provide valuable opportunities for cultural and social interaction. Team sports like football, basketball, and group fitness programs create informal but structured spaces where individuals from diverse backgrounds can build friendships, improve communication, and develop teamwork skills (Jensen and Kirchner, 2020). Seasonal outdoor programs, such as winter sports and hiking, offer opportunities for physical well-being and foster cross-cultural connections. These activities reduce social isolation by creating an inclusive environment where participants interact equally, regardless of language or cultural differences. A key feature is their incorporation of language-learning opportunities. Informal language exchanges in parks or community gardens provide migrants and refugees with a relaxed, immersive setting to practice language skills through real-life conversations, improving both fluency and social confidence. Additionally, digital platforms within the EU integration framework offer self-guided language resources, helping them overcome communication barriers and build stronger connections with their host communities.

Structured educational programs, like Erasmus+ Summer Schools, integrate outdoor learning to promote social cohesion. These programs use ecological and sustainability-focused activities to

encourage teamwork and intercultural dialogue, fostering a sense of shared responsibility. Additionally, psychological adaptation workshops help them build resilience and develop social skills for successful integration (Jensen and Kirchner, 2020). Storytelling projects, both digital and community-based, offer migrants and refugees platforms to share personal experiences, promoting empathy and challenging local prejudices. These initiatives not only amplify their voices but also create opportunities for deeper cultural exchange, reinforcing social ties and promoting greater understanding between diverse groups.

Ultimately, outdoor activities serve as powerful tools for integration by facilitating collaboration, encouraging cultural exchange, and fostering inclusive environments. By participating in shared experiences such as sports, farming, guided tours, and storytelling initiatives, they gain social confidence, develop meaningful relationships, and become more engaged members of their communities. Furthermore, the integration of outdoor learning with educational and psychological support programs ensures a holistic approach to inclusion, promoting long-term social cohesion and mutual respect. Through these diverse initiatives, outdoor activities contribute significantly to building more integrated, inclusive, and culturally enriched societies (Berry, 2005).

1.5 How can environmental awareness and social integration be combined?

The integration of the two previously examined dimensions can be effectively achieved through community-based outdoor initiatives that promote both sustainability and intercultural exchange. By designing programs that encourage collaborative environmental action, these initiatives foster meaningful interactions while cultivating a shared sense of responsibility for ecological preservation. Migrants, refugees and host communities can engage in joint sustainability efforts, creating opportunities for social bonding while simultaneously addressing environmental challenges. Programs integrating urban agriculture, conservation, and ecological education strengthen community ties while promoting environmental stewardship (Farini and Scollan, 2018). Community gardening and urban farming provide spaces where they collaborate in cultivating green areas, practicing sustainable agriculture, and sharing traditional knowledge. Initiatives like “Communal Garden Niguarda” in Milan illustrate how urban agriculture fosters both social cohesion and environmental responsibility. Similarly, environmental volunteering engages migrants and refugees in conservation efforts such as reforestation and wildlife monitoring, facilitating social integration while preserving ecosystems (Roland, 2017).

Educational outdoor programs that integrate environmental learning with cultural exchange further strengthen the link between sustainability and social inclusion. Initiatives such as guided ecological hikes, environmental storytelling, and sustainability workshops create spaces where migrants, refugees, and locals can discuss global environmental challenges while sharing diverse cultural perspectives on nature conservation (Codato et al. 2024). These programs provide participants with the opportunity to explore new landscapes, develop ecological literacy, and

gain insights into the environmental traditions and sustainability practices of different cultures. By embedding environmental education within socially inclusive frameworks, these activities foster a deeper appreciation of both nature and cultural diversity, promoting long-term integration and ecological consciousness.

The Erasmus+ Summer School model exemplifies an interdisciplinary approach that merges environmental action with social inclusion. These programs incorporate sustainability-focused projects, such as ecological restoration and waste reduction initiatives, ensuring that they engage in meaningful hands-on environmental work while forming connections with their peers. By encouraging teamwork and experiential learning, these programs facilitate both social adaptation and environmental awareness, equipping them with valuable skills for sustainable living. Additionally, the integration of psychological adaptation workshops within these sustainability initiatives helps them navigate social and cultural transitions while reinforcing their commitment to ecological responsibility (Farini and Scollan, 2018).

Incorporating storytelling into environmental education is another innovative approach to combining ecological awareness and cultural integration. Storytelling walks, where migrants, refugees, and locals share personal and cultural narratives about their relationship with nature, provide a unique avenue for fostering empathy and understanding while raising environmental consciousness. Digital storytelling projects further amplify this impact, contributing to a richer collective knowledge of ecological stewardship. By embedding environmental awareness within socially inclusive frameworks, outdoor activities serve as powerful tools for fostering both sustainability and integration. Through collaborative gardening, conservation volunteering, ecological education, and intercultural storytelling, these initiatives not only promote environmental responsibility but also build resilient and cohesive communities. By working together in shared sustainability efforts, migrants, refugees, and host communities develop meaningful relationships while cultivating a shared commitment to preserving the natural world. These programs enhance social well-being, encourage ecological stewardship, and contribute to a more inclusive and environmentally conscious society (Roland, 2017).

2. The outdoor activities collection framework

The IntegratEU international team has undertaken a comprehensive and collaborative effort to develop a structured collection of outdoor activities that align with the project's broader objectives of integration, sustainability, and experiential learning. Recognising the vital role of interactive and place-based education in fostering engagement among migrants, refugees, and vulnerable groups, the team has worked meticulously to design activities that are both educational and inclusive. Through a partnership-driven approach, the institutions involved in the project have contributed with their expertise to create a cohesive training framework, ensuring that each activity is pedagogically sound, adaptable to diverse learners, and aligned with European values. By integrating experiential learning methods, these activities serve as a bridge between formal education and hands-on engagement, offering migrants, refugees, and vulnerable groups meaningful opportunities for skill development, community participation, and environmental awareness.

This collection aims at providing a clear methodological guidance for summer school teachers and facilitators. This resource ensures that educators can effectively implement activities that foster intercultural exchange, ecological responsibility, and social cohesion. Each activity has been carefully crafted to be inclusive, interactive, and adaptable, allowing participants with different learning styles, linguistic backgrounds, and levels of prior education to engage meaningfully. The team has prioritised accessibility and participation, embedding elements such as peer-led initiatives, multilingual support, and structured reflection sessions to maximise engagement and ensure that knowledge is internalised and applied beyond the summer school experience. Each partner institution has collaborated proposing at least 3 activities, taking into consideration and drawing inspiration from initiatives already widespread in their respective countries (Croatia, Poland, Italy, Lithuania, Bulgaria and Ukraine). These sources have also been referenced in the activities sheets in this volume to enable readers to deepen their own knowledge about the proposed initiatives.

The development process has emphasised a holistic educational approach, ensuring that all the activities collected are not only informative but also transformative. Designed to strengthen personal agency and leadership skills, the activities encourage participants to take ownership of their learning journey, whether through sustainability projects, urban explorations, or collaborative community initiatives. By moving learning beyond the classroom and into real-world settings, the IntegratEU team has created a framework that fosters long-term commitment to sustainability and integration, equipping participants with practical tools to navigate both academic and civic life in their host countries. Moreover, the IntegratEU team has focused on ensuring the continuity and replicability of these activities within the On-Wheels Summer Schools (OWSS) model. The integration of digital learning materials, role-playing scenarios, and mentorship structures enhances the effectiveness of outdoor education while also providing a flexible and scalable format that can be adopted by other institutions. The collaborative nature

of this effort reflects a shared commitment to creating inclusive, high-impact learning experiences that extend beyond the immediate summer school setting.

Ultimately, this collection of outdoor activities is not just a compilation of exercises but a carefully curated educational tool designed to empower participants, enrich university teaching methodologies, and foster a deeper understanding of European civic and environmental principles. Through this structured and methodologically robust approach, the IntegratEU team has developed a resource that ensures outdoor education becomes a sustainable and integral part of higher education institutions' efforts to support migrant and refugee integration.

As part of this international research initiative, the University of Catania (UniCT) has been primary responsibility to systematise and critically refine the work conducted by all participating institutions, ensuring a cohesive and rigorous final output. This task has been conducted through in-depth comparative analysis, methodological harmonization, and thematic classification to guarantee. By adhering to a common structure, the activities were aligned with the overarching objectives of the project while maintaining thematic and conceptual coherence. This was crucial in ensuring that the integration of migrants and refugees through outdoor experiences was approached holistically, combining social, cultural, and environmental dimensions in a grounded manner.

The UniCT working group systematization involved also language and terminology standardization as well as the identification of relevant overlaps or discrepancies. The goal was to improve the overall quality and practical feasibility of the proposed interventions, making them synergistic rather than fragmented. The comparative analysis facilitated the development of a unified, high-quality set of activities that adhered to a shared academic and operational standard. To further refine the document structure, the activities were categorised into three thematic groups: "Integration", "Environment", and "Environment and Integration". The taxonomy also revealed cross-cutting themes, such as cultural heritage, ecological awareness, and physical well-being, which were carefully integrated into the overall structure. Adopting this thematic organization contributed to reinforce the project's holistic vision, which sought to address migrants and refugees' integration and, simultaneously, and environmental concerns.

This document has been organised with a table of contents, thematic sections, methodological explanations, activities sheets and a bibliographic reference section, ensuring both academic rigor and practical accessibility. It articulated the ideas behind the project, the strategies implemented, and the anticipated outcomes, providing a valuable resource for teachers and facilitators in the field of migrant and refugees' integration for real-world interventions. Although coordinating contributions from multiple countries presented undeniable challenges, the collaboration ultimately proved to be both enriching and essential. It fostered a dynamic exchange of perspectives, ensuring that the project was not merely a collection of distinct proposals but rather a harmonised and critically refined body of work. Each partner's input added depth and nuance, reflecting the unique socio-cultural contexts in which outdoor activities were conceived and implemented. This diversity, far from being an obstacle, reinforced the value of a shared yet adaptable framework, capable of accommodating different realities.

Ultimately, the collective work underscored the importance of interdisciplinary and cross-national cooperation in addressing complex social challenges. The project exemplifies how scientific research, and practical application can converge to create innovative and impactful solutions, demonstrating that integration through outdoor activities is not only feasible but also a highly effective and sustainable approach. The ability to reconcile diverse viewpoints into a unified, accessible, and scientifically rigorous document serves as a testament to the strength of collaborative academic endeavours in fostering inclusive and transformative social change.

2.1 Key terms in IntegratEU activities and strategies

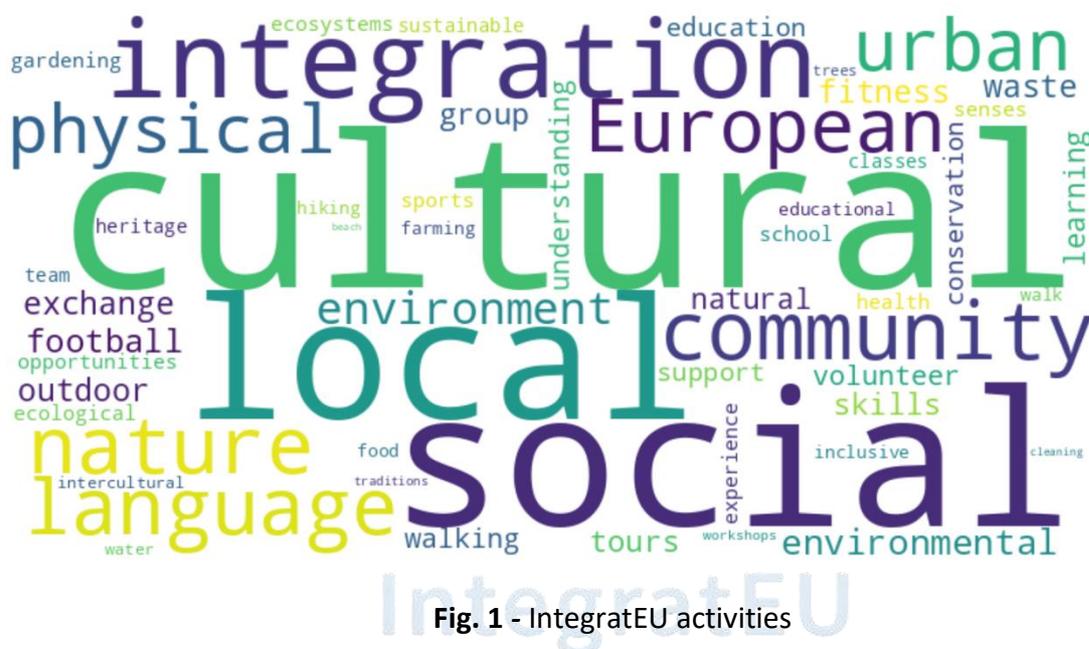


Fig. 1 - IntegratEU activities

The word cloud presented highlights key themes and concepts that define the activities proposed in the handbook. The most prominent terms (cultural, local, social, integration, and community) reflect the core values of the initiative, emphasising the importance of fostering connections between newcomers and their new environments. These words illustrate the central role of cultural exchange and social interaction in the activities, ensuring that participants engage with one another in meaningful ways that strengthen their sense of belonging and foster the creation of shared identity. The emphasis on cultural and social integration is also evident in the presence of words like language, heritage, and traditions, suggesting that many activities focus on promoting cultural awareness through interactive experiences, providing participants with opportunities to deepen their understanding of different cultures while engaging in enjoyable and educational interactions. Physical activity also plays a key role in the program, as indicated by words such as football, hiking, sports, fitness, and walking. These activities incorporate movement and outdoor engagement, promoting physical well-being and social interaction.

their peers, and apply their knowledge in real-world contexts can enhance both comprehension and motivation. The presence of workshops, guidance, and practical reinforces the importance of this experiential-based learning systems. Practical applications of knowledge, such as project-based learning and real-world problem-solving, enhance motivation by making learning more relevant and engaging. The inclusion of interdisciplinary suggests that teaching approaches should be multifaceted, drawing on different fields and methods to make learning more dynamic and adaptable to various learner needs.

A strong emphasis on community and collaboration is evident, with words like group, social, and networking, highlighting the role of teamwork in the learning process. Collaborative learning activities, peer mentorship programs, and group discussions can help in building a sense of belonging and collective progress, which is crucial for maintaining motivation. Creating an inclusive and interactive learning space ensures that all students feel valued and encouraged to participate actively. Motivational strategies should also focus on resilience and creativity. Teachers are encouraged to foster an environment where learners feel empowered to take ownership of their educational experience. Providing constructive feedback, celebrating progress, and encouraging creative problem-solving can enhance motivation and persistence. Thus, resilience is cultivated when students feel supported through challenges and are given the tools to develop perseverance and self-efficacy.

Overall, the word clouds highlight the handbook's emphasis on cultural integration, environmental responsibility, social engagement, and adaptable teaching. By fostering inclusivity, interdisciplinary learning, and accessibility, the proposed activities create a dynamic platform for collaboration and personal growth. Through structured guidance, experiential learning, and diverse engagement opportunities, participants develop essential skills, motivation, and a sense of collective well-being.

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3. Motivational and engagement strategies

Outdoor educational activities offer a dynamic and immersive approach to learning by integrating hands-on experiences, social interaction, and cultural engagement. Unlike traditional educational methods that often rely on passive information absorption, outdoor learning actively involves participants in real-world experiences, making them contributors rather than mere observers. The effectiveness of these activities, particularly in fostering environmental awareness and social integration, hinges on their ability to sustain participant motivation through experiential learning and direct engagement (Ager and Strang, 2008; Berry, 2005). In fact, experiential learning is most effective when it engages the senses, emotions, and intellect simultaneously. This multidimensional learning process reinforces memory retention, deepens emotional investment, and intensifies personal connections to the subject matter (Lugg, 2005). When participants physically engage in tasks as exploring a cultural site, planting trees, or working on a collaborative project, they internalise knowledge through action rather than simply processing theoretical concepts. These hands-on experiences cultivate essential cognitive skills such as problem-solving, decision-making, and adaptability, making learning more impactful and personally meaningful.

Beyond cognitive engagement, outdoor educational activities leverage social interaction as a key motivator. Activities designed to be collaborative and community-oriented encourage teamwork, communication, and shared responsibility. Engaging in group-based learning fosters interpersonal skills and creates a sense of belonging, which is critical for motivation and long-term commitment. When participants work together toward a shared goal, whether in environmental conservation or cultural exploration, they form connections that strengthen community bonds and create a sense of collective achievement. This social dynamic enhances motivation by making learning more than an individual pursuit, it becomes a shared experience that builds relationships and mutual understanding. A crucial factor in maintaining long-term engagement is emotional investment. When participants feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for their actions, they are more likely to remain committed to an initiative (Formella and Perillo, 2018). Whether navigating cultural landscapes, participating in environmental restoration, or collaborating on social projects, participants develop personal attachment to their work. This emotional connection enhances intrinsic motivation, ensuring that engagement continues beyond the immediate activity. However, effective structuring and execution of activities are essential in achieving these outcomes. Poorly designed experiences may fail to create meaningful connections or may overwhelm participants without sufficient guidance and reflection opportunities. While direct engagement is a powerful motivator, it must be balanced with structured reflection to maximise its impact. Reflection is what transforms experience into learning, allowing participants to process, analyse, and internalise their activities. Without structured opportunities for discussion, feedback, and introspection, even the most immersive activity risks becoming a fleeting moment rather than a transformative experience (Roland, 2017). Facilitators and educators play a critical role in guiding reflection, helping participants

connect their experiences to larger themes of cultural awareness, environmental responsibility, and social inclusion.

The following sections will showcase concrete strategies for teachers and facilitators to effectively integrate experiential learning into outdoor activities. These strategies emphasise interdisciplinary approaches, social collaboration, and structured follow-up initiatives to reinforce long-term commitment and sustained engagement. By ensuring that activities are well-designed, participatory, and rooted in real-world application, educators can create dynamic platforms for skill-building, social integration, and environmental awareness. Ultimately, fostering a sense of community, empowerment, and practical learning ensures that these activities have a lasting impact, transforming education into a meaningful and enduring experience.

3.1 Experiential learning and cultural immersion

A strong motivational foundation can be built on experiential learning, which transforms passive observation into active participation. Traditional educational approaches often rely on passive absorption of information, where learners are expected to retain knowledge presented to them without direct interaction. Experiential learning, on the other hand, places individuals at the centre of the learning process, allowing them to engage directly with their surroundings and apply newly acquired knowledge in a meaningful context (Dewey, 1986; Bandura, 1977). This hands-on approach makes learning more tangible and personally relevant, as participants do not simply hear or read about concepts but actively experience them. Whether through historical site visits, interactive workshops, or outdoor projects, experiential learning fosters a deeper intellectual and emotional connection to the material. This method is particularly effective when combined with storytelling, thematic exploration, and real-world applications, which help transform information into an engaging narrative. Storytelling has been recognised as one of the most powerful tools in education, as it allows learners to connect emotionally with the subject matter. By framing educational experiences within a story, whether it be the history of a local community, the evolution of a cultural tradition, or the personal journey of individuals, participants are more likely to remember key details and engage with the topic on a deeper level (Lopez Abeledo, 2008; Krashen, 1982). Thematic exploration further enhances this effect by organising learning experiences around central themes that allow participants to draw connections between different topics, making knowledge acquisition dynamic, memorable, and contextually rich.

Cultural immersion is another powerful motivator, as it encourages participants to actively engage with local traditions, arts, and customs, fostering a sense of connection with their environment. Unlike conventional classroom learning, cultural immersion allows individuals to experience different lifestyles, belief systems, and artistic expressions first-hand. This engagement helps break down barriers and creates a more inclusive and participatory educational environment. When individuals are exposed to different cultural perspectives in an

interactive way (festivals, culinary experiences, music, or artistic performances) they develop a more profound appreciation for diversity and are more likely to remain engaged. Transitioning from passive participants to active contributors is an essential factor in maintaining motivation. When individuals take on leadership roles within an activity, such as leading discussions, organising events, or guiding others through a particular experience, their sense of ownership and responsibility increases. This shift from being a learner to becoming a facilitator fosters confidence, strengthens communication skills, and enhances personal investment in the learning process. Furthermore, this approach provides practical skill development opportunities, particularly in public speaking, collaboration, and problem-solving, which are valuable beyond the immediate context of the activity.

3.2 Social engagement and group collaboration

Another key motivational factor in outdoor learning could be social interaction, which fosters a sense of belonging and shared responsibility. Learning in isolation can sometimes feel abstract or disconnected, but when individuals engage in collaborative activities, they develop stronger ties to both the subject matter and their peers. Outdoor learning environments provide unique opportunities for participants to engage in teamwork, where they must rely on one another to achieve a common goal. This dynamic creates a supportive atmosphere in which individuals feel valued, encouraged, and motivated to participate more actively. The presence of a group setting naturally stimulates engagement, as social interaction introduces elements of discussion, debate, and shared problem-solving, making the learning process more dynamic and stimulating. When individuals work collaboratively, they develop problem-solving skills and the ability to navigate different perspectives. Outdoor activities that require group coordination, such as team-based challenges, conservation projects, or cultural explorations, encourage participants to negotiate, communicate, and adapt to new ideas. This interaction helps foster critical thinking and interpersonal skills, which are essential not only for learning but also for broader personal and professional development. The exchange of ideas within a team setting can also expose individuals to new viewpoints and strategies, broadening their understanding and encouraging a more open-minded approach to learning.

A key component of motivation in social learning environments is the sense of shared achievement. When individuals collaborate on a project and witness its completion, they experience a sense of accomplishment that reinforces their commitment to the task and to future learning opportunities. Completing a group challenge or reaching a collective goal fosters a sense of pride and purpose, encouraging participants to continue engaging with similar activities in the future. Seeing tangible results of their work, whether in an environmental project, a cultural initiative, or a group performance, enhances self-efficacy: the belief in one's ability to contribute meaningfully and succeed in new challenges. Structured support plays an essential role in maximising the benefits of social interaction in learning. The presence of facilitators, mentors, or peer guides provides encouragement and constructive feedback, helping participants feel supported in their efforts. Guidance from experienced individuals not only enhances learning but

also fosters a sense of security and motivation, as participants receive direct reinforcement for their progress (Weidinger et al., 2024). Additionally, allowing individuals to take on leadership roles within group settings deepens engagement by giving them a sense of responsibility and ownership over the learning experience (Jensen and Kirchner, 2020). When participants are given the opportunity to guide others, organise activities, or take initiative within a team, they develop confidence, leadership skills, and a deeper commitment to their educational journey.

3.3 Tangible outcomes and hands-on involvement

Activities that emphasise tangible, real-world outcomes can provide strong motivational incentives by allowing participants to see the direct impact of their efforts. Unlike abstract or purely theoretical learning, hands-on experiences create visible and measurable results, reinforcing a sense of accomplishment and personal investment. When individuals engage in projects related to environmental conservation, creative expression, or community improvement, they develop a deeper sense of responsibility and pride in their contributions. Whether it is planting trees, designing public spaces, or participating in cultural initiatives, witnessing the transformation of their work fosters a more profound connection to the task and enhances their motivation to stay involved. By actively participating in ecological and community initiatives, individuals experience the immediate value of their actions (Barton and Rogerson, 2017) This not only strengthens their understanding of sustainability principles but also encourages long-term commitment to ecological and social responsibility (Berg et al., 2023). When participants recognise that their contributions lead to meaningful change, they are more likely to develop intrinsic motivation to continue engaging in similar activities.

However, to ensure sustained motivation beyond the initial experience, follow-up engagement is crucial. Revisiting past projects, maintaining long-term initiatives, or implementing structured check-ins helps participants remain connected to their initial efforts. If individuals do not have opportunities to reflect on and track the progress of their contributions, the sense of accomplishment may fade over time. By incorporating periodic follow-ups, for example returning to maintain a garden, evaluating the effectiveness of a community initiative, or seeing the continued impact of a restoration project, participants develop a greater sense of accountability and are more likely to remain engaged in the long term (Codato et al., 2024) A particularly effective approach to maintaining engagement is the use of structured responsibility models, where individuals are assigned specific roles or tasks within a larger project. Assigning responsibility, such as caring for a specific plant in a community garden, leading an awareness campaign, or mentoring new participants, creates a sense of ownership and personal investment. This structure helps prevent disengagement by ensuring that each person feels a continued stake in the project's success. When participants take on active roles, they transition from temporary contributors to long-term stewards of environmental or social initiatives.

3.4 Interdisciplinary learning and physical engagement

Integrating physical activity with intellectual learning can enhance motivation by making education more dynamic, engaging, and immersive. Traditional learning environments often rely on passive instruction, but when movement is incorporated (through walking, hiking, or interactive exploration) participants experience a stimulating and multisensory connection to the subject matter. Engaging in physical activities while learning ensures that knowledge is not confined to abstract theory but is instead applied in real-world contexts, reinforcing both understanding and retention (Thompson Coon et al., 2011; O'Driscoll et al., 2014). One of the key benefits of this interdisciplinary approach is that it fosters both cognitive and emotional connections to learning. When individuals engage in active exploration, they associate the experience with curiosity, excitement, and personal discovery. For example, historical or cultural lessons delivered through guided walks allow participants to physically experience the spaces being discussed, making information more tangible and memorable. Similarly, scientific concepts explored through outdoor experiments or ecological studies provide immediate, hands-on applications of theoretical knowledge. This approach encourages participants to think critically while being fully immersed in their environment, creating a more holistic and impactful educational experience.

Research has demonstrated that nature-based learning has significant benefits for cognitive development, self-esteem, and emotional resilience (Louv, 2008; Thompson Coon et al., 2011). Exposure to natural environments has been linked to enhanced focus, reduced stress, and improved mental well-being, all of which contribute to higher levels of motivation and engagement (Korpela et al., 2001). Learning in outdoor settings can foster a sense of curiosity and exploration, as natural surroundings provide ever-changing stimuli that encourage observation, questioning, and problem-solving. The ability to physically engage with the learning environment further strengthens long-term knowledge retention. Beyond its cognitive benefits, physical movement contributes to emotional and social well-being. Activities that involve group challenges, team exploration, or cooperative physical tasks strengthen social bonds and collaboration skills, creating an environment where participants feel supported and encouraged. Moreover, movement itself has been shown to enhance mood and energy levels, making learning more enjoyable and reducing the fatigue that often accompanies traditional sedentary education. This approach transforms education into a process of discovery, interaction, and personal growth, making learning not just an academic pursuit, but a deeply enriching and sustainable experience.

3.5 Sustained long-term engagement through follow-up initiatives

One of the greatest challenges in outdoor education is ensuring long-term commitment beyond initial participation. While hands-on activities and social interaction create immediate engagement, maintaining motivation over time requires structured follow-up initiatives that

reinforce learning and encourage continued involvement. Without sustained engagement, participants may view their experiences as isolated events rather than as part of a continuous learning journey. To counteract this, scheduled check-ins, mentorship programs, and recurring events serve as essential tools for maintaining motivation. When participants are given opportunities to reflect on and revisit past projects, they develop a deeper sense of responsibility and connection to their efforts (Ganzevoort and van den Born, 2023; Furlong et al., 2024). Regular engagement ensures that skills and knowledge acquired during the initial experience remain relevant and actively applied, preventing disengagement. Mentorship programs, in particular, offer ongoing guidance and encouragement, allowing participants to seek support, ask questions, and continue developing their skills beyond the structured activity. Similarly, recurring events create a sense of continuity, reinforcing the idea that participation is not a one-time experience but rather part of a larger, evolving process.

Another key strategy for fostering long-term engagement could be providing clear progression pathways within activities. When individuals perceive opportunities for growth, such as advancing from learner to mentor, or from participant to project leader, they are more likely to remain committed. The ability to build upon previous experiences and take on increasingly complex responsibilities strengthens motivation and fosters a sense of achievement. Participants who see tangible progress in their involvement feel a greater connection to the activity and are more inclined to contribute in meaningful ways. Structured responsibility models are particularly effective in sustaining motivation (O'Brien et al., 2010). When participants are assigned specific roles or ongoing responsibilities, they develop a sense of ownership over the learning process. For example, individuals may be tasked with leading new participants, managing aspects of a project, or overseeing long-term initiatives. These structured commitments encourage deeper investment and reinforce personal accountability, ensuring that participants feel their contributions are essential to the success of the activity. Ensuring that participants remain actively involved over time transforms learning from a singular event into a sustainable, lifelong journey of growth and contribution.

3.6 Personalised and adaptive learning

One more possible effective way to sustain engagement and long-term motivation in outdoor education is by ensuring that activities are personalised and adaptable to individual needs, abilities, and interests. A one-size-fits-all approach may fail to address the diverse backgrounds, learning styles, and motivations of participants, whereas a flexible and participant-centred model allows for greater involvement and investment in the learning process. By tailoring activities to individual strengths, interests, and prior knowledge, facilitators can create a sense of personal relevance, which is crucial for intrinsic motivation (Ormond and Vietti, 2022). When participants feel that an activity aligns with their personal goals, cultural background, or aspirations, they are more likely to engage deeply and sustain their involvement over time (Huss, 2024). For example, giving participants the opportunity to choose different roles within an activity, for instance

leadership positions, creative tasks, or technical responsibilities, encourages them to take ownership of their learning.

Adaptive learning strategies can also ensure inclusivity and accessibility, allowing participants of varying abilities, languages, and comfort levels to engage meaningfully. By providing different entry points and progression pathways, outdoor educational activities can accommodate both beginners and advanced learners, ensuring that everyone remains challenged and motivated. This approach prevents disengagement due to frustration (if tasks are too difficult) or boredom (if tasks are too easy) (Farini and Scollan, 2018). Incorporating self-directed learning elements, such as goal-setting, reflection journals, or participant-led projects, further reinforces motivation by allowing individuals to track their own progress and growth. When participants see tangible development in their skills, confidence, or understanding, they develop a greater sense of personal achievement and long-term commitment. By integrating personalised and adaptive learning strategies, outdoor education can move beyond standardised instruction and instead empower individuals to shape their own learning journeys, ensuring that engagement is meaningful, inclusive, and sustainable.



4. Outdoor Activity Sheets

The 24 face-to-face outdoor activities presented in this handbook are designed to promote environmental awareness, social integration, and cultural engagement. They have been carefully structured to offer participants meaningful learning experiences that combine hands-on engagement with theoretical insights and are suitable for diverse settings and adaptable to various participant needs, ensuring broad accessibility and impact.

The activities are divided into three main categories, each emphasising a different aspect of outdoor engagement. The first category focuses on environmental awareness activities, which include initiatives such as community tree planting, beach and river clean-ups, and sustainable urban gardening. These activities aim to instil ecological responsibility, encourage conservation efforts, and provide participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to contribute to a more sustainable future. The second category encompasses social and cultural integration activities, which include sports sessions, walking tours, and interactive workshops designed to foster intercultural exchange and community building. These activities provide opportunities for migrants, refugees, and local residents to engage with one another, develop social bonds, and gain a deeper understanding of their cultural surroundings. The third category bridges both environmental and integration aspects, incorporating activities that blend ecological awareness with community interaction, such as urban farming and cooperative outdoor games. Every category contains a variety of activities suited to different physical abilities, language levels, and group sizes.

Each activity sheet follows a structured format to ensure clarity and ease of implementation. Every entry includes an activity overview, outlining the main objectives and intended impact of the initiative. The strategies section details how the activity should be organised, offering guidance on logistics, group management, and necessary materials. The mission and goals segment define the broader purpose of the activity, emphasising its educational and social value. The context section provides relevant background information and similar examples, explaining the significance of the activity in relation to broader environmental or social challenges. The expected results section highlights the anticipated benefits for participants and communities. Finally, the instructions for summer school teachers offer practical advice for educators on how to facilitate and integrate the activity into broader learning programs.

The proposed activities vary in duration, from short interactive exercises to longer initiatives, and allow for flexible implementation, either independently or in collaboration with local organizations, schools, or municipalities. Educators and facilitators are encouraged to adapt these activities based on their participants' needs and language proficiency, ensuring greater accessibility and engagement. To maximise the impact of these experiences, reflection and assessment methods, such as group discussions and feedback sessions, should be incorporated to reinforce learning outcomes.

By following this structured approach, this chapter provides a clear and accessible guide for implementing outdoor activities that combine education, sustainability, and social inclusion. Whether focusing on environmental conservation, cultural engagement, or a mix of both, these activities serve as valuable tools to foster community engagement and lifelong learning of migrants and refugees in the European Union context.

4.1 Activities for environment

4.1a. Clean-up of beaches, rivers, and lakes

Activity Overview: This initiative focuses on a comprehensive, hands-on environmental action plan that goes beyond simple waste collection to promote long-term sustainability, ecological restoration, and community engagement. By organising clean-ups along beaches, riverbanks, and lake shores, the activity restores natural beauty, improves local ecosystems, and encourages a collective sense of responsibility for maintaining clean and healthy aquatic environments. The initiative integrates waste removal with broader environmental restoration efforts, including habitat protection, shoreline stabilization, and invasive species control. To motivate this initiative is the belief that small, community-driven efforts can create lasting, positive environmental change.

Strategies: Participants should be divided into small teams, each responsible for a specific section of the shoreline to maximise coverage and effectiveness. Teams receive safety instructions, waste sorting guidelines, and best practices for habitat restoration. By involving local environmental specialists, the initiative should ensure that participants contribute to the overall health of the ecosystem through informed actions. Collaboration with local municipalities plays a vital role in the success of the activity. Authorities should help identify priority clean-up areas, provide necessary tools and resources, and facilitate proper waste disposal. To reinforce long-term engagement, follow-up visits can be organised to monitor the impact of the clean-up as well as to provide an opportunity to reflect on the progress made and encourage participants to remain involved.

Mission and Goals: The mission of this initiative is to protect and enhance aquatic ecosystems while fostering environmental responsibility and community collaboration. The goal is to educate participants on the harmful consequences of pollution and encourage proactive environmental stewardship by engaging individuals in direct conservation efforts. Beyond environmental restoration, the initiative aims to strengthen community bonds by bringing together individuals, local authorities, and environmental organizations in a shared effort.

Context: This activity is based on the consciousness that beaches, rivers, and lakes worldwide face significant pollution challenges due to plastic waste, discarded items, and habitat destruction. This pollution not only degrades natural beauty but also threatens aquatic life, disrupts ecosystems, and diminishes recreational value. Urbanization and industrial activities

further exacerbate these issues, making proactive clean-up and restoration efforts essential. Local governments play a crucial role in supporting clean-up efforts by providing tools, coordinating waste disposal, and aligning activities with existing environmental policies.

Expected Results: The clean-up and restoration of shorelines will lead to healthier ecosystems, improved water quality, and enhanced habitats for both aquatic and terrestrial species. The initiative will help restore the ecological balance of these environments, making them safer and more enjoyable for local communities. By instilling sustainable habits and values, the initiative will also empower participants to continue advocating for cleaner, greener, and healthier natural spaces.

Instructions for Summer School Teachers: Educators play a vital role in reinforcing the long-term impact of environmental clean-ups by encouraging students to take part in these activities and in integrating sustainability topics into their teaching and highlighting the impact of pollution on biodiversity and climate regulation. Lessons on responsible waste management, recycling, and conservation can be incorporated into broader environmental education programs. By creating an inclusive and engaging learning environment, educators can inspire students to view environmental conservation as a shared responsibility, reinforcing the idea that even small actions contribute to significant positive change.

4.1b. Community tree planting

Activity Overview: This initiative focuses on a hands-on environmental action plan that goes beyond simply planting trees. It is designed to foster a deeper connection with nature, raise ecological awareness, and promote sustainable community engagement. Recognising the role of urban greenery in improving air quality, mitigating climate change, and enhancing biodiversity, this activity provides participants with an opportunity to actively contribute to the greening of their local environment. In collaboration with the municipality, the initiative ensures that native tree species are planted in suitable locations, maximising their long-term benefits for the ecosystem. At the heart of this initiative is the belief that small, collective efforts can generate a sense of ownership and significant, long-lasting positive impacts on both urban and suburban landscapes.

Strategies: Participants should be divided into small working groups, each responsible for different aspects of the planting process, including digging, positioning saplings, watering, and stabilising trees. This division of tasks ensures that the process is well-organised and that every tree has the best chance of thriving. Experts in environmental conservation should provide clear, step-by-step instructions on proper planting techniques and tree care, ensuring that participants gain practical skills that can be applied beyond the event. Municipal collaboration plays a key role in identifying the best locations for tree planting and supplying essential materials such as tools, tree saplings, and water resources.

Mission and Goals: The mission of this initiative is to enhance urban and suburban ecosystems through active participation in tree planting while instilling a lasting commitment to

environmental responsibility among participants. It also wants to empower individuals by providing them with the knowledge and experience to engage in sustainable practices, reinforcing the importance of trees in regulating climate, improving air quality, and supporting biodiversity. Beyond environmental benefits, the initiative aims to strengthen social bonds within the community. By working together toward a shared goal, participants build a sense of unity and collective responsibility for their surroundings.

Context: This initiative is grounded in the recognition that urban greenery plays a crucial role in climate mitigation, with trees acting as natural carbon sinks that absorb pollutants and cool urban areas. The rapid urbanization and deforestation of recent decades have significantly reduced green spaces, leading to decreased biodiversity, poorer air quality, and heightened vulnerability to climate change. Tree-planting initiatives serve as a proactive response to these challenges, offering communities a way to restore ecological balance while actively participating in local conservation efforts.

Expected Results: The activity will foster a sense of ecological responsibility by demonstrating the tangible benefits of trees. In the long run, the presence of newly planted trees contributes to the creation of more aesthetically pleasing and liveable environments, benefiting both people and wildlife. Socially, the initiative promotes stronger community ties, as participants collaborate in an inclusive and meaningful way, reinforcing a shared sense of purpose and environmental commitment. Over time, the trees planted through this initiative will serve as a living testament to collective action, offering lasting benefits to the environment and future generations.

Instructions for Summer School Teachers: Educators play a vital role in reinforcing the long-term impact of tree planting by integrating environmental awareness into their teaching and encouraging discussions on the role of trees in ecosystems. They are also responsible for creating an inclusive and engaging learning environment where students understand that their small efforts contribute to a much larger ecological goal can inspire lifelong environmental stewardship.

4.1c. Flower Garden installation and maintenance

Activity Overview: This initiative promotes environmental awareness and enhances outdoor spaces by designing and maintaining vibrant flower gardens. By engaging participants in hands-on gardening, the activity fosters creativity, teamwork, and a deeper appreciation for biodiversity. Through the selection of pollinator-friendly plants and sustainable gardening practices, the initiative not only beautifies the environment but also contributes to ecological health. At the heart of this activity is the belief that small, community-led green spaces can improve air quality, support biodiversity, and inspire long-term environmental stewardship.

Strategies: Participants should collaborate on designing the garden layout, selecting native and pollinator-friendly flowers suited to the local climate. Soil preparation includes composting and enrichment to promote plant health. Teams are responsible for planting, watering, and maintaining the garden by weeding, mulching, and using eco-friendly pest control methods such

as neem oil and insecticidal soaps. Educational workshops should provide insights into biodiversity, organic gardening, and the role of flowers in ecosystems. Progress is documented to track growth and maintain engagement. Partnerships with environmental experts or local organizations can enhance learning and ensure sustainable gardening practices.

Mission and Goals: The mission is to cultivate a deeper connection with nature by creating flower gardens that support biodiversity, improve air quality, and foster sustainable gardening habits. The activity aims at educating participants on the ecological importance of plants while promoting hands-on conservation efforts. Key goals include providing habitats for pollinators, encouraging sustainable landscaping, and enhancing the beauty and functionality of outdoor areas. The initiative also seeks to empower individuals with practical gardening skills and inspire a long-term commitment to environmental care.

Context: As urbanization reduces green spaces and threatens biodiversity, initiatives like flower gardening play a crucial role in restoring ecological balance. Flowers absorb carbon dioxide, release oxygen, and support pollinators such as bees and butterflies. This activity addresses the need for more sustainable, green environments in both urban and rural settings, offering a simple yet impactful way to promote biodiversity conservation while improving mental and physical well-being.

Expected Results: The initiative will result in thriving flower gardens that enhance the aesthetic and ecological value of outdoor spaces. Participants will gain skills in sustainable gardening, reinforcing long-term environmental awareness and eco-friendly habits. By creating habitats for pollinators, the project supports biodiversity and contributes to cleaner air. Additionally, the shared gardening experience fosters community bonds, encourages outdoor engagement, and inspires participants to expand the initiative within their own neighbourhoods, ultimately contributing to a greener and healthier environment.

Instructions for Summer School Teachers: Educators play a vital role in reinforcing the environmental and educational benefits of flower gardening. By integrating discussions on plant life cycles, pollination, and ecosystem services, they can help students understand the broader significance of gardening beyond aesthetics. Teachers can use the garden as a teaching tool, demonstrating principles of sustainability, climate action, and habitat conservation. Additionally, encouraging reflection on the experience, through journaling, discussions, or creative projects, helps reinforce the importance of long-term environmental stewardship. Moreover, they are responsible of creating an inclusive and engaging learning environment ensures that all students, regardless of prior gardening experience, feel encouraged to participate.

4.1d. Interactive games for ecological awareness

Activity Overview: This initiative engages participants in outdoor games designed to promote environmental responsibility and sustainability. Through interactive and educational experiences, individuals explore ecological concepts, learn about resource conservation, and develop a deeper connection with nature. The activities encourage critical thinking, creativity,

and problem-solving, helping participants understand their impact on the environment and adopt more sustainable habits. By incorporating elements of teamwork, observation, and reflection, the initiative fosters a hands-on approach to environmental education.

Strategies: Each activity is designed as an experiential learning opportunity, ensuring that participants actively engage with environmental topics rather than passively receiving information. Games and role-playing exercises stimulate curiosity and encourage collaboration, while nature-based activities strengthen ecological awareness.

Mission and Goals: The initiative aims to cultivate a sense of environmental responsibility by equipping participants with the knowledge and skills to make sustainable choices. By engaging with ecological concepts in an interactive setting, individuals become more aware of the impact of their daily habits and the importance of protecting natural resources. The goal is to inspire long-term commitment to environmental stewardship and to encourage collective action toward sustainability.

Context: The initiative aligns with global trends in environmental education that emphasise experiential learning as a tool to foster ecological responsibility. Outdoor activities provide an opportunity to engage with nature directly, reinforcing the importance of conservation efforts. By integrating sustainability themes into interactive exercises, participants gain a practical understanding of key environmental issues such as waste management, resource conservation, and biodiversity protection.

Expected Results: Participants will leave with a stronger awareness of environmental issues and a deeper appreciation for sustainable practices. The activities will encourage critical thinking, promote ecological responsibility, and provide practical tools for integrating sustainable behaviours into everyday life. In the long run, through teamwork and reflection, individuals will also develop problem-solving skills that can be applied to environmental challenges in their own communities.

Games Description:

- *“Second life of things”* challenges participants to find creative ways to repurpose discarded objects, encouraging sustainable thinking and problem-solving. Participants are divided into teams and provided with used materials, such as plastic bottles or old newspapers. Each team must brainstorm and craft a functional or artistic object from these items, demonstrating how waste can be transformed rather than discarded. At the end of the session, teams present their creations and discuss the environmental benefits of upcycling.

- *“Find and create”* encourages participants to explore their natural surroundings and collect various materials such as leaves, stones, or flowers. Using these elements, they work in teams to create nature-inspired artworks, sculptures, or land art installations. The exercise promotes observation, appreciation for biodiversity, and an understanding of how materials found in nature can be repurposed for creative expression.

• *“Find the exit”* is a survival-based challenge that simulates real-world environmental hazards. Participants are presented with scenarios such as being lost in a forest, facing a sudden storm, or navigating an area with limited water resources. Working in teams, they must develop strategies to find a safe path, identify edible plants, purify water, or signal for help. This activity enhances problem-solving skills, teamwork, and environmental awareness while teaching participants about survival techniques that respect nature.

• *“How long does garbage live?”* is an interactive game that teaches participants about the decomposition rates of various waste materials. Participants receive a set of cards, each featuring an image of a waste item (e.g., plastic bag, aluminium can, banana peel, glass bottle) and must place them in order from fastest to slowest decomposition. After completing the challenge, the correct answers are revealed, and participants discuss the environmental impact of different waste types.

• *“Our earth”* is a hands-on activity that helps participants understand resource distribution and environmental limitations. Using a fruit or vegetable as a model of Earth, they cut it into sections representing different land uses: forests, agriculture, urban areas, and uninhabitable regions. This visual representation highlights the scarcity of fertile land and the importance of sustainable land management.

• *“Make it better”* is a problem-solving exercise in which participants analyse real-life environmental issues and propose sustainable alternatives. Each team is given a scenario, such as excessive plastic use in daily life, energy wastage in households, or air pollution from transportation. They must brainstorm and present practical solutions, focusing on achievable changes that individuals and communities can implement.

• *“My day”* encourages participants to reflect on their daily consumption habits and their environmental impact. They record all the materials they use, food they consume, and waste they produce in a typical day. After analysing their data, they identify areas where they can reduce their ecological footprint. Group discussions provide an opportunity to exchange ideas on adopting more sustainable habits.

• *“The tree”* let participants explore the anatomy and ecological role of trees through an interactive lesson. They learn about tree rings, root systems, and leaf functions, then take part in an observation exercise where they identify different tree species and discuss their contributions to the environment, deepening their understanding of biodiversity.

• *“Sound and moment”* is a sensory-based activity in which participants listen to natural sounds, such as rustling leaves, bird calls, or flowing water, and translate these experiences into artistic expressions. They can create drawings, poems, or even musical compositions inspired by what they hear. The exercise enhances sensory awareness and encourages participants to connect with nature in a meaningful way.

• *“I see, I feel”* is a mindfulness exercise that asks participants to observe their surroundings and reflect on their emotional responses to different elements of nature. They record their

thoughts and feelings about landscapes, colours, textures, and smells, fostering a deeper connection to the environment. The activity encourages appreciation for the natural world.

- *“Name the smell”* is a sensory challenge in which participants identify different fruits, herbs, and vegetables by smell alone. This activity heightens awareness of natural scents and encourages discussions about traditional and local agricultural products.

- *“Clean water”* is a crisis simulation that challenges participants to develop strategies for water purification and conservation. They are given a hypothetical scenario of water contamination and must determine the best methods for filtering and cleaning water using available materials. The activity emphasises the importance of clean water access and the need for responsible water management.

- *“Ecological city”* asks participants to design a model of a sustainable city, incorporating elements such as renewable energy sources, green spaces, efficient waste management, and eco-friendly transportation systems. The exercise encourages innovative thinking about urban sustainability and promotes discussions on how cities can reduce their environmental impact.

- *“Attention! Danger nearby”* is an ecological literacy game teaches participants how to identify potentially harmful plants, insects, and fungi in their surroundings. Through guided activities and visual identification, they learn which species are safe and which require caution, promoting responsible behaviours when exploring nature.

4.1e. Mountain hiking and excursions groups

Activity Overview: This three-day initiative brings together ten participants for shared hiking experiences in the Rhodope Mountains, fostering friendships and breaking down cultural barriers. Carefully selected trails accommodate different fitness levels, prioritising scenic and accessible routes. Participants will visit national parks and caves, learning about the region’s flora, fauna, and geology. Short lectures and discussions will enhance environmental awareness, while activities such as birdwatching, foraging, and outdoor painting will further enrich the experience. Collaboration with local hiking groups will ensure safety and promote cultural exchange. Similar programs in Italy, such as the “Cammino degli Dei” and the “Via Francigena,” have successfully integrated migrants through hiking, highlighting its potential for social connection and personal development.

Strategies: The initiative promotes integration by connecting refugees and locals through nature. Routes are chosen for accessibility and engagement, with small, diverse groups fostering cultural exchange. Experienced guides ensure safety and share ecological knowledge, while environmental education is integrated through activities like trail cleaning and tree planting. Cultural exchange is encouraged through meals, music, and storytelling. Partnerships with local organizations support sustainability, and program effectiveness is monitored through feedback. Eco-friendly practices, such as responsible trail use and conservation workshops, reinforce community participation and environmental stewardship.

Mission and goals: This initiative seeks to promote social integration, physical well-being, and cultural exchange by engaging refugees and locals in hiking experiences. It encourages environmental responsibility while fostering a sense of belonging within local communities. Participants develop confidence, new skills, and resilience, while also contributing to the preservation of natural spaces. By combining outdoor adventure with education and community engagement, the program offers a holistic approach to integration.

Context: Outdoor activities provide a powerful platform for integration, allowing refugees to connect with their new environment while fostering social interactions. Hiking has been successfully used in integration efforts across Europe, including Italy and Spain, where iconic trails blend cultural, historical, and natural experiences. Programs like Rural Migrantour and the Nature School in Italy demonstrate how outdoor initiatives empower migrants, providing valuable skills in navigation, sustainability, and environmental conservation. This model can be adapted to Bulgaria, where outdoor exploration fosters a sense of connection and appreciation for the country's landscapes and communities.

Expected results: This initiative will enhance social integration by fostering relationships between refugees and local participants. It will improve physical and mental well-being, increase environmental awareness, and encourage active community participation. Through skill-building in navigation and sustainability, participants gain practical knowledge that may lead to future opportunities in ecotourism and conservation. The long-term goal is to create a sustainable model for outdoor-based refugee integration, inspiring similar programs in other regions.

Instructions for Summer Schools' Teachers: Teachers are key to maximising this initiative by encouraging participation in outdoor activities. Discussions on cultural and environmental topics build language skills and confidence. Inclusive strategies like group activities and reflection strengthen social bonds and long-term engagement. Ensuring accessibility and adaptability enhances the program's impact. By combining hiking with cultural exchange and environmental awareness, the initiative helps refugees connect with their new home, fostering resilience, inclusion, and community engagement.

4.1f. Sustainable agriculture program

Activity Overview: This initiative promotes sustainable agriculture by cultivating organic vegetables and herbs in a controlled greenhouse environment while utilising rainwater for irrigation. By integrating eco-friendly practices, such as composting, water conservation, and organic pest management, participants gain hands-on experience in sustainable food production. The greenhouse setting allows for optimal growing conditions, extending the planting season, protecting crops from extreme weather, and maximising water efficiency. The idea behind this activity is that small-scale, environmentally conscious farming can contribute to healthier diets, resource conservation, and a deeper understanding of ecological responsibility.

Strategies: Participants work in small teams to oversee different aspects of greenhouse management, including planting, soil preparation, and daily maintenance. A rainwater harvesting

system is installed, collecting and storing water for irrigation, reducing reliance on treated water sources. Organic compost is used to enhance soil fertility, while natural pest control methods minimise environmental impact. Regular monitoring of temperature, humidity, and plant growth ensures optimal conditions. Educational workshops complement the activity, providing insights into greenhouse technology, water conservation, and sustainable farming techniques. Collaborations with agricultural experts or environmental organizations help deepen participants' understanding and practical skills.

Mission and Goals: The mission of this initiative is to demonstrate the benefits of greenhouse farming in creating a self-sustaining, eco-friendly food production system. By integrating rainwater harvesting with organic cultivation, the activity promotes resource efficiency, biodiversity, and responsible agricultural practices. The goals include reducing water waste, fostering an appreciation for sustainable food systems, and equipping participants with the skills to implement similar methods at home or within their communities. By understanding the impact of controlled-environment agriculture, participants become advocates for sustainable living and food security.

Context: Conventional agriculture often relies on excessive water consumption and chemical fertilisers, contributing to soil degradation and water scarcity. Greenhouses offer an effective alternative by providing a controlled environment where crops can thrive with minimal resource waste. Rainwater harvesting further enhances sustainability by reducing dependence on municipal water supplies. As urbanization continues to limit access to fertile land, greenhouse farming presents a viable solution for small-scale, organic food production. This activity aligns with global sustainability efforts by encouraging responsible farming practices that benefit both people and the environment.

Expected Results: By the end of the activity, participants will have established a functional greenhouse system that efficiently utilises rainwater for irrigation. They will develop practical skills in organic farming, greenhouse management, and water conservation, reinforcing their commitment to sustainable living. Additionally, the initiative fosters long-term environmental awareness, inspiring participants to apply their knowledge in personal or community projects, ultimately promoting greener lifestyles and more resilient local food systems.

Instructions for Summer School Teachers: Educators play a crucial role in reinforcing the educational value of greenhouse farming by integrating sustainability concepts into the activity. Teachers should also encourage discussions on the advantages of controlled-environment agriculture. By fostering curiosity and active participation, educators can empower students to see greenhouse farming as both a practical solution to environmental challenges and a means of contributing to a healthier planet.

4.1g. Urban Farming Program

Activity Overview: Urban Farming involves cultivating food in underutilised urban spaces such as rooftops, vacant lots, or community gardens. It may also include small livestock, such as chickens

or bees, and typically focuses on larger-scale food production, aimed at serving local communities, markets, or restaurants. By producing fresh food, Urban Farming addresses urban food security and supports local economies. It may also integrate eco-friendly practices like using organic fertilisers and rainwater collection, contributing to environmental sustainability and local food systems.

Strategies: Urban Farming focuses on large-scale food production, including growing vegetables, fruits, herbs, or raising livestock in city environments. This approach often emphasises sustainability by using organic fertilisers, recycling organic waste, and collecting rainwater. Urban farms may generate income through community-supported agriculture (CSA) programs, local markets, or partnerships with local businesses, promoting food security and reducing reliance on imported, processed food. Innovative technologies like hydroponics and vertical farming may also be incorporated in areas with limited space. Urban farms contribute to the local economy, provide healthy food options, and support environmental sustainability in urban settings.

Mission and goals: Urban Farms aim to improve air quality, promote biodiversity, and enhance mental health by reducing stress and encouraging physical activity. For migrants, these farms provide a way to connect with their new environment, learn sustainable farming, and gain skills in agriculture and business. They also serve as platforms for cultural exchange, where migrants can share agricultural knowledge and traditions, enriching the local community. Urban Farming supports migrants, especially those new to local practices, by offering a welcoming space for learning and integration.

Context: Outdoor activities, such as Urban Farming, provide migrants in Italy with opportunities to connect with their new environment, meet locals, and improve their overall well-being. These activities facilitate cultural integration, helping migrants learn Italian in a practical context while forming bonds with others who share similar experiences. Urban farms, including initiatives in cities like Rome and Milan, provide valuable spaces for community interaction, mental and physical well-being, and stress relief. The Rooftop Garden Project in Milan is one such initiative that not only supplies local restaurants and markets with fresh produce but also serves as an educational platform for sustainable urban farming, benefiting both locals and migrants. By participating in such projects, migrants can gain a sense of belonging and improve their quality of life.

Expected results: Urban Farming will enable migrants in Italy to connect with their surroundings, meet new people, and improve their language skills while engaging in local, sustainable food production. These activities support social integration by offering opportunities for cultural exchange, fostering mutual understanding, and providing physical and mental health benefits. Urban Farming also helps reduce isolation, offering migrants a sense of purpose and belonging, which is essential for their successful adaptation to their new environment.

Instruction for summer schools' teachers: Teachers should encourage active participation in Urban Farming, helping migrants connect with local communities and learn sustainable farming practices. They should guide participants on agricultural techniques, highlight eco-friendly practices, and foster cultural exchange. Teachers should promote language learning by

encouraging interaction between migrants and locals. They must cater to varying skill levels, ensuring inclusivity, and facilitate reflection sessions where participants can share experiences, enhancing community building and integration.

4.2 Activities for integration

4.2a. Chess sessions

Activity overview: This initiative focuses on developing a chess program that goes beyond intellectual competition to foster integration, cognitive development, and emotional resilience among refugees. Recognising that chess offers strategic and mental benefits in terms of self-efficacy and self-confidence. The initiative also includes structured training sessions, weekend tournaments, and mentorship opportunities that serve as a bridge between refugees and local communities. Chess, as a universally understood and deeply engaging activity, allows participants to connect across cultural and linguistic barriers while enhancing their critical thinking and decision-making abilities. At the core of this initiative is the belief that intellectual engagement, much like physical sports, has the power to heal, empower, and unite individuals through shared experiences and mutual respect.

Strategies: Chess should be conceived as a tool for both cognitive and emotional well-being, offering structured opportunities for strategic thinking, concentration, and problem-solving while simultaneously reducing stress, fostering patience, and encouraging resilience. Through regular training, participants should develop not only their chess abilities but also a sense of purpose, self-discipline, and confidence that extends beyond the game. Psychological well-being should be promoted, with chess providing a structured and predictable activity that offers refugees a sense of stability and control.

Mission and Goals: The initiative's mission is to create an inclusive environment that recognises and nurtures the full spectrum of human cognitive development, while providing meaningful opportunities for integration and self-expression. By ensuring access to structured training, organised competitions, and social chess events, the initiative seeks to use chess as a tool for intellectual empowerment and social inclusion. In the long term, the initiative aims to strengthen partnerships between refugees and local chess clubs, ensuring that their participation is a sustainable process.

Context: This initiative is inspired by the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Croatia program, which has successfully incorporated structured intellectual activities to support refugee integration. Chess, with its ability to transcend language and cultural barriers, offers a unique platform for social interaction and cognitive development. Through structured training and participation in local tournaments refugees can develop their sense of confidence, leading to friendships and a greater sense of belonging.

Expected Results: By integrating structured chess training with psychological well-being and social engagement the initiative is expected to improve cognitive skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and concentration, which can also contribute to academic and professional success. Socially, the initiative will promote cultural exchange, allowing refugees to engage with local players in a setting that values skill and strategy over linguistic ability.

Instructions for Summer School Teachers: Educators play a crucial role in reinforcing the holistic benefits of chess for refugees. Teachers should encourage chess participation and lessons on strategic thinking, patience, and problem-solving can be integrated into broader educational activities, helping refugee students develop valuable life skills. Teachers should also create an inclusive and welcoming environment where all children feel encouraged to participate. By promoting chess as both a recreational and intellectual pursuit, educators can help refugee students develop confidence, build friendships, and engage with their new communities in a meaningful way.

4.2b. Cultural heritage summer school

Activity Overview: The “Cultural Heritage Summer School” is a four-day initiative designed for ten participants, offering an immersive exploration of Bulgaria’s cultural heritage to support refugee integration. The program takes place in different cities, allowing participants to engage with both tangible and intangible heritage. Locations such as Plovdiv, with its layered history and vibrant social life, offer activities like mosaic-making workshops and guided tours of cultural hubs like “Old Plovdiv” and “Kapana”. Another option is the UNESCO-listed Ancient City of Nessebar, where participants can explore medieval churches, traditional homes, and the region’s underwater cultural heritage. Activities include guided thematic tours, fishing excursions with local fishermen, and, if possible, diving experiences in search of submerged historical sites. The initiative fosters a deeper connection between refugees and their new environment by integrating them into Bulgaria’s cultural landscape.

Strategies: Effective implementation requires careful planning, balancing education, interaction, and recreation. Small, diverse groups encourage cultural exchange, while language support ensures accessibility. Collaboration with local NGOs, cultural organizations, and residents fosters meaningful engagement. Logistical support, including transportation and accommodation, guarantees participation for all. Continuous evaluation monitors progress, enabling program adjustments and long-term sustainability.

Mission and goals: The initiative seeks to facilitate refugee integration by providing a structured yet dynamic environment for cultural exchange and learning. By engaging in historical site visits, creative workshops, and interactions with local communities, participants gain an in-depth understanding of Bulgarian cultural heritage. The program aims to foster a sense of belonging, equip refugees with new skills, and create lasting social bonds with locals. Ultimately, it contributes to a more cohesive and tolerant society by promoting mutual learning and cultural appreciation.

Context: Outdoor activities provide a powerful mechanism for social integration, allowing refugees to experience their host culture in an engaging, hands-on manner. Whether through historical tours, artistic workshops, or community-led events, these experiences create shared moments that transcend language barriers. Participating in festivals, working with local artisans, and exploring regional traditions enable refugees to build connections while adapting to their new environment. The summer school's format ensures that participants are not only learning about Bulgarian history and traditions but are actively involved in cultural preservation and appreciation.

Expected results: The “Cultural Heritage Summer School” fosters social integration by building relationships between refugees and residents while deepening cultural awareness of Bulgarian history and traditions. Through creative and hands-on activities, participants develop confidence, transferable skills, and a sense of belonging. The initiative also strengthens community appreciation for cultural diversity, serving as a model for future refugee integration programs.

Instruction for summer schools' teachers: Teachers should encourage refugee students to engage in extracurricular and cultural activities, reinforcing language development and social confidence. Creating an inclusive classroom environment where students can share their experiences enhances their sense of belonging. Integrating sports, creative workshops, and guided cultural activities into educational programs ensures meaningful learning opportunities, while regular reflection sessions help assess progress and provide necessary support for long-term integration.

4.2c. Exploring European governance and decision-making

Activity Overview: This initiative offers participants an interactive learning experience about the functioning of the European Union and the role of democratic decision-making in shaping policies that affect everyday life. By engaging with multimedia tools and simulation exercises, participants gain insights into European governance, institutional structures, and the importance of civic engagement. The visit fosters an understanding of how collective and individual actions contribute to policy development, highlighting the interconnected nature of European cooperation. In addition to expanding knowledge of governance processes, the activity encourages collaboration and discussion, strengthening social connections among participants.

Strategies: The experience should be structured around interactive elements that encourage active engagement and critical thinking. Participants begin with an exploration of key facts about Europe through digital tools, individual research, and group discussions. This approach allows them to develop a foundational understanding of European institutions and their responsibilities. Video materials and guided explanations that illustrate how EU policies influence various aspects of life, from economic development to environmental protection and human rights, should be included. A central element of the experience is a simulation exercise replicating a parliamentary debate. Participants take on the roles of Members of the European Parliament, representing different political perspectives and negotiating policies on selected issues. This hands-on

approach deepens their understanding of political dynamics, consensus-building, and the complexities of legislative processes. Through structured debate and role-playing, participants develop essential communication, argumentation, and negotiation skills while experiencing first-hand how democratic institutions function.

Mission and Goals: The initiative aims to enhance participants' understanding of European governance, democratic processes, and the impact of policy decisions on individuals and societies. By engaging in discussions and role-playing activities, participants not only acquire knowledge of institutional mechanisms but also develop skills in public speaking, critical thinking, and teamwork. Another key objective is fostering intercultural exchange and cooperation, as the experience brings together individuals from different backgrounds, encouraging them to engage in meaningful discussions and collaborative problem-solving. The activity strengthens awareness of active citizenship and the role of informed participation in democratic life.

Context: This initiative draws inspiration from established European information and educational centres that offer interactive learning experiences on EU institutions and governance, such as the Europa Experience Centre in Warsaw, which provides visitors with an opportunity to explore the decision-making structures of the European Union through digital exhibits, simulations, and guided presentations.

Expected Results: By the end of the activity, participants will have a deeper knowledge of European policies. They will develop practical skills in negotiation, debate, and teamwork, gaining a better appreciation for the complexities of governance and international cooperation. The experience will also create opportunities for networking and long-term collaboration, fostering connections between individuals. The initiative ultimately aims to inspire greater awareness of the importance of democratic participation and the role of individuals in shaping the future of European societies.

Instructions for Summer School Teachers: Educators play a crucial role in preparing participants for this learning experience by introducing key concepts related to European institutions and by correctly managing and moderating the interactive discussion sessions.

4.2d. Exploring non-governmental support for migrants and refugees

Activity Overview: This initiative provides participants with an opportunity to explore the role of non-governmental organizations in supporting migrant communities, fostering integration, and strengthening cross-cultural relations. Through interactive activities, discussions, and direct engagement with representatives of a migrant support organization, participants gain insight into the challenges faced by displaced populations and the strategies used to assist them. The activity highlights the importance of civil society in responding to migration-related challenges and demonstrates how grassroots initiatives contribute to social cohesion. Beyond acquiring knowledge, participants engage in discussions on policy solutions, integration models, and the role of international cooperation in addressing migration and diaspora-related issues.

Strategies: The activity should be structured around interactive learning and dialogue, ensuring participants actively engage with the subject matter. A guided introduction by involved organization representatives should provide context on the history, mission, and operations of the institutions, explaining how support mechanisms have evolved in response to geopolitical events. An educational quiz encourages participants to familiarise themselves with demographic trends, integration policies, and social challenges faced by migrant communities. It follows a roundtable segment engages participants in brainstorming solutions for improving migrant integration, identifying challenges, and considering the broader implications of diaspora engagement for international relations. The discussion provides a space for exchanging perspectives, fostering critical thinking, and formulating recommendations based on diverse experiences and backgrounds.

Mission and Goals: The activity aims to deepen participants' understanding of migrant support systems, highlighting the role of civil society organizations in assisting displaced populations. It seeks to provide an informed perspective on integration policies and encourage critical discussions on sustainable solutions for social inclusion. By engaging in dialogue with practitioners and peers, participants develop a nuanced understanding of migration's impact on host societies and the opportunities it presents for cultural exchange and economic development. The activity also fosters a sense of global responsibility, inspiring participants to consider the role of cross-border cooperation in addressing migration-related challenges.

Context: This initiative is inspired by the work of non-governmental organizations that provide assistance to migrant communities across Europe. One such example is Ukraiński Dom (Ukrainian House) in Warsaw, a foundation that offers legal support, social assistance, and cultural programming for Ukrainians in Poland. In fact, in addition to direct support, the organization fosters Ukrainian-Polish cooperation through cultural events and networking opportunities, strengthening the diaspora's role in Polish society. By visiting such institutions, participants can gain first-hand exposure to the practical aspects of migrant support and integration efforts, drawing lessons that are applicable to broader migration contexts in other European countries.

Expected Results: By the end of the activity, participants will have gained a comprehensive understanding of non-governmental strategies for supporting migrant integration. The interactive format ensures active engagement, enabling participants to develop critical perspectives on integration models and the role of civic initiatives in shaping inclusive societies. Additionally, the diverse backgrounds of the participants will contribute to a cross-national exchange of ideas, fostering new perspectives on international cooperation and diaspora engagement.

Instructions for Summer School Teachers: Educators play an essential role in preparing participants for this experience by introducing key topics related to migration, diaspora communities, and the role of civil society in social integration as well as in moderating the roundtable session.

4.2e. Football sessions

Activity Overview: Recognising the power of sport as a tool for social cohesion, this initiative offers refugee children and their families access to extracurricular activities, Croatian language education, and football training. A key aspect of the activity is the provision of at least 30 school hours of extracurricular learning, with a focus on school adaptation and Croatian language acquisition, particularly football-specific terminology. Additionally, the initiative removes financial barriers by covering membership fees for local football clubs, providing essential sports equipment, and offering free football training also for adult refugees holding international protection status.

Strategies: The initiative combines education, sports, and community engagement to create a comprehensive approach to integration. Language and education support should be integral to the activity, ensuring that refugee children receive structured assistance in adapting to the Croatian school system. The activity should also allow refugees' children to train under professional supervision while receiving the necessary equipment and support to fully engage in the sport. Beyond the technical aspects of football, the initiative must place strong emphasis on social inclusion, encouraging refugees to build meaningful relationships with their local peers on and off the field.

Mission and goals: At its core, the initiative seeks to facilitate refugee integration into Croatian society through the medium of sport. Football, as a widely accessible and familiar activity, serves as an effective means of fostering a sense of belonging. The initiative aims to provide structured opportunities for refugee children to participate in regular sports activities, helping them develop confidence and a sense of community. By focusing on language learning the initiative strengthens the ability of refugee children to adapt to their new school environment. The ultimate goal is to create an inclusive environment where refugees' families feel welcome and valued, while also reinforcing the role of sports as a unifying force within society.

Context: The initiative is inspired by a formal agreement between The Croatian Football Association (HNS) and the Center for Cultural Dialogue (CCD), supported by UEFA funding and signed by HNS President Marijan Kustić and CCD President Dr. Aziz Hasanović. The program "New Neighbors – Integration through Football" was aimed at reinforcing Croatia's commitment to social cohesion. Football is recognised as a tool for integration, enabling refugees to feel welcomed and included in Croatian society.

Expected results: The initiative aspires to achieve several key outcomes. One of the most immediate goals is to improve Croatian language proficiency equipping them with the necessary skills to succeed in school and communicate effectively with their peers. It also seeks to enhance the social confidence of refugees, allowing them to build friendships and integrate more easily into their new communities. In the long term, the initiative aims to strengthen institutional cooperation between educational, cultural, and sports organizations, ensuring that refugee integration remains a priority across multiple sectors.

Instruction for summer schools' teachers: Teachers play a vital role in ensuring the success of this initiative, particularly in summer schools where refugee children receive additional educational support, making language acquisition more engaging and practical. Teachers should emphasise the value of extracurricular participation, recognising that structured activities outside of the classroom contribute significantly to a child's sense of belonging and confidence. In creating an inclusive classroom environment, educators should foster a supportive atmosphere where refugee students feel motivated to learn, engage, and take part in both academic and sports-related activities.

4.2f. Holistic sports training

Activity overview: This activity focus on developing a comprehensive, holistic sports initiative that goes beyond physical activity to foster integration, emotional well-being, and personal development among refugees. Recognising that sports provide not only physical benefits but also mental, social, and emotional support, the initiative should include diverse activities as swimming, cricket, para taekwondo, and community football that serve as a bridge between refugees and local communities, allowing participants to engage in structured training sessions, weekend recreational events, and competitive sports leagues. At the core of this initiative is the belief that sports have the power to heal, empower, and unite.

Strategies: The holistic nature of the initiative is reflected in its multidimensional approach. Sports should be conceived as a tool for both physical and mental health, offering structured opportunities for movement, discipline, and skill development while simultaneously reducing stress, improving mood, and fostering emotional resilience. Through regular training, participants should develop not only their athletic abilities but also a sense of purpose and motivation that extends beyond the playing field. Psychological well-being is an essential component of the initiative and direct support from professional therapists should be incorporated to help refugees process their experiences and build emotional strength.

Mission and Goals: The initiative's mission is to create an inclusive sports environment that recognises and nurtures the full spectrum of human well-being, physical, emotional, and social, while providing meaningful, opportunities for integration and self-expression by ensuring access to a variety of sports. In the long term, the initiative seeks to strengthen partnerships between refugees and local sports institutions, ensuring that integration is not a temporary intervention but a sustainable process. By engaging with Croatian sports culture, refugee participants gain a deeper connection to their new home, while local communities' benefit from increased diversity and cultural enrichment.

Context: This proposal is inspired by a Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) program that has incorporated sport training with psychological support, cultural exchange, and personal growth, ensuring that participants develop confidence, resilience, and a sense of belonging. Special attention is given to refugees' children with disabilities, who benefit from adapted training through JRS' partnership with the Croatian Para Taekwondo Association (HPTS). This inclusive approach

ensures that all participants, regardless of age or ability, experience the profound physical and psychological benefits of sports.

Expected Results: By integrating physical training with psychological well-being and social inclusion, the activity aims to create a lasting impact in the lives of refugee participants. It is expected to improve overall health, enhance self-confidence, and provide meaningful opportunities for cultural integration. Through continued sports participation, refugees will not only maintain an active lifestyle but also strengthen their social connections, enabling them to form lasting relationships within their new communities.

Instructions for Summer School Teachers: Educators play a crucial role in reinforcing the holistic benefits of sports for refugee children. Teachers should encourage participation in physical activities as a means of both exercise and emotional well-being. Lessons on teamwork, resilience, and the social aspects of sports can be integrated, helping refugee students understand the broader significance of their participation. Teachers should also recognise the psychological benefits of sports, creating an inclusive and welcoming environment, where all children feel encouraged to participate regardless of their athletic ability.

4.2g. Language and cultural exchange programs

Activity Overview: Language and cultural exchange programs held in outdoor settings present valuable opportunities for migrants and refugees to enhance their Italian language skills in a relaxed, informal environment. These programs are typically organised by cultural centers and language schools in parks or communal gardens, promoting a sense of connection with the local environment and community. The use of activities such as outdoor movie screenings, group discussions, and cultural storytelling fosters conversational practice, making language learning engaging and dynamic. By incorporating elements like Italian snacks and drinks, these events create an inclusive and warm atmosphere that blends cultural education with shared experiences, strengthening social bonds.

Strategies: These programs use interactive activities like group discussions, games, and storytelling to encourage language practice and intercultural dialogue. By incorporating recreational elements such as picnics and outdoor movie workshops, participants deepen their understanding of the host culture. Held in public parks, these activities ensure accessibility for people from diverse backgrounds. Volunteers and local organizations play a key role in supporting and guiding participants throughout the process.

Mission and Goals: These programs aim to promote social integration by enhancing language skills and cultural understanding. They empower migrants and refugees, helping them navigate their new environment with confidence. By fostering intercultural relationships and mutual respect, the programs reduce social isolation and encourage personal growth. Ultimately, they support sustainable integration and social cohesion by building language proficiency and fostering positive connections.

Context: Outdoor activities provide an excellent opportunity for migrants in Italy to engage with their new environment, connect with others, and enhance their well-being. Examples include community picnics, such as those held in Rome’s Villa Borghese Park, where migrants can practice Italian in a relaxed setting, share traditional dishes, and enjoy music. These gatherings promote social interaction, cultural exchange, and environmental responsibility. Another example is the “Cinemind” program in Campobasso, which uses cinema to facilitate language learning and integration. It engages participants in film workshops and screenings, enhancing language acquisition while addressing themes like social inclusion and sustainability. These initiatives foster a sense of belonging and cultural understanding, benefiting both migrants and local communities.

Expected Results: Outdoor language and cultural exchange programs offer numerous benefits, including the enhancement of communication skills through real-life practice and the increment of cultural awareness by exposing migrants and refugees to Italian customs and traditions, promoting mutual respect and understanding. Moreover, the interaction with locals and other newcomers builds friendships and fosters a sense of belonging, straightening social connections. In this context, the relaxed outdoor settings are expected to help in reducing stress and fostering a positive learning environment that can increase both emotional and physical well-being.

Instruction for summer schools’ teachers: Teachers should encourage active participation in language practice and cultural exchanges, fostering open discussions and group activities. It’s important to create a safe, inclusive environment where students feel comfortable expressing themselves. Teachers should guide students in engaging with locals and fellow migrants through activities like food sharing, music, and environmental initiatives. By maintaining a relaxed atmosphere, teachers can help students build confidence in their language skills and form meaningful connections.

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4.2h. Maintenance of outdoor spaces in community settings

Activity Overview: This initiative focuses on fostering community spirit and social responsibility by engaging volunteers in the maintenance and improvement of outdoor spaces at senior homes, animal shelters, and similar institutions. These spaces serve as vital environments for relaxation, recreation, and well-being, yet they are often underfunded and require additional care. Through hands-on participation, volunteers help enhance these areas by cleaning, gardening, planting flowers, and restoring outdoor features. By creating pleasant, safe, and well-maintained environments, the initiative benefits both the residents and the volunteers, strengthening connections within the community.

Strategies: The activity is designed to be both structured and flexible, allowing participants to contribute effectively while adapting to the specific needs of the location. Volunteers should be divided into teams; each assigned a particular task. Collaboration with the host organization ensures that priorities are identified in advance, making the work efficient and impactful. Local authorities, businesses, or environmental organizations may be involved to provide additional

materials, expertise, or financial support. Volunteers should receive clear instructions and safety guidelines to minimise risks, and where possible, short workshops or presentations on sustainable landscaping. These educational elements ensure that participants gain valuable knowledge that can be applied to future environmental or community initiatives.

Mission and Goals: The mission of this initiative is to create welcoming and sustainable outdoor environments that enhance the well-being of residents, visitors, and animals while fostering a culture of community care and environmental responsibility. The main idea is to promote social inclusion while engaging individuals in hands-on activities that demonstrate the positive impact of green spaces on mental and physical health, inspire volunteerism, and strengthen relationships between organizations and the broader community.

Context: The initiative stems from the importance of outdoor spaces at senior homes, animal shelters, and other community facilities as therapeutic and recreational areas but are frequently underfunded or overlooked. Proper maintenance of these areas can greatly enhance the quality of life for those who use them, offering safe and welcoming environments for relaxation, exercise, and socialization. However, due to resource limitations, these institutions often struggle to keep their outdoor spaces well-maintained. Volunteer efforts may provide a crucial solution to this challenge, while also fostering a culture of care and collaboration.

Expected Results: The initiative will lead to the revitalization of outdoor spaces, creating more inviting and functional environments for residents, visitors, and animals. Improved gardens, clean surroundings, and restored outdoor structures will enhance both the aesthetic and practical value of these areas. Participants will gain hands-on experience in teamwork, environmental care, and landscaping, while also developing a deeper appreciation for the impact of community service and strengthen community.

Instructions for Summer School Teachers: Educators play an essential role in reinforcing the values of environmental care and community engagement among participants. Teachers should encourage discussions on the importance of green spaces and how they contribute to well-being, biodiversity, and sustainability. Practical lessons should contribute at creating an inclusive and motivating learning environment where students recognise their ability to make a tangible difference in their community.

4.2i. Outdoor game about the European Union

Activity Overview: This outdoor game is a dynamic, team-based activity designed to engage participants in learning about European integration through exploration and problem-solving. Teams receive a map and materials, including a notebook, pen, instructions, and hints, to navigate key locations where hidden boxes contain EU-related information and challenges. Each box covers topics such as EU law, history, institutions, and geography, with tasks designed to test knowledge and teamwork. Points are awarded for correct answers, and the team that finds all boxes and scores the highest within the time limit wins small prizes. In Warsaw, the Europa

Experience Centre can enhance the learning experience by offering interactive exhibits on EU institutions, decision-making processes, and European policies.

Strategies: The game incorporates interactive tasks that challenge participants to apply their knowledge of European integration in a fun and engaging way. Tasks may include identifying key aspects of EU law (naming major legal sources and principles), testing EU geography (listing non-EU countries or members of the European Economic Area), and exploring EU history (recognising politicians known as the “founding fathers” of European integration). By solving these challenges, participants develop problem-solving skills, teamwork, and critical thinking while deepening their understanding of the European Union in an interactive and enjoyable setting.

Mission and goals: The aim of the outdoor game is to engage summer school students into a teambuilding assignment connected with interactive acquisition of knowledge about the European Union. The goal of the outdoor game is to foster team building, enhance knowledge of the European Union, and facilitate an interactive learning experience. It also aims to develop soft skills such as problem-solving, collaboration, and creativity, offering a dynamic and enjoyable way for participants to learn about European integration.

Context: The outdoor game is a group activity designed for diverse settings, including educational institutions and community spaces with historical or academic significance. One notable example is the University of Warsaw’s historic main campus, home to faculties such as History, Law, Political Science, Geography, and Regional Studies. This setting offers an enriching environment where participants can actively engage with EU-related content while exploring the campus. The flexible nature of the game allows it to be adapted to various locations, making it a versatile and educational experience.

Expected results: The activities described above will build participants’ knowledge about the European Union (and about the University of Warsaw) and at the same time strengthen their soft skills: problem solving, teamwork, creativity, acting under the pressure of time. The outdoor game will enhance participants’ knowledge of the European Union while simultaneously strengthening their soft skills, such as teamwork, creativity, and time management. It will also foster a deeper connection to the surrounding environment and the educational context, promoting a more engaging learning experience.

Instruction for summer schools’ teachers: Teachers should facilitate a supportive and engaging environment where participants can collaborate and apply their problem-solving skills. Encourage teamwork, provide guidance as needed, and ensure that all students are actively involved in the activity. Teachers should also highlight the importance of time management and creativity during the game while ensuring that the learning objectives about the EU are met through the tasks.

4.2j. Sports and fitness groups session

Activity Overview: Outdoor fitness programs in Italy, including activities like yoga, tai chi, aerobics, and various group workouts, are held in public parks, offering an inclusive environment that encourages participation from both locals and migrants, including refugees. These programs not only promote physical health and well-being but also serve as a platform for cross-cultural exchange, providing a space where newcomers and locals can connect, share experiences, and build community. By engaging in these fitness activities, participants can explore Italian fitness traditions, relieve stress, and improve mental and physical health. The programs foster cultural integration in a supportive, accessible setting, helping to bridge social divides while encouraging a healthy lifestyle for all.

Strategies: The programs are designed to accommodate diverse fitness levels, from beginner to advanced, with instructors who offer guidance on techniques and safety. It is essential for instructors to be trained in multicultural and multilingual engagement to ensure inclusivity. These classes can also integrate cultural elements such as local fitness traditions and wellness practices, promoting a positive relationship with nature. Additionally, outdoor events or workshops focusing on mindfulness and mental health can enhance well-being. Social gatherings and group challenges can be incorporated to strengthen community bonds, encouraging cross-cultural connections and a sense of belonging.

Mission and Goals: The primary goal is to promote physical activity, health, and well-being, particularly among migrants and refugees, by providing accessible and inclusive fitness options. These programs aim to reduce social isolation, facilitate community integration, and foster cross-cultural understanding. By encouraging regular participation, the programs aim to enhance participants' mental and emotional resilience, support their physical health, and help them build a sense of empowerment and community integration.

Context: Outdoor activities provide migrants in Italy with opportunities to connect with their new environment, improve well-being, and build social ties. Programs like “Sport for All” offer free fitness classes in parks across cities like Rome, Milan, and Turin, targeting marginalised groups, including migrants and refugees. These activities promote physical health, social integration, and a sense of belonging. Volunteers help bridge cultural gaps and enhance integration. Additionally, the “Beach Junior Summer Camp” combines language instruction with physical activities, fostering cultural immersion and social connections. These initiatives make fitness accessible and support both physical and social integration for migrants.

Expected Results: By participating in outdoor fitness classes, migrants and refugees will experience improved physical health, enhance social connections, and increase cultural understanding. These initiatives reduce stress, promote integration, and foster mutual respect. The programs create opportunities for cross-cultural dialogue and provide a platform for social cohesion, helping to create stronger, more inclusive communities. Moreover, these activities cultivate a culture of health and wellness, empowering individuals to contribute to their well-being and the broader community.

Instruction for summer schools' teachers: Teachers should be aware of the multicultural and multilingual dynamics within the outdoor fitness classes. It is important to ensure that activities are inclusive, accessible, and respectful of the diverse backgrounds of participants. Teachers should encourage cross-cultural interactions, foster a positive and supportive environment, and ensure that participants understand the benefits of integrating physical activity with cultural engagement. In addition, teachers should incorporate cultural elements and local customs into the activities to help participants connect more deeply with the host culture.

4.2k. Walk book about Europe and European integration

Activity Overview: This activity involves creating a “walk book”, a guided tour of locations that highlight European culture, science, and a country’s path to European integration. Local students will select significant sites, such as historical landmarks, government institutions, and cultural spaces, and provide brief descriptions. The walk book will help foreign participants explore these places, offering insight into European connections. To encourage interaction, the students who develop the guide will also lead the tour, fostering engagement and cross-cultural exchange. In Warsaw, the Europa Experience Centre can complement this activity by providing an interactive space to learn more about European institutions and integration.

Strategies: The walk book may include significant landmarks such as government buildings, historical sites, and cultural institutions that highlight European heritage and integration. Key locations could feature the Presidential Palace, tied to major political events shaping Europe, sites related to Frederic Chopin, reflecting European cultural influence, and EU institutions like Frontex. In Warsaw, the walk can incorporate a visit to the Europa Experience Centre, offering an interactive exploration of European institutions and policies.

Mission and Goals: The primary goal of this activity is to promote integration and active participation among summer school participants. By engaging in a collaborative, hands-on experience, local and international students work together to shape the activity, fostering cross-cultural dialogue and teamwork. Through exploring European history, culture, and institutions in an interactive way, participants gain a deeper understanding of Europe’s shared heritage while developing critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills. This approach not only strengthens connections between participants but also encourages a sense of ownership and engagement in the learning process.

Context: The walk book can be applied in various countries, with local students curating the route based on their own perspectives of European integration and cultural significance. An example from Warsaw includes a walk through Śródmieście, where key historical sites are connected to Poland's path to the EU. Specifically, the Europa Experience Centre in Warsaw serves as a valuable stop to connect the theoretical knowledge of EU integration with practical, real-world examples.

Expected results: The walk book activity is designed to actively engage participants, offering them an opportunity to deepen their understanding of the European aspects of Polish history,

culture, and politics. Through this experience, participants will not only expand their knowledge but also foster stronger social connections, promoting better integration and a greater appreciation of diverse backgrounds. This collaborative approach will enhance participants' understanding of both the host country's European dimension and each other's cultural perspectives, creating a more inclusive and interactive learning environment.

Instructions for summer schools' teachers: Teachers should encourage active involvement from both local and foreign participants in designing the walk book. Facilitate discussions to help students select relevant locations, provide guidance on the historical and cultural context of each site, and ensure students are prepared to act as effective guides. The teachers should also emphasise the importance of collaboration and foster an atmosphere of curiosity and respect throughout the activity.

4.2I. Walking tours and city explorations

Activity Overview: Walking tours in historic Italian cities like Rome, Florence, and Naples offer migrants and refugees the chance to explore Italy's rich cultural heritage. These tours focus on landmarks such as ancient ruins and Renaissance art, providing an immersive understanding of the country's history and traditions. Multilingual guides ensure accessibility, and smaller town and UNESCO site tours offer a glimpse into Italy's countryside and cultural diversity. These tours help newcomers connect with Italy's urban landscapes and cultural identity.

Strategies: Walking tours can include multilingual guides to bridge language gaps and enrich participants' understanding of the sites. Interactive activities such as Italian cooking lessons or art classes can be incorporated to deepen participants' connection to local traditions. Themes focused on Roman history, Renaissance art, or local folklore make the tours engaging, and residents could participate as guides to enhance cultural exchange. Migrants and refugees can also take on future roles as guides, gaining professional and personal development opportunities. These activities aim to promote integration, mutual understanding, and intercultural dialogue.

Mission and Goals: The goal of walking tours is to facilitate cultural integration by introducing migrants and refugees to Italy's historical landmarks, fostering shared experiences and interactions with locals. These tours help participants build language skills, enhance cultural awareness, and reduce stress by exploring the local environment. By encouraging local involvement, the program works to combat stereotypes and create a sense of community. The initiative contributes to migrants' integration, empowerment, and understanding of Italy's cultural heritage.

Context: Outdoor activities offer valuable opportunities for migrants in Italy to connect with their new environment, meet people, and improve their well-being. Walking tours are a great example, providing a chance to explore Italy's rich cultural and historical landmarks while fostering social integration. Initiatives like "Migrantour" and "Hidden Italy" offer guided tours that highlight the cultural diversity and history of various Italian cities. These programs, often led by migrants themselves, encourage intercultural exchange, reduce stereotypes, and help

migrants build connections with local communities, promoting both personal growth and social cohesion.

Expected Results: Walking tours offer migrants and refugees a unique opportunity to connect with their new surroundings in Italy, deepening their cultural understanding and facilitating integration into local communities. Through these tours, participants not only learn about Italy's rich history and traditions but also develop valuable language and professional skills. As they engage with locals and fellow migrants, they expand their social networks, fostering a sense of belonging and community. Additionally, the tours promote both physical and mental well-being by encouraging outdoor activity and exploration, which helps migrants adapt to their new environment. By participating in these tours, individuals are empowered to contribute to cultural exchange, building stronger, more inclusive communities and enhancing their integration process.

Instruction for summer schools' teachers: Teachers should encourage active participation in walking tours, emphasising the importance of engaging with the local culture and history. Ensure that all participants are provided with multilingual support to maximise comprehension. Foster an open environment for sharing personal experiences, both with locals and among participants. Teachers should promote teamwork during interactive activities like cooking lessons or art classes and encourage reflection on the cultural significance of the tour. Additionally, remind participants that these tours are not only an educational experience but also an opportunity to form meaningful social connections with their peers and the local community.

4.2m. Winter sports and activities

Activity Overview: The proposed winter sports and activities initiative aims to foster social integration and cultural exchange between refugees and local Bulgarians through a series of outdoor winter activities. The program will run for four days in the scenic Rhodope Mountains and will involve ten participants. Activities such as snowshoeing, sledding, skiing, and ice skating have been specifically chosen to accommodate varying fitness levels and ages, ensuring that all participants, regardless of their physical ability, can fully engage in the experience. The initiative will create a shared, immersive winter environment where refugees and locals can connect, develop lasting relationships, and build a deeper sense of community.

Strategies: The initiative focuses on key strategies to ensure success. Activities will be accessible to individuals of all physical abilities, with translation services provided to bridge language barriers. Safety is a priority, with experienced instructors offering guidance on equipment, winter survival, and hazard management. Small, diverse groups of refugees and Bulgarians will promote social interaction and cultural exchange. Environmental education will be integrated, fostering awareness of local ecosystems and conservation. Additionally, transportation will be arranged to ensure easy access to outdoor locations for all participants.

Mission and goals: Mission of this initiative is to foster social integration and cultural exchange between refugees and the local community through engaging outdoor winter activities. It can

and must be achieved by creating opportunities for refugees to connect with Bulgarians and build lasting relationships by involving them in typical winter activities. This will ensure a high level of social integration. Through cultural exchange will promote mutual understanding and appreciation of different cultures through shared outdoor experiences. Strengthening the sense of community among refugees and fostering a supportive environment is also one of the main goals.

Context: Outdoor activities are essential for refugee integration, providing opportunities for social interaction and cultural exchange. In Bulgaria, winter activities like skiing, sledding, and ice-skating offer refugees a chance to connect with locals, learn about traditions, and explore the country's natural beauty. These activities help reduce social isolation, allowing refugees to build networks, feel more involved in their communities, and overcome cultural barriers in a relaxed setting.

Expected Results: Increased social interaction and friendships between refugees and Bulgarians; Enhanced understanding and appreciation of different cultures and traditions through outdoor activities; Improved sense of belonging and community among refugees; Increased preparedness for winter conditions and access to resources; Positive media coverage and public awareness of refugee integration efforts. By implementing these strategies and activities, we can create a meaningful and impactful experience for refugees and Bulgarians alike, fostering integration, understanding, and community through shared outdoor experiences in the Bulgarian winter.

Instruction for summer schools' teachers: Summer school teachers should foster an environment that encourages social interaction between refugees and locals. Teachers should facilitate communication, allowing participants to share their cultural traditions and stories. Safety must be prioritised, with clear instructions provided on equipment use and winter preparedness. Activities should be adapted to suit the varying physical abilities of participants. Teachers should also lead discussions on environmental awareness, highlighting the local ecosystem and conservation. Daily reflective sessions will allow participants to share experiences, discuss challenges, and strengthen connections. By following these guidelines, teachers will ensure the program promotes integration, understanding, and community building.

4.3 Activities for environment and integration

4.3a. Community gardening and urban farming

Activity Overview: This initiative promotes sustainable urban agriculture by transforming underutilised spaces into productive gardens and farms. Community gardening brings people together to cultivate vegetables, herbs, and flowers in shared spaces, fostering collaboration and a deeper connection to nature. Urban farming extends this concept to larger-scale food production, integrating innovative techniques such as hydroponics and vertical farming. By encouraging local food production and sustainable agricultural methods, the activity supports biodiversity, strengthens community ties, and enhances environmental awareness. Beyond food cultivation, it provides an opportunity for social interaction and skills development, particularly

for migrants and refugees who can reconnect with farming traditions while integrating into their new surroundings.

Strategies: Participants should engage in various aspects of garden or farm management, from soil preparation and planting to regular maintenance and harvesting. Sustainable practices such as composting, natural pest control, and rainwater collection should be used to enhance productivity while minimising environmental impact. In community gardens, responsibilities should be shared, creating a sense of collective ownership and cooperation. Workshops and hands-on training sessions should introduce participants to organic gardening techniques and to ecological role of urban greenery. Partnerships with environmental organizations, municipalities, and research institutions can provide expertise and resources to ensure the long-term sustainability of these projects.

Mission and Goals: The initiative aims to create green spaces that contribute to urban sustainability, improve food security, and enhance the quality of life for participants. It seeks to encourage environmentally responsible farming methods while promoting healthier diets and a stronger sense of community. Engaging in agriculture within city environments not only helps mitigate the effects of urbanization but also offers an opportunity for social inclusion and cultural exchange. Migrants and refugees, in particular, benefit from practical learning experiences that can help them develop new skills, adapt to their surroundings, and share agricultural knowledge from their home countries.

Context: This initiative is inspired by existing urban agricultural projects that have successfully combined food production with social inclusion and environmental sustainability. Projects such as the UPA-Rome initiative and the Communal Garden Niguarda in Milan have provided spaces where migrants and refugees, local residents, and disadvantaged groups can engage in sustainable farming while strengthening social connections. These gardens function as educational hubs, offering workshops on organic agriculture and ecological awareness. Similarly, rooftop farming projects in Milan illustrate how commercial buildings can be transformed into productive urban farms, supplying fresh produce to local businesses while promoting environmentally friendly food systems.

Expected Results: The initiative will lead to the creation of self-sustaining gardens and farms that enhance biodiversity, improve urban air quality, and provide fresh, locally grown food. Participants will develop practical knowledge of sustainable agriculture and gain experience in managing food production within an urban context. For migrants and refugees, the activity fosters integration by creating opportunities for skill development, social interaction, and cultural exchange. Community gardening strengthens social bonds, offering a shared space where individuals can contribute to a common goal.

Instructions for Summer School Teachers: Educators play an essential role in reinforcing the environmental, social, and practical benefits of urban agriculture. By encouraging discussions on sustainability, food security, and the role of green spaces in urban environments they help participants understand the broader impact of their participation and create an inclusive environment where students feel motivated to contribute.

4.3b. Food and experience factory

Activity overview: The “Food and Experience Factory” is a four-day initiative for ten participants, designed to integrate refugees into Bulgarian society through outdoor and cultural experiences. The program blends tradition, skill development, and recreation, offering stays in guesthouses for direct interaction with locals, culinary workshops featuring traditional Bulgarian cuisine, participation in musical and dance activities, and engagement in local festivals. Outdoor experiences include horseback riding and farm visits, allowing participants to learn about agriculture, take part in food tastings, and, where possible, assist in farming tasks. These activities foster a connection with nature, encourage social interaction, and facilitate the development of practical skills within a supportive community.

Strategies: A structured approach ensures the program’s effectiveness. Identifying participants’ needs allows for tailored activities, while partnerships with local organizations and community groups secure resources and sustainability. Activities such as cooking workshops and farm visits provide informal but structured settings for socialization and cultural exchange. Regular evaluation allows for necessary adjustments to improve impact. Through active engagement in daily community life, the program fosters a sense of belonging, promoting long-term integration and mutual understanding between refugees and residents.

Mission and goals: The initiative seeks to foster integration by creating spaces for cultural exchange and personal growth. Through active participation in local traditions, refugees develop meaningful relationships, acquire transferable skills, and gain confidence in their new environment. The program not only eases their transition but also enriches host communities, promoting diversity and social cohesion. By encouraging mutual learning, it strengthens the foundation for an inclusive and tolerant society.

Context: Outdoor activities provide a natural and engaging platform for integration. By participating in cooking, farming, and traditional festivals, refugees gain first-hand experience of Bulgarian cultural heritage while sharing their own backgrounds. This process breaks down social barriers and fosters connections, helping refugees feel welcome in their new environment. Additionally, engagement with nature promotes well-being, reduces stress, and enhances overall mental and physical health.

Expected results: The program enhances social integration by fostering relationships and informal language acquisition. It deepens cultural understanding by exposing refugees to local traditions and norms while promoting intercultural communication. On a personal level, participants acquire skills in cooking, farming, and teamwork, increasing their self-confidence and employment potential. Physical activities contribute to well-being, while community development is strengthened through cultural exchange. Long-term benefits include increased self-reliance, continued engagement with local communities, and improved job prospects.

Instructions for summer schools’ teachers: Teachers play a critical role in guiding integration. They should facilitate discussions on cultural similarities and differences, encourage teamwork

through collaborative activities, and promote language learning in informal settings. Creating a supportive environment ensures that participants feel valued and engaged. Monitoring progress through regular reflection helps adapt the program to evolving needs, maximising its impact on both refugees and local communities. The “Food and Experience Factory” demonstrates how cultural immersion and outdoor engagement foster refugee integration, strengthening relationships and building inclusive societies.

4.3c. Sustainable development advocacy in coastal regions

Activity Overview: This initiative introduces participants to the role of environmental activism and sustainable development efforts in coastal areas, exploring the work of civil society organizations dedicated to nature conservation and ecological awareness. By examining and discussing real-world examples of environmental activism, participants will understand the challenges and opportunities that arise when balancing industrial development, tourism, and nature conservation. The activity fosters critical thinking about environmental sustainability and encourages discussion on the role of local communities in protecting natural resources.

Strategies: The initiative should be structured to provide an in-depth exploration of environmental advocacy efforts through a combination of research, discussion, and interactive learning. Participants should begin by analysing case studies of environmental organizations that have successfully mobilised communities to promote ecological conservation. Group discussions should focus on assess key challenges in sustainable development, particularly in coastal and island communities where environmental concerns intersect with economic pressures. A role-playing simulation will allow participants to take on the perspectives of different stakeholders to explore the complexities of environmental conflicts and the negotiation processes involved in sustainable development. Collaborations with environmental experts, policymakers, or NGO representatives can enhance participants' understanding of how advocacy efforts contribute to environmental protection.

Mission and Goals: The initiative aims to deepen participants' understanding of environmental activism and its role in sustainable development, highlighting the importance of citizen engagement in ecological conservation. It seeks to equip participants with the skills to critically evaluate environmental policies, recognize the role of civil society in shaping public discourse, and explore methods for community-driven environmental advocacy.

Context: This initiative draws inspiration from environmental organizations dedicated to protecting natural landscapes and promoting sustainable development such as Eko Kvarner, a Croatian non-governmental organization founded in response to industrial projects threatening the Adriatic ecosystem. The organization has played a significant role in advocating for environmental transparency, raising awareness about the ecological risks of oil transportation, and mobilising public support against the construction of an LNG terminal on the island of Krk. The organization's efforts demonstrate how civic movements contribute to environmental

governance by fostering democratic participation and challenging unsustainable development initiatives.

Expected Results: Participants will gain a comprehensive understanding of environmental advocacy strategies and the role of civic engagement in shaping sustainability policies. The activity will enhance their ability to analyse environmental challenges, develop critical perspectives on policy debates, and engage in constructive dialogue about ecological conservation. By exploring real-world examples of activism, participants will acquire practical insights into how grassroots movements influence decision-making and promote accountability in environmental governance. The activity also fosters collaboration and exchange of ideas, encouraging participants to consider how similar advocacy strategies can be applied to environmental challenges in their own communities.

Instructions for Summer School Teachers: Educators play a crucial role in guiding participants through discussions and helping to connect theoretical concepts with practical applications. Field visits to local conservation projects, guest lectures from environmental experts, or engagement with policy debates on sustainability can further enhance students' understanding of ecological challenges. Educators should also encourage critical reflections helping students recognise the multifaceted nature of sustainability, advocating for environmental responsibility in their own communities.

4.3d. Volunteering in Nature Reserves

Activity Overview: Volunteering in Nature Reserves provides an opportunity for migrants to contribute to the preservation of natural environments and biodiversity in protected areas like national parks and wildlife reserves. This activity involves working alongside conservationists and park rangers to maintain, restore, and protect ecosystems. Migrants in Italy can benefit from this volunteer work by connecting with local communities, gaining environmental knowledge, and fostering a sense of belonging through active participation in conservation efforts.

Strategies: Volunteers can engage in various tasks, such as restoring habitats, removing invasive species, monitoring wildlife populations, and conducting biodiversity research. Tasks also include maintaining trails, educating visitors, and promoting responsible tourism practices. Volunteers may assist in conservation efforts, including replanting native species, supporting soil and water management, and conducting educational programs. The strategy is to ensure active participation, build cross-cultural understanding, and provide migrants with both practical skills and a sense of contribution to Italy's natural heritage.

Mission and goals: The mission of this initiative is to integrate migrants into Italian society by providing them with opportunities to volunteer in nature reserves. This experience allows migrants to connect with local communities, learn new skills in conservation, and build relationships with locals. Volunteering in nature reserves also offers migrants a platform for cultural exchange, where they can share their knowledge of environmental practices from their home countries while gaining valuable insights into local conservation efforts. The goals are to

foster a deeper understanding of Italy's natural ecosystems, encourage personal growth, and facilitate integration into Italian society.

Context: Outdoor activities offer migrants in Italy an opportunity to connect with their environment and local communities. Volunteering in nature reserves is especially beneficial, as it allows migrants to contribute to conservation while learning about local ecosystems. Programs like “Volunteers for Nature” and “LIFE ESC360” engage migrants in species monitoring, habitat restoration, and environmental education. These initiatives help migrants develop new skills, build connections with locals, and strengthen their bond with Italy’s natural heritage. Volunteering fosters integration breaks down language barriers and contributes to Italy’s sustainability efforts.

Expected results: Volunteering in nature reserves helps migrants integrate into their communities, develop skills in conservation and environmental management, and contribute to Italy’s environmental preservation. This activity promotes personal growth, improves social cohesion, and provides a sense of fulfilment. Through active participation, migrants can deepen their connection to their new environment, build relationships, and gain valuable work experience, all while supporting Italy's conservation efforts.

Instruction for summer schools’ teachers: Teachers should encourage migrants to participate actively in volunteering activities, providing guidance and support as they learn about environmental conservation. It is essential to promote interaction between migrants and local volunteers, helping them build connections and practice language skills in a practical setting. Teachers should facilitate learning by explaining conservation concepts, assisting with tasks, and ensuring safety protocols are followed. Additionally, teachers can guide reflection sessions, where volunteers can share their experiences and learnings, fostering a sense of community and reinforcing the integration process.

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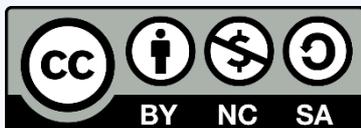
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Co-funded by
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Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them



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