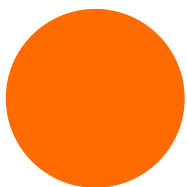




Games and activities for children

-a best practices guidebook-

by
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This guidebook is a part of the Școala Abilităților de Viață project which took place in Bucharest between May and August of 2023. The primary goal of the project was to provide Ukrainian children and youth with the opportunity to participate in a variety of non-formal educational activities at the Scout Edu Hub. These activities were designed to foster personal growth, promote social connections, and build resilience among the participants. Additionally, parents of the children and youth were encouraged to participate in the activities, which provided them with an opportunity to engage with other parents and build their own social connections. The project was aimed at creating a positive and supportive learning environment for all participants.

Main partner of the project: United Way Romania.



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About the Center

Scout Edu Hub, an initiative of the National Organization "Cercetașii României", the oldest non-governmental youth movement in Romania, with more than 7000 members in 79 local centers and scout groups all over the country, has supported the local Ukrainian refugee community since October 2022 by providing a safe space for parents and minors, as well as extra-curricular activities and non-formal education. The mission of Scout Edu Hub is to provide a safe space for the Ukrainian refugee community, as well as to facilitate children, teenagers, and young people in the framework for developing life skills through non-formal education. The initiative also supports the social inclusion component through mixed activities involving groups of Romanian children and young scouts.

From 13 October 2022 till 31 August 2023, the center has registered 2291 visits in part from underage beneficiaries and 1819 visits from adults, with recurrent participation in extracurricular activities and a desire for long-term involvement from both minors as well as the adult community. Scout Edu Hub regularly offers access to workshops, integration-based activities, and space for recreation, and leisure activities for minors and caregivers who wish to participate.

In addition, as part of the cross-sectoral approach that our organization has adopted to respond to multiple needs in this time of crisis, from the very beginning we took as part of our responsibility to support the refugee community by hiring staff among people from Ukraine.

On June 1, 2023, the President of Romania conferred, on the occasion of International Children's Day, the Order "Merit for the Promotion of Human Rights and Social Commitment" in the rank of Commander to the National Organization of Romanian Scouts, as a sign of high appreciation and gratitude for professionalism, dedication and selflessness in promoting and defending children's rights, contributing to their healthy and harmonious development. These initiatives also include support at the national level for the refugee community from Ukraine, as well as local initiatives through the Scout Edu Hub.



About Youth Workers

Yelizaveta Honcharenko

My experience of working with kids was challenging for me because I had never done it before. However, during that time, I felt like we were one big family. Each child was different, with their own unique character, ideas, and behavior. When I saw that my knowledge had helped them to grow and learn something new, I felt extremely grateful. I did my best to become someone they could trust. The hardest part was saying goodbye to my little friends, but I am very proud of how our center helped them to grow, and I know they will become brilliant people.

Kristina Zholobchuk

My experience at Scout Edu Hub, working with children who arrived from Ukraine due to the conflict, has been truly enlightening. It has taught me a lot, particularly about the significance of education and community. Being with these children, and engaging them in various activities at our hub, has demonstrated the importance of assisting them not only in their school studies but also in feeling emotionally well and developing life skills that will be useful within a community. Observing these children participate in team games, creative workshops, and special sessions has reminded me of the role of education in young people's lives and how it can make a significant difference. This method of learning, where children acquire life skills alongside general subjects, has made me realize that we need to create more spaces where children can learn not only facts but also how to grow as individuals, be included, and cultivate skills that will benefit them throughout their lives. Overall, this experience has enhanced my teaching approach and encouraged me to aspire to create more spaces where children can develop life skills, be included, and learn how to grow as individuals.

Myroslava Gaiova

Working with children can be a challenge, but it is also incredibly rewarding. They have a way of surprising you even when you think you've seen it all. Specifically, I am grateful for my work at Scout Edu Hub, where I have been able to provide socialization, education, and care to refugee children who are in great need of these things.

Arts and Crafts

Making beaded accessories



Age category

7 and above

No. of participants

10

Degree of difficulty

depends on the chosen type of bracelet making technique; medium

Duration

60-90 minutes

Location

outside in the garden or in the room

Materials needed

colored beads, thread for bracelets, clasps, charms, plates

Objectives of the activity

Develop autonomy, develop motor skills, develop taste aesthetics, develop self-esteem.

Activity description

Before the activity, the youth workers demonstrate how to make bracelets, rings, and necklaces, allowing kids to select their preferred colors and styles to create their own pieces.

Recommendations/How to get more from this activity

Parents can participate in the activity with their kids, creating a safe and comfortable environment. Afterwards, the accessories can be used for a garage sale or for kids to exchange.



Arts and Crafts

Creating “motanka” dolls



Age category

10-14 years

No. of participants

5 to 15

Degree of difficulty

medium

Duration

60-90 minutes

Location

a spacious room or outside

Materials needed

colored threads, scissors

Objectives of the activity

Develop motor skills, learn the history of the homeland.

Activity description

Prior to the workshop, youth workers plan and prepare the steps for creating a doll. During the session, they distribute the necessary materials to each participant and provide step-by-step guidance as each participant creates their own doll.

Recommendations/How to get more from this activity

Before the activity you can prepare a presentation about the history of this type of doll, to better motivate the group.



Arts and Crafts

Making windmills with flower fields



Age category

7-14 years

No. of participants

5 to 15

Degree of difficulty

easy

Duration

60-90 minutes

Location

a spacious room or outside

Materials needed

carton glasses, scissors, colored paper, white paper, glue, dried flowers, paint, brushes, napkins, wood sticks, silicone glue

Objectives of the activity

Develop creativity, and motor skills, create a pleasant atmosphere, develop imagination.

Activity description

First, the youth workers prepare the cardboard cups by cutting them in half. Then, they provide the necessary materials to the group and guide them through the process of using silicon glue to attach a half of the carton cup and wood sticks to imitate a windmill. Next, the children use paint to draw lavender fields and decorate their art with real dried flowers.

Recommendations/How to get more from this activity

You can play some French music to create an atmosphere similar to that of real flower fields in the south of France.



Arts and Crafts

Creating flower crowns from craft paper



Age category

7-14 years

No. of participants

5 to 15

Degree of difficulty

easy

Duration

60-90 minutes

Location

a spacious room or outside

Materials needed

scissors, colored paper, white paper, glue, carton plates

Objectives of the activity

Develop motor skills, develop creativity, to create a pleasant atmosphere.

Activity description

Prior to the activity, the youth workers remove the middle circle from the cardboard plates. Once ready, they distribute the necessary materials among the group and demonstrate how to create various types of paper flowers. The group then follows along with the process.

Recommendations/How to get more from this activity

You can prepare this kind of activity for the national holiday "Ivana Kypala", and create a small presentation about this holiday to explain the reason for making flower crowns.



Arts and Crafts

Creating “vareniki” model with Petrikiv hand painting



Age category

7-14 years

No. of participants

8 to 15

Degree of difficulty

easy

Duration

60-90 minutes

Location

a spacious room or outside

Materials needed

clay, paint, brushes, glasses with water, napkins, kneads

Objectives of the activity

Develop motor skills, develop creativity, to learn the meaning of traditional food.

Activity description

Youth workers distribute clay to a group of children. The children then use their hands and/or a rolling pin to flatten the clay into a circular shape. They place a small amount of clay in the center of the circle, fold it in half, and press the sides together to create a vareniki model. Finally, the children decorate the vareniki with paint.

Recommendations/How to get more from this activity

It is best to organize such events on the national holidays, so kids can learn more about their culture.



Arts and Crafts

Personified animals



Age category

7-14 years

No. of participants

8 to 15

Degree of difficulty

easy

Duration

60-90 minutes

Location

a spacious room or outside

Materials needed

carton, scissors, colored paper, details from egg box, paint, brushes, silicon clay

Objectives of the activity

Develop creativity, develop imagination, develop acting skills.

Activity description

Youth workers prepare the materials and demonstrate how to use silicone clay to attach details from egg boxes onto paper cartons. The main objective of the group is to utilize paint and paper to create an animal, bringing the materials to life. Afterwards, the group is prompted to create a story about their creation, including details such as where it lives, its name, and what it enjoys doing.

Recommendations/How to get more from this activity

After making the animal models, you can use them to create a miniature puppet theater with the help of children's crafts.



Arts and Crafts

Making carpets



Age category

10-14 years

No. of participants

8 to 15

Degree of difficulty

medium

Duration

90-120 minutes

Location

a spacious room or outside

Materials needed

wooden boards for making carpets, scissors, threads, scotch

Objectives of the activity

Develop self control, develop motor skills.

Activity description

Kids choose the color of their future carpets. After watching a master class by youth workers, the group begins making a carpet by sticking pieces of thread onto a wooden board.

Recommendations/How to get more from this activity

This master class may take some time, so we recommend playing a game of questions with friends or a "spy-eye" game.



Arts and Crafts

Making an aquarium



Age category

7-14 years

No. of participants

8 to 15

Degree of difficulty

easy

Duration

60-90 minutes

Location

a spacious room or outside

Materials needed

carton plates, scissors, glue, wooden sticks, foam plastics balls, fluffy balls, glitter paper, stickers, silicon glue, paint, brush

Objectives of the activity

Develop motor skills, develop creativity, and create a pleasant atmosphere .

Activity description

Youth workers assist in attaching half of a foam plastic ball to a paper plate. Then, the group starts decorating it by first painting the plate in blue. After that, they put a wooden stick in the ball so kids can attach a paper-made fish or octopus. Then the decoration can begin.

Recommendations/How to get more from this activity

Turn on sounds of water during the master class to create a pleasant atmosphere.



Arts and Crafts

Making summer cards



Age category

7-14 years

No. of participants

8 to 15

Degree of difficulty

easy

Duration

30-60 minutes

Location

a spacious room or outside

Materials needed

paper cups, colored paper, glue, silicon glue, scissors, straws

Objectives of the activity

Develop motor skills.

Activity description

Youth workers distribute materials to the group. We fold a piece of paper together and on one side, the workers help the children stick a half of a paper cup to the carton before beginning the decoration.

Recommendations/How to get more from this activity

You can ask the group to write the receipt of their favorite summer drink on the next page.



Sport Games

Musical chairs


Age category

7 and above

No. of participants

8 to 15

Degree of difficulty

easy

Duration

10-30 minutes

Location

a spacious room or outside

Materials needed

uplifting music playlist, sound system, chairs or beanbags

Objectives of the activity

Stimulate coordination of the body, increase attention levels, develop musical rhythmicity, create a strong group dynamic.

Activity description

Players are gathered in a circle around the chairs. Players dance to music around a row or circle of chairs (one less than the total of players). When the music stops, everyone tries to get a seat when the music stops. The one person left standing is out of the game. Remove another chair and continue until only one person is left.

Recommendations/How to get more from this activity

This game can be played like this too: Remove one chair after each round but keep everyone in the game. The challenge then is to get every player seated on a diminishing number of chairs. In other words, players have to learn how to share chairs.



Sport Games

Yoga in the Park



Age category

7 and above

No. of participants

1 to 10

Degree of difficulty

depending on moves chosen it can be easy, medium or difficult

Duration

60 minutes

Location

outside in the fresh air, on an even field

Materials needed

yoga mats or blankets

Objectives of the activity

Stimulate big muscle groups, stretching of the body, learning relaxation techniques, promote body-mind health.

Activity description

Here are six simple postures good for any age or ability level that can be performed without special equipment or advanced experience.

Mountain Pose

Stand with your arms relaxed at your sides with your palms faced outward in a gesture of openness. Stand tall, like a balloon is lifting you up.

Warrior Pose

From mountain pose, step one foot back, slightly angling it outwards, bend your front knee, and bring your arms straight up towards the sky, and look up. Switch sides.



Cobra Pose

Lie on your tummy, lift your head and shoulders off the ground, place palms flat next to your shoulders, and open your chest.

Tree Pose

From mountain pose, transfer your weight to one side. Place the bottom of your left foot on the inside of your right thigh or shin (not the knee) and hold with your palms together at your chest. Switch sides.

Cat-Cow Pose

On your hands and knees, tuck your chin into your chest and round your back. Then look up, open your chest, and arch your back. Repeat the Cat-Cow sequence a few times.

Bridge Pose

Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the ground. Rest your arms down alongside your body, tuck your chin into your chest, and lift up your hips to create a bridge.

Recommendations/How to get more from this activity

You can start with each pose and add some affirmations like:

"I am strong. I am brave. I am graceful. I am confident. I am proud of who I am. I appreciate myself."

For new groups start with easy movements, some stretching and warm-up. Do not force the movements. Tell children to feel when their bodies tell them to stop.



Life Skills Development Activities

Cooking Masterclass



Age category

7-14 years

No. of participants

5 to 15 per group

Degree of difficulty

depending on recipe; from easy to difficult

Duration

60-90 minutes

Location

somewhere with quick access to water, cleaning equipment, long tables - it can be done both indoors and outdoors

Materials needed

plastic glasses, cups, blender, peanut butter, dried and fresh fruit, baking paper, natural seeds, cocoa, cocos (ingredients may vary according to recipe), wet wipes, plastic gloves, napkins, aprons

Objectives of the activity

Develop autonomy, develop motor skills necessary in cooking, learn to cooperate, develop taste aesthetics, develop self-esteem.

Activity description

The youth workers prepare the proportions before the activity, the utensils and the space. For this activity, they chose vegan truffles - no baking needed. After, they present the recipe to the participants.

The children choose their ingredients they want for the sweets and start blending them together. At the end they enjoy their own creations as well as those of their friends. Bon appetite!

Recommendations/How to get more from this activity

Children can suggest recipes before the activity. They can also make chef's hats using paper and glue or end with a food market.



Life Skills Development Activities

Food Market



Age category

7-14 years

No. of participants

10 to 20

Degree of difficulty

easy

Duration

90-180 minutes

Location

outside in the garden or indoors

Materials needed

plates, napkins, glasses, eating utensils, tables, chairs, music

Objectives of the activity

Develop communication and negotiation skills, learn to value their cooking, learn to share with others, learning to appreciate others, improve group dynamic.

Activity description

Each child is given one or more unique ingredients that they must incorporate into their recipe. Once the dishes are ready, the children place them on the tables and are encouraged to explore what others have brought. The youth workers encourage the children to ask questions about the recipe, about how it was made, to communicate and share their creations.

Recommendations/How to get more from this activity

You can make a contest with categories that children choose; most creative cook, most colorful food etc.



Life Skills Development Activities

Garage Market



Age category

7 and above

No. of participants

10 and above

Degree of difficulty

easy

Duration

90 minutes

Location

outdoors in the garden or indoors

Materials needed

hangers, clothes support, tables, chairs, any alternative and creative way to expose the objects

Objectives of the activity

Develop communication and negotiation skills, learn about circular economy, learn about low carbon footprint, encourage switching, re-using, creative recycling, encourage sharing and donating, normalize rational use of resources, learn about pollution and green practices.

Activity description

Children are encouraged to bring from home objects, clothes, toys - things that they want to bring to the garage market, that are in good condition. They set their objects on the tables and begin exploring what others have brought. The youth workers encourage the children to ask questions about the objects, and try to negotiate a fair trade. They also encourage prosocial behavior and sharing.

Participants learn introductory notions about circular economy, about the impact of fast fashion and the effects of pollution, they learn about creative recycling and green practices.



The children also develop prosocial attitudes and exercise their communication skills.

Recommendations/How to get more from this activity

You can invite speakers to talk to the children about topics like pollution and fast fashion, creative recycling, how objects are made and what is their cycle in the world.



Life Skills Development Activities

Making a city map



Age category

7 and above

No. of participants

10

Degree of difficulty

depending on map details - can be adapted

Duration

60-90 minutes

Location

indoors or outdoors

Materials needed

blank paper roll or A3 paper size, crayons, colored pencils, lines

Objectives of the activity

Strengthening imagination and curiosity, develop a sense of direction and spatial awareness and orientation, improvement of visual literacy.

Activity description

Choose the difficulty of the map.

Based on the age of the participants, youth workers agree on the complexity of the map - a type of map that they can understand. but still challenges them. Children can either choose from existing options or create their own.

Recommendations/How to get more from this activity

You can ask the group to write the receipt of their favorite summer drink on the next page.



Theatre and Music

Pantomime game



Age category

7 and above

No. of participants

even number, min. 6

Degree of difficulty

easy

Duration

30-60 minutes

Location

indoors or outdoors

Materials needed

none

Objectives of the activity

Encourage creative expression, build self-confidence, raise body posture and facial expression awareness, improve group dynamic, develop attention levels.

Activity description

Participants work in teams or individually.

Each team decides what to mime and chooses 1 representative for the round. They come in front of the other groups and mime the word chosen. The other team has to guess. If the group is too small or participants prefer to work individually, then tell each to write 10 words on notepads, fold them and put them in a hat. Then the youth workers mix them and each participant takes a word from the hat to mime.

Recommendations/How to get more from this activity

The pantomime activity can have a specific theme. For example, mime emotions, or mime behaviors at school, work etc. That way, children can express themselves and explore different behaviors in different settings in a safe environment.



Theatre and Music

Puppet theatre


Age category

7 and above

No. of participants

min. 10

Degree of difficulty

easy

Duration

60-90 minutes

Location

indoors

Materials needed

colorful paper, scissors, glue, carioca, tempera, decor elements - glitter, feathers, plastiline, beads, natural materials (whatever you have available)

Objectives of the activity

Encourage creative expression, build self-confidence, improve cooperation, develop attention levels, stimulate imagination.

Activity description

Children make their own puppet toys for puppet theater. The youth workers provide some examples and visual support for the child to inspire. After finishing the puppets, the children will work in groups of 3 to 5 participants to create a story. They will then act out this story using their creations. The rest of the big group is the audience for the story. They exchange roles and are, in turn, on the stage and in the audience.

Recommendations/How to get more from this activity

You can choose an already existing story or invite kids to invent one. You can teach children the important milestones of a story. You can give children topics to guide them in creating the story, for example: the hero learns to manage anger, about being cooperative, about learning to say no and so on.



Theatre and Music

Karaoke


Age category

7 and above

No. of participants

10

Degree of difficulty

easy

Duration

60-90 minutes

Location

indoors

Materials needed

microphone, sound speakers, video projector, microphone, music songs list

Objectives of the activity

Encourage creative expression, build self-confidence, improve body posture.

Activity description

Have students choose a familiar song and work with them to develop individual and ensemble singing. After they have chosen a song, they receive the microphone and get in front of the group. The youth workers remind the children that it is important to have a good posture when singing. After each performance children receive a round of applause for the courage of getting in front of the group and making their voice heard.

Recommendations/How to get more from this activity

Have the children write down or tell you their favorite songs. Make a playlist of the group's favorite songs.



Theatre and Music

Music improvisation with instruments



Age category

7 and above

No. of participants

10

Degree of difficulty

easy

Duration

60-90 minutes

Location

indoors or outdoors

Materials needed

djembe drums, ocean drum, maracas, tambourines, boomwhacker tubes, wind chimes, xylophone, bells, tibetan bowl - other instruments you have available

Objectives of the activity

Encourage creative expression, build self-confidence, improve cooperation, develop attention levels, stimulate imagination.

Activity description

The youth workers invite children to choose their instrument. They inform the participants that they will have the opportunity to change the instruments throughout the activity.

The youth workers start with a simple rhythm that children will have to illustrate back to them using their own instruments. The rhythms increase in difficulty as the children develop coordination and attention.

Then, the youth workers propose to children the improvisation moment: each child will bring their own rhythm and together they will all create a song. This requires attention, coordination and cooperation and learning to listen to others. Through trial and error the group will create their first song.



Recommendations/How to get more from this activity

If there is no access to musical instruments, children are invited to search the surrounding space for the musical potential of everyday objects - cups, paper, bottles - and to create their own musical instruments.



Tips for implementing

- At the end of each activity have feedback with the children; ask them open-ended questions such as: What was your favorite part? what would you do differently? what did you learn?
- Ask children to help put back in their place the educational materials used.
- Test them by yourself the activities before you bring them to children; this way, you will know how to better assist them.
- Give children autonomy by helping them when they verbally express the need or confirm the need for help; children love challenges - in order to stimulate their growth and skill acquisition it is important to let them try before doing the task in their place; an autonomous child is an empowered child.
- Always follow the mood of children individually, ask about their well-being, ask the child if he wants to discuss something privately.





Be prepared !