

Introduction

In January 2015 the Belgian organization NATURE decided to invite a group of experiential educators and adventure therapists from seven other European countries to dream and talk about starting a European partnership project on Adventure Therapy together. They wanted to work together in the search for the roots of Adventure Therapy (AT) in Europe and see if it was possible to create a professional network of European AT practitioners. In October 2015 this dream came true: with the support from Erasmus+ and the European Union, the two-year Strategic Partnership Project, named 'Reaching Further' (2015-2017) was born.

Among several others, the goals of the partnership were:

- To create a common understanding and language of AT in Europe (at least within the eight organizations represented by the partner-countries: Belgium, Germany, The Netherlands, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Spain and Portugal);
- To provide a platform for sharing knowledge, experience, resources, etc. among practitioners;
- To explore AT as a new innovative method of working with youth-at-risk within youth work and other informal learning organizations.

Two years of continuous work and regular meetings (through Skype and in 'real life') allowed for an opportunity to share practical experiences and to identify common points in our culturally different professional working practices. During the meetings (5 in total) each partner organization presented workshops, sharing their good practices of Adventure Therapy. Through a meta-reflection process of these practices and workshops, facilitated by the 'Training and Intersession Action Group', common and different elements of the approaches were identified and discussed. At the same time the extracted key-elements of AT served as the foundation for a literature review study conducted by the 'Research Action Group'. The results of both processes are interrelated because both Action Groups took into account what the other had been finding, extracting and reflecting.

During this process of reviewing literature and developing a common language on Adventure Therapy, there was also a 'Website Action Group', creating an online platform for the network, and a 'Gathering Action Group', whose main task was to plan and organize a gathering for all European AT practitioners to come together and share their knowledge (the first GATE). After the partnership has finished, we would love to keep the network alive and include more European countries and AT practitioners. They will be able to participate in all announced trainings on the website, share information and experiences with each other and keep broadening our knowledge of AT in Europe.

It has been a very enriching process of getting to know each other, of trying to speak a common language and looking for the European roots of Adventure Therapy. Through endurance, patience and also a fair amount of humour we have found each other in a reflective dialogue being able to sublimate both our different and common ideas into something that is more than only the sum of it all... In reaching for the roots we haven't only found a tree of Adventure Therapy, we have found a whole forest.

In the following two chapters the main findings of the 'Training and Intervention Action Group' (Chapter 1: "What is Adventure Therapy?") and the 'Research Action Group' (Chapter 2: "A literature review") are presented. As a third chapter you will find a brief presentation of each country's history on Adventure Therapy as described by the representing organization that took part in the partnership. More detailed descriptions of the partnership process and the development of all Action Groups will be published on the website at the end of the partnership (in April 2017), as well as some workshops and good practices that we have found to be useful.