


YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN RIVER PROTECTION METHODS



BALTA DABA



YEE
YOUTH AND
ENVIRONMENT
EUROPE

 **ecoclubes**
Portugal INTERNACIONAL

ABOUT THE PUBLICATION

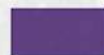
This booklet “Youth involvement in river protection - methods” is a result of an international youth initiative, the “RIVER reMEMBERS” project.

This publication can be a useful support in environmental youth work. It gives concrete examples of methods on how young people can be involved in river protection activities. The majority of the described methods have been tested within “BALTA DABA” and “OPE” workshops. Described methods are diverse - starting from simple activities related with raising awareness about river protection till more complex activities that requires more time and practical work for river protection.

The project “RIVER reMEMBERS” was developed by two youth environmental organisations - “BALTA DABA” (Latvia) and “Organização para a Promoção dos Ecoclubes” (Portugal). The aim of the project was to encourage young people active citizenship for protection of Europe’s rivers. Main objectives were to exchange best practices on how to organise local river protection activities for young people, to find new innovative methods for youth work in river protection sector and to increase young people research skills and knowledge about river ecosystems. The project directly involved 10 young people (5 from each organisation) with ages from 18 to 30 years old who made research about dam’s problem on rivers, organized workshops for local people about river protection, organized local seminars and discussions and created this methodology about how to involve young people in river protection activities.



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THE RIVER COMMUNITY



The workshop about the biodiversity of a river. Identification of species living in the river.

2-3 hours

No age limits

GOALS

- Explore the biological diversity of a river.
- Learn indicator species of water quality.
- Raise awareness about river protection issues.

MATERIALS

Nets for collecting samples; magnifiers or a microscope; small containers for collected animals; a manual for identification of collected species.

NOTES

Please release collected species back into the river after the workshop.

STEPS

1. Go into the river (shallow section of the river) and collect water animal samples with the net.
2. Put collected samples in light containers filled with river water.
3. Try to recognize each river inhabitant. If it is too small to recognize - use magnifiers or a microscope.
4. Use manuals for identification of unknown species.
5. Discuss what identified species tell about water quality. Are there any indicator species which points out that river is polluted or very clean?
6. Get the reflection from participants about activity and plan the follow-up activities.

LET THE RIVER FLOW



Removing dams from rivers.

2 hours - 1 day
15+ / 18+

GOALS

- Improve river functionality.
- Increase oxygen level in the river.
- Raise awareness through practical involvement.

MATERIALS

Depends on the situation. Work gloves, chainsaw, hooks.

NOTES

- Always get the permit from state authorities and land owner before any activity related with changing water level in the river.
- Always consult environmental experts to check if the activity is needed.
- Be aware of safety issues during workshop.

STEPS

1. Find obstacles that don't let the river flow (e.g. natural dams of wood and soil, beaver dams).
2. Consult river specialists if the dam is desirable for the river or not.
3. If not, coordinate the removal of the dam with state authorities (municipality institutions).
4. Provide safety instructions.
5. Explain to participants why such action is important for nature.
6. Remove the dam with appropriate tools.
7. Get the reflection from participants about the activity and plan the follow-up activities.

DOWN THE DAM

Visit and discussion about river dams.

2-3 hours + travel

12+ / 15+

GOALS

- Discover positive and negative effects caused by dams.
- Raise awareness about damming problems.
- Raise awareness about river protection issues.

MATERIALS

Transport.

NOTES

- Be aware of safety issues during the visit.
- Similar activity can be organized about mills and other river infrastructure elements.

STEPS

1. Choose a dam where it is possible to make guided visits and contact the owners.
2. Provide the group with previous general background about dams in your region.
3. Visit the dam.
4. Discuss the benefits and problems caused by dams.
5. Get the reflection from participants about the activity and plan the follow-up activities.

CAMPING PLACE

Workshop about creating a recreational place near a river.

1 day (for creation)
15+ / 18+



GOALS

- Develop creativity and practical skills.
- Create a recreational place near a river.

MATERIALS

Depends on the plan but usually wooden materials, stones, nails, and tools (hammer, saw, ruler).

NOTES

- Be aware of safety issues during workshop.

STEPS

1. Find a picturesque place near a river.
2. Brainstorm what you want to create (fireplace, benches, table, etc.).
3. Draw your plan on paper (or computer).
4. Get the permission from lands owner to create the planned place.
5. Follow your plan and create the place.
6. Get the reflection from participants about the activity and plan the follow-up activities.

RIVER GEOCACHING

Join the world's largest treasure hunt!

No time limit
No age limits



GOALS

- Discover the surroundings of your river.
- Show your river's beauty to others.
- Raise awareness about river protection issues.

MATERIALS

GPS or smartphone.

NOTES

- For more info consult www.geocaching.com
- Before creating your own geocaches think if a concrete place is suitable for the presence of a lot of people - never make geocaches in environmentally sensitive places, such as protected areas with endangered species.

STEPS

1. Create a free geocaching account (www.geocaching.com).
2. Find out if there are geocaches around your river; explore them.
3. Hide geocaches for others in specific places related to your river.
4. Provide educational information about your river and its problems for the participants.
5. Ensure proper maintenance of your geocaches.

CLEANING THE RIVER

River cleaning action.

1 - 3 hours
12+



GOALS

- Raise awareness about pollution in rivers.
- Reduce pollution in the river and its banks.

MATERIALS

Work gloves, garbage bags.

NOTES

- Ensure that collected garbage is brought to a landfill.

STEPS

1. Find a polluted place in a river.
2. Collect the garbage from river banks and if possible also from the water.
3. Discuss with participants why the river is polluted and where the pollution comes from.
4. Get the reflection from participants about the activity and plan the follow-up activities.



PLACE THE STONE INTO THE RIVER

Putting stones into the river according to a certain methodology. Creation of river rapids.

2 hours - 1 day
15+ / 18+

GOALS

- Improve river functionality.
- Increase oxygen level in the river.
- Increase biodiversity in the river.
- Raise awareness through practical involvement.

NOTES

- Collecting stones is a time consuming process; organise it some days before the main activity.
- Always get the permit from state authorities and land owners before the activity.
- Always consult environmental experts about the necessity and content of the activity.
- Be aware of safety issues during workshop.
- The workshop idea is borrowed from Latvian river experts: Andris Urtāns and Loreta Urtāne. www.bit.ly/placeastone

MATERIALS

Work gloves, rubber boots (or other footwear).

STEPS

1. Find the stage of the river where the current is obvious (at least 10 cm/sec).
2. With the help of an expert, draw the plan for placing stones into the river.
3. Collect stones (diameter more than 30 cm) and bring them close to the river.
4. Provide safety instructions.
5. Explain to participants why such action is important for nature.
6. Place stones into the river according to the plan (in the central part of the river, providing that changes of the flow do not make damage to the banks of the river).
7. Get the reflection from participants about the activity and plan the follow-up activities.

BIRD HOUSES

Workshop about creating houses for birds that are related with river ecosystems.

3 hours - 1 day
No age limits



GOALS

- Discover the diversity of bird species.
- Understand the connection between birds and rivers.
- Raise awareness about river protection issues.

NOTES

Research what kind of materials and technology (also size) is suitable for houses of certain bird species. An inappropriate choice can cause negative consequences to birds.

MATERIALS

Binoculars, bird guide, materials for bird houses (e.g. wooden planks, nails), tools (hammer, saw, ruler).

STEPS

1. Take a walk near the river and identify bird species living there; use binoculars and bird guide.
2. Identify those bird species who nest in tree holes.
3. Create houses for identified birds.
4. Get the reflection from participants about the activity and plan the follow-up activities.

RAFTS IN THE RIVER

Rafts challenge in a river.

1 - 2 days

12+ / 15+

GOALS

- To explore environmental elements surrounding the river.
- Create an emotional bond with the river.
- Raise awareness about river protection issues.
- Link different environmental issues - waste reusing/recycling and river protection.

MATERIALS

Waste, building tools, tissues, paint, lifejacket, transport.

NOTES

Always get the permit from state authorities and land owners before the activity and grant the presence of experts to ensure the navigation capacity of the rafts.

STEPS

1. Plan the rafts trail and stopping spots.
2. Create an advertisement for the awareness campaign, program of the activity and its regulations (objectives, necessary elements, safety rules).
3. Find the best ways to spread the campaign (door-to-door; online advertising - email, website, forums, facebook; leaflets).
4. Provide participants with all rules, trail structure (time to stop, maps) and safety instructions.
5. The task can involve the process of building rafts.
6. Give tasks to participants to do along the trail, to improve involvement in river ecosystem - try give it a challenging structure.
7. Provide a debate about different environmental topics.
8. Provide a prize to the winners.
9. Get the reflection from participants about the activity and plan the follow-up activities.

FIND THE VIEW

Searching for the same place in the nature according to an old picture.

3 - 5 hours

15+

GOALS

- Create an emotional tie with the river.
- Discuss changes of river related landscape.
- Raise awareness about river protection issues.

MATERIALS

Old river photos and camera for each team, computer and projector for presenting results.

NOTES

It is nice to make a photo collage where the same place of landscape is combined from different age photos.

STEPS

1. Find old photos of your river.
2. Participants are split into several teams.
3. Each team receives 1 photo.
4. The task is to find the same place in the present river landscape and take a photo of it.
5. After a certain time period, groups return from the river and present their results.

THE GUARDS OF A RIVER

Workshop about creating art out of natural materials.

1 hour
Especially for children



GOALS

- To create an emotional tie with the river.
- Raise awareness about river protection issues.

NOTES

The idea for this activity was borrowed from TC "Forest - Welcome Home": www.bit.ly/ForestWelcomeHome

STEPS

1. Find trees or other natural elements near the river.
2. Create a face and clothes for it using only natural things found near the river.
3. Get the reflection from participants about the activity and plan the follow-up activities.

PEDDY PAPER IN CITY RIVER BANKS

Environmental challenge with tasks.

1 day
12+ / 15+



GOALS

- Explore environmental elements surrounding the river.
- Create an emotional bond with the river.
- Raise awareness about river protection issues.

MATERIALS

Paper, writing/drawing materials, different tools according to the challenges defined for each spot, gloves, trash bags, cameras and prize.

NOTES

Be aware of safety issues during the activity.

STEPS

1. Plan the overall trail, stopping spots and tasks for the activity.
2. Make sure all the elements needed for each task are provided to teams.
3. Make previous contact with places to visit (museums, traditional places, local markets, exhibitions, boat trips companies, natural protected areas).
4. Provide teams with all participating rules, game structure (time, maps) and safety instructions.
5. Collect the task results and raise a short debate about different important topics considered during the peddy-paper.
6. Provide a prize to the winners.
7. Get the reflection from participants about the activity and plan the follow-up activities.

RIVER BANKS

An activity for precluding erosion of river banks.

3 hours - 1 day (excluding planning)
15 +



GOALS

- Raise awareness about river banks erosion.
- Reduce river banks erosion.

MATERIALS

Depends on the plan - natural materials (trees, stones), working gloves, camera.

NOTES

- Be aware of the safety issues.
- Consult the authorities to know if a permit is needed for the action.

STEPS

1. Identify the place in the river where there are problems with erosion of river banks.
2. Consult an expert for the action needed to protect the banks from erosion.
3. Create a plan for the action.
4. Take a picture of a place before start of activity.
5. Do the action according to your plan (e.g. planting trees, placing stones).
6. Take a picture of the place after the activity.
7. Get the reflection from participants about the activity and plan the follow-up activities.

FROM PAST TO FUTURE

Transferring knowledge on local rivers from older generations to youth.

2 - 3 hours (for sharing knowledge)
15+



GOALS

- Transfer knowledge from older generations to youth.
- Discover local river history.
- Recover the traditions of river protection activities.

MATERIALS

Camera, materials depending on action.

NOTES

Plan the activities according to older people limitations.

STEPS

1. Approach old people of your community and ask them to collect materials (e.g. photos) and memories.
2. Organize a meeting with them.
3. Prepare the presentation on how you are protecting the river.
4. Ask the invited old people to share their experience and memories.
5. Document the knowledge and memories of old people.
6. Do some common action for the river (e.g. plant a tree).
7. Get the reflection from participants about the activity and plan the follow-up (e.g. article, video).

RIVER PROBLEMS MAPPING

Identification of river problems.

1 - 2 days (depends on river extension)
12 +

GOALS

- Identify the problems of a river.
- Raise awareness about river protection.
- Improve civic participation.

MATERIALS

GPS (if possible), maps, camera, notebook, mean of transport.

NOTES

Don't forget to report the problems to local municipality and state authorities.

STEPS

1. Choose a stage of the river close to your community.
2. Find a map of the stage of the river.
3. Choose the method of mapping the river (on foot, by bike, by boat).
4. Do the mapping - identifying problem sources (e.g. pollution, dams, agriculture impact).
5. Mark the place in a map or GPS and make the picture of the problem.
6. Discuss the possible solutions for identified problems.
7. Get the reflection from participants about the activity and plan the follow-up activities.

BALLS IN THE RIVER

Exciting fundraising activity for a public event.

2 - 3 hours
No age limits

GOALS

- Bring the community to discover the beauty of the river.
- Raise awareness about river protection in a funny way.
- Raise funds for river protection.

NOTES

- Balls can be replaced by other floating objects (e.g. wooden sticks).
- Integrate other environmental workshops in the event.
- Ensure that you catch all balls.
- The idea for this method is borrowed from the annual event of "Valmieras novada fonds": www.bit.ly/BallsCharityRally

MATERIALS

Plastic balls or other floating objects, boat and nets for collecting balls, prize.

STEPS

1. Organize a public event.
2. People donate some money and in return get the number which is inserted into the ball.
3. All balls are put together into the river simultaneously.
4. After a certain distance, balls are collected.
5. The winner is the person whose ball is the first in the finish line.
6. The winner is rewarded with a prize in a public event.
7. Collected money from bought tickets is spent for river protection.

RIVER SOUNDS GOOD

Creative activity related with natural sounds.

2 - 3 hours

No age limits

GOALS

- Create the connection with a river.
- Improve the creativity of young people.
- Raise awareness about river protection.

MATERIALS

All materials available in nature, camera and recorder.

NOTES

Provide a silent, relaxing atmosphere for the process.

STEPS

1. Bring people near the river and invite to listen and get the inspiration from the sounds of the river.
2. Give a task to participants to create musical instruments from natural materials available in the river and around it.
3. After a certain time period, participants meet and create a performance using their instruments.
4. Perform the concert of the river (could be recorded).
5. Get the reflection from participants about the activity and plan the follow-up activities.

RIVER GOURMET

Workshop about edible things in the nature.

2 - 3 hours
12+

GOALS

- Discover the diversity of edible things within the river ecosystem.
- Raise awareness about river protection.

MATERIALS

Fishing rod, knife, pot, spoons, cups, manual for species.

NOTES

Be aware of safety issues.

STEPS

1. Find an expert on river plants (animals).
2. The expert provides a workshop on what species found in river are edible and which are poisonous.
3. Make a meal from edible things (e.g. river mint tea, fish soup).
4. Get the reflection from participants and discuss the follow-up (e.g. the recipes from river food).

LET THE RIVER ENTERTAIN YOU

Creation of entertainment elements around the river.

Several days
12+

GOALS

- Make a connection with the river.
- Raise awareness about river protection.

MATERIALS

Depends on the plan (e.g. wooden materials, ropes, saw, shovel).

NOTES

Be aware of safety issues.

STEPS

1. Explore the surroundings of the river and brainstorm what kind of entertainment elements could be created there (e.g. natural sculptures, barefoot path, labyrinth).
2. Create a plan of the entertainment path.
3. Get the permit from land owners to execute the plan.
4. Execute the plan - build the entertainment path.
5. Get the reflection from participants about the activity and plan the follow-up activities.

RIVER IMAGE CONTEST

Artistic competition for an
environmental cause.

1 month
No age limits

GOALS

- To raise awareness about river importance and protection through observation.
- Gain interconnected multidisciplinary skills.
- Develop participants' creativity.

MATERIALS

Camera, drawing materials, paper, computer/tablet/smartphone, prize.

NOTES

Ensure the target audience is very concrete (provide that children don't compete with adults or professionals).

STEPS

1. Create an advertisement for the contest and its regulations (objectives, necessary elements, deadlines, address for participation, other rules).
2. Find the best way to spread the contest (door-to-door; online advertising - email, website, forums, facebook; leaflets).
3. Receive the applications and verify if they are eligible for participation (contact applicant if something is missing).
4. Create an evaluation form with scales to vote according to the evaluation items defined.
5. Announce the winner and its prize.

MOVIE NIGHT

Environmental film evening.

2 hours
12+ / 15+



GOALS

- Raise awareness about river protection issues.
- Discuss possible solutions for river protection problems.

MATERIALS

Computer, projector,
a place for the event.

STEPS

1. Find a documentary about river protection issues.
2. Get a place for the movie night.
3. Invite an expert to the event - about a topic related with the movie.
4. Announce the event to potential participants.
5. The expert provides the audience with a speech/presentation about the movie.
6. Watch the documentary together.
7. Identify the problems touched in the film/presentation and discuss possible solutions.

GUIDED TOUR

A simple tool for environmental education - a guided tour.

Several hours
12+ / 15+



GOALS

- Explore environmental elements related with the river.
- Create an emotional bond with the river.
- Raise awareness about river protection issues.

NOTES

- Be aware of safety issues during the activity.
- Topics of tours can be very diverse: e.g. water treatment systems, environmental museums, biodiversity in the river, concrete type of species - dragonflies, birds, fishes, plants, etc.

MATERIALS

Depends on the topic, transport.

STEPS

1. Plan the guided visit about some river protection related topic (pollution, biodiversity, natural or cultural heritage).
2. Invite an expert for guiding the tour.
3. Invite participants to the event.
4. An expert guides the tour and participants have certain tasks during the activity (e.g. monitor the water quality in different river stages).
5. Get the reflection from participants about the activity and plan the follow-up activities.

RIVER FAIR

Workshops integrated in other events.

Several hours
No age limits



GOALS

- Inform the local community about river protection issues.
- Raise funds for river protection.
- Raise awareness about river protection.

MATERIALS

Depends on workshop, tent.

NOTES

Make sure you have all necessary permissions for your activities.

STEPS

1. Identify the festival or fair you want to participate.
2. Coordinate the place (tent) for your workshop.
3. Prepare the workshop for the festival (any activity described in this publication).
4. Run the workshop during the festival.
5. Collect donations for river protection.

ADOPT THE RIVER

Long-term commitment to concrete river protection.

Long term activity
No age limits



GOALS

- Encourage people to get direct responsibility of their river.
- Create an emotional bond with the river.
- Raise awareness about river protection issues.

MATERIALS

Depends on the concrete action.

NOTES

The idea is very suitable for schools - try to involve your local school in this movement.

STEPS

1. Choose concrete section (e.g. 3 kilometers) of a river close to your community.
2. Identify environmental problems in your river section.
3. Consult experts about possible solutions for identified problems.
4. Organize activities for researching, protecting and developing your river section.
5. Declare in your NGO web page (other communication tools) your responsibility for a concrete river section during a certain time period.
6. Inform the local municipality that you take care about concrete river section.
7. Invite other people and organisations to join the movement and to take responsibility about their rivers.



This publication was created by two
non-governmental environmental youth organisations:

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