



REPORT

Activity 5. Youth climbing camp - Safety and injury prevention in Youth Climbing

Hosted by: Horolezecky klub Horec Liptovsky Mikulas

Date and location: 22. – 28.8.2021, Kalamárka, Slovakia

Aim: To share experiences, knowledge, and practices on how to increase safe participation in climbing, meaning both technical knowledge and knowing how to train without injuries. Also to work out, propose the guidelines and new methods on how to introduce safety in climbing to children of different ages. The work will be partly based on the results of Activity 2 (How to approach the aspect of Safety in Youth Climbing, hosted by: Hungary) and will give some starting points for Activity 3 (Health benefits and importance of smart training, hosted by: Czech Republic).

Participants:

Planinsko društvo Domžale
Sportsko penjački klub Fothia
Horolezecký klub Atlas Opava, z.s.
Horolezecky klub Horec Liptovsky Mikulas
Magyar Hegy – és Sportmászó Szövetség

Used methods, as agreed upon in the project, were implemented. The youth climbing camp had 4 subparts: theoretical and practical lessons given by qualified climbing instructors, practical training - climbing, for learning new techniques and to get familiar with local conditions, additional physical training for the safe practice of physical activities and workshops for knowledge sharing and encouraging socializing between participants from different countries.

General information

Summer camp for children was organized by the Mountaineering club HOREC Liptovský Mikuláš under the supervision of the Youth Commission of Slovak Mountaineering Union JAMES with the cooperation of international partners from the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Croatia, and Hungary. The camp was held on 22. - 28.8.2021 at andesite sport climbing area Kalamárka, one of the iconic climbing areas of Slovakia. As there was no appropriate accommodation, we built a camp on the green field and slept in special tents with wooden bases and sides, and had our own fully equipped mobile kitchen trailer and hygiene assets.

Transnational youth climbing camp offered an introduction to the local climbing culture and allowed participants to experience local climbing under the supervision of certified climbing instructors and coaches. The focus of the camp was safety and injury prevention in youth climbing therefore the specific topics were directly implemented into the program.

The main aim was to share experiences, knowledge, and practices on how to increase safe participation in climbing, meaning both technical knowledge and knowing how to train without injuries. As the weather allowed we managed to have two training sessions daily combined with some safety lectures and climbing games. We tried an innovative way of implementing traditional games adjusted to climbing vocabulary and methodology. As we were very close to the rocks, we could effort regular



eating at camp together with some short after-lunch breaks keeping in mind that children will have enough time for regeneration.

Children had an opportunity to spend a week in line with nature living in the eco-based camp, concentrating on the safety and quality of their training, keeping healthy eating, and good physical balance between activities and regeneration. Mixed climbing groups of different nations enhanced international friendships.

Leaders had a chance to get to know each other, share their experiences from working with youth, and compare their climbing methodics. All the activities were daily evaluated through short organizational meetings of all instructors and the program was adjusted according to the weather and the participant's knowledge. Project leaders had space for meetings to discuss the findings of previous activities.

Participants

Children and leaders were from Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Croatia, and Hungary. There were 30 children and 11 adults (leaders, instructors, and organizers). Children were from 12 to 18 years old.

All of the leaders were all the time with children and youth together with local climbing instructors, being responsible for them and teaching them various climbing skills and rope maneuvers.

Program

22.8.2021 Sunday – Arrival to Kalamárka, accommodation, invitation of participants, and providing them with general information. Walk around rocks with history and local climbing culture explanation, “eco” presentation about being environmentally friendly and using fully biodegradable products at this camp. Leader’s meeting (discussion about the results and experiences of Activity 1 and how to effectively implement prepared guidelines).

23.8.2021 Monday – Introduction games for participants. A presentation about the importance of warming up and stretching with practical exercises (presented by a group of 3 professionals: climbing coach, kinesiologist, and physical education teacher). Watching specific climbing movies (part of education, using the non-traditional method) while raining. Hiking trip to the rock climbing area Boriakove skaly and short climbing session afterward.

24.8.2021 Tuesday – Morning and afternoon rock climbing in national groups - instructors giving advice on selecting appropriate climbing routes in their groups, providing individual rope maneuvers explanations and practical training in the groups according to the level of expertise of the group participants.

25.8.2021 Wednesday – Morning and afternoon rock climbing in mixed groups enhancing using the English language and international socialization. Afternoon first aid lecture with CPR training and discussion on how to avoid injuries and stay in good physical condition.

26.8.2021 Thursday – Rock climbing in mixed groups, playing climbing bingo & enhancing children to get deeper into the safe climbing world (vocabulary, methodics, history, local culture). A presentation



about how to rappel safely, which climbing gear to use, the methodology of this maneuver, and practical training afterward in smaller groups.

27.8.2021 Friday – Rock climbing in mixed groups and practicing rappelling learned the day before. Organizers prepared a program with high rope obstacles (high swing and zipline) for children. Leader's meeting (preliminary discussion on Activity 3 based on the experiences of Activity 1 and 2).

28.7. 2018 Saturday – Evaluation, packing, and departure.

The goals set up in the project were all fulfilled and topics were successfully implemented into the program. The organization of the camp went smoothly, and despite the challenging weather, we had a chance to climb every day. We are happy that such an international event happened even in this difficult pandemic situation, and everyone arrived and left healthy.

Summary from feedbacks

Content of all feedback from leaders and children contains a personal evaluation of the organization, cooperation, program, food, accommodation, and benefits for children. All of the participants were satisfied and agreed they enjoyed the summer camp and their overall impression was really good. All feedbacks were very positive about the climbing area, accommodation in special tents, instructor's approach, organization, and program. What matters the most is that all participants agreed they have learned new knowledge/skills. Children were raising the importance of the organization of such camps - seeing benefits in improving their climbing, social, and English skills as well as a chance to enjoy a different rock type and opportunity to climb abroad and get a chance to build cross-border friendships.

The leader's discussion brought up the idea of having an animator for such camps. It could be very beneficial to have a person dedicated to the program besides climbing and presentations. It would release instructors and coaches from running the whole program and give them a bit more space for their meetings.

Leaders plan to organize another camp in Slovenia in 2022 and implement the feedback into the organization.

Annexes

1) Photos



Staying safe in the world of youth climbing

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