



# Socio-educational animation



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## Socio-educational animation

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National Agency for the Community Programmes in the Field of Education and Vocational Training  
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# Socio- educational animation

The 7th edition of the Connector provided a space and context where people involved in learning became familiar with and practiced different non-formal learning methods for use in inclusion and diversity contexts. A special focus was placed on how these learning methods can be used for the integration of migrants and refugees, given the outcome of the Ukrainian displacement crisis that began on 24 February 2022.

## CONNECTOR 2022 workshop

Socio-educational animation represents a tool of building relationships between participants, using social, cultural, physical and sports activities. It includes games and playful activities, learning through experience, and educational activities through adventure, which introduce the game as a new type of learning, cultural and social act.

In some cases it requires that the individual has the ability to control or manipulate one or more objects at the same time. Those with strong visual/spatial intelligence will like to visualize the patterns where they exist. Getting up, moving around, throwing and catching objects will develop the kinesthetic intelligence. Games are spontaneous bits to support self- discovery, getting to know the others and the world. They involve experiment, observation, being audacious, working hard and celebrating, participation and mutual help, organizing abilities, learning how to win and how to lose. Playing introduces rules and adequate ways of respecting them.

The participants will experience the game as a tool of cooperation for achieving a common goal, building up strategies, and developing creativity.



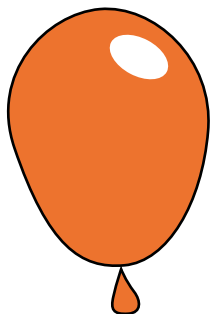
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Since 2005 I have been involved at different levels of local, national, European and world projects and currently I am the president of Romanian Scouts National Organization (ONCR).

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# What is it?

Socio-educational animation represents a tool of building relationships between participants, using social, cultural, physical and sports activities. It includes games and playful activities, learning through experience, and educational activities through adventure. It introduces the game as a new type of learning, cultural and social act.

In some cases, it requires that the individual has the ability to control or manipulate one or more objects at the same time. Those with strong visual/spatial intelligence will like to visualize the patterns where they exist. Getting up, moving around, throwing and catching objects will develop the kinesthetic intelligence. Games are spontaneous bits to support self-discovery, getting to know the others and the world. They involve experiment, observation, being audacious, working hard and celebrating, participation and mutual help, organizing abilities, learning how to win and how to lose. Playing introduces rules and adequate ways of respecting them.

*The word "animator" has its origin in the Latin word "animus", meaning "soul".*

It can be said that the animator is the soul of the public he/she works with. It is very important for an animator to know and apply various practices and techniques of group animation, while taking care of the relationships established between the participants, too.

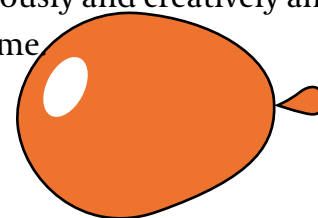
Representative elements of the socio-educational animation are the activities organized in different contexts, where is created the opportunity of working in large or small groups. Thus, the active participation in communities you belong, the

self knowledge, the social and the cultural integration, and many more are developed and increased.

Socio-educational animation is showed through games. These can be seen as activities, as spontaneous methods to discover yourself, the others and the world. Games involve experimenting, observing how far you can go, being adventurous, working hard and celebrating. Playing with the others implies participation, mutual help, and organizer abilities, learning how to win and how to lose and how to learn from the entire experience, from planning till evaluating the games.

Animation has multiple functions. It makes people interact and socialize, being a means of integration and adaptation. Communication is also improved through animation; making people work in team, collaborate for a common purpose. It is a way of spending free time in a relaxing, but challenging way. Animation is an alternative to traditional education, discovering new styles of living and learning. Animation helps filling the lacks, integrating the marginalized people, reducing the deficiencies.

In terms of results and impact of the method, the socio-educational animation primarily "works" the autonomy of the beneficiary, teaching him/her to control his/her behavior, helping him/her to think ahead and act to achieve a planned action in time. At the same time, the participant learns to collaborate, to empathize, to face the challenges of everyday life spontaneously and creatively and to act in the right way, at the right time.





## Categories of socio-educational animation games

The games were divided into several categories, depending on the interest of those who use them:

- free games or coordinated by an adult;
- individual or group games;
- indoor and outdoor games;
- games for children and adults – which in turn, can be divided into subgroups of age;
- sports and environmental games;
- specific national games;
- educational games;
- games with strict rules or without rules and so on.

Individual game elements of a category or even entire games from a category can be removed from the context of the respective category and they can be used in another category, but with a different effect.



Another way of organizing the games is based on the main purpose.  
In this respect, we can identify:



**Presentation games** - allow a first contact and closeness, respectively by knowing the names and some characteristics of the participants.

**Getting to know each other games**  
– give the opportunity for the participants to discover more about the others.

**Self-knowledge games** - give the opportunity for the participants to discover more about themselves.

**Communication games** - stimulate communication between participants and aim to create a proper communication process in the group in which, as a rule, some fixed roles are established. These games tend to create an environment conducive to active listening and verbal communication and at the same time stimulate non-verbal communication (expressions, gestures, physical contact, looks, etc.) to initiate new ways of communication. Their dynamics are diverse, and making games at different times can bring many new experiences to the group.

**Cooperation games** - through them, the mechanisms of competitive games are examined, creating a relaxed and favorable environment for group cooperation, with an emphasis on the coordination of movements to carry out an activity.

**Energizers** - determine a mood or create an atmosphere, introduce a topic in a pleasant, dynamic way.

**Knowledge games** - They are intended for mutual knowledge of the participants in an activity.

**Games of affirmation and integration in the group** - are based on self-confidence mechanisms, both internal ones (concepts, capabilities), and correlation with external influences (role within the group, requirements towards other people). The purpose of this game is to capitalize on the positive qualities of individuals and the group, to foster an atmosphere in which everyone feels part of a whole. Affirming on equal terms is the basis of free communication and working together.

**Stimulating games** – give space for creativity, strategies, coming up with new ideas.

**Teambuilding games** – determine the participants to work together, to discover their strong or low points, to realize where their qualities can be used to solve a situation.

**Development of practical skills games**  
– based on using our hands to create different objects (for e.g.: origami, painting, drawing, etc).

**Trust games** – are used for participants to offer a safe space. These games are recommended to be organized when participants are already getting to know each other.

**Solving conflicts games** – through them, the mechanisms of how to see a conflict is examined, analyzed. Put in a safe environment, the group realizes how important are communication, cooperation. It is emphasized the coordination of movements to carry out an activity.

**Relaxation games** - in relaxation games, movement and laughter generate the psychological and physical relaxation mechanism. Games are meant to release energy, humor, stimulating movement in the group.

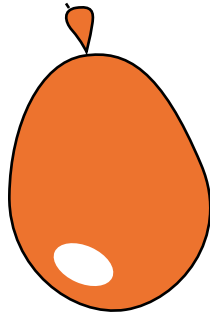
**Outdoor games** – nature helps for inviting participants to explore more, enjoying the environment.

These are a part of different types and categories of games used in socio-educational animation. The animator / facilitator will take care in choosing the proper methods for his/her participants in order to make them learn in the best way.

# Learning objectives

*In order to develop the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to use socio-educational animation methods in learning experiences, the animator will be able to:*

- know what socio-educational animation is and its role;
- know clearly what the purpose, principles, objectives and functions of the socio-educational animation are;
- know what the animator's profile is and can create the portrait of him/her and use it accordingly;
- work in a team with his/her co-animator;
- improve communication and socialization skills (getting out of the comfort zone);
- learn and develop various socio-educational animation methods;
- apply various types of activities, according to the characteristics of his/her beneficiary;
- identify and follow the steps of the experiential learning cycle;
- know the learning styles and their characteristics and identify them when preparing the games
- identify what the beneficiary's rhythm of life is and how to place the activities;
- form a team, following group dynamics;
- use Safe instead of Harm interventions;
- evaluate the socio-educational animation methods;
- evaluate and adapt the place and the role of socio-educational animator in animation purposes in general and define its place in the context of socio-educational frame;
- develop an animation project and design content, goal and objectives for the project;
- know precisely the framework of projects and socio-educational activities.



An animator should have pedagogical skills and knowledge from social, cultural, educational and sports fields, in order to create the animation project. He/she should predict the problems that could appear, assuring the security conditions. He/she should take into consideration: social mediation when initiating socio-educational animation methods or animation activities, in order to create and develop social relationships.

In addition to the educational, innovative and social character, the general learning objectives of the socio-educational animation, regardless of the audience on which it intervenes, are those of social regulation, awareness of human identity and belonging to a small or larger community (e.g. *European Union*), development of the respect for human rights, etc.

## Preparation of the method

*The animator, before selecting the proper method of socio-educational animation, will:*

- Identify the needs for socio-educational animation;
- Identify good practices of socio-educational animation;
- Know, analyze and test models, techniques and practices of socio-educational animation relating to different objectives, contexts, areas of intervention and public;
- Analyze a socio-educational animation project identifying its different components;
- Conceive, implement and evaluate a socio-educational intervention;
- Construct or recreate different materials, dynamics or educational games according to the objectives of the intervention.

*The socio-educational animation methods:*

- are necessary for physical health, wellbeing and mental balance;
- generate vitality, energy, self-confidence and develops qualities like: initiative, team spirit, decision;
- offer the opportunity to act, to fulfill missions, to have responsibilities and mobilize a set of latent qualities, offer suppleness, resistance, self-control.

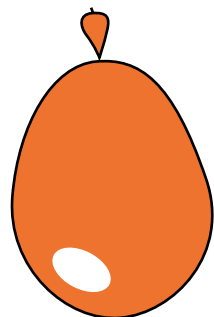
Before starting the socio-educational animation method, we:

The elements that we are taking into account when organizing a socio-educational animation method are: the number of participants, age, sex, physical fitness of everyone, weather, clothing (adapted, in case is needed), mentality of the participants (their tastes), the participants habits (which help us choose easier or more difficult actions), place, materials at our disposal, available duration, time of day.

- Bring the necessary materials for the planned game.
- Create the necessary mood.
- Check if everyone is present, if they have a practical outfit (pay attention to objects that can cause accidents).
- Give clear explanations, create silence and maximum interest, attention. Some methods: keep an imperturbable calm and look at the clock; start the explanations with a low voice; make them shout (something loud): “Cric-crac!” ... louder ... ”crick-crack!”, etc.
- Speak loudly, rarely, as much for the eyes as for the ears. Using visual schemes or examples will facilitate the understanding of the exercise. Think about how the participants will perceive a scheme compared to a long speech. The explanations must be complete, but short and progressive, must be structured and, if possible, must be done in the same order (have a game sheet) the game is unfolding.
- Pay attention to the order in which the explanations are given to the participants.

*Example:*

- land, boundaries;
  - division into teams (with distinctive signs and names);
  - the purpose and spirit of the exercise;
  - the main rules, in small numbers, and if possible secondary rules during the game;
  - arbitration signs (whistle, visual aids);
  - deadline;
  - special rules: what should be done or not;
  - suggesting some tactics, techniques;
  - ask if additional explanations are needed.
- Make sure that all the players have understood and then, if possible, we play a trial round or two.





# Delivering the method

*The role of the facilitator during the socio-educational animation method consists in: giving relevant instructions, animating, observing the participants' learning process and experience.*

Practically, the facilitator/ the animator:

- knows perfectly the rules of the game and the difficult situations that may arise;
- is a good observer of the participants and their playing style;
- will (re)solve conflicting situations that arise (it is important to have conventional signs);
- it is just, equitable;
- motivates participants (sustained rhythm, continuity in animation);
- observes the rules and how participants are playing;
- oversees everyone's participation.

The game will end – when the time provided for the game is over or, if faster, when the goal was reached.



# Evaluation

The facilitator / animator will close the game by:

- coming back to the group and reorganizing them;
- giving the results, both teams are congratulated (not only the winning one);
- making a positive environment for the participants;
- checking the materials used.

In terms of learning objective, the facilitator will guide participants to see how the socio-educational animation method used made them discover something more about themselves, about the others or some new theories or instrument.

*In animation and not only,  
a way for following the  
participants' learning process  
is by using the  
experiential learning cycle,  
developed by David Kolb.*

Kolb's experiential learning theory works on two levels: a four-stage cycle of learning and four separate learning styles. Much of Kolb's theory is concerned with the learner's internal cognitive processes. Kolb states that learning involves the acquisition of abstract concepts that can be applied flexibly in a range of situations. In Kolb's theory, the impetus for the development of new concepts is provided by new experiences.

In Kolb's four-stage learning cycle the learner 'touches all the bases':

1. **Concrete Experience** - the learner encounters a concrete experience. This might be a new experience or situation, or a reinterpretation of existing experience in the light of new concepts.
2. **Reflective Observation of the New Experience** - the learner reflects on the new experience in the light of his/her existing knowledge. Of particular importance are any inconsistency between experience and understanding.
3. **Abstract Conceptualization** - reflection gives rise to a new idea, or a modification of an existing abstract concept (the person has learned from their experience).
4. **Active Experimentation** - the newly created or modified concepts give rise to experimentation. The learner applies their idea(s) to the world around them to see what happens.



## Socio-educational animation PLAN

The team of facilitators/animators is elaborating an animation project adapted to the pedagogical project. It proposes a package of specific, various activities that correspond to the requirements included in the educational and pedagogical project. The team is important to collect all the inputs mentioned before, to propose a method and to organize everything in a plan.

The animation project offers the most direct, simple and operational way of working directly with the beneficiary. The indoor, outdoor, sports, technical, expressive, scientific activities reflect the creativity of the animation team. The animators are formulating it concretely and clearly, taking into account all aspects of daily and collective life.

*The animation project has the following structure:*

- Theme.
- Objectives.
- Beneficiaries' characteristics.
- Place and date of performance.
- The time given to the activities.
- Learning objectives for the participants.
- Proposed activities.
- Designation of those responsible for their implementation.
- Establishment of the necessary resources to fulfill the objectives.
- Evaluation of the activity.





# The ABCs for our Facilitator/Animator

Source: Ghidul Animatorului socio-educativ /Asociatia CREATIV

- ☐ Choose the game carefully, to be suitable for the age, number and interests of the participants. Most games can adapt to the needs of the group. Be creative!
- ☐ It is ideal to have played the chosen game yourself. If it is not possible, try to understand it very well.
- ☐ Know in advance the place where you are going to play the game.
- ☐ Prepare all materials long before necessary.
- ☐ Estimate the duration of the game yourself, depending on the group's capabilities.
- ☐ It is good to have one or two games prepared as reserves.
- ☐ If you are the only person responsible for a group, you are also responsible for the group security. A small First Aid Kit is always useful.
- ☐ Be enthusiastic when presenting the game.
- ☐ Explain clearly and simply the rules of the game, addressing all participants. Take care and be quiet so you can be heard.
- ☐ Check if they understood the rules of the game, ask participants to present the rules briefly. Repeat them or exemplify them practically.
- ☐ The rules of the game never change according to the wishes of one or the other.
- ☐ Actively participate in the game.
- ☐ Make sure that all group members take part in the game. Emphasize the importance of cooperation and team spirit. Every player can contribute to the success of the game.
- ☐ If you notice that the rules are not respected, be sure that others have noticed. Also, be prepared to take the lead to facilitate the participants' learning experience and process.
- ☐ Encourage everyone.
- ☐ Respect every participant.
- ☐ Do not lengthen or shorten the duration of the game.
- ☐ If it is necessary to keep the score, use a visual in such a way that the results should be seen by all.
- ☐ Victory is highly desired in games competitions and can bring a passionate note, but it is not the main goal. Defeat can be accepted, when the participants have understood how much they had to learn.
- ☐ Plan the required time at the end of the game for evaluation. Discussions with participants like: if all respected the rules, what I learned, how I/we managed to overcome certain difficulties, which was the part the funniest, if we felt good, etc. are very important.
- ☐ Facilitate the learning outcomes of the game.





# Why do we use this method?

Inclusion & diversity context



*During the Connector 2022, the participants developed 2 different experiences, keeping in mind the context of inclusion and diversity.*

## Exercise no. 1

### *Olympic Games*

**Duration:** 50 minutes

**Learning objectives:** teambuilding, respect yourself and each other, focusing, dealing with frustration, dealing with stress, trust, fun,

**Participants number:** 15

(Teambuilding counting)

– Give your group a name!

**Location:** indoor or outdoor

### **MEMORY Exercise**

#### **Instructions for players:**

- you are going to look at 20 different objects.
- you can look at them for 15 seconds.
- a blanket will cover them, and we will take away three objects.
- 30 seconds each group to discuss and write down the objects missing. You have 30 seconds to discuss the missing objects.
- each correct object will give you one point.

#### **Items we need:**

- pencils and paper, 20 objects, a blanket.

#### **Instructions for facilitators:**

- all groups together.
- 1-3 rounds: a point for each object.

### TRANSPORTER Exercise

#### Instructions for players:

- as a team you have to transport a ball from *a* to *b*, using only your feet. The ball has to stay on the ground and the ball has to be touched by all feet. The ball has to stay close to your group.
- you are connected together in a circle back-to-back and make your way through the parkour.
- the fastest gets the highest points.
- follow the path that we show.
- when you are cheating or you lose the ball you have to restart from the last obstacle.

#### Instructions for facilitators:

- all groups together or successively/timed. The others are not allowed to watch.
- prepare the parkour.

#### Items we need:

- balls, rope, obstacles.

### REACH THE HIGHEST POINT Exercise:

#### Instructions for players:

- everybody has to be engaged in the activity.
- use only your bodies.
- you have one minute to decide on a strategy.
- two minutes to build your highest point.
- Once you decided on your structure...Let us know and we measure.
- Be careful and accept each other's bodies and boundaries and do NOT DO anything that harms you... Explain what happened in practice.

#### Instructions for facilitators:

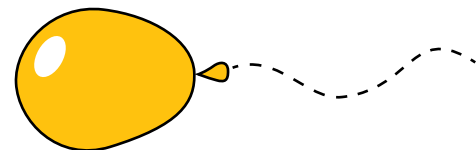
- all groups together.
- 5, 4, 3, 2 points for building.

#### Items we need:

- rope.

#### Evaluation for the activity

- How did you feel doing the activity?
- What happened?
- How do you relate this experience to real life?
- What would you change the second time?









## Exercise no. 2

### The Egperience

**Duration:** 30 minutes

**Learning objectives:** focus, cooperation and strategy

**Participants:** 6 => 20

**Resources:** egg, plate, scarfs, rope, papers (stones to keep the papers in place), the 'Connector-Letters'

**Location:** outdoor

#### Instructions for facilitators:

Step 1: Divide the group into pairs (e.g. two and two).

Step 2: Handle out the task on paper and see how it is spread within the group, to everyone.

Step 3: Put on the scarfs on the "blind" people.

Step 4: All the blindfolded start going into the circle at the same time.

Step 5: Mission is completed when the egg is taken outside the ring.

#### The instructions for players

The mission is to get the egg(s) out of the circle. Only blindfolded people are allowed to go into the ring. The blindfolded participants will be directed by a guide outside the ring. Once the blindfolded people enter the circle, they are becoming speechless. The blindfolded are guided to avoid obstacles or other people inside the ring. Each person can touch the egg only with one finger. The guide must communicate only in English. Your mission is competed when the egg has left the ring and has been given to a facilitator. The mission will re-start after one minute.

#### Evaluation of the activity

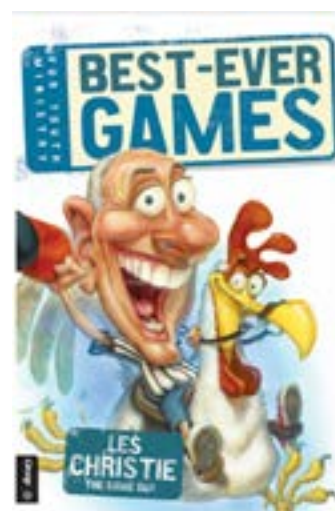
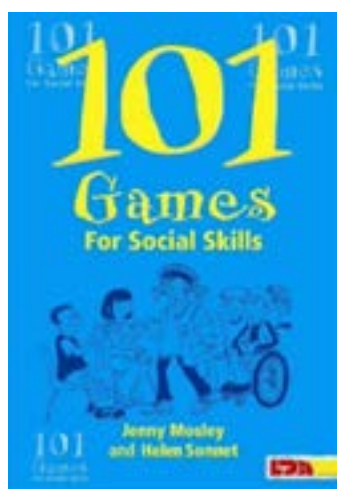
- How did you feel doing the activity?
- What happened?
- How do you relate this experience with real life?
- What would you change the second time?



Socio-educational animation is giving the space for everybody to feel that they can be active, can be involved, can act and contribute. The facilitator/animation will take care to prepare the proper method for highlighting the importance of how inclusion and diversity are pointing out more learning objectives for participants.

# Communities of practices and resources

1. "Animate yourself" seminar
2. Ghidul Animatorului, Asociația CREATIV, 2007 (ro)
3. Manual-100-de-idei-de-educatie-non-formala.pdf (ro)
4. Youth group games
5. Inclusive group games
6. Inclusion A-Z
7. TOOLBOX - Outdoor activities for inclusion
8. Playbook- Urban youth games
9. Group games
10. Non-formal Education Methods- Dreams for Life
11. Bank of Exercises - Skills Exercises
12. A Trust and Team Building Activity









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is an international event focused on non-formal learning  
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