

# Polish Outdoor Learning - POL

## Date of creation

2024

## Description

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The Polish Outdoor Learning (POL) experience equips participants with a comprehensive set of knowledge, skills, and social competences. The POL [curriculum](#) offers engaging methodologies providing a holistic approach to development.

Participants acquiring knowledge, skills and social competences are facilitated through:

- Experiential learning methods, including outdoor development processes.
- Comprehensive explanations of the formal and practical aspects of Outdoor Learning.
- First-hand experiences of outdoor learning and the provision of relevant psychological and pedagogical content.

The specifics of the above methods are described in the chapters of the POL [curriculum](#) available in English and the [handbook](#).

## Beneficiaries

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 [NEETs in recent search](#)

NEETs Women (aged 18-35)

Female NEETs, re-entrants, in long term search, unavailable due to family responsibilities, unavailable due to illness or disability, discouraged/disengaged young women.

## Countries

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 Norway

 Poland

## Education level and sector

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 [Adult education](#)

Non-formal education

## Level of implementation / Scope

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 [National level](#)

## Aims of policy/initiative

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The primary objectives of the POL project were to:

- Develop and implement experimental Outdoor Learning solutions to prepare NEET women to enter the labour market;
- Professional development for the Centre for Innovative Education (CIE) staff, including their mobility;
- Collaboratively create and analyse a POL model for NEET women suitable for adoption by labour market institutions;
- Improve the quality and adaptability of CIE's educational services; and,
- Promote strengthened bilateral relations between Poland and Norway in the education sector.

In more detail, the Outdoor learning approach seeks to facilitate the adaptation of knowledge, skills and social competences among participants:

### **Knowledge:**

**Understanding Outdoor Education:** Participants get to understand the nature and characteristics of Outdoor Learning and its role in the wider educational landscape. They gain insight into the social and theoretical conditions influencing outdoor learning processes.

**Synergy with well-being:** Participants explore entrepreneurial principles, adapting individual, local and community initiatives to the knowledge gained in the POL Programme. This knowledge encompasses the synergy of outdoor learning with human well-being in different areas of life.

### **Skills:**

**Critical thinking and problem solving:** Participants develop the ability to discuss, generate solutions and predict outcomes in Outdoor Learning. They critically articulate and interpret Outdoor Learning content, evaluating the existing knowledge landscape.

**Communication and planning:** Developing skills to engage in dialogue, participants communicate effectively and plan and organise Outdoor Learning tasks independently.

**Independent learning:** Participants acquire the skills to acquire new knowledge, gather information and improve skills independently using a variety of sources and technological tools while maintaining a critical perspective.

### **Social Competences:**

**Self-awareness and continuous learning:** Participants demonstrate an awareness of their knowledge and skills, expressing a clear need for continuous education and self-education.

**Leadership and collaboration:** Prepared to work both individually and in teams, participants initiate and manage various activities, involving specialists in the field studied.

**Accountability and prioritisation:** Participants take responsibility for tasks, demonstrating the ability to design, execute and prioritise tasks independently, recognising the importance of improving skills.

**Entrepreneurial mindset:** Participants understand the importance of lifelong learning and continuous improvement. They prioritise goals and approach tasks with an entrepreneurial mindset.

**Effective communication:** Participants communicate instructions clearly, using positive

reinforcement and rules-based communication strategies.

**Ethical and open-minded:** Participants justify and maintain an ethical and open-minded approach in Outdoor Learning and sustainability activities, considering social and public interests.

**Problem identification and resolution:** Participants identify and evaluate ethical problems and dilemmas, seeking optimal solutions. They demonstrate a readiness to enrich the learned content and activities independently.

## Features and types of activities implemented

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The project explored using an Outdoor Learning (OL) approach whether NEET women can be mobilised to engage in social and working life and set out to develop a sustainable model framework for use by stakeholders across Europe. The project focused on NEET women and provided stimulating and innovative means for them to develop life and work skills, thus enabling them to become active citizens in their regions. The programme involved 67 NEET women and 13 trainers and researchers, transferring experience from the Western Norway Research Institute (Norway) to Poland. The partners learned about the theoretical and practical aspects of the OL model and trained the trainers with the help of an expert partner.

They used the Outdoor Learning approach to create alternative, attractive and engaging ways to reach NEET women. Through the programme, participants identified strengths / talents, strengthened soft skills, built self-esteem / self-awareness, and strengthened attitudes towards employment. The NEET women built their career paths, learnt about changes in the labour market and prepared for their job search.

## Resources

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The amount of EUR 157,452 was funded by the EEA Fund of Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, and the amount of EUR 15,745 from the budgets of Centrum Innovative Education and Western Norway Research Institute.

Lead partner:

Centre for Innovative Education CIE (PL)

Donor Project Partner:

Vestlandsforskning (Western Norway Research Institute) (NO)

## Evaluation of the measure

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To ensure the success of the project, an evaluation methodology and recommendations were applied on a cross-sectoral / international level. This allowed the creation of guides and tools that were used to inform public authorities, regional / local authorities, and other stakeholders on how to apply the model in their regions.

The project has been positively evaluated and cleared by the Fund Operator. The evaluation is not publicly available.

## Evidence of effectiveness of the measure

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The project yielded significant results for the participants. Most of the 67 women who participated in the project significantly improved or changed their living conditions. After the project:

- 15 women returned to education (resuming studies, attending courses and training).
- 2 became CIE volunteers, collaborating on ongoing projects.
- 18 found employment.
- 11 retrained and began working in new fields.
- 4 started families and are soon to become mothers.
- 3 went abroad in search of work.

Only 11 women (less than 11% of participants) did not change anything in their lives and are not in contact with us. This means that over 89% of the participants significantly changed their lives and actively participate in social or professional life.

Achieving these results has long-term significance as the activation of NEET women contributes to reducing social exclusion and improving their professional and life prospects. The project contributed to the development of universal tools and methods that can be applied in various social contexts across Europe, enhancing its wide-scale impact. The effective activation of project participants demonstrates that Outdoor Learning methods are effective and can contribute to sustainable social development.

## Success factors

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Outdoor Learning remains an innovative but unfamiliar practice in many regions, despite being scientifically proven to be highly effective, diverse, adaptable, and sustainable over the long term.

It was crucial to complement the previously developed Outdoor Learning method with the Norwegian experience. The Centre for Innovative Education has been implementing Outdoor Learning as a method for working with different audiences, including NEETs, since 2017. So far, we have relied on the Scottish experience and the method developed by the University of Edinburgh. During the development of POL, we drew on both theoretical and practical Norwegian experience provided by the Western Norway Research Institute and modified / enriched the OL method. On this basis, we have developed a [manual](#) for outdoors trainers that can be used for working with female NEETs but can be used in whole or in parts to work with other audiences.

## Contact details for further information

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## Related intervention approaches

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### Helping female NEETs (re)integrate into education, employment or training



### Skills development



### Preparing NEETs to access green jobs

## Related resources

### Publications

#### Publications

##### **Polish Outdoor Learning Handbook**

*Curriculum for outdoor learning trainers*

The Polish Outdoor Learning (POL) handbook provides a comprehensive guide for Outdoor Learning (OL) trainers, covering the benefits, methodology, group dynamics, individual development, logistics, and safety considerations of the POL Curriculum.

Norway Poland

#### Publications

##### **Polish Outdoor Learning report**

*Project's final report*

This is the final project report of a good practice called the Polish Outdoor Learning (POL) project. The practice is based on the concept of Outdoor Learning (OL), a pedagogy that cultivates essential life skills and key competences for transformative learning, social inclusion, and diversity.

Norway Poland

