

**Title**

Gymkhana of unforeseen situations

**Source**

Method presented during the International Trainers Laboratory, October 2001 by Spanish team. For further information on the International Trainers Laboratory, please contact IJAB e.V., Kerstin Giebel, Heussallee 30, D-53113 Bonn, Tel.: 0228/9506223, Fax: 0228/9506199, E-Mail: [giebel@ijab.de](mailto:giebel@ijab.de).

**Field/Content**

Different kinds of "unforeseen" or "unexpected" situations: human and economic resources, activities, participants etc.

**Duration**

2 hrs.

**Participants**

12 - 16

**Aims**

- To reflect in groups on the solutions to possible problematic situations in an International Youth Exchange.
- To experience within an intercultural group the resolution process of hypothetical unforeseen situations
- To take away conclusions about the way to confront conflicts and make decisions in team work

**Materials / Resources**

Prepared descriptions of the programme setting and unforeseen situations, e.g.:

You are a monitors' team that has prepared an International Youth Meeting with these characteristics:

- Length: 12 days
- Number of participants: 60
- Nationalities: French, Italian, Spanish, and German people (from different cultures and religions)
- Number of monitors: 8
- Lodge: Youth Hostel with 70 places, good equipment, 25 km from the nearest village, in an appropriate area for sports, trips...
- Rooms: 4 and 8 bunks.
- Activities: Half-and-half, in the house (dynamics, workshops, playing...) and out (trips, bike, trekking...).
- Topic of the Meeting: Youth and Solidarity
- Language: English

## Unforeseen events

### *Participants:*

1. Fifteen Spanish participants don't speak English.
2. There are two confronting subgroups (by countries). The conflict started from gossip about a controversial football match played two days before the Meeting; the conflict has deteriorated to insults, threats and attempts to fight.
3. Some objects have disappeared (a watch, a camera, a prism); a mistrustful and suspicious atmosphere is growing between the participants.
4. We recognize some racist behaviors among the participants (they don't share the table in the dining room, don't want to share rooms, make contemptuous commentaries), although it is not something widely seen or shared by everybody.
5. The first night Italian and Spanish groups, who had met already at a previous Meeting, hide the clothing belonging to occupants of three rooms; this situation gives rise to a lot of complaints and mistrust; the initial atmosphere is conflictive and upsetting; even the monitors are held responsible for it.

### *Activities:*

1. The participants know all the activities we have prepared because they have been in other Meetings.
2. From the fourth day, the participants don't participate because of the "funny nights".
3. We have to review the timetable prepared for the different activities: cultural differences cause complaints from all the participants; one group thinks the activities are much too early, another group much too late, some people want to have "siesta"...
4. There is a bike trip planned for a complete day and there are two people with motor handicaps we have not taken into account.
5. While you are on a trip, the bus breaks down before lunch. For nearly two hours you are stopped in the middle of the road; it is 7 km to the next village. Then, the bus company informs you another bus will arrive in three hours.

### *Infrastructure / Equipment:*

1. It rains the whole time during the meeting.
2. Fifteen beds have been not booked.
3. The cooking service is on strike. The money for this part is returned to the team.
4. The material for the activities doesn't arrive. We think someone forgot it at the airport. Anyway, the five first days you don't have it to use.
5. The Youth Hostel has a particular and unexpected organization: there are only vegetarian menus and its timetable is coordinated with nature (wake up with the sun, go to bed when night comes...); it would appear that the administration considers the centre to be something like a meditation centre. All of this causes complaints from and confusion among the participants.

### *Human resources:*

1. The monitors don't speak English.
2. There are some differences of opinion between the monitors: some of them create a monitors' subgroup that doesn't collaborate and even interferes with the realization of the program.
3. Two monitors are very young and inexperienced: they identify too much with the participants; they act as though they were participants and don't collaborate as monitors.
4. The monitors have very different methods and ways of working that are incompatible. Some are very adaptable and compliant persons; some are very strict about the rules, punctuality and exact observance of the program.
5. Different circumstances came up unexpectedly (family, work, examinations...) resulting in there being only three monitors at the disposal of the Meeting; instead of that, you could have at your disposal the people village's help.

## **Preparation**

See above.

## **Methodology**

All the participants will be divided into 4 or 5 small international groups.

Each group has the task of organizing an International Youth Meeting. The various conditions and characteristics of the International Youth Exchange will have been previously defined. All the different hypothetical unforeseen situations will also have been planned ahead of time (see above).

Every small international work group will decide on the kind of unforeseen issue it wants to work on first. When this is resolved the group will work on another kind of unforeseen situation. Each group gets one situation of each kind.

The Gymkhana ends when all the groups have resolved all the different kinds of unforeseen situations. An exhibition of all the solutions could help the big group reflect and come to some conclusions.

## **Evaluation / Debriefing**

We propose a quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the different aspects of this activity as well as its aims and development. The way of taking decisions in (international) groups can be taken into consideration.

## **Variants**

If there is enough room for it in and outside the house there can be arranged a treasure hunt for the situations by giving the groups some hints and let them find the hidden sheets.