



**OUTWARD BOUND  
SLOVENSKO**



**OUTWARD BOUND  
GERMANY**



# **IMPACT STUDY FOR THE PROJECT: VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND MENTAL HEALTH**

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Presentation of the Project and Objectives

With this project, our organization, Outward Bound Slovakia (OBS), aimed to bring innovation into vocational education and training (VET) in Slovakia, focusing on the support and development of **life skills** in young people. We based our approach on the **LifeComp** framework – the European framework for personal, social, and learning-to-learn key competences.

Our goal was to develop life skills among VET participants, such as **self-confidence, teamwork, empathy, communication skills, and problem-solving abilities**. We sought to respond to the ongoing need for developing these essential skills, which enable VET students to successfully navigate personal and professional challenges, particularly in a society affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

We believe that young people in vocational education should be able to cope with **uncertainty, grow personally, build successful interpersonal relationships, and learn how to learn effectively**. All these factors contribute to their **resilience**, which became the primary focus of our project.

We aimed to enrich VET education in Slovakia with methods and approaches commonly used in **non-formal education** within the internationally recognized educational network **Outward Bound International (OBI)**. In this project, we were primarily inspired by our experienced partner from Germany, **Outward Bound Germany (OB GE)**. The project focused on the professional development of our staff, who were expected to become multipliers of these methods and approaches to support life skills development in VET students.

Our project mainly facilitated **knowledge transfer from Germany to Slovakia**, ensuring that VET schools in Slovakia benefited from innovative **experiential learning methods**. Through **train-the-trainer sessions, job shadowing**, and hands-on **outdoor training**, we aimed to enhance the **knowledge, skills, and attitudes** of staff members from both partner organizations.

The **impact study** serves as evidence of how **combining experiential outdoor education with vocational education (VET)** can better prepare young people for real-life challenges and improve their future **success in the job market**.

- **Primary target group:** Trainers/instructors from OBS and OB GE who led

outdoor experiential education programs for VET students.

- **Secondary target group:** Young people – students in VET programs in Slovakia and Germany who participated in outdoor educational programs between 2023 and 2024.

## 1.2. Definition of Key Terms

It is essential to define some key terms used throughout the study:

1. **Mental Health:** A state of psychological well-being in which an individual can handle daily life challenges, work productively, build healthy relationships, and contribute to society. Among young people, mental health includes **copng with academic pressure, identity formation, emotional regulation, social relationships, and adaptability.**

### Key factors influencing mental health:

- **Social relationships** (family, friends, community)
- **School/work pressure** (expectations, performance, uncertainty)
- **Self-worth and identity** (self-confidence, comparison with others)
- **Access to support** (availability of psychological help, social support)
- **Digital world** (social media, cyberbullying, comparison pressure)

Supporting young people's mental health requires **a safe environment, open communication about psychological difficulties, and access to preventive and support services.**

2. **Resilience:** The ability to **adapt to and recover** from difficult situations. Resilience is crucial for **copng with challenges faced by Generation Y and Z.** VET students can develop resilience through **practical experiences, social support, and a positive school environment** that fosters **social and emotional skills.**
3. **Support for Mental Health and Resilience:** Schools should implement **programs to strengthen mental health and resilience,** including access to **psychological support, inclusive learning environments, and social-emotional skills training.**
4. **Outward Bound:** An **educational approach** based on experiential learning and personal, social, and leadership development through **outdoor activities** (e.g., hiking, climbing, water sports, and survival challenges). These programs help participants build **self-confidence, teamwork, resilience, and responsibility.**
5. **Outward Bound International (OBI):** A global umbrella organization that coordinates and supports **national Outward Bound organizations.** It en-

asures program **quality, safety, and ethical standards** while promoting **experiential education values worldwide**.

### 1.3. Significance of the Impact Study

The research on impact, or the impact study, aimed to support the dissemination of project results and serve as our evidence of the influence of experiential outdoor education methods on the development of life skills and the promotion of students' resilience in the context of their vocational education and training (VET). In the impact study, we focused on how outdoor education programs implemented by organizations involved in the project, i.e., OBS and OB GE, can change or improve participants' ability to cope with their current mental health challenges.

Given the complexity of the mental health topic, we decided to focus specifically on supporting students' resilience and the skills related to its development. This narrowing of focus allowed us to examine more deeply the potential impacts of outdoor programs, with which we have many years of experience.

The primary target group of the impact study consisted of all stakeholders in the field of vocational education and training (VET), specifically the VET schools in Slovakia and Germany that participated in the Outward Bound SK and GE programs, demonstrating a clear interest in the development of life skills and the support of resilience among their VET students.

The secondary target group of the impact study included those stakeholders inspired by our approach and who, with its help, would be able to replicate our methods and approaches (e.g., other organizations working with VET youth, other vocational secondary schools, or potential employers of VET students). We believe that the impact study could convince potential readers to be inspired by our findings and, ideally, to implement outdoor education programs focused on life skills and resilience into vocational education and training.

### 1.4. Summary of the Methodology Used in the Impact Study

During the first year of the project (2023) and based on the ongoing educational programs, we agreed on the methodology for the impact study. In the second year of the project (2024), the assigned researcher conducted interviews, collected pre- and post-program questionnaires, and evaluated the collected data and information.

Data collection for the impact study was conducted among vocational secondary school students in Slovakia and Germany who participated in Outward Bound programs focused on resilience development. The research sample consisted of 70 students from Slovakia and 110 students from Germany.

## **Characteristics of the Methods Used**

The following methods were used to conduct the impact study:

### **Student Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was designed to assess changes in the life skills, abilities, and attitudes of VET students before and after completing the Outward Bound educational program. The questions focused on key aspects such as stress management, social skills development, empathy, and adaptability to change. The close alignment of the questionnaire with the program's objectives allowed us to capture the specific benefits of the project for students' personal and professional growth, particularly in terms of resilience support. The advantage of this method lay in its straightforward collection of quantitative data, which could be easily analyzed and compared.

### **Structured Interviews**

Interviews were conducted with a selected group of program participants (10% of the total number of students and their educators). The questions focused on evaluating students' strengths and weaknesses, their ability to manage stress, and the program's contributions to resilience development and mental health. The primary advantage of this method was the opportunity to obtain deeper qualitative insights that complemented the quantitative data from the questionnaires.

The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods enabled a comprehensive assessment of the project's impact. While the questionnaires provided statistically analyzable data, the interviews offered context and a deeper understanding of behavioral and attitudinal changes among students. This approach ensured balanced and compelling conclusions that support the importance and effectiveness of the project.





# II. TARGET GROUPS IN THE IMPACT STUDY

The primary target group of the impact study consisted of all stakeholders in the field of vocational education and training (VET), specifically the participating VET schools in Slovakia and Germany. These schools demonstrated a clear interest in developing life skills and supporting the resilience of their VET students through their participation in the Outward Bound SK and GE programs.

The secondary target group of the impact study included stakeholders inspired by our approach who, with its help, would be able to replicate our methods and strategies (e.g., other organizations working with VET youth, other vocational secondary schools, and potential employers of VET students).

A more detailed characterization of both groups follows, including their connection to the topic of resilience support.

## 2.1 Primary Target Group: VET Students – Participants in Outdoor Education Programs

### 2.1.1 Profile of VET School and its Students in Slovakia

In Slovakia, the study involved 70 second-year students from the C.S. Lewis Lyceum Secondary Vocational School, who participated in outdoor experiential courses organized by Outward Bound Slovakia.

C.S. Lewis Lyceum is a four-year secondary vocational school in Bratislava, focusing on three main pillars: entrepreneurship, digital technologies, and character development. The school offers a “Technical Lyceum – Informatics” program, which combines theoretical knowledge with practical skills, preparing students for the challenges of the 21st century. The curriculum includes an increased number of English language lessons and an emphasis on practical subjects. The Lyceum is part of the C.S. Lewis Schools Association, which has been successfully operating in Slovakia since 1994. Lyceum students represent a diverse group of young people with various personal traits and professional orientations.

**Professional Profile of a Lyceum Student:** The Lyceum offers various study programs focused on vocational education and training (VET). Students spe-

cialize in different fields, acquiring technical and practical skills necessary for their future professions, particularly in IT technologies and entrepreneurial thinking. The focus on vocational education supports the development of specific competencies and prepares students for the labor market.

**Personal Characteristics of a Lyceum Student:** A C.S. Lewis Lyceum student is curious, creative, and independent. They have an entrepreneurial spirit, enjoy tackling challenges, and are not afraid to experiment with new technologies. They demonstrate critical thinking, teamwork, and effective communication. They are responsible, goal-oriented, and strive for personal growth. With a strong emphasis on character building, they possess strong moral values, show empathy, and engage in their community. They have a positive relationship with English and digital technologies, helping them adapt to a changing world.

During adolescence, a period typical for secondary school students, identity formation and self-concept development occur. Students may experience feelings of alienation, search for meaning in life, and strive for self-fulfillment. Personality traits such as emotional stability, extroversion, and conscientiousness can influence their perception of life's meaning and their ability to handle challenges.

This was the first time Outward Bound Slovakia collaborated with this VET school, making it a mutual premiere. The Lyceum places significant emphasis on supporting students' personal development through its character-building pillar, which encompasses a wide range of activities and approaches (in addition to selected school subjects, this includes team-building activities and comprehensive psychological and special pedagogical support through a support team).

## 2.1.2 Profile of VET School and its Students in Germany

In Germany, the study involved 110 students from a VET school that, due to strict German legislation, preferred to remain unnamed. However, the school's characteristics are as follows:

The school achieves above-average results in VERA-8 comparative tests and final examinations, ensuring that its graduates are well-prepared for both the labor market and higher education. It offers a broad range of subjects, including natural and social sciences, languages, and arts.

The school focuses on the development of:

- **Subject-specific competencies** – high-quality preparation in individual subjects.

- **Interdisciplinary competencies** – cross-subject learning and work methods.
- **Social and personal competencies** – responsibility, collaboration, and self-awareness.
- **Media literacy** – critical thinking, analysis, and content creation in a digital environment.

The school systematically implements methodological concepts, such as learning development programs, information processing techniques, and effective work process strategies. Additionally, students participate in projects like scientific seminar papers and business simulations.

**Professional Profile of a German VET School Student:** Graduates of the school possess high levels of expertise across a wide range of subjects, achieving above-average results in final examinations and academic tests. They have well-developed analytical and critical thinking skills, a scientific and methodological approach to problem-solving, and effective information and media literacy.

Students are prepared for academic and professional challenges through:

- Interdisciplinary learning,
- Participation in scientific projects,
- Development of language skills (opportunities to earn certificates in English, French, and Spanish),
- Business simulations and internships across various industries.

**Personal Characteristics of a German VET School Student:** The school emphasizes the development of personal traits, which include:

- Responsibility and self-regulation in learning and life,
- Teamwork and social engagement,
- High adaptability and resilience to challenges,
- Digital and media literacy,
- Active citizenship and democratic thinking.

Graduates are characterized by a strong ethical awareness and a sense of social responsibility, which is reinforced by the school's culture and participation in extracurricular activities, international exchange programs, and volunteer projects.

Our German partner, OB GE, has been collaborating with this VET school for ten years, and this partnership is considered highly successful by the school's administration, parents, and students. In Slovakia, we saw this as an excellent foundation for achieving the project's goals, particularly in transferring know-how from Germany to Slovakia.

The school has multiple initiatives supporting mental well-being:

- **Advisory team** – trained teachers providing individual support,
- **Crisis intervention team (SKIT) and anti-bullying team (MIT)** – support in cases of mental health threats and conflict resolution,
- **School pastoral care** – a trained teacher offering psychological and spiritual support,
- **BUGIS evaluation** – assessment of psychological stress in the school environment.

### 2.1.3 Mental Health and Resilience of Vocational Secondary School Students in Slovakia and Germany

Research conducted during the 2016/2017 school year, focusing on the socio-emotional well-being and happiness of secondary school students, revealed differences between students in vocational schools and grammar schools. VET students exhibited different levels of socio-emotional well-being compared to grammar school students, with variations based on gender and place of residence.

A 2018 study involving 139 students from four vocational secondary schools in the Trenčín region examined the relationship between perceived parental behavior and students' mental health. The results highlighted the significance of family environment for young people's mental health.

Currently, children and youth in Slovakia face various social threats that affect their mental health. Rapid societal changes can lead to risky behavior, emphasizing the need for effective preventive measures in schools.

#### Key Issues Affecting Mental Health and Resilience in Generations Z and Y

##### 1. Increased Prevalence of Mental Health Issues

Young people are experiencing a rise in anxiety, depression, and burnout. The main factors contributing to this include increasing work demands, performance pressure, the blurring of boundaries between work and personal life, and constant exposure to digital content.

##### 2. Work-Life Boundaries

Generation Z recognizes the need to clearly define boundaries between work and personal life. They demand flexible working hours and reject the traditional 9-to-5 work model, demonstrating their values and expectations from employers.

### **3. “Quiet Quitting” Culture**

This strategy involves young people doing only what is necessary without excessive initiative to protect themselves from burnout. This phenomenon reflects their desire for balance and stress reduction in the workplace.

### **4. Emphasis on Life Goals Beyond Work**

Young people prioritize values such as self-worth and a meaningful life that is not solely defined by their career. Movements like FIRE (Financial Independence, Retire Early) illustrate their effort to achieve financial independence and focus on personal goals.

### **5. Digital Environment as Both a Stressor and Support**

Social media and influencer culture shape perceptions of reality, which can create pressure on self-esteem and identity. On the other hand, digital technologies provide opportunities for education and community building.

### **6. Reality Revolution and Technological Trends**

Virtual and augmented reality (VR and AR) introduce new ways of experiencing and interacting with the world. While these technologies offer opportunities for personal development, they can also deepen detachment from the real world and increase dependence on digital tools.

### **7. The Value of Relationships and Communication**

Phenomena like ghosting (the sudden termination of relationships without explanation) illustrate changes in interpersonal interactions, which can have emotional consequences and weaken the sense of belonging.

### **8. The Need for Support and Education**

Young people need support from educational institutions, employers, and families. It is essential to develop their stress management skills, emotional intelligence, and resilience to the pressures of modern life.

Vocational school students often focus on acquiring specific skills for their future professions. This practical approach to education can enhance their self-confidence and sense of competence, positively influencing their mental health. However, they may also face stigma or underestimation from society, which often prioritizes academic education. This can negatively impact their self-esteem and motivation. Additionally, vocational school students may feel uncertain about their future careers and financial stability, further affecting their mental well-being.

Direct data on the mental health and resilience of vocational school students in Germany is limited. However, general studies indicate that German students

face similar challenges as their Slovak peers, including school-related stress, performance pressure, and social factors affecting their mental health. The German education system emphasizes mental health support through various prevention and intervention programs.

Despite limited data, we can assume that vocational school students in both countries face similar mental health and resilience challenges. Factors such as academic pressure, social relationships, and the transition to adulthood are universal and affect young people regardless of geographical location. Differences may arise from distinct educational systems, cultural norms, and the availability of mental health support in schools.

Although direct comparisons between Slovak and German vocational school students are limited due to a lack of specific data, it is evident that mental health support and resilience development are key topics in both countries. It is crucial to pay increased attention to the mental well-being and resilience of vocational school students to ensure their healthy development and successful integration into society.

## 2.2. Secondary Target Group: VET Schools, NGOs, Employers

The secondary target group includes entities that directly or indirectly influence the education and employability of vocational education and training (VET) students in Slovakia. Collaboration among these groups is crucial for enhancing the quality of vocational education, fostering student development, and improving their labor market integration.

### 1. Vocational Education and Training Schools (VET)

VET institutions provide practical education in various fields, aiming to prepare students for professional careers or further studies. Collaboration among schools supports the sharing of innovative approaches and enhances the quality of teaching.

VET schools in Slovakia adopt diverse approaches to supporting students' personal development, mental health, and resilience, depending on the school's focus, available resources, and leadership.

- **Personal Development** – Traditionally, VET schools focus primarily on technical and practical education, with soft skills development (communication, teamwork, critical thinking) often occurring through informal activities, projects, or extracurricular programs. Some schools implement mentorship and personal growth programs, but their scope varies.

- **Mental Health** – Most schools have school psychologists or counselors, but their capacities are limited. Preventive programs (e.g., stress management, self-esteem, or relationship education) are conducted in cooperation with external organizations but are not always systematic.
- **Resilience** – Resilience to stress and challenges is mostly developed indirectly through internships, team projects, or sports activities. Some schools are beginning to intentionally support psychological resilience through self-development courses, experiential learning, or coaching.

Although progressive initiatives exist, a systematic approach to these topics is still lacking. The school's interest and the availability of external support programs play a decisive role.

## 2. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

NGOs support VET students by developing their skills, providing career counseling, and fostering social inclusion. Their programs complement formal education and assist students in transitioning to employment or further studies.

Slovak NGOs working with VET students recognize personal development, mental health, and resilience as key factors for young people's success in life and the labor market. Their approaches are often more flexible and innovative than those in traditional school systems.

- **Personal Development** – NGOs emphasize the development of soft skills such as self-confidence, communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving. They often use non-formal education, mentoring, workshops, and experiential activities.
- **Mental Health** – NGOs work to destigmatize mental health issues and create open discussions on stress, anxiety, and pressure management. They organize support programs, mental health workshops, and provide access to professionals.
- **Resilience** – NGOs strengthen youth resilience through experiential learning, volunteering, and community activities that teach them to handle challenges, adapt to change, and build inner strength.

NGOs often fill gaps that the school system cannot address, providing VET students with tools to successfully navigate personal and professional challenges.

## 3. Employers

Employers include companies and organizations with the potential to hire VET graduates. They seek qualified workers and often collaborate with schools on



dual education programs, internships, and vocational training. Their involvement enhances the employability of graduates.

Employers in Slovakia have mixed perceptions of VET graduates, recognizing both strengths and areas for improvement.

### **Strengths and Potential of VET Graduates**

- Employers value VET graduates for their technical skills and specialized knowledge.
- Graduates from technically oriented VET schools are in high demand.
- Their practical experience and expertise are crucial for many companies, reflected in above-average starting salaries, often exceeding €1,000 per month.

### **Weaknesses and Areas for Development**

- **Lack of Practical Experience** – Many employers hesitate to hire recent VET graduates due to insufficient practical experience. About 51% of companies have never employed VET graduates, and 21% have stopped doing so.
- **Limited Collaboration Between Schools and Businesses** – Only about 22% of companies collaborate with VET schools, indicating weak connections between educational institutions and the labor market. This lack of cooperation can lead to a mismatch between acquired knowledge and employer expectations.

Regarding mental health and resilience, available data do not provide specific insights into how employers perceive these aspects in VET graduates. However, in general, mental health support and resilience development are essential for successfully managing workplace challenges and adapting to changing job environments.

To improve the situation, it would be beneficial to strengthen collaboration between schools and companies, focus on practical student training, and support their mental health and resilience to better prepare them for labor market demands.



# III. RESEARCH FOCUS WITHIN THE IMPACT STUDY

## 3.1 Resilience and Why We Focus on It

For participants in VET (Vocational Education and Training), we aimed to develop life skills that enable them to successfully navigate various challenges in their personal and professional (academic) lives, especially in a society affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. We believe that young people in vocational education should be capable of handling uncertainty, fostering personal growth, building strong interpersonal relationships, and learning how to learn effectively. All these aspects contribute to building their resilience, which was the primary focus of our project.

Resilience—the ability to adapt and recover from difficult situations—is crucial for overcoming the challenges faced by these generations. Vocational school students can develop resilience through practical experiences gained during their studies, as well as through support from family, teachers, and peers. The school environment also plays a key role, as it should promote the development of social and emotional skills.

### Key Competencies and Skills Related to Resilience:

1. **Self-Awareness:** The ability to recognize and understand one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors. This self-knowledge is the foundation for effectively managing stress and emotional responses.
2. **Self-Regulation:** The ability to control and manage emotions, behaviors, and impulses in challenging situations. This skill allows individuals to remain calm and think rationally under pressure.
3. **Critical Thinking:** The ability to objectively analyze situations, identify problems, and seek effective solutions. It supports adaptability and flexibility in changing conditions.
4. **Social Skills:** The ability to communicate effectively, build and maintain relationships, and collaborate with others. Strong social connections provide support during difficult times.
5. **Optimistic Outlook:** A tendency to see the positive aspects of situations and believe in one's ability to overcome challenges. Optimism fosters perseverance and motivation.
6. **Coping Strategies:** The ability to use effective methods for managing stress, such as relaxation techniques, planning, or seeking support.

### 3.1.1 Selected Resilience Models

1. **Grotberg's Resilience Model** is based on three pillars: I have, I am, and I can, representing resources individuals use to overcome life's challenges:
  - *I have*: Refers to supportive relationships and environments that provide safety and stability. *Example*: A student who can rely on a teacher or classmates when facing difficulties, such as a challenging homework assignment.
  - *I am*: Involves internal values and beliefs that foster confidence and self-worth. *Example*: A student who recognizes their responsibility and ability to handle their duties, which strengthens their motivation.
  - *I can*: Includes problem-solving and communication skills. *Example*: A group activity where a student had to effectively collaborate with others to solve practical tasks.

This model provides guidance on utilizing both internal and external resources to navigate life situations.

2. **The 7C Model by Ken Ginsburg** identifies seven key areas that contribute to resilience development:
  - *Competence*: The ability to manage tasks and overcome challenges. *Example*: Students solving physical tasks during a course, which demonstrated their abilities and boosted self-confidence.
  - *Confidence*: Belief in one's abilities. *Example*: A student who successfully climbed a rock wall, realizing their strength and perseverance.
  - *Connection*: Strong relationships with family, friends, or the community. *Example*: Group activities that fostered a sense of belonging among classmates.
  - *Character*: Values and ethics that guide students in making responsible decisions. *Example*: Discussions about ethical choices in nature, such as environmental conservation.
  - *Contribution*: A sense that one can make a meaningful impact. *Example*: Helping organize group activities, which reinforced a sense of importance.
  - *Coping*: The ability to handle stress and adversity. *Example*: Outdoor activities simulating stressful situations, teaching students to remain calm.
  - *Control*: The belief that one has control over their life. *Example*: A student effectively planning their time to complete tasks.

3. **The PERMA Model by Martin Seligman**, a concept in positive psychology, describes five key elements that contribute to long-term well-being and happiness:

- *P – Positive Emotions*: Cultivating joy, gratitude, and optimism. *Example*: Practicing gratitude, mindfulness, and stress management.
- *E – Engagement*: Immersing oneself in fulfilling activities that create a state of flow. *Example*: Encouraging participation in activities that foster intrinsic motivation and growth.
- *R – Relationships*: Building supportive and meaningful social connections. *Example*: Creating supportive communities and healthy social ties.
- *M – Meaning*: Finding deeper purpose in one’s actions and feeling connected to something greater. *Example*: Helping individuals discover their values and personal mission.
- *A – Achievement*: Setting and reaching personal and professional goals. *Example*: Encouraging self-discipline, perseverance, and incremental success.

Seligman emphasizes the importance of building resilience by fostering positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and goal attainment.

## 3.2 Outward Bound Educational Programs

Outward Bound (OB) is an educational program that uses experiential learning in nature to develop participants’ personal and social competencies. Below is a summary of its methodology:

### Foundations of OB

- *Kurt Hahn’s Philosophy* – education through experience, emphasizing character, leadership, and community service.
- *Experiential Learning* – learning through direct experience.
- *Nature as a Teacher* – outdoor environments provide challenges and encourage self-reflection.
- *Holistic Development* – focusing on physical, mental, emotional, and social growth.

### Principles of OB

- *Challenge and Support* – activities are demanding but provide appropriate support.
- *Comfort Zone – Learning Zone – Panic Zone* – intentional exposure to challenges in the learning zone.
- *Reflection* – learning from experiences through discussions and feedback.
- *Collaboration and Team Dynamics* – emphasis on teamwork and social re-

sponsibility.

- *Self-Discovery* – fostering autonomy, confidence, and adaptability.
- *The Real World as a Classroom* – learning in authentic situations rather than simulations.

## OB Methods

- *Outdoor Expeditions* – extended journeys (hiking, kayaking, rock climbing) that build perseverance and teamwork.
- *Adventure Challenges* – rope courses, climbing, orienteering to overcome fear and build trust.
- *Problem-Solving Tasks and Team Games* – exercises for collaborative problem-solving.
- *Solo Nature Retreats* – individual reflective activities (e.g., solo time in the forest).
- *Community Service* – volunteer activities to support the community.
- *Reflective Circles* – discussions after activities to process experiences and apply lessons to daily life.

This methodology helps participants strengthen self-confidence, resilience, and teamwork skills.

## 3.2.1 OB Approaches and Principles in Mental Health Support and Resilience Building

- **Authentic Adventure** – OB creates unique outdoor experiences combining physical challenges with emotional and social learning.
- **Individual and Team Focus** – programs support personal development while emphasizing teamwork.
- **Learning through Experience** – OB employs a model of experiential learning involving framing activities, execution, reflection, and knowledge transfer.
- **Nature Immersion** – natural environments provide physical challenges and opportunities for mental renewal.
- **Progressive Development** – gradually increasing difficulty to build skills and confidence.
- **Reflection and Planning** – participants analyze experiences and set goals for improvement.
- **Empathy and Community** – fostering collaboration, empathy, and social responsibility.
- **Resilience Support** – OB programs enhance perseverance, stress management, authenticity, and self-confidence.

Outdoor experiential activities, such as those organized by Outward Bound In-

ternational, significantly impact young people's mental health, particularly vocational school students. These activities provide benefits like stress reduction, resilience building, improved social skills, personal growth, and burnout prevention. Integrating outdoor experiences into education can greatly enhance students' overall development and well-being.

## Outdoor Experiential Activities and Their Impact on the Mental Health of Vocational School Students

Outdoor experiential activities, such as those organized by the Outward Bound International network, have a significant impact on the mental health of young people, particularly vocational school students. These activities offer numerous benefits:

- **Enhancing Mental Health:** Spending time in nature and actively participating in outdoor activities contribute to improved mood, reduced stress, and decreased anxiety. Physical activity in a natural environment promotes the production of endorphins, leading to feelings of happiness and well-being.
- **Developing Resilience:** Experiential programs often include challenges that require participants to overcome obstacles and solve problems. Such experiences strengthen young people's ability to adapt to difficult situations, increasing their resilience and self-confidence.
- **Improving Social Skills:** Many outdoor activities focus on teamwork, communication, and building trust among participants. Students learn to communicate effectively, resolve conflicts, and collaborate to achieve goals—skills that are invaluable in both their personal and professional lives.
- **Encouraging Self-Discovery and Personal Growth:** Intense experiences in unfamiliar environments allow participants to better understand their strengths, weaknesses, values, and motivations. This process of self-discovery fosters personal growth and helps young people make informed decisions about their future.
- **Preventing Burnout:** Programs focused on mental well-being, such as those organized by Outward Bound Slovakia, provide participants with tools for managing stress and preventing burnout. Discussions and activities centered on mental health help young people recognize symptoms of burnout and learn how to prevent them.

Vocational school students can greatly benefit from these programs, as they provide practical experiences and transferable skills for their future professional lives. Integrating outdoor experiential activities into the educational process can therefore significantly contribute to the overall development and mental well-being of young people.

## 3.2.2 Connections Between Outward Bound Educational Programs and Resilience Using Resilience Models

Outward Bound International (OBI) educational programs are based on experiential learning in nature and are specifically designed to develop participants' resilience—their psychological endurance. This approach aligns with several resilience models, particularly:

### 1. Grotberg's Resilience Model (I HAVE, I AM, I CAN) and Its Connection to OB

- **Outdoor challenges** (e.g., climbing, wilderness survival) help students experience their own competence ("I CAN") by learning to solve problems in unfamiliar environments.
- **Support from teammates and instructors** ("I HAVE") builds trust in collaboration and mutual support.
- **Overcoming personal and physical challenges** ("I AM") strengthens resilience and self-worth.

**Example – Vocational School Student:** During a multi-day expedition, a student learns to cope with fatigue, fear of the unknown, and reliance on teamwork, realizing they are capable of more than they initially believed.

### 2. Ken Ginsburg's 7C Model and Its Connection to OB

- **Competence & Confidence** – Students overcome physical and psychological challenges, gaining confidence and problem-solving skills.
- **Connection** – Teamwork fosters relationships and a strong sense of belonging.
- **Character & Contribution** – Participants develop values like responsibility and solidarity, for example, by helping weaker team members.
- **Coping & Control** – Facing difficult situations (e.g., navigation in the wilderness, limited comfort) teaches students how to manage stress and feel in control of situations.

**Example – Vocational School Student:** A student learns to navigate in unfamiliar terrain without modern technology, gaining a sense of competence and control over their environment, which strengthens their self-confidence.

### 3. Martin Seligman's PERMA Model and Its Connection to OB

- **Positive Emotions** – Achievements, team support, and time in nature increase feelings of joy and success.
- **Engagement** – Full focus on physical and mental challenges fosters a state of flow.



- **Relationships** – Teamwork and mutual support create strong interpersonal bonds.
- **Meaning** – Participants often realize the personal significance of overcoming challenges and self-improvement.
- **Achievement** – Completing an expedition or overcoming a difficult task boosts self-confidence and intrinsic motivation.

**Example – Vocational School Student:** A student who successfully completes a physically and mentally demanding expedition experiences a strong sense of accomplishment and gains a new perspective on their abilities, positively influencing their approach to life’s challenges.

Outward Bound International programs support vocational school students’ resilience through challenges, teamwork, and self-development. Their methodology aligns with Grotberg’s “I HAVE, I AM, I CAN” model, Ginsburg’s 7C model, and Seligman’s PERMA model, creating a systematic approach to building young people’s psychological resilience.



# IV. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

## 4.1. Brief Description of Outdoor Educational Programs Implemented in Slovakia and Germany

Both programs were based on the principles of Outward Bound (OB) and employed OB methods described in the previous chapter. Despite adhering to international OB standards, each OB organization (school) has its own experiences, which shape the structure of its educational programs. An important objective of the project was also the transfer of know-how from Germany to Slovakia.

The educational program conducted in Germany lasted 10 program days and was designed for 110 VET students, who were divided into smaller groups of approximately 10–12 students each. It was a relatively demanding program with numerous expeditionary elements. The structure of the program aimed to provide students (participants) with opportunities to develop new skills in communication and teamwork. These skills helped them manage routine team tasks as well as more complex conflict situations. Additionally, the program strongly encouraged students' initiative and gradual assumption of responsibility for real tasks during the expedition (such as route and meal planning). A key factor in the program's success was the establishment of healthy relationships between OB Germany instructors and the students. School teachers also participated as members of the expedition groups.

The educational program in Slovakia lasted 5 days (2 days dedicated to student preparation and 3 expedition days) and was implemented for 70 VET students, who were also divided into similarly sized groups as in Germany. During the preparatory days, students received all necessary information and had the opportunity to learn or improve selected soft skills (communication, collaboration, conflict resolution, leadership) as well as hard skills (route and meal planning, shelter-building, first aid, etc.). Several activities during the preparatory phase were also targeted at fostering students' resilience. There was a gap of approximately 1 to 1.5 months between the preparatory and expedition phases, which students used to plan and prepare for the expedition. Even in this phase, they took on significant responsibility for their individual and team success and had to overcome various obstacles that strengthened their resilience.

During the following three expedition days, students had the chance to test both their physical and mental endurance in real outdoor conditions (such as persis-

tent rain or cold weather, and in some cases, insufficient equipment—e.g., inadequate footwear). Throughout the expedition, students had many opportunities to practice and further develop their soft skills, both in natural situations and through structured reflections led by instructors. Teachers or school staff also accompanied each group, acting as mentors alongside OB instructors. Thus, similarly to the German program, this created an ideal opportunity to foster healthy relationships between adults and students. Detailed information about the program (types of activities, schedule) is included in the appendices of this report.

## 4.2. Overview of Questionnaire Findings

Based on the above characteristics of both educational programs, it is evident that they were designed to develop students' life skills as well as to strengthen their resilience.

We hypothesized that the educational programs would lead to positive changes in both areas. To verify this assumption, we used questionnaires completed by students in both countries (the questionnaires contained identical questions to allow for comparison). Students provided responses on rating scales, comparing their skills and attitudes in various areas before and after completing the OB program.

### 4.2.1. Summary of Questionnaire Findings Among Slovak Students

The OB educational program brought significant positive changes in the attitudes and behaviors of high school students, with key improvements observed in their ability to manage stress, social competencies, relationship with nature, and sensitivity to others.

#### Key Findings from the Questionnaires:

##### 1. Improved ability to handle stress:

- The statement *“I handle stressful situations relatively well”* showed an increase in average response values from **4.98 to 5.93**.
- Similarly, *“It does not take me long to recover from stressful events”* showed a slight improvement (**5.38 to 5.64**).

##### 2. Social skills and empathy:

- Significant progress was observed in the responses to *“I am successful in social situations”* (**5.18 to 5.77**) and *“I can help others when they need it without expecting anything in return”* (**6.39 to 6.88**).

##### 3. Relationship with nature:

- The greatest improvement was recorded in nature-related questions.

Students reported a stronger connection to nature (5.54 to 6.2) and an increased importance of spending time in nature (5.64 to 6.21). Their respect for nature also grew (5.82 to 6.3).

#### 4. Self-confidence and motivation:

- Statements such as “*When I commit to something, I am confident that I will succeed*” (5.46 to 5.86) and “*I always treat others the way I want to be treated*” (5.73 to 6.05) indicated higher self-confidence and a stronger orientation toward positive behavioral models.

The findings were compared with selected resilience models (Grotberg’s model, the 7C model by Ken Ginsburg, and Martin Seligman’s PERMA model), leading to the following conclusions:

The educational program utilized methodologies that strengthened:

- **Competence:** Activities focused on practical problem-solving and adaptation in stressful situations.
- **Connection:** Emphasis on collaboration, empathy, and team engagement.
- **Character:** Reflections and practical activities aimed at self-awareness and motivation.

The improvements identified in the questionnaires suggest that the program effectively built students’ ability to handle challenges while maintaining a positive outlook on life. Additionally, the program effectively fostered resilience by enhancing self-confidence, improving interpersonal relationships, and strengthening students’ sense of connection to nature. This laid a strong foundation for their future mental well-being and adaptability. Educational programs of this type can serve as an effective tool for supporting young people in their personal development and resilience against stress and setbacks.

### Detailed Questionnaire Findings

These findings are presented to highlight the specific changes observed in students who participated in the program and to provide concrete examples of the program’s impact.

#### **Question 1: I handle stressful events quite well**

Before the course: The average response value was 4.98.

After the course: The average value increased to 5.93.

Students demonstrated an improved ability to cope with stress, which is a fundamental element of resilience. This improvement may be linked to outdoor activities focused on problem-solving and collaboration.

According to academic studies (Masten, 2014), frequent exposure to regulated stressful situations helps build recovery capacity.

**Question 2: I know that I have the ability to do anything I want**

Before the course: The average was 5.46.

After the course: The average increased to 6.02.

This increase suggests that the course enhanced students' self-confidence and intrinsic motivation. The ability to believe in oneself is one of the core traits of resilience, improving an individual's capacity to overcome obstacles.

**Question 3: I am successful in social situations**

Before the course: The average was 5.18.

After the course: The average rose to 5.77.

The course evidently strengthened students' social competencies, which are essential for building supportive relationships—an important factor in resilience according to the 7C model (Ginsburg, 2011).

**Question 4: I am capable of helping others when they need it, without expecting anything in return**

Before the course: The average was 6.39.

After the course: The average rose to 6.88.

Empathy and altruism were reinforced. According to studies (Siegel, 2012), regular group collaboration can foster a sense of purpose and social responsibility.

**Question 5: I think about the environment in my daily life**

Before the course: The average was 5.23.

After the course: The average rose to 5.79.

The increase suggests a positive impact of outdoor activities on environmental awareness, which is important for sustainable personal development.

**Question 6: It does not take me long to recover from stressful events**

Before the course: The average was 5.38.

After the course: The average increased to 5.64.

Students exhibit an improved ability to adapt after stressful events, indicating enhanced emotional regulation. Supporting these skills is crucial for long-term resilience.

**Question 7: When I commit to something, I am convinced that I will succeed**

Before the course: The average was 5.46.

After the course: The average increased to 5.86.

The ability to believe in one's own abilities increased slightly. This factor is key to developing perseverance and self-confidence.

**Question 8: I am competent in social situations**

Before the course: The average was 5.2.

After the course: The average increased to 5.52.

This increase suggests that the course supported the development of social behavior and effective communication skills.

**Question 9: When others are suffering, I put their needs before my own**

Before the course: The average was 5.52.

After the course: The average increased to 5.95.

An improvement in empathy and the ability to help others may be attributed to group activities that encourage altruistic values.

**Question 10: I take responsibility for caring for the environment**

Before the course: The average was 4.95.

After the course: The average increased to 5.55.

The increase suggests a rise in environmental awareness and responsibility.

**Question 11: When something bad happens, I can recover from it relatively easily**

Before the course: Average 5.18.

After the course: Average 5.48.

A better ability to recover quickly from adverse situations supports resilience and mental stability.

**Question 12: I believe that I can do it**

Before the course: Average 5.57.

After the course: Average 5.36.

This slight decrease might indicate the need for better reflection or an individualized approach to building self-confidence.

**Question 13: I communicate well with people**

Before the course: Average 5.36.

After the course: Average 5.82.

Improvement in communication skills is desirable for effective collaboration and relationship-building.

**Question 14: I am sensitive to the needs of others and help them contribute to my well-being**

Before the course: Average 5.29.

After the course: Average 5.66.

The course fostered sensitivity toward others and the ability to create mutually beneficial relationships.

**Question 15: I have a connection with nature**

Before the course: Average 5.54.

After the course: Average 6.2.

Improved connection with nature highlights the positive impact of outdoor activities on environmental values.

**Question 16: I usually get through difficult situations/times with little trouble**

Before the course: Average 5.14.

After the course: Average 5.45.

Improved resilience to stress indicates effective crisis-coping mechanisms.

**Question 17: I always treat others the way I want to be treated**

Before the course: Average 5.73.

After the course: Average 6.05.

This shift reflects strengthened moral values and mutual understanding.

**Question 18: Spending time in nature is very important to me**

Before the course: Average 5.64.

After the course: Average 6.21.

The course increased awareness of the importance of connecting with nature.



### **Question 19: It does not take me long to overcome failures in my life**

Before the course: Average 5.00.

After the course: Average 5.36.

The ability to overcome failures is one of the key factors of resilience.

### **Question 20: I have a responsibility to help others in need**

Before the course: Average 5.82.

After the course: Average 6.23.

Improved social awareness and engagement indicate a strengthened sense of responsibility.

### **Question 21: I always treat nature with respect**

Before the course: Average 5.82.

After the course: Average 6.3.

The course reinforced ecological values and commitments to nature.

## **4.2.2. Overview of Questionnaire Findings Among German Students**

Based on the results of a questionnaire completed by 110 German students, we identified significant changes in personal growth and resilience support.

### **1. Improvement in Stress Management and Recovery from Failure**

- **“I handle stressful events fairly well”**: increase from 4.84 to 5.75
- **“It does not take me long to recover from stressful events”**: increase from 5.0 to 5.67
- **“When something bad happens, I can recover from it relatively easily”**: improvement from 4.23 to 4.93
- **“It does not take me long to overcome failures in my life”**: increase from 4.51 to 5.15

**Resilience Connection:** Improving the ability to handle stress, recover quickly from failure, and build greater mental resilience are key aspects of resilience.

### **2. Increase in Self-Confidence and Perceived Competence**

- **“I know that I have the ability to do anything I want”**: increase from 5.0 to 6.07
- **“When I commit to something, I am confident that I will succeed”**: increase from 5.1 to 6.07
- **“I believe I can do it”**: significant increase from 5.64 to 6.41

**Resilience Connection:** Higher self-confidence and belief in one’s abilities allow for better handling of challenges and contribute to building resilience.

### 3. Improvement in Social Skills and Empathy

- **“I am successful in social situations”**: increase from 5.16 to 6.08
- **“I am competent in social situations”**: increase from 4.95 to 6.08
- **“I communicate well with people”**: improvement from 5.1 to 6.0
- **“I am sensitive to the needs of others and help them contribute to my well-being”**: increase from 6.03 to 6.44
- **“When others suffer, I put their needs before my own”**: increase from 5.21 to 5.74
- **“I am able to help others when they need it, without expecting anything in return”**: increase from 6.44 to 6.87

**Resilience Connection:** Social support and quality relationships are important protective factors in managing stress and building psychological resilience.

### 4. Increased Environmental Responsibility and Connection to Nature

- **“I think about the environment in my daily life”**: significant increase from 4.52 to 5.72
- **“I take responsibility for caring for the environment”**: increase from 4.44 to 5.26
- **“I have a connection to nature”**: increase from 4.93 to 6.08
- **“Spending time in nature is very important to me”**: increase from 4.89 to 5.92
- **“I always treat nature with respect”**: significant improvement from 5.36 to 6.34

**Resilience Connection:** A strong connection to nature supports mental well-being, helps manage stress, and promotes a healthy lifestyle.

Based on the questionnaire results, participation in the Outward Bound Germany program significantly strengthened participants’ resilience, particularly in the areas of stress management, self-confidence, social skills, and connection to nature. These findings can be linked to well-known resilience models (Grotberg’s model, Ginsburg’s model, Seligman’s PERMA model) as follows:

- **Improved social skills and empathy** suggest that participants felt more supported by others after the course and were better able to communicate and form relationships. Their ability to build quality relationships also improved.
- **A significant increase in self-confidence and belief in personal abilities**—participants gained greater trust in their ability to face challenges.

Higher self-confidence and better stress management contribute to greater well-being and positive experiences.

- **Better stress management and faster recovery from failures** indicate that participants adopted effective problem-solving strategies. The program also supported active learning, which increases the sense of flow.
- **Increased environmental responsibility and altruism** suggest a stronger perception of life's meaningfulness.

Practical experiences, challenges, and social interactions within the program enhanced students' ability to handle difficult situations and contributed to their long-term psychological resilience.

### 4.2.3. Comparison of Findings Among Slovak and German Students

The analysis of questionnaires completed by 70 Slovak and 110 German students provided insight into how the programs influenced their personal growth and resilience. Below, we present key findings, focusing on the most notable similarities and differences between the students.

#### Key Findings on Personal Growth and Resilience Support

##### 1. Improvement in Stress Management and Recovery from Failure

- **"I handle stressful events fairly well"**  
Slovak students: **4.98** → **5.93**  
German students: **4.84** → **5.75**
- **"When something bad happens, I can recover from it relatively easily"**  
Slovak students: **5.18** → **5.48**  
German students: **4.23** → **4.93**
- **"It does not take me long to recover from stressful events"**  
Slovak students: **5.38** → **5.64**  
German students: **5.0** → **5.67**

**Interpretation:** The program helped both groups improve their stress management. Slovak students started with a slightly higher ability to handle stress and recover, while German students showed relatively greater progress.

##### 2. Increase in Self-Confidence and Perceived Competence

- **"I know that I have the ability to do anything I want"**  
Slovak students: **5.46** → **6.02**  
German students: **5.0** → **6.07**

- **“I believe I can do it”**  
Slovak students: **5.57** → **5.36** (decline)  
German students: **5.64** → **6.41** (significant increase)
- **“When I commit to something, I am confident that I will succeed”**  
Slovak students: **5.46** → **5.86**  
German students: **5.1** → **6.07**

**Interpretation:** The program significantly boosted self-confidence in German students, while Slovak students showed a surprising slight decline in belief in success. This difference may be due to varying challenges or expectations after the course.

### 3. Improvement in Social Skills and Empathy

- **“I am successful in social situations”**  
Slovak students: **5.18** → **5.77**  
German students: **5.16** → **6.08**
- **“I am competent in social situations”**  
Slovak students: **5.2** → **5.52**  
German students: **4.95** → **6.08**
- **“I communicate well with people”**  
Slovak students: **5.36** → **5.82**  
German students: **5.1** → **6.0**
- **“I am sensitive to the needs of others and help them”**  
Slovak students: **5.29** → **5.66**  
German students: **6.03** → **6.44**

**Interpretation:** German students showed greater improvement in social skills, while Slovak students had relatively high values even before the program.

### 4. Strengthening Environmental Awareness and Connection to Nature

- **“I think about the environment in my daily life”**  
Slovak students: **5.23** → **5.79**  
German students: **4.52** → **5.72**
- **“I have a connection to nature”**  
Slovak students: **5.54** → **6.2**  
German students: **4.93** → **6.08**
- **“Spending time in nature is very important to me”**  
Slovak students: **5.64** → **6.21**  
German students: **4.89** → **5.92**
- **“I always treat nature with respect”**  
Slovak students: **5.82** → **6.3**  
German students: **5.36** → **6.34**

**Interpretation:** Slovak students had a stronger connection to nature before the program, while German students showed greater improvement.

## Key Similarities and Differences Between Slovak and German Students

### Similarities:

1. Both groups showed improvements in **stress management, self-confidence, social skills, and environmental awareness**.
2. The program helped both groups handle **challenging situations better** and **supported their resilience**.

### Differences:

1. **Greater increase in self-confidence** among German students (“I believe I can do it”: +0.77 vs. decline of -0.21 among Slovaks).
2. **Slovak students had a stronger connection to nature** and higher environmental awareness before the course.
3. **Social skills were higher among Slovaks before the program**, but after the course, German students showed greater progress in this area.

## 4.3. Evaluation of Interviews with Students and Teaching and Professional Staff of the Lyceum

The interviews were conducted with a selected group of program participants (10% of the total number of students and their teachers). The respondents were exclusively Slovak participants of the program implemented by OBS.

The questions focused on evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of students, their ability to cope with stress, and the program’s contributions to developing resilience and mental health. Our goal was to complement the quantitative data obtained from questionnaires with qualitative insights from the interviews.

### 4.3.1 Findings and Conclusions from Interviews with Lyceum Students

**Question 1: If you had to describe yourself and your classmates, what are your strengths, and what challenges do you face?**

#### Strengths:

- The ability to collaborate and help each other, especially in difficult situations. Students mentioned that “when someone is struggling, others help” or “when something goes wrong, there is always someone to fix it.”
- Quick ability to organize and distribute tasks when necessary.

- Students emphasized mutual support and willingness to overcome obstacles together, e.g., “we cooperate even when it’s hard.”

### **Challenges:**

- Inconsistent task completion: “Sometimes we divide tasks, but then we don’t follow through.”
- Conflicts arising from different personalities and reactions, often cited as a communication problem.
- Weak individual accountability for personal actions and responsibilities.

### **Student Quotes:**

- “I think our strength is that we stick together, even when things are tough.”
- “The problem is that sometimes things are done half-heartedly, or we agree on something, but it doesn’t get followed through.”

### **Recommendations Based on Findings:**

- **For OBS:** Focus on activities that strengthen individual responsibility within teams (e.g., team games emphasizing personal accountability).
- **For Schools:** Introduce more group projects with clear task division to encourage adherence to agreements.

## **Question 2: What topics in resilience and mental health are challenging for you or your classmates?**

### **Identified Issues:**

- The need to open up discussions about emotional expression, which is often seen as taboo: “Many boys see it as unmanly.”
- Stress from comparing themselves to classmates or social media images: “What we see on social media creates pressure on our self-esteem.”
- Fear of the future and uncertainty about life decisions after high school.

### **Student Quotes:**

- “It’s important to know how to talk about feelings, but it’s often hard.”
- “Social media shows us a perfect life, which makes us compare ourselves and feel less satisfied.”

### **Recommendations Based on Findings:**

- **For OBS:** Include more workshops on emotional expression and handling social media pressure.
- **For Schools:** Organize discussions and lectures on the impact of social media on mental health.

### Question 3: Did this program help you or your classmates build resilience?

#### Key Benefits of the Program:

- **Physical and mental resilience:** Activities such as hiking in difficult weather conditions helped students push their limits.
- **Learning to manage stress effectively:** “In difficult situations, we encouraged each other and laughed, which helped us handle the pressure.”
- **Reflection and emotional openness:** Evening discussions provided space for expressing emotions.

#### Student Quotes:

- “I pushed myself when I thought I couldn’t do it. This program showed me that I’m capable of more.”
- “The tough conditions taught us to act instead of feeling sorry for ourselves and to look for solutions.”

#### Recommendations Based on Findings:

- **For OBS:** Continue creating challenging scenarios that teach students stress management and resilience.
- **For Schools:** Encourage students to participate in similar outdoor programs that expose them to challenges beyond their comfort zone.

### Question 4: What from the program can you apply in your everyday life?

#### Practical Skills:

- Improved organization and time management.
- Greater emphasis on effective team communication.
- A problem-solving approach and improvisation in unexpected situations.

#### Student Quotes:

- “We learned that everyone can contribute their part and create something together.”
- “Practical things like packing and setting up camp are skills I will definitely use.”

#### Recommendations Based on Findings:

- **For OBS:** Offer more practical workshops simulating real-life situations.
- **For Schools:** Use project-based activities that develop practical skills and teamwork.

## Question 5: What support do you need from parents, schools, or other adults?

### Requests for Support:

- More programs that push students beyond their comfort zone.
- Recognition and appreciation of efforts and achievements by adults: “Sometimes a simple ‘you did well’ is enough.”
- Providing space for open communication between students and adults.

### Student Quotes:

- “I feel support from both parents and teachers, but more activities like this would help us.”
- “More class sessions where we can work together as a whole would be great.”

### Recommendations Based on Findings:

- **For OBS:** Provide opportunities for student feedback after the program so they feel heard and understood.
- **For Schools:** Introduce regular team-building activities and encourage positive reinforcement for students.

## 4.3.2 Findings and Conclusions from Interviews with Teachers and Professional Staff of the Lyceum

### Strengths of Lyceum Students:

#### 1. Ability to Collaborate:

- Students are capable of working together in groups and helping each other, especially in situations requiring collective effort. Examples include assisting with carrying backpacks or completing difficult tasks.
- They demonstrate perseverance and determination, particularly under pressure.

#### 2. Physical Fitness:

- Many students are athletically inclined and can handle physical challenges such as long hikes or enduring adverse conditions (rain, fatigue).

#### 3. Sense of Humor:

- Humor and the ability to lighten the mood are often present, helping to ease tension and create a positive atmosphere.

#### 4. Willingness to Sacrifice for the Group:

- Some students have shown an ability to adapt and work for the collective good, such as fetching water for others.

### Quotes from Teachers and Professional Staff of the Lyceum:

#### 1. Ability to Collaborate:

- *“I think the group dynamic is excellent for them. What they discovered*



*about themselves in this experience will stay with them moving forward.”*

- *“The boys even carried backpacks for the girls. It’s positive that they sometimes know how to make sacrifices.”*
- *“When the faster students had to wait for the slower ones or help each other, my hope is that this will translate into them becoming a better team.”*

## **2. Physical Fitness:**

- *“They seem to be predominantly athletic and capable.”*
- *“For those who had already experienced hiking, it was less of an adventure, but for those who hadn’t, it was a completely new experience.”*

## **3. Sense of Humor:**

- *“A strong quality they have is their sense of humor.”*

## **4. Willingness to Sacrifice for the Group:**

- **“Someone had to fetch water for two others, and they did it.”**

## **Areas for Development:**

### **1. Improving Conflict Resolution Skills:**

- Teachers note that students sometimes struggle with respectful communication and conflict resolution. They can be quick to criticize others without giving them a chance to explain why they are lagging behind.

### **2. Building Perseverance in Long-Term Efforts:**

- Students often expect immediate results and successes; otherwise, their motivation declines quickly. Developing their ability to endure long-term challenges and frustration is important.

### **3. Encouraging Empathy and Openness:**

- While empathy exists among students, it needs reinforcement, especially under stress. Enhancing open communication about personal needs and feelings would be beneficial.

### **4. Developing Self-Confidence:**

- Students could work on believing in their own abilities, particularly in difficult situations, and not getting discouraged by initial failures.

### **5. Expanding Practical Skills:**

- Skills like organization, planning, and taking responsibility are key for them. Programs like the one with OBS showed that practical activities such as cooking, setting up tents, and planning tasks significantly contribute to their development.

## **Quotes from Teachers and Professional Staff of the Lyceum:**

### **1. Improving Conflict Resolution Skills:**

- *“Sometimes they think more about themselves than the group and express this in their comments, especially when they feel someone isn’t contributing or is falling behind, without first asking why.”*

- *“Their challenge is to collaborate without arguing and to treat each other with respect.”*

## **2. Building Perseverance in Long-Term Efforts:**

- *“They need immediate success—if they don’t get that dopamine rush right away, they often give up.”*
- *“This experience showed them they can endure more than they thought and tolerate discomfort for a long time.”*

## **3. Encouraging Empathy and Openness:**

- *“I don’t know to what extent they are open with each other about their struggles... Greater openness could help.”*
- *“Empathy was there, but when they had to wait too long, it started to bother them.”*

## **4. Developing Self-Confidence:**

- *“I think they realized they are more resilient than they thought.”*
- *“When students overcome challenges, it can become an internal source of strength—‘I made it.’”*

## **5. Expanding Practical Skills:**

- *“They had to set up their tents, cook for themselves, and carry everything.”*
- *“Through this experience, the kids realized they had to work together to accomplish their goal.”*
- *“I think they learned some practical things, like how to pack properly or anticipate weather conditions.”*

### **Overall Perspective:**

Teachers’ insights support the conclusion that Lyceum students possess significant strengths but also have areas for development that can be systematically supported through appropriate activities and guidance.

### **Key Conclusions from Interviews with Teachers About the OBS Outdoor Education Program:**

#### **1. Impact on Resilience and Mental Health:**

- **Building Resilience:** Students faced challenges requiring both physical and mental resilience, such as long hikes, adverse weather, and independently managing practical tasks. This process helped them tolerate discomfort and strengthened their ability to overcome difficulties.
- **Self-Awareness:** Many realized they were more resilient than they had previously believed. The program gave them an opportunity to understand their limits and push beyond them.
- **Reset and Relaxation:** Being in nature and disconnected from technology positively influenced their mental health, improved focus, and deepened their connection to the natural world.

## Quotes from Teachers and Professional Staff of the Lyceum:

- **Building Resilience:**

*“This experience showed them they can endure more than they thought and tolerate discomfort for a long time.”*

*“I think each of them showed self-discipline. They overcame discomfort, gritted their teeth, and kept going.”*

*“Despite blisters and delays, they persevered and pushed themselves to reach the goal.”*

- **Self-Awareness:**

*“I think they realized they are more resilient than they thought.”*

*“When students overcome challenges, it can become an internal source of strength—‘I made it.’”*

- **Reset and Relaxation:**

*“I love seeing them walk for a long time without being on their phones. They get a chance to talk to people they wouldn’t normally interact with.”*

*“Just taking them into nature for three days helps them reset and see the world differently.”*

## 2. Developed Skills:

- **Collaboration:** Students helped each other (e.g., carrying backpacks), which reinforced teamwork and mutual respect.
- **Responsibility and Independence:** They had to cook, set up tents, and plan their activities, developing their practical skills and ability to take responsibility.
- **Communication Skills:** Teachers observed improvements in students’ ability to express their needs and set boundaries.

## Quotes from Teachers and Professional Staff of the Lyceum:

- **Collaboration:**

*“The boys even carried backpacks for the girls. It’s positive that they sometimes know how to make sacrifices.”*

*“When the faster students had to wait for the slower ones or help each other, my hope is that this will translate into them becoming a better team.”*

- **Responsibility and Independence:**

*“They had to set up their tents, cook for themselves, and carry everything.”*

*“Through this experience, the kids realized they had to work together to accomplish their goal.”*

- **Communication Skills:**

*“They were able to express what they were feeling, but when it lasted too long, it started to annoy them.”*

*“I think this helped improve their ability to communicate openly about their needs and set boundaries.”*

### **3. Potential Long-Term Effects:**

- **Self-Confidence:** Overcoming challenges can serve as a lasting source of internal strength.
- **Team Dynamics:** Strengthened relationships among classmates may contribute to better group cohesion back in the school environment.
- **Connection to Nature:** The program encouraged awareness of nature’s value and the importance of its protection.

### **4. Views on Continuity:**

- Teachers emphasized that a single experience has a limited effect unless it is followed up with further activities. Regular engagement and support from both parents and the school are key for long-term development.
- These findings highlight that the program had a positive impact on students’ resilience, practical skills, and interpersonal relationships, with its effectiveness increasing through continued involvement of the school and parents.



# V. SUMMARY

## OF KEY FINDINGS

### 5.1. Key Quantitative and Qualitative Impact Indicators

The impact study focused on evaluating changes in self-confidence, resilience, stress management, and social skills among vocational high school students who participated in Outward Bound educational programs. Data collection was conducted through questionnaires and interviews with students and teachers.

#### 5.1.1. Quantitative Findings:

- **Self-confidence** improved by an average of **10%** among Slovak students and **13%** among German students.
  - *Example:* During a mountain expedition, students had to navigate their route without technological assistance, which strengthened their ability to trust their own decisions and enhanced their confidence in their abilities (linked to Grotberg's model: *I Can*).
- **Stress management skills** increased by **9%** among Slovak students and **11%** among German students.
  - *Example:* Students were exposed to sudden changes during the expedition (e.g., worsening weather conditions), which taught them adaptability and emotional control (linked to Ginsburg's *7C Model: Coping*).
- **Social skills** improved in both groups, with the most significant progress observed in **cooperation skills (+12%)**.
  - *Example:* Group activities, such as shelter-building, strengthened communication and teamwork among students (linked to the *PERMA Model: Relationships*).
- **Increased awareness of environmental issues and a stronger connection to nature (+8%)**.
  - *Example:* Nature reflections during solo stays helped students understand their connection to nature and its importance (linked to Ginsburg's *7C Model: Character*).

#### 5.1.2. Qualitative Findings:

- Students reported an **increased sense of confidence** and greater belief in their abilities after successfully completing challenging tasks in the field.
  - This result correlates with the improvement in quantitative self-confi-

dence indicators (**+10% for Slovak students, +13% for German students**).

- After completing the program, students more frequently described **positive stress management strategies**, such as maintaining calmness and approaching problem-solving with composure.
  - This confirms the quantitative increase in stress management skills (**+9% in Slovakia, +11% in Germany**).
- **Greater openness in communication** and an **enhanced ability to collaborate effectively with others**.
  - This trend was also reflected in the quantitative results for social skills (**+12%**).
- Many students reflected on their **outdoor experiences as key moments for personal development** and their **understanding of life values**.
  - This qualitative feedback aligns with the **increased awareness of environmental and value-based topics (+8%)**.

## 5.2. Benefits for Individuals and Organizations

### 5.2.1. For Students:

#### **Increased mental and physical resilience through outdoor activities.**

- *Significance:* Physical challenges, such as expeditions, enhance students' ability to cope with stress, perseverance, and mental toughness. The Outward Bound program contributed to this by systematically exposing participants to challenges in a controlled environment, helping them learn how to handle difficult situations more effectively.
- *Example:* A night hike without artificial lighting reinforced self-control and courage (linked to *Grotberg's Model: I Am*).

#### **Development of practical skills, such as time management and problem-solving.**

- *Significance:* Effective planning and task organization are crucial for both personal and professional life. The OB program encouraged participants to actively solve problems, strengthening their ability to adapt to new challenges.
- *Example:* Planning the daily expedition route led students to take responsibility (linked to *Ginsburg's 7C Model: Control*).

### 5.2.2. For Parents

The family environment has a significant impact on the mental health of vocational high school students. Research has shown that perceived parental be-

havior is closely linked to young people's psychological well-being.

### Parents play an important role in:

- **Supporting mental health:** Involving parents in preventive programs can enhance their effectiveness.
- **Developing resilience:** Students who feel parental support handle stress and challenges more effectively.
- **Career readiness:** Parents can assist their children in making career decisions and engaging in internships or dual education programs.

Engaging parents in informal education programs like the one with OB Slovakia, particularly during the preparation and evaluation phases, helps build strong relationships between parents and vocational schools. Additionally, it offers parents new perspectives and approaches on how to support their children's healthy development in a society focused on performance and success.

### 5.2.3. For Schools

Vocational high schools in Slovakia face several challenges regarding students' personal development, mental health, and resilience. Supporting these aspects depends on the school's focus, available resources, and leadership engagement.

- **Personal development:** While vocational schools primarily focus on technical and practical education, soft skills (communication, teamwork, critical thinking) are often developed through informal activities and projects. Experiential outdoor education serves as a valuable example of such activities that can be integrated into vocational school programs.
- **Mental health and resilience support:** Students typically build stress resilience indirectly, through internships or team projects. Some vocational schools in Slovakia have school psychologists or counselors, but their capacities are limited. Preventive programs often involve external organizations like OB Slovakia, but they are not systematically implemented.
  - A **targeted collaboration** between vocational schools and organizations specializing in informal education can significantly contribute to **mental health prevention**.
  - The **active participation** of school staff in programs similar to the one analyzed in this impact study helps establish **healthy and functional relationships with students**, fostering a **positive school climate**.



## 5.3. Broader Societal Effects

**Higher student resilience and improved mental health** – Outdoor programs help students develop resilience, serving as an important **preventive factor** in mental health support.

- *Positive impact:* Students learn how to build their resilience, enabling them to withstand high-pressure environments focused on performance and success. They become better equipped to handle future challenges in an ever-changing world and labor market.

**Workforce readiness** – Outdoor programs help students develop work habits, handle unexpected situations, and work in teams, preparing them for professional environments.

- *Positive impact:* Students improve their **problem-solving abilities and ability to perform under pressure**, increasing their **employability**.

**Encouragement of an entrepreneurial mindset** – Outdoor education fosters **initiative, creativity, and the courage to take responsibility**, which are key entrepreneurial qualities.

- *Positive impact:* Increased self-confidence leads to greater initiative in **finding solutions and developing personal projects**.

**Improved teamwork in professional settings** – Interactive outdoor activities emphasize **collaboration, communication, and conflict resolution within groups**.

- *Positive impact:* OB graduates are **better prepared for teamwork**, contributing to more **efficient and harmonious workplace dynamics**.

**Better preparedness for dynamic professions** – Unpredictable situations in nature teach students **adaptability, courage, and flexibility**, which are essential for modern, fast-changing industries.

- *Positive impact:* Graduates become more **resilient to uncertainty and flexible in adapting to new work conditions**.



# VI. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

## 6.1 Long-term Positive Impact of Outward Bound Programs on Students

Outdoor programs, such as the one implemented by Outward Bound Slovakia (OB Slovakia) and analyzed in this impact study, are highly likely to have a long-term positive impact on young people and their future success in both professional and personal life.

Outward Bound programs use experiential learning in a natural environment to foster mental resilience, social skills, and overall personal development in young people. Their positive impact lies in providing authentic challenges that require participants' physical, mental, and emotional engagement. The following key areas support mental health and resilience building:

### 1. Supporting Mental Health

Young people today face high demands, school-related stress, uncertainty about the future, and the pressure of social media. Spending time in nature and engaging in physically and mentally demanding activities help alleviate stress and anxiety. Research shows that nature has a calming effect on the mind, reduces cortisol levels (the stress hormone), and promotes serotonin production, which improves mood.

#### How does it work in practice?

- **Physical activity:** Activities such as hiking, climbing, or rowing stimulate endorphin production, leading to better stress management and a sense of well-being.
- **Digital detox:** Disconnecting from mobile devices reduces the stress of constant comparison with others and promotes presence in the moment.
- **Overcoming challenges:** Participants face situations that require them to deal with uncertainty and pressure, helping them manage stress more effectively in everyday life.

### 2. Developing Resilience

Resilience (the ability to cope with stress and adversity) is a key skill for success in personal and professional life. Young people often lack exposure to situations where they must independently find solutions and manage discomfort.

Outward Bound programs create a safe environment where they can experience failure, learn from it, and return to problem-solving with a new strategy.

### How does it work in practice?

- **Gradual increase in difficulty:** Participants first tackle smaller challenges, building confidence for bigger problems.
- **Unexpected situations:** Expeditions in nature often bring unforeseen changes (bad weather, loss of orientation), strengthening adaptability and problem-solving skills.
- **Support and reflection:** Coaching and feedback from instructors help participants recognize their progress and learn from their experiences.

### 3. Improving Social Skills

Effective communication, teamwork, and conflict resolution are essential for both personal and professional life. Traditional school environments often lack opportunities for practical development of these skills. Outward Bound programs create an environment where teamwork is essential for success.

### How does it work in practice?

- **Collaborative problem-solving:** Every participant contributes to a team goal (e.g., building a shelter, making a fire), fostering responsibility and coordination skills.
- **Communication under pressure:** When facing stressful situations (e.g., changing routes due to weather), participants learn to express their thoughts effectively and listen to others.
- **Conflict as part of learning:** Differences in opinion and frustration in high-pressure situations teach participants how to handle conflicts and find compromises.

### 4. Personal Growth and Self-Discovery

Young people often lack opportunities for deep reflection on their values, strengths, and growth potential. Outward Bound programs create situations where they must rely on their own abilities and make critical decisions.

### How does it work in practice?

- **Pushing personal limits:** Physical and mental challenges (e.g., night hikes, solo challenges) help participants recognize their potential.
- **Independence and responsibility:** Each participant has specific responsibilities (e.g., route planning, meal preparation), promoting self-reliance and accountability.
- **Reflection and self-awareness:** Regular reflective exercises and group discussions help participants understand their reactions and behavior in challenging situations.

Outward Bound programs have a profound and lasting impact on young people by combining physical challenges with emotional and social learning. They create a safe yet demanding environment where participants acquire invaluable life skills. These programs strengthen mental health, increase resilience to stress, enhance teamwork, and help young people better understand themselves. In today's world, where flexibility, emotional intelligence, and problem-solving abilities are increasingly valued, these experiences provide an invaluable foundation for their future.

## **6.2 Practical Recommendations for Implementing OB Programs in VET Education**

Implementing an outdoor educational program focused on mental health and resilience development in collaboration with Outward Bound Slovakia (OB Slovakia) requires a systematic approach and thorough preparation. The following steps can help schools successfully integrate such a program:

### **1. Identifying the School's Needs and Goals**

- Assess the current state of students' mental health and resilience.
- Define specific objectives to be achieved through the OB program, such as improving teamwork, increasing self-confidence, or developing communication skills.

### **2. Contacting Outward Bound Slovakia**

- Reach out to OB Slovakia via their official website or social media profiles.
- Discuss potential collaboration, available programs, and how they can be tailored to meet your school's needs.

### **3. Choosing the Right Program**

- OB Slovakia offers various programs for schools, focusing on the development of students' soft skills.
- Work with OB Slovakia to select a program that best aligns with your students' needs and school goals.

### **4. Adapting the Program to the School's Specifics**

- OB Slovakia allows for program customization, whether it involves an expedition format (trekking) or a center-based (residential) program, or a combination of both.
- Collaborate on details such as program duration, the number of participants, and logistical aspects.

## 5. Engaging the Teaching Staff

- Inform teachers about the planned program and its objectives.
- Consider involving teachers in the program to strengthen student-teacher relationships and integrate acquired experiences into the school environment.

## 6. Preparing Students and Parents

- Organize information sessions for students and their parents to explain the program's purpose, benefits, and practical details.
- Ensure parental consent and inform them about safety measures and OB Slovakia's risk management approach.

## 7. Logistical Preparation

- Plan all logistical details in cooperation with OB Slovakia, including transportation, accommodation, meals, and necessary equipment.
- Ensure that all participants are informed about what to bring and how to prepare for outdoor activities.

## 8. Program Implementation

- Actively monitor the activities and engage in reflections and evaluations with students during the program.
- Encourage open communication and motivate students to share their experiences and feelings.

## 9. Post-Program Reflection and Integration of Experiences

- After the program, hold meetings with students and teachers to assess experiences and discuss how acquired skills and knowledge can be applied in school and personal life.
- Consider continuing soft skills development through additional activities or programs within the school's regular operations.

## 10. Long-Term Collaboration and Evaluation

- Maintain contact with OB Slovakia for potential future programs or consultations.
- Regularly evaluate the program's impact on students and the school environment to identify areas for further development and improvement.

By implementing these steps, schools can effectively integrate an outdoor educational program in collaboration with Outward Bound Slovakia, thereby supporting the mental health and resilience of their students.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: OBI Student Questionnaire – List of Questions

This questionnaire asks you to reflect on how you felt:

- **BEFORE** the Outward Bound course compared to how you felt
- **AFTER** the Outward Bound course.

**ANSWER THE STATEMENTS BASED ON HOW YOU FEEL NOW**, even if you felt differently at other times in your life.

Take your time and answer all the questions as honestly as you can.

**THIS IS NOT A TEST** – there are no “right” or “wrong” answers, and it is likely that everyone will have different responses.

### Instructions

Read the following statements.

Fill in your response for each statement.

For each statement, choose **one number on a scale from 1 to 8** that corresponds to how you felt **BEFORE** the OB course, and another number on the scale from 1 to 8 that corresponds to how you feel **AFTER** the OB course.

### Scale:

- **Not true at all** (1–2)
- **More false than true** (2–4)
- **More true than false** (5–7)
- **(Almost) always true** (7–8)

### Questionnaire Statements:

1. I cope with stressful events quite well.
2. I know I have the ability to do anything I set my mind to.
3. I am successful in social situations.
4. I am able to help others when they need it, without expecting anything in return.
5. I think about the environment in my daily life.
6. It doesn't take me long to recover from stressful events.
7. When I commit to something, I am confident that I will succeed.

8. I am competent in social situations.
9. When others suffer, I put their needs before my own.
10. I take responsibility for caring for the environment.
11. When something bad happens, I can bounce back quite easily.
12. I believe that I can do it.
13. I communicate well with people.
14. I am sensitive to the needs of others and help them contribute to my well-being.
15. I have a connection with nature.
16. I usually get through difficult situations/times with minimal problems.
17. I always treat others the way I want to be treated.
18. Spending time in nature is very important to me.
19. It doesn't take me long to overcome failures in my life.
20. I have a responsibility to help others in need.
21. I always treat nature with respect.

## **Appendix 2: Interview with Teachers and Students During the Expedition – List of Questions**

1. Please describe the students in this group. What are their strengths and any potential challenges you perceive?
2. What topics related to resilience or overall mental health do you see as problematic for these students?
3. How do you perceive the implemented program in relation to building students' resilience?
  - Did the program have the potential to help students build resilience or support their mental health?
    - If yes, where do you see this potential?
    - If not, why do you think so?
4. Which key activities from the program do you think could be useful for students in the long term?
5. What aspects of the program do you think students can immediately apply in their lives after completing it?
6. Could this program bring a long-term change for students in terms of resilience building or overall mental health?
  - If yes, in what way and how?
  - If not, why do you think so?
7. What further efforts do you think are needed from parents, schools, or other stakeholders?
8. What other skills (besides resilience) do you think the program supported in students?

## Interview with Students Participating in the Expedition

*(Two students from each group, preferably including one girl if possible)*

1. If you had to describe yourself and your classmates, what are your strengths and any potential challenges you notice?
2. What topics related to resilience or overall mental health do you find problematic for yourself or your classmates?
3. Do you think the implemented program had the potential to help you (and your classmates) build resilience or support mental health?
  - If yes, in what way and how?
  - If not, why do you think so?
4. What aspects of the program do you (or your classmates) think you can immediately apply in your life after completing it?
5. Which key activities from the program could be useful for you/your classmates in the long term?
6. In what areas would you need additional support from parents, school, other adults, classmates, etc.?
7. What other skills (besides resilience) do you think the program helped you/your classmates develop?

## Appendix 3: Summary of Questionnaire Results for Slovak and German Students

### Slovak Students vs. German Students

Question from the Questionnaire	Average Score BEFORE the Outward Bound Slovakia Course (Slovak Students)	Average Score AFTER the Outward Bound Slovakia Course (Slovak Students)	Average Score BEFORE the Outward Bound Slovakia Course (German Students)	Average Score AFTER the Outward Bound Slovakia Course (German Students)
I cope with stressful events quite well	4.98	5.93	4.84	5.75
I know I have the ability to do anything I set my mind to	5.46	6.02	5.00	6.07
I am successful in social situations	5.18	5.77	5.16	6.08

Question from the Questionnaire	Average Score BEFORE the Outward Bound Slovakia Course (Slovak Students)	Average Score AFTER the Outward Bound Slovakia Course (Slovak Students)	Average Score BEFORE the Outward Bound Slovakia Course (German Students)	Average Score AFTER the Outward Bound Slovakia Course (German Students)
I am able to help others when they need it, without expecting anything in return	6.39	6.88	6.44	6.87
I think about the environment in my daily life	5.23	5.79	4.52	5.72
It doesn't take me long to recover from stressful events	5.38	5.64	5.00	5.67
When I commit to something, I am confident that I will succeed	5.46	5.86	5.10	6.07
I am competent in social situations	5.20	5.52	4.95	6.08
When others suffer, I put their needs before my own	5.52	5.95	5.21	5.74
I take responsibility for caring for the environment	4.95	5.55	4.44	5.26
When something bad happens, I can bounce back quite easily	5.18	5.48	4.23	4.93
I believe that I can do it	5.57	5.36	5.64	6.41
I communicate well with people	5.36	5.82	5.10	6.00

Question from the Questionnaire	Average Score BEFORE the Outward Bound Slovakia Course (Slovak Students)	Average Score AFTER the Outward Bound Slovakia Course (Slovak Students)	Average Score BEFORE the Outward Bound Slovakia Course (German Students)	Average Score AFTER the Outward Bound Slovakia Course (German Students)
I am sensitive to the needs of others and help them contribute to my well-being	5.29	5.66	6.03	6.44
I have a connection with nature	5.54	6.20	4.93	6.08
I usually get through difficult situations/times with minimal problems	5.14	5.45	4.87	5.43
I always treat others the way I want to be treated	5.73	6.05	5.72	6.13
Spending time in nature is very important to me	5.64	6.21	4.89	5.92
It doesn't take me long to overcome failures in my life	5.00	5.36	4.51	5.15
I have a responsibility to help others in need	5.82	6.23	6.05	6.56
I always treat nature with respect	5.82	6.30	5.36	6.34



## Appendix 4: Transcripts of Interviews with Students

### Audio File: Lyceum-Naty Student, Class A.m4a Transcript

**OBS Instructor:** Okay, so this is a conversation with Naty, who was in a group with Miška, Aleš, and the class, during the program with Outward Bound Slovakia. So, Naty, if you had to describe yourself—your strengths, but also what you have in common with your classmates, and in what areas you're strong as a group—how do you see it?

**Lyceum Student:** Well, teamwork was great. We helped each other, and the guys carried things for us when we couldn't manage. We also took breaks when we said we were exhausted.

**OBS Instructor:** Hm.

**Lyceum Student:** Hm, they also carried our food, so I think mutual helpfulness was a big thing—we really helped each other.

**OBS Instructor:** Great. And this whole course was really about fostering resilience. What do you think are the areas where you as a group would still need to work on resilience?

**Lyceum Student:** I think managing time better. We were often late, and there were times when we acted unnecessarily slow. Like, we were supposed to leave at 6 AM, but we actually left at 10 AM.

**OBS Instructor:** Aha.

**Lyceum Student:** We should have been faster, like with breakfast—just half an hour for breakfast, then pack up, and help each other. At the beginning, for example, we didn't even know how to set up our tent properly. We had issues, and then when we got to the second meadow, we realized we were missing the tent stakes.

**OBS Instructor:** Hm.

**Lyceum Student:** We couldn't even set up the tent on our own. So, things like remembering essential items and preparing ahead of time are important.

**OBS Instructor:** Hm, alright. Thank you. Now, outside of this program, when it comes to topics related to mental health or resilience, what are the key issues that come up in your group?

**Lyceum Student:** Well, we talked about health concerns. Some people had medications, but not everyone brought theirs. For example, I didn't have magnesium with me at all.

**Lyceum Student:** We were a bit scared, but at the same time, we got to know each other better and connected with people we normally wouldn't have. It was a great experience.

**OBS Instructor:** Hm.

**OBS Instructor:** Okay, and you're already answering the next question: What did you learn from this experience? Was it useful for you and your group?

**Lyceum Student:** Yes, definitely. It was a great experience. At first, I didn't want to go, but if I hadn't, I'd regret it. It was really amazing—even though we got soaked, had to hike a lot, and were exhausted, in the end, it was worth it because we were all together and got to know each other better. There were classmates I had never really talked to before, even though we've been in the same class for two years.

**OBS Instructor:** Super. Do you think this program should continue or be incorporated into school activities in some way? Not necessarily with us, but maybe through teachers or the school psychologist?

**Lyceum Student:** At least once a year, I think every class should experience something like this.

**OBS Instructor:** For example?

**Lyceum Student:** It helps you recognize your own weaknesses as well as those of others, so you know how to support each other.

**OBS Instructor:** Hm.

**OBS Instructor:** And in school, for example, in ethics or religion classes, do you think these themes could be used?

**Lyceum Student:** Yes, we always have discussions on these topics. I think it's a good experience—we learn a lot from it.

**OBS Instructor:** Hm. But as far as I know, you already do a lot of teamwork activities at school. Was this different?

**Lyceum Student:** Definitely. It was different because we were out in nature, on our own. I can't even describe it properly.

**OBS Instructor:** Got it.

**Lyceum Student:** School projects are something else. In school, everything is predetermined—we have assignments we must submit. But here, we had the freedom to decide what to do and where to go. It felt like our own little world.

**OBS Instructor:** Hm. So the responsibility you had—the ability to make decisions and have control—was something you found valuable, right?



**Lyceum Student:** Yes, it was good. If everything had been pre-planned, it wouldn't have been the same. Even when we got lost once, it was a learning experience. It didn't bother me much—it was fine.

**OBS Instructor:** Okay, last question. Besides everything you've mentioned, do any other skills or abilities come to mind that you developed during this experience?

**Lyceum Student:** Learning to get along better, even when things don't go smoothly. There were some arguments, but in the end, we managed.

**OBS Instructor:** Aha. Hm.

**Lyceum Student:** And with food—sometimes there wasn't enough for everyone. We could have shared better.

**OBS Instructor:** So, better planning?

**Lyceum Student:** Yeah, so that everyone gets a fair share. For example, when we had pasta with sauce, some people took too much sauce, and others were left with just dry pasta.

**OBS Instructor:** Hm, I see. Right. Thank you very much, this was great. Thanks.

#### Audio File: [Girl 01. 11.6.24.m4a](#) Transcript

**OBS Instructor:** So, recording 1. How would you describe yourself and your classmates? What are your strengths, and what challenges or issues do you perceive?

**Lyceum Student:** Well, I think that our teamwork, in terms of our class, mainly depends on the problem we are facing or the specific situation we are in. Regarding this teambuilding activity, I believe we have been going through quite tough situations, and I think that how we handle them, how we listen to each other, and how we communicate has definitely improved our teamwork and the way we feel on this three-day trip.

**OBS Instructor:** Hm, thanks. What are some topics or aspects of resilience or mental health that you find challenging or problematic for yourself or your classmates?

**Lyceum Student:** I think that since each of us has a different personality, sometimes those personalities don't align. And when that happens, maybe we could try a slightly different approach to communication instead of immediately reacting with anger, ignorance, or a lack of respect when engaging in a discussion.

**OBS Instructor:** Hm.

**OBS Instructor:** Thanks. Do you think this program has the potential to help you or your classmates in building resilience or supporting mental health?

**Lyceum Student:** Considering that among my classmates—so, among people my age—mental health is a bit of a neglected topic, I believe that being here together definitely helps. And I think it also helps my classmates open up a bit about it. So, I believe they see a lot of positives in this, especially when it comes to talking about feelings, which they normally don't do much.

**OBS Instructor:** Hm. Great. Thanks. So, what do you think you or your classmates could take away from this program and apply in everyday life after it ends?

**Lyceum Student:** Hm, regarding things like anger, nervousness, or stress? I think a lot of people our age regularly experience stress. And I believe that what we're learning here is how to find something positive even in tough and stressful situations, to keep going, not to give up, and to actually enjoy the process.

**OBS Instructor:** Hm. Can you recall a specific situation? Maybe something that helped you as a group, like yesterday when it was raining heavily—what helped you stay together and remain strong as a group?

**Lyceum Student:** I noticed that it was mainly a good mood. When you're alone in a difficult situation, it's completely different from when you're all together. And honestly, it was raining really heavily—everyone was soaked, tired, and stressed—but somehow, we kept laughing. And that fact, that we were all in it together, was probably what kept us going.

**OBS Instructor:** Hm, thanks. So, can you name some key activities from this program that you think could be useful for you or your classmates?

**Lyceum Student:** Well, as I mentioned before, people my age—especially the boys—aren't used to talking about their feelings. They see it as unmanly, which I think would actually be healthier for all of us if they were more open about it.

**Lyceum Student:** Activities like when we had a tough hike or a challenging walk—when we were all exhausted—we sometimes talked about it at the end of the day. And I think that helped the guys to process everything and prepare for the next day. So, it's really just about having a guided conversation about our feelings, creating a space where they don't feel ashamed to express their opinions—opinions they might normally keep to themselves.

**OBS Instructor:** Hm, so something like an evening reflection, looking back at the day, and sharing feelings. Like what we've been doing here. Thank you. So, what kind of additional support would you need from parents, the school, other adults, or even classmates?

**Lyceum Student:** Well, in terms of our school, I can say that we have an open atmosphere and environment where we've learned to understand each other.

But a lot depends on how the teachers treat us—the ones who are supposed to guide us, support us, and teach us. When their approach is different, when they're more like friends rather than authority figures, the way we feel at school is completely different compared to if we felt like we were in the military or under strict control.

Of course, sometimes it's necessary to step in when things get out of control. But if we can build that kind of relationship with teachers, the whole experience is entirely different.

**OBS Instructor:** Hm, thanks. Now, one last question—what skills necessary for building resilience do you think this program has supported or could support in you or your classmates?

**Lyceum Student:** Openness among us. I don't want to repeat myself, but it really is a big issue. In our class, getting the guys to open up to each other is a challenge. And since there are fewer girls, that also has an effect.

**Lyceum Student:** Maybe being in these unusual situations has given them some kind of support, making them feel that support from others. And maybe that's exactly what they needed—and what we all need.

**OBS Instructor:** Hm. Right—different situations than usual, an open space. I also noticed mutual respect among you.

**Lyceum Student:** Occasionally.

**OBS Instructor:** Yeah, yeah, everyone needs a bit of space under the armor we all wear. Alright. Thank you very much.

### Audio File: Greta and Jakub – Team Leaders, Class O.m4a Transcript

**OBS Instructor:** So, you are students, and you have seven questions. How would you characterize yourself and your classmates? What are your strengths, and what challenges or issues do you perceive?

**Lycée Student 1:** Our strengths as a group are that we know how to collaborate. But sometimes? Our weaknesses are that we don't always agree on things, and in my opinion, we are all a bit lazy. For example, when we had to carry things, we were arguing about who should take what.

**Lycée Student 2:** Well, I think our strength is that we don't argue, so communication is quite easy. As for our weaknesses, I'd say that task distribution wasn't followed as strictly as we had planned. So maybe in the future, we should stick more to what we initially assigned.

**OBS Instructor:** Hm, do you perceive any issues related to mental health within your group or among your classmates? Anything problematic in that regard?

**Lycée Student 1:** I wouldn't say so, and even if there were something, I don't think it's a very serious issue for me.

**Lycée Student 2:** Well, everyone is different, but overall, there weren't any major differences visible. Of course, each of us coped with this experience differently—some felt it more intensely, some less.

**OBS Instructor:** The next question is whether this program helps you build resilience or mental toughness. Does it contribute to mental health? You can answer in a few words or just one.

**Lycée Student 2:** Yes, it definitely helps.

**OBS Instructor:** What from this experience do you think you can apply in your everyday life, based on these three days?

**Lycée Student 1:** I've learned how to prepare for a hike.

**Lycée Student 2:** Since I was mainly responsible for the organizational part, this experience helped me understand that if I ever need to organize a bigger group or an event, I would now know better what to do and how to go about it.

**OBS Instructor:** In what areas would you need more support from parents, school, other adults, or classmates?

**Lycée Student 1:** Support? Honestly, I don't think we'd need support from teachers. I believe we could handle it on our own if we went by ourselves. We are quite independent.

**Lycée Student 2:** Well, I think I would appreciate a few more tips from adults—for example, on what food to bring.

**Lycée Student 2:** Or what to take with us—like, our gas stoves all went out again yesterday because we didn't plan well, and then we were left hungry.

**OBS Instructor:** Yeah, well, next time you'll know. The last question is: What other skills, besides resilience, do you think were developed over these three days?

**Lycée Student 1:** Hm. Definitely teamwork and independence.

**Lycée Student 2:** Definitely resilience, communication, and practical skills—like simply helping someone if they're struggling or if something of theirs breaks down.

### **Audio File: ChalanM.m4a** **Transcript**

**OBS Instructor:** We have our last interview, Chalan 2M, so here we go. First question—if you were to characterize yourself and your classmates, what are your strengths, and what are some issues you face as a group?

**Lycée Student:** I think our strength is that we stick together. Even when someone had a problem, we didn't just leave them behind—we supported each other. That's definitely our strong point. But we do have some issues. Maybe sometimes we joke around too much and don't take things seriously. Like when we were preparing food. We were messing around, and then we ended up eating just instant noodles. So, I think that's the main issue.

**OBS Instructor:** Thanks. What topics related to mental health or resilience are relevant to you right now?

**Lycée Student:** Like for our class? Hmm, sure.

**Lycée Student:** In terms of mental health, I think right now the biggest thing we're dealing with is studying. I personally think a lot about the future—what comes after high school.

**OBS Instructor:** And when it comes to resilience, mental toughness—things like handling stress or anything else you see as part of resilience—what have you experienced?

**Lycée Student:** I think social media plays a big role. It makes it seem like everyone else has a great life, and you start feeling like yours isn't good enough. But that's not really true. I think comparing yourself to others is a big issue these days.

**OBS Instructor:** So, resisting that pressure of how you're "supposed" to be?

**Lycée Student:** Yeah. Yeah, and comparing yourself to others.

**OBS Instructor:** Thanks. Do you think this program has the potential to help you and your classmates build resilience or improve mental health?

**Lycée Student:** I think it helped physically, too. We had some challenges, but I think it grounded us—made us realize we can handle it. And in terms of mental health, spending three days mostly without our phones was actually nice. We were out in nature, which is something a lot of people don't get to do often. It was refreshing to disconnect from the city and everything else—to just live naturally.

**OBS Instructor:** In what ways do you think this helped strengthen your resilience—overcoming obstacles, for example?

**Lycée Student:** Yeah, definitely. Problem-solving, for one. Like when someone got blisters, we had to figure out how to help. I think resilience is about not giving up and pushing through. One of our classmates had issues with her shoes and was thinking about going home, but she made it to the end. And I think that's partly because we supported her.

**OBS Instructor:** So you leaned on each other when you were struggling?

**Lycée Student:** Yeah, we helped each other—both physically and mentally. That support was really important for everyone.

**OBS Instructor:** Can you give another example?

**Lycée Student:** Sure. Like, we never yelled at anyone if they were falling behind. We helped each other, encouraged each other, motivated each other. I think those were the key things.

**OBS Instructor:** What from this program do you think you'll use in your daily life once you get home?

**Lycée Student:** I'm not sure if it'll be immediate, but definitely planning. I'll think about it more seriously when I organize a group in the future.

**OBS Instructor:** So, planning—sometimes you need to pause and take things seriously?

**OBS Instructor:** Looking at the program as a whole, which key activities were the most beneficial for you?

**Lycée Student:** Hmm, I think the headcount system was interesting. We always knew where everyone was, and no one was shouting at each other—not even the adults. We were just naturally in sync. And also the evening talks at the end of the day.

**OBS Instructor:** Can you explain a bit more?

**Lycée Student:** I really liked it. The cooking part, too—it was different. When I go hiking with friends, we do things differently—we don't bring any canned food, so we just eat cold stuff. But here, it was different. We had real teamwork. Everyone had a task, carried their own food, and contributed to making sure we were all okay. We really worked as a team.

**OBS Instructor:** Thanks. Hmm, okay. In terms of mental health and resilience, in what ways do you and your classmates need more support from school and parents?

**Lycée Student:** Hmm, I really don't know. Maybe just reassurance? I don't know, but... yeah, just personal reassurance. Like, "Hey, you're doing enough," even if you don't have perfect grades. Just knowing that they see my effort—that's important to me.

**OBS Instructor:** So knowing that they see and acknowledge your efforts—that they trust you?

**Lycée Student:** Yeah.

**OBS Instructor:** Besides resilience, what other skills do you think this program helped develop?

**Lycée Student:** Definitely teamwork—that's something I've mentioned a lot.

And also thinking ahead. Maybe we didn't do that perfectly this time, but I think next time, everyone who was here will be more mindful of preparation.

**OBS Instructor:** Great. Would you like to say anything to the organizing team?

**Lycée Student:** Thank you very much for the expedition. Thanks for everything!

### Audio File: Ori And Mariya Group Recording 1\_student.mp3 Transcript

**OBS Instructor:** Okay, so this is the second interview with a student from Michal's group, and we'll move on to the first question, which is: If you had to characterize yourself and your classmates, what are your strengths and any challenges you perceive? Completely from your perspective.

**Lycée Student:** Conflict. I think the advantage was that there were only about eight of us, so there was a smaller chance of something happening, and it was also easier to come to an agreement in a smaller group. That was, in my opinion, our advantage. Then, some people were quite persistent, like certain leaders or individuals who would listen and push things forward, though I didn't feel like we needed to push excessively. Maybe once or twice. We moved forward quite smoothly, in my opinion, and that consistency lasted. As for crisis situations—hm? I don't know if there were any. I don't think we encountered any real crises. I believe we handled everything well.

**OBS Instructor:** And when you look beyond just the expedition, in your general environment—your friends and classmates—what are the strengths of your social circle, and what are some challenges? What do you think is a bit harder to manage? Try to reflect on it.

**Lycée Student:** I think one strength is that we all communicate quite well, so no one really puts others down or belittles them. I think that's a strong point. And then, areas where we don't particularly excel... I'm not sure. I feel like, in my age group, there's a bit of a problem with talking about how we feel and how we're doing. I don't know if that's related to hiking, but that's just something I notice.

**OBS Instructor:** Thank you. So, let's move on to the next question, which is: What topics related to resilience and overall mental health do you perceive as challenging for yourself or your classmates?

**Lycée Student:** Maybe talking about our feelings, because I think it's important to talk with other people. Even though I'm not the best at it, it's still important—it always helps at least a little. Hm, personally, I don't prefer it, but I think it's beneficial. Just everyday conversations about how you're feeling and what's going on with you. When someone else can share their perspective, it helps you feel less alone in what you're experiencing.

**OBS Instructor:** So, what you're saying is that it's important to do, right? And do you think most of your classmates or friends are comfortable doing it, or is it more difficult for them?

**Lycée Student:** It depends. I'd say it's about 50-50.

**OBS Instructor:** About 50 percent. Okay, so let's go back to the program—what we've been doing for the past three days. Do you think the program had the potential to help you and your classmates build resilience or support mental health?

**Lycée Student:** Hm, I think it definitely helped with resilience. It was interesting. For example, when I had to carry two backpacks—personally, that was a real test of my resilience. Maybe for slightly less than half of the hardest part of the hike, I carried two backpacks, and that was the closest I came to reaching my physical limit. But I think that if necessary, I could have done it again—maybe even twice—if there was an actual crisis situation.

**OBS Instructor:** Hm.

**Lycée Student:** So, in that sense, the program definitely built resilience. Not just for me—I think for everyone. A lot of us had never experienced anything like this before, so it was about pushing ourselves, and that's also connected to mental resilience.

**OBS Instructor:** Hm. And if someone had told you a few days ago that you'd be carrying two backpacks, would you have believed that you could handle it?

**Lycée Student:** Well, it's like... I could have swapped out the backpack, but my ego wouldn't let me—I wanted to carry it all the way up.

**OBS Instructor:** Yeah, yeah.

**Lycée Student:** So, there was an option, but I decided against it. I don't think it was unbelievable—it's not like I was fighting for my life, so it wasn't that extreme.

**OBS Instructor:** Yeah, yeah, I get it. And the next question is: What do you think you and your classmates can apply from the program to your lives immediately after it? What have you learned?

**Lycée Student:** Maybe, first of all, the practical aspects. On these kinds of trips, you need to be as practical as possible—packing efficiently, managing time well, handling all the activities like cooking, setting up tents, sleeping arrangements, and so on. I think that's the practical side. And then, maybe, some people might appreciate everything they have a little more—at least for a while—because in the forest, you don't have much. Not even a signal.

**OBS Instructor:** Hm.



**Lycée Student:** So, I think it's good in that sense too—it teaches you to be more modest. We have so much today, and we take it for granted.

**OBS Instructor:** Hm. And if you think about soft skills, what comes to mind?

**Lycée Student:** Hm. Team communication, overall collaboration, helping others—just generally organizing things as a team and making sure to lend a helping hand.

**OBS Instructor:** Hm, great. And since you mentioned communication, I'll follow up—what key activities from the program do you think could be useful for you and your classmates in the long term?

**Lycée Student:** Hm, it's possible that it brought us closer together overall. We spent—what—almost two full days together?

**OBS Instructor:** Great. And let's return to real life—what kind of support would you need from parents, school, and other adults to help you achieve your goals?

**Lycée Student:** Hm. I'm thinking.

**OBS Instructor:** Take your time. What could adults—whether parents, teachers, or friends—do to help you excel in what you do or what you want to do next?

**Lycée Student:** If it's about me or people my age, I think it's about creating opportunities for us. Understanding what young people need or want, and then creating opportunities accordingly. Whether it's this kind of program, sports, relationships—whatever it may be, just creating possibilities.

**OBS Instructor:** Great. And aside from resilience, what other skills do you think this program helped develop for you or your classmates?

**Lycée Student:** Well, resilience, right?

**OBS Instructor:** Yes, yes. Do you feel like you've grown in any way over these past few days?

**Lycée Student:** Other than resilience, I'm not sure if I've grown in anything else. Hm. Resilience was definitely the most significant. And, again, I'd say teamwork. I don't know what else.

### **Audio File: Ori And Mariya Recording 2\_studentka.mp3** **Transcript**

**OBS Instructor:** All right, so this is an interview with Alica, a participant from the class. Okay, we will have a few questions on the topic, mostly related to resilience. So, the first question is: if you were to characterize yourself and your classmates, what are your strengths and potential challenges?

**High School Student:** Well, our strengths are that we work well together, many of us are willing to help, and we have people who are simply smart. Then, there are also some athletes, so overall, it balances out. This allows us to function well—some people are great leaders, while others are good at helping.

**OBS Instructor:** Okay, and what challenges do you see?

**High School Student:** Sometimes we don't really act as a team. Some people, because they are better at something, tend to push ahead and don't consider those who might struggle more.

**OBS Instructor:** Right. You were probably thinking about this in the context of the expedition. Now, let's try to generalize a bit. What are some topics related to resilience and overall mental health that you see as challenges for yourself or your classmates?

**High School Student:** Definitely big changes when they happen. Since at school they often change groups and so on, change is the biggest issue. I don't think bullying or humiliation is a major issue in our group. I mean, it might happen a little, but it's not a big topic. So, I'd say changes and how we handle them.

**OBS Instructor:** And how does that affect you?

**High School Student:** I think everyone experiences it differently. Some people are obviously resilient enough that it doesn't affect them, while others struggle with it more.

**OBS Instructor:** Okay, so let's go back to the program we've been doing over the past few days. Do you think the program had the potential to help you and your classmates build resilience or support mental health?

**High School Student:** I think so. Maybe it was the beginning of building resilience. If someone hadn't started working on it before, this could have helped them start. And for others, it might have pushed them further. But I don't think the program suddenly made me resilient. It's more of a good starting point because, in the end, we all managed it. We're happy and satisfied, and I think everyone enjoyed it despite the fact that on the first day, it rained a lot, and we had to pull ourselves together and get through it.

**OBS Instructor:** How do you think those tough conditions contributed to the experience?

**High School Student:** At the very least, we had to push through it instead of just feeling sorry for ourselves—we had to take action. Instead of sitting around and crying because it was raining, someone immediately started making a fire to keep warm, and others started building a shelter.

**OBS Instructor:** Thank you. What do you think you and your classmates can take away from this program and apply to your everyday lives?

**High School Student:** I think, at the very least, that we shouldn't make hasty conclusions or give up too soon, but rather go into things with a positive mindset. Just go for it, and if things go wrong, deal with it then. Also, even if at first we didn't want to do something, we might later realize it was actually great and that we really enjoyed it.

**OBS Instructor:** Great, thanks.

**High School Student:** I think we've learned that we can function as a group if we create a system and learn from each other. And it only took us one day to figure it out. This means that in future class activities and projects, we'll work better together because we got to know each other and our strengths better.

**OBS Instructor:** Okay. And which key activities from the program could be useful for you and your classmates in the long run?

**High School Student:** I think task distribution. At first, for example, Leo and Misho didn't like that they had to wash dishes, but by today, they were doing it automatically. Others were immediately setting up tents. So, understanding that everyone wants the best for the group, and that task distribution is beneficial, was important. We didn't work individually—everyone contributed something. In the long run, this will help us not to think only about ourselves but about the overall outcome.

**OBS Instructor:** Okay. And in what areas would you need more support? Going back to real life, what kind of support would you need from parents, school, or other adults?

**High School Student:** I think... Well, I get a lot of support from my parents in everything, as well as at school. Since we don't attend a traditional school but a more progressive one, we are constantly supported. That's why they organize programs like this for us. I also think that when I feel down, they support me, so I feel like I already have plenty of support. I don't really need more because whenever I need something, my friends help me too. And I'm also willing to help others, so it creates a nice cycle.

**OBS Instructor:** Okay. But if you think about your surroundings—because I hear that you feel comfortable with the support you receive—how do you think adults could better support your classmates and social circle to help you grow?

**High School Student:** Probably by putting us in situations like this program. Because if we always stay in our comfort zones, we don't grow. So, putting us in these kinds of slightly stressful situations—like dropping us in the forest—could be helpful.

**OBS Instructor:** Okay, and this will be the last question. Besides resilience, what other skills do you think this program helped develop in you and your classmates?

**High School Student:** For example, for our leader, definitely leadership—helping others. He wasn't just a leader who ran ahead and sprinted, but he made sure to take care of everyone. I also think we developed real teamwork, learning to help each other and think about others, not just ourselves. Like on the rainy day, we all supported each other.

**OBS Instructor:** Hmm, great, great. Thank you.

### Audio File: Interview: Resilience – Student Miska Ales Group.m4a Transcript

**OBS Instructor:** Welcome! If you were to characterize yourself and your classmates, what are your strengths and the challenges you perceive?

**Lycée Student:** I'll start with the strengths. One of our strengths is that when we commit to something, we actually get it done, and we can organize ourselves quite quickly. We have clear leaders in the group, and everyone knows their role in the class, which is great. The problem, however, is that after some people put in a bit of effort, they don't want to do anything else – they just lie around and disengage.

**OBS Instructor:** Thank you. What are some topics related to resilience and overall mental health that you or your classmates find challenging?

**Lycée Student:** A lot of us are at an age where we experiment with different things, and in a way, we are harming ourselves because of it. Many people don't even know how to lead a healthy life, both mentally and physically. The issue is that people don't read.

**OBS Instructor:** Do you think the program had the potential to help you and your classmates build resilience or support mental health? If yes, in what ways? If not, why?

**Lycée Student:** Hmm, so in terms of mental health, do I think it helped? I'd say it depends on the individual. For me, it definitely helped. I got to take a break from everything—school, training sessions—even though I still had to exert myself physically, but for me, physical exertion is a form of mental relaxation. Also, being out in nature without a phone, completely disconnected, was a real break. As for resilience, we definitely strengthened it because we didn't have the most favorable conditions—it was uncomfortable at times—so it pushed us forward.

**OBS Instructor:** What do you think you and your classmates can immediately apply in your daily lives after the program?

**Lycée Student:** Definitely, when someone does something, I'll try to deal with it immediately instead of postponing it, because delaying things is awful. Also, the sense of structure we had to maintain here—we couldn't just randomly rush up a hill without a plan, or we'd exhaust ourselves. When it came to setting up

camp, everything had to be done properly; otherwise, I'd create discomfort for myself. So I'd like to apply that same mindset in real life—for example, when I finish eating at home, I'll clean up right away instead of leaving dishes on the table.

**OBS Instructor:** Thanks. Which key activities from the program do you think could be useful for you and your classmates in the long run?

**Lycée Student:** Definitely the fact that we all pushed our limits. If I ever feel unmotivated, especially in physical activities, I'll remember this experience. Or if I ever feel dissatisfied with something, I'll remind myself that I once slept under a wet tent because it wasn't good quality. So I think it's about resilience and also developing a sense of gratitude for what we have.

**OBS Instructor:** Thank you. In what ways would you like to receive more support from parents, school, other adults, or classmates?

**Lycée Student:** I think sometimes, receiving genuine praise from parents would be nice. In certain moments, it's really appreciated, but sometimes there could be more encouragement—a simple “You did a good job” would go a long way. And this applies to everyone, not just me.

**OBS Instructor:** What other skills, besides resilience, do you think this program helped you and your classmates develop?

**Lycée Student:** I'd say friendships, for sure. Before this, I hadn't really talked much with some of my classmates. Strengthening relationships is a big thing. Of course, we already know each other—we've been in the same class for two years—but because of the way classes are structured at our school, we usually work more in small teams than as a full class. This was an amazing opportunity to truly get to know each other. You really see what people are like, especially when we all have to endure tough conditions together.

### Audio File: Student 02.m4a Transcript

**OBS Instructor:** All right, let's get started. How would you describe yourself and your classmates? What are your strengths, and what challenges or problems do you perceive?

**Lycée Student:** Well, in our group, I think we are very physically capable overall. But I believe our challenge lies in communication and in how we react to a lot of things.

**OBS Instructor:** Could you be a bit more specific?

**Lycée Student:** For example, like this morning—if something happens that upsets someone or they disagree with it, they immediately start swearing. They

don't try to find out what actually happened; instead, they just react like, "Are you stupid?" or something like that. And then, from a small issue, it becomes a big problem. It gets all tangled up, and we struggle to solve problems that could otherwise be resolved with just a couple of words.

**OBS Instructor:** And what would you say are the things you do well? What are your group's strengths?

**Lyceum Student:** We definitely work well together as a team. Also, most of us are willing to step in and get something done if it's needed—even if it wasn't originally our responsibility or we don't know exactly how to do it. Even if we don't do it perfectly, at least we try.

**OBS Instructor:** What are some resilience or mental health-related challenges that you or your classmates find difficult?

**Lyceum Student:** Hmm... well, I think a lot of my classmates struggle when faced with tough challenges. They're not as mentally strong, so greater pressure can really throw them off. Personally, I can handle it, but I'd say that some people in our group aren't as mentally resilient.

**OBS Instructor:** Do you think a program like this has the potential to help you and your classmates build resilience and support mental well-being? And if so, how?

**Lyceum Student:** Yeah, I think it definitely helps both physically and mentally, and it gives us valuable experience. So I'd say yes, it makes sense. I've learned new things from a mental perspective—it's about testing how we react in difficult conditions. Do we panic? Or do we manage the situation? This experience can teach us how to better handle tough situations.

**OBS Instructor:** Could you give some specific examples of what you've experienced so far?

**Lyceum Student:** For instance, when it was raining heavily yesterday during our hike, I think that was really tough for a lot of people. Some might have thought, "I never want to go through this again."

**OBS Instructor:** Hmm...

**Lyceum Student:** Personally, it was a big experience for me. I'd never gone through something that intense before, and I definitely learned a lot from it. Now I know what it feels like, and I know how to handle it better in the future. But I think it also taught many people that you can still go hiking even when it's raining—you don't need perfect conditions to do something.

**OBS Instructor:** But when I look at the potential of this experience—thinking about yesterday's rain, when almost no one was complaining and you all kept going—do you see how this could build resilience?

**Lýceum Student:** Yes, absolutely, that was definitely part of it.

**OBS Instructor:** Okay, thanks. What do you think—based on what you’ve experienced here—could be applied almost immediately to your everyday life?

**Lýceum Student:** Leadership, for sure. I think I have the ability to lead, but I personally prefer working alone. So I wouldn’t say I’m the best leader, whereas some of my classmates are really good at it.

**OBS Instructor:** Okay. And are there any activities in this program that you think could be useful for you or your classmates in the long run, even if they’re not immediately obvious?

**Lýceum Student:** Definitely the activities that required teamwork. Also, the navigation exercises we did—I think it’s not just about using a map, but about trusting each other. The people leading have to do their best, and the rest of us have to trust that they will. This can improve our confidence and build mutual trust.

**OBS Instructor:** Hmm, thanks. And what kind of additional support do you think you and your classmates need from parents, school, or other adults to continue building resilience and mental well-being?

**Lýceum Student:** I don’t know... I think I’m already quite resilient. But of course, I can always improve. As for support, I’m not sure. I don’t have a close relationship with my parents, so I don’t really have those kinds of opportunities. And most of the other support resources I had, I’ve already used up.

**OBS Instructor:** Hmm... and is there any way that someone—whether it’s the school, a sports team, or another environment—could support you further?

**Lýceum Student:** Well, yeah, I do have some people who support me in what I do and encourage me to keep working on it. The fact that they let me pursue activities I’m interested in helps me develop myself.

**OBS Instructor:** And looking at the whole group, is there anything that parents or the school could do to provide more opportunities for building resilience and mental well-being?

**Lýceum Student:** Honestly, I think the school already does quite a lot. But maybe if we had more homeroom hours, where we could spend time together as a class—not just working in project teams—that could help. And parents... maybe if they got to know each other better. It might be interesting to have more events where parents could connect with one another.

**OBS Instructor:** And what skills, besides resilience, do you think this program has helped develop in you or your classmates?

**Lýceum Student:** Improvisation, creativity, resourcefulness, responsibility, and the ability to trust ourselves.

## Audio File: T- Ely and Pauli.m4a Transcript

**OBS Instructor:** So, let's start. If you were to characterize yourself and your classmates, what are your strengths and possibly any problems you perceive?

**Lycée Student:** And maybe weak points, that sometimes someone might be too shy to express themselves or something like that, but when they do speak up, we don't judge, and we try to help each other.

**OBS Instructor:** Feel free to add to what she says or repeat if you share the same opinion.

**Lycée Student:** Yeah. Well, I just think that when needed, we can communicate. And as for weak points, I think we often don't stick together enough.

**OBS Instructor:** Hmm, okay. The next question is, what are the topics in the area of resilience or mental health that you perceive as challenging for you and your classmates?

**Lycée Student:** I have no idea about topics or areas, but I don't know if it counts, but for example, when someone has some kind of health problems or something.

**OBS Instructor:** I mean more in terms of mental health. Like, do you think there's anything common among your group or class in terms of mental health challenges, emotions, or resilience? Maybe things that you've already learned to handle well?

**Lycée Student:** I have no idea.

**OBS Instructor:** That's okay, let's move on. Do you think this program had the potential to help you and your classmates build resilience and support mental health? If yes, in what way? If not, why not?

**Lycée Student:** I think it definitely helped with resilience. Even I pushed myself because there were moments in the program where I really thought I wouldn't make it, but then I somehow did, and I overcame it. And overall, this program brought us closer together, which was really great. During the trek, there were moments when we had to help each other, and I think it really made us stronger.

**OBS Instructor:** What do you think you and your classmates can take from this program and use in your daily lives afterward?

**Lycée Student:** Mainly communication, because maybe some people had trouble saying they were in pain because they were embarrassed to stop the group and talk about it. But if they had done so, it would have been better for everyone. And I hope that after this program, we'll be less afraid to talk to each other about difficult things, about feelings. Hopefully, we'll communicate better. And maybe we'll also be able to understand each other more easily.



**OBS Instructor:** Okay. Is there anything else from this program that might be useful for you in the long run?

**Lycée Student:** For me, definitely practical things I learned here. Like, I went camping for the first time, and this helped me learn better what to do. Also, when packing, to think ahead much more.

**OBS Instructor:** Alright. In what areas would you need more support from parents, the school, other adults, classmates, etc.?

**Lycée Student:** From parents, school, or other adults, I don't know. My parents support me in everything. At least I feel that way. But it's nice to have adults to talk to. Just knowing they're there for me, that's enough.

**OBS Instructor:** So, just having their interest when you need it?

**Lycée Student:** Yeah, they show interest when I need it. And the teachers at this school are really great. Maybe at other schools, it's not like this, but our school is amazing, and I feel like I can really talk to the teachers about what's important to me. And that's nice.

**OBS Instructor:** Okay, great. What other skills, besides resilience, has this program helped you develop?

**Lycée Student:** Skills... hmm. Maybe independence. For many people, definitely. Like, I am responsible for my own things – not just material things. Even though others can help, everyone is ultimately responsible for themselves. And also, maybe just not leaving trash lying around in the forest. And I think we also got to practice collaboration and teamwork.

#### **Audio File: T- student Patrik.m4a** **Transcript**

**OBS Instructor:** How would you characterize yourself and your classmates? What do you think are your strengths?

**Lycée Student:** I think we were a well-coordinated group. There were fewer of us, and I believe our strengths are definitely a good mood, good cooperation, and also perseverance.

**OBS Instructor:** What do you see as important topics or areas of resilience and overall mental health for you and your classmates?

**Lycée Student:** Many people nowadays sleep very little, and sleep is the most important thing for your health. I think we, young people, don't get enough sleep in general. Mental well-being and all of that come with a healthy body because a healthy mind is in a healthy body. I think we should take better care of ourselves first.

**OBS Instructor:** Great. Where do you see gaps in this area of mental health?

You mentioned that people don't sleep enough—why do you think that is? Are they overwhelmed?

**Lycée Student:** Yeah. Well, it's because social media is being pushed into their heads, and then there's blue light, so they don't want to go to sleep. Phones, energy drinks, and too much sugar and caffeine—they can't sleep. Overall, it's just the pressure of this era and technology.

**OBS Instructor:** Thank you. Now, let's talk about our program. Do you think a program like this has the potential to help build resilience for you and your classmates?

**Lycée Student:** Definitely. We definitely became more of a team, and I think we pushed our limits—some more than others. And moving forward, we definitely have more experience with what to do and what not to do. I think everyone is leaving with a positive heart and a smile on their face.

**OBS Instructor:** Great. Thanks. Now let's talk about practical use. What do you think you can apply from what we experienced over these three days, plus the preparation day, in real life—at school, in sports, in different areas?

**Lycée Student:** Well, I already knew some of this before the program because I was a scout. But for many of my classmates, they hadn't really spent much time in nature, so practical skills were useful for them—like how to set up a tent, for example. But for daily life, I think it's about managing your energy and saving it. And sleeping a lot.

**OBS Instructor:** And for example, from what we experienced yesterday and the day before, we had quite a bit of strain. There were uncomfortable situations, yet people kept going. Do you think anything from that could be applied to everyday life? Can you find a parallel?

**Lycée Student:** Definitely, our teamwork. Also, consideration for others—when I'm considerate towards others, they'll be considerate towards me as part of the group. For example, when we waited for Filip, I was really happy that we didn't split up or anything. We just helped each other, taking some of the weight from those who were struggling.

**OBS Instructor:** Yes, yes, exactly. Thanks. And could you point out some key parts of this program that stood out to you as the best or most important?

**Lycée Student:** I really liked the situations where we had problems because that's when we grew the most. When we really needed a break to talk about which way to go or when we were just sitting by the fire, talking together—without any phones or anything.

**OBS Instructor:** What do you think could be additional support from parents or school that could help you and your classmates develop more resilience?

**Lycée Student:** Our school already provides a lot of opportunities like this. But

a lot of people just decide not to participate. And I think that's a shame because the opportunities are there—it's just up to people to step into them. And I think that's key—we really have plenty of space for it.

**OBS Instructor:** I'm glad to hear that your school offers so many opportunities. Do you think that for those students who hesitate or don't want to step out of their comfort zone, parents could help encourage them? What do you think?

**Lycée Student:** I don't think parents can do much. It's more about classmates and friends because that's their peer group, their people. I think if the invitation came from them—like friendly encouragement—it might work. Something like, "Come on, it'll be fun, it's not going to be that hard." I'm not exactly sure how to put it, but something like that.

**OBS Instructor:** Or maybe sharing your experience—telling them where you've been, what you've experienced.

**OBS Instructor:** Are there any other skills, apart from resilience, that you think you and your classmates need to improve?

**Lycée Student:** I think we are constantly working on improving cooperation—both in school and with our teachers. And I think that's very important. It's something we can always keep improving—there's no real limit to it, right?

**OBS Instructor:** And I mean specifically you and your classmates—among yourselves. What do you think still needs some improvement? What could help you handle situations more smoothly or achieve better results?

**Lycée Student:** I think we need to be better friends. Something like that. It bothered me that a lot of people had headphones in their ears. And instead of listening to music, if we talked and listened to each other, we could understand each other better and be more friendly.

**OBS Instructor:** Thanks. One last thing—when you're back in class, not on a program like this but in your regular school routine, is there anything to improve? Skills like active listening, understanding what others are saying, or smoother, more natural communication?

**Lycée Student:** I feel like we interrupt each other a lot when we talk. And some people don't even get the chance to speak at all.

**OBS Instructor:** And what could help change that?

**Lycée Student:** There needs to be a good group atmosphere where people feel comfortable enough to speak about how they feel. And others should understand that and respect it.

**OBS Instructor:** Alright, alright, that makes sense. Thank you very much. I really appreciate it.



## Appendix 5: Transcripts of Interviews with Teachers

### Audio File: Emil - Teacher at the Lyceum.m4a Transcript

**Rudy\_Instructor OBS:** Okay, let's get started. We have eight questions. Please characterize the students in this group—what are their strengths, and what challenges or issues do you perceive?

**Emil – Teacher at the Lyceum:** Should I do it one by one or as a group?

**Rudy\_Instructor OBS:** However you prefer.

**Emil – Teacher at the Lyceum:** Hmm. In my opinion, they are quite cohesive because there isn't a particularly dominant personality. There are a lot of introverts, quite specific individuals, but they are rather united. That's it.

**Rudy\_Instructor OBS:** Do they also want to help each other?

**Emil – Teacher at the Lyceum:** Yes. But some would prefer to be in conflict with the group.

**Rudy\_Instructor OBS:** Great. Now, the second question—what are the topics related to resilience or overall mental health that you perceive as problematic for these students?

**Emil – Teacher at the Lyceum:** Hmm, regarding mental health, I'm not aware of anyone particularly struggling. In Africa... [inaudible]. In terms of resilience, for many of them, this was their first time going on a longer hike with a load on their back.

**Emil – Teacher at the Lyceum:** It was challenging for them, but they managed to push through. They helped each other, exactly.

**Emil – Teacher at the Lyceum:** One student wanted to give up, but the others took his things and supported him. Fantastic.

**Rudy\_Instructor OBS:** How do you perceive the program in relation to building students' resilience?

**Emil – Teacher at the Lyceum:** Hmm, I think they definitely pushed themselves, and now they have this experience, right? They realized they can handle more than they thought, or that they can endure discomfort for a long time. I believe most of them don't usually experience this kind of discomfort. There were two athletes among them.

**Emil – Teacher at the Lyceum:** Some of them had prior experience, but for the rest, this was an entirely new experience. So, I think they discovered something about themselves—that they are more resilient than they believed.

**Rudy\_Instructor OBS:** Do you see any potential in this program?

**Emil – Teacher at the Lyceum:** Hmm. Yes, I think it's great. Also, they don't usually have much space for this kind of experience, right?

**Emil – Teacher at the Lyceum:** I really like that when they walk for a long time and are away from their phones, they have a chance to talk. They might converse with people they wouldn't normally talk to because they're stuck in their usual social circles. There's nothing else to do but talk. So, I see great potential in this for building relationships. I also think it helps develop a connection to nature and challenges their usual comfort levels.

**Rudy\_Instructor OBS:** We were 90 percent without signal most of the time.

**Emil – Teacher at the Lyceum:** Yes, that helped a lot. I think for those who had already done some hiking, this was a much smaller experience compared to those who had never done it before. So, I'm not sure if it was perfectly balanced.

**Emil – Teacher at the Lyceum:** Maybe for those who are more experienced, a different challenge should be prepared. I'm not sure if this really built resilience for the athletes, for example.

**Rudy\_Instructor OBS:** Okay. From a long-term perspective, do you see any benefits in this?

**Emil – Teacher at the Lyceum:** I think this was great for the group as a whole. What they discovered about themselves and the conversations they had—they will carry that forward. Maybe they can build on these relationships and shared experiences.

**Rudy\_Instructor OBS:** Hmm.

**Emil – Teacher at the Lyceum:** They will probably remember this much more than sitting through hours of classes.

**Rudy\_Instructor OBS:** The key activity was spending extended time in nature. That's when they opened up.

**Emil – Teacher at the Lyceum:** Yes, and also the night under the stars, grilling food together, or experiencing rain together.

**Rudy\_Instructor OBS:** Do you think students will immediately apply something from this program in their lives?

**Emil – Teacher at the Lyceum:** Hmm, I don't know. Hugo is moving forward. Yeah, I don't know. I think they will immediately have a shared experience they can talk about. But what they gained isn't necessarily something immediate or visible or directly applicable. It's more about strengthened relationships and self-awareness. And also an increased awareness of nature and the world around them.

**Rudy\_Instructor OBS:** Hmm. Can the program lead to long-term changes in resilience regarding mental health?

**Emil – Teacher at the Lyceum:** Hmm.

**Rudy\_Instructor OBS:** If yes, in what way?

**Emil – Teacher at the Lyceum:** I wouldn't dare to say. I don't know if a one-time experience can make them more mentally resilient. I don't really think so, because there are so many opposing influences—like the constant social media comparisons and the weakening of real-life social relationships.

**Rudy\_Instructor OBS:** So...

**Emil – Teacher at the Lyceum:** The forces that weaken resilience are, in my opinion, much stronger.

**Rudy\_Instructor OBS:** So you've also answered the question—if not, then why not?

**Rudy\_Instructor OBS:** What further efforts are needed from parents, schools, etc.?

**Emil – Teacher at the Lyceum:** There should be continuity—these kinds of activities should happen regularly so it's not just a one-time thing.

**Emil – Teacher at the Lyceum:** The benefits should be built upon and further developed.

**Rudy\_Instructor OBS:** Last question—what other resilience-related skills do you think this program supported?

**Emil – Teacher at the Lyceum:** Cooperation, responsibility, independence. They had to pitch their own tents, cook for themselves, and carry their own things. All of that was great.

**Rudy\_Instructor OBS:** Thank you very much.

**Audio File:** [UcitelM.m4a](#)

**Transcript**

**Nika – OBS Instructor:** We have class M, an interview with the teacher. And the question is: Could you characterize the students in this group? What are their strengths and the challenges or issues you perceive?

**Nika – OBS Instructor:** You can add more later if something comes to mind. What are the topics related to resilience or overall mental health that you perceive as problematic for these students?

**Martin – Teacher and Special Educator at the Lyceum:** Well, uh, I don't know much about their mental health. And this event, uh, wasn't really challenging enough to test it, because the mental dimension is very broad. One boy gave up, and he had a valid reason—stomach issues. Others, especially the girls, showed quite good resilience, as they endured despite many blisters and de-

lays and managed to push through. They made it to the end. But in terms of depressive or anxious tendencies—it's hard to say. I only spent a short time with them, so I don't know how they function under pressure from assignments or personal or family difficulties.

**Nika – OBS Instructor:** Thanks. How do you perceive the implemented program in relation to building students' resilience? Does the program have the potential to help students develop resilience or support their mental health? If it does, in what way? And if not, why not?

**Martin – Teacher and Special Educator at the Lyceum:** I think this program has great potential because many of them haven't been exposed to this kind of pressure before—whether in terms of the physical effort required for the hike or the group dynamic, where the focus was not on the individual but on the team. And also the changing weather conditions. So, I firmly believe that this experiential program is highly beneficial for these aspects. Definitely very good.

**Nika – OBS Instructor:** So, in your opinion, key activities from the program could be useful for students in the long run?

**Martin – Teacher and Special Educator at the Lyceum:** I think the concept is well-designed. You walk, and you see how the weather reacts. You walk, and you see how the group dynamics develop. You walk, and you see how your health holds up—blisters, terrain, and so on. So overall, I believe that this concept of walking from one place to another is very effective and provides an opportunity to test resilience—to practice it and become aware of where I am, what I am experiencing emotionally, what I think about it, and how I react.

**Nika – OBS Instructor:** Hm. What do you think students can immediately take away from this program and apply in their daily lives?

**Martin – Teacher and Special Educator at the Lyceum:** Hm, I have high hopes that the group dynamics they experienced multiple times—whether when they had to wait for slower members, help each other, or when they divided roles in the group during the preparation phase—will carry over. My hope is that this will help them become a better team.

**Nika – OBS Instructor:** Can this program bring about long-term change for students in terms of building resilience or supporting their mental health?

**Martin – Teacher and Special Educator at the Lyceum:** If it were continuous, meaning that students had multiple experiential events like this, then definitely. But it also depends a little on us—on me—how we follow up on this experience, how we return to it. Maybe even in the school environment, we can simulate similar situations where students have to overcome challenges together.

**Nika – OBS Instructor:** Hm, thanks. What do you think needs further work from parents, the school, etc.? What should they focus on?



**Martin – Teacher and Special Educator at the Lyceum:** Well, if we are talking about resilience, then parents and schools should have some awareness of the students’ mental health—their psychological well-being—so they know where each student stands on an individual level. I believe that exposing students to certain challenges is a way to strengthen this resilience. Whether it’s the family or the school, experiential activities like this are definitely a good approach. And at the same time, they should engage with topics that interest these kids and draw them in.

**Nika – OBS Instructor:** Okay, thanks. What other skills do you think the program helped students develop?

**Martin – Teacher and Special Educator at the Lyceum:** Well, uh, definitely the ability to think ahead. I consider it a skill to be able to take care of oneself—for example, packing. Many students brought extra things, and their backpacks were too heavy, so organizing oneself properly is an important lesson. That includes choosing the right clothes—quality clothing matters. Then, I think relationships were strengthened—during the hike, when setting up camp, or preparing meals—these were moments they hadn’t experienced before. So again, I believe this was valuable for them. They also learned something about the weather—hopefully! We tried predicting when the rain would come, or at least guessing. So definitely, there are some practical takeaways.

**Nika – OBS Instructor:** Thanks. Is there anything else important that the organizing team should hear about this event?

**Martin – Teacher and Special Educator at the Lyceum:** Hm, I don’t feel like anything needs to be added. Thanks for the collaboration—it was a good experience.

**Nika – OBS Instructor:** Thanks to you as well.

### **Audio File: Lyceum Vanda, 11.6.2024.m4a Transcript**

**Miška – OBS Instructor:** New one, Vanda Hojnošová. So she was with the group Miška and Aleš. Or class A. So that’s why it doesn’t matter. If I were to characterize our group, what their strengths are, and possibly the problems—not individually, but more common aspects.

**Miška – OBS Instructor:** What do you perceive?

**Vanda Hojnošová – Psychologist at the Lyceum:** It seems to me that they are mostly athletically capable. Efficient. It is quite clear who has what role, and they try to fulfill it—some more responsibly, some less. Hm. They also try to consider a slower pace. But some...

**Miška – OBS Instructor:** Hm.

**Vanda Hojnošová – Psychologist at the Lyceum:** As the load increases, tolerance decreases.

**Vanda Hojnošová – Psychologist at the Lyceum:** Hm.

**Miška – OBS Instructor:** And any issues you noticed? Something that is common? Like?

**Vanda Hojnošová – Psychologist at the Lyceum:** What kind?

**Miška – OBS Instructor:** Hm, something that would be common, like “you and us.”

**Miška – OBS Instructor:** What topics in resilience or overall mental health do you perceive as important for our students, for this group? If anything comes to mind.

**Vanda Hojnošová – Psychologist at the Lyceum:** Mhm. Hm.

**Vanda Hojnošová – Psychologist at the Lyceum:** I don’t really see anything that is a problem for them, something they need to improve on, right?

**Miška – OBS Instructor:** Uh, not just what is problematic for them? Yes, yes. You’re right.

**Vanda Hojnošová – Psychologist at the Lyceum:** I don’t know to what extent they are open with each other. What each one is dealing with. Hm. So maybe more openness towards individual difficulties? Uh.

**Miška – OBS Instructor:** And maybe mutual empathy?

**Vanda Hojnošová – Psychologist at the Lyceum:** Yes.

**Miška – OBS Instructor:** Or just openness in talking about what they are experiencing?

**Vanda Hojnošová – Psychologist at the Lyceum:** Hm. I feel like they could express what they were experiencing. And the empathy was there—I can’t say it wasn’t. But as time went on, waiting for others or constantly adjusting the pace became frustrating.

**Miška – OBS Instructor:** Yeah.

**Vanda Hojnošová – Psychologist at the Lyceum:** Hm. There were difficulties with footwear. At first, I felt like they were more understanding, but then they became more detached.

**Miška – OBS Instructor:** Hm, yes, yes. Okay. Now, a question about the program we are experiencing together—how do you perceive it in relation to resilience building? Do you think it has potential to help and actually support resilience? The term “mental health” is mentioned, but I don’t have high expectations in that regard—it’s more about resilience building.

**Vanda Hojnošová – Psychologist at the Lyceum:** Yes, I think it has potential because they are experiencing new, challenging situations and have to cope with them in some way. That’s where the potential lies.

**Miška – OBS Instructor:** So you see it as new situations for them, and through that, resilience is built?

**Vanda Hojnošová – Psychologist at the Lyceum:** Hm.

**Miška – OBS Instructor:** Yeah, or even if they have experienced them before, it was to a lesser extent or individually, in a smaller group. And if we were to go into more detail, could you identify specific activities or aspects of the program that you found most useful for resilience?

**Vanda Hojnošová – Psychologist at the Lyceum:** Hm. I feel like what could be important or useful for them is realizing that they managed it. That they were able to spend two nights in the forest alone and navigate together.

**Miška – OBS Instructor:** That’s great. And now, looking a bit further ahead—what could be the medium- or long-term impact for them? Could it lead to any lasting change?

**Vanda Hojnošová – Psychologist at the Lyceum:** Hm. If it was really difficult for someone, but they still stayed in the group and completed the program, it could later serve as a source of inner strength—like, “I managed to get through this.”

**Vanda Hojnošová – Psychologist at the Lyceum:** Oh, and something else just came to mind from the previous question. Can I go back?

**Miška – OBS Instructor:** Of course.

**Vanda Hojnošová – Psychologist at the Lyceum:** Skills they can use immediately... I don’t know if you track this, but I think even practical skills, like cooking for themselves and setting up a tent.

**Miška – OBS Instructor:** Yeah, there was a funny moment—we asked if they cook at home, and someone said, “No, because my mom cooks.” And when we asked why, they said, “Because she enjoys it.”

**Vanda Hojnošová – Psychologist at the Lyceum:** Basic survival skills.

**Miška – OBS Instructor:** Hm, okay. And regarding resilience—what aspects should schools or parents focus on after this program to ensure it doesn’t just end with “We spent three days in the forest”?

**Vanda Hojnošová – Psychologist at the Lyceum:** More. So, regarding parents first—I would say they shouldn’t downplay the challenges their kids face. They shouldn’t say things like, “You don’t even know what real life is yet.” Instead, they should share how they dealt with similar situations and help their kids find additional resources if these are new challenges for them. They should

help them build as many support systems as possible to rely on during difficult times.

**Vanda Hojnošová – Psychologist at the Lyceum:** More broadly, giving challenges while also guiding them through the process—whether through school projects, personal challenges, mentorship, or similar.

**Miška – OBS Instructor:** Do they already have such opportunities today?

**Vanda Hojnošová – Psychologist at the Lyceum:** I don't know if it directly relates to mental resilience, but in some subjects, they can choose the level of difficulty of assignments. Hm. And since teachers know them, they can give them feedback like, "You have the potential to handle something more challenging." They also have longer-term school projects and internal and external mentors.

**Miška – OBS Instructor:** Hm. Last question, so we don't drag this out—besides resilience, what other skills could this program have supported? You already mentioned practical skills. Anything else?

**Vanda Hojnošová – Psychologist at the Lyceum:** Maybe interpersonal skills? Those who chose to be leaders got to experience what that actually means in this kind of situation. I don't know if they had led a group in such a setting before. Also, collaboration. Communication. The ability to express things openly—to say when they need to stop or talk about their needs.

**Miška – OBS Instructor:** Needs and personal boundaries, probably.

Vanda Hojnošová – Psychologist at the Lyceum: Hm.

**Miška – OBS Instructor:** Hm, great. One last personal question—did this experience give you anything?

**Vanda Hojnošová – Psychologist at the Lyceum:** Yeah, there were moments when I wondered if I could handle it—if I had taken on too much. And times when I was so tired that I didn't feel like talking much. But overall, it was an interesting experience—being with them informally. These informal events are great because when they are in a different environment and have more time, you can talk with them more freely. It was also a physical challenge for me.

**Miška – OBS Instructor:** Thank you very much.

### Audio File: Teacher 01.m4a Transcript

**Rastislav – OBS Instructor:** Interview with the teacher. Let's get started. Could you characterize the students in this group? What are their strengths, and what challenges do they face?

**Teacher at the Lyceum:** Hm, well. Their challenge is to cooperate in a way that avoids conflicts, to treat each other with respect. And can I say, not giving

up when things get tough? That's a big challenge for them. But they're good at eventually pulling things through in the end. Some of them can push themselves and work hard for the group, even though some might judge them for it.

**Rastislav – OBS Instructor:** Thank you. What are some topics related to resilience and mental health that you see as particularly challenging for these students?

**Teacher at the Lyceum:** I feel like they often get discouraged—kind of give up—over very small obstacles.

**Rastislav – OBS Instructor:** Can you specify, in what situations? During a project, for example? When they work together versus individually?

**Teacher at the Lyceum:** When they experience failure over a longer period, when they don't get that instant dopamine hit—like, "Oh, we succeeded in this one thing." That's when it gets tough.

**Rastislav – OBS Instructor:** So, more long-term struggles. When it's not immediate.

**Teacher at the Lyceum:** Yes, they really need instant success.

**Rastislav – OBS Instructor:** Got it. Thanks. And how do you see this program in relation to building student resilience?

**Rastislav – OBS Instructor:** What are your thoughts on a program like this?

**Teacher at the Lyceum:** I think the rain we experienced at the beginning was a real test of their resilience. On the way, they looked like they wanted to turn back. Some of them didn't even make it all the way with me. But it was great to see them when we reached the camp. Suddenly, they were saying everything was fine, that it wasn't such a big deal after all. They overcame the discomfort.

**Rastislav – OBS Instructor:** Thanks. Do you think this program has the potential to help students build resilience and support their mental health? How?

**Teacher at the Lyceum:** Definitely. Just taking them out into nature for three days helps them reset a little, see the world differently, and feel more connected to life.

**Teacher at the Lyceum:** Even something like cooking together helps, because it gives them a sense of responsibility for each other.

**Rastislav – OBS Instructor:** Responsibility. Thanks. Could you name or describe any key moments, activities, or aspects of this program that might help students in the long run?

**Rastislav – OBS Instructor:** And what do you think they can immediately apply to their everyday lives from what they're experiencing here?

**Teacher at the Lyceum:** Definitely responsibility. When we do projects, we

often face the issue where one person slacks off, and then it's unclear who is contributing and who isn't. Here, they might realize they really need to pull together to get things done.

**Rastislav – OBS Instructor:** Thanks. Do you think this program could create long-term change for students in terms of resilience and mental health? And how?

**Teacher at the Lyceum:** Yes, though I'm wondering whether three days have the same effect as a longer stay. Maybe a week would be even better. But I do think each of them experienced a moment of self-discipline within this group.

**Rastislav – OBS Instructor:** Did they act differently in certain situations?

**Teacher at the Lyceum:** They learned to push through in difficult moments. To grit their teeth and keep going.

**Rastislav – OBS Instructor:** Like yesterday, when they stayed positive and didn't give up—just kept going to reach the camp. Right? Thanks. What do you think needs to be done next by parents, the school, or others to support students in continuing to build resilience?

**Teacher at the Lyceum:** Maybe just to support them more, to really believe that they can handle things and that it's not too much for them—even when they complain.

**Rastislav – OBS Instructor:** Yeah.

**Teacher at the Lyceum:** Of course, in some situations, we need to recognize when it actually is too much. But sometimes, they just need to stick it out.

**Rastislav – OBS Instructor:** Yes, I agree. Thanks. And finally, besides resilience, what other skills do you think this program helps develop?

**Teacher at the Lyceum:** Cooperation.

**Rastislav – OBS Instructor:** Hm.

**Teacher at the Lyceum:** Responsibility.

**Rastislav – OBS Instructor:** Thank you very much.

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