

FINDING THE LOST PATHS - NATURE-BASED WORK FOR CULTURAL (R)EVOLUTION

Erasmus + Training course

21- 30.09.2024

“School in Nature” educational center

Gudevica village, Bulgaria



Co-funded by
the European Union

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APPLICATION FORM

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FINDING THE LOST PATHS

FINDING THE LOST PATHS is an international training course aimed to people who consider themselves - or strive to become - agents of **cultural (r)evolution and social transformation**. Humans who, with their daily actions, are models in their community and leaders of the awakening and change in the world. People who are ready to turn their look inwards and explore everything – light and dark - that is in their **hearts and souls**.

PROJECT RATIONALE

Reconnecting with nature is fundamental to human and planetary well-being and to the future of the global ecosystem. In the last 2000 years, many people have been increasingly alienated from their natural environment. Humans have forgotten the language of **Intuition, Mystery** and the wild world and replaced it with the language of science and technology. Fewer and fewer people turn to **the wisdom of Dreams, Natural cycles, the Cosmos and the Forest**, and we fear them more and more. Nature which created us has become for humans a warehouse for goods and things. By offering an eight day intensive immersion program, we are creating a space for connecting with the wisdom of Nature, the forgotten ways of intuition, vision, dreams and the deep human connection with nature.

THE NEED

"Modern" culture is based on anthropocentrism - the belief that the human is the highest creation and everything else is inferior to them. Even some people have the power of privilege over other people. Strongly associated with this belief is competition and the pursuit of power and supremacy. The modern education system develops in children and young people a desire to be "the best", to take part in competitive sports, knowledge assessments, tests, following the promises of success if you are better, faster, and richer.

The mainstream understanding of success is being more than others.

This belief is the basis of human development in recent millennia (fuelled by science, education, religions, esoterics and the overall social environment).

Many of the crises and challenges we face - wars, intolerance, genocide, ecological catastrophe, mass extinction of species, social inequality, violence are a result of the narrative of Superiority, and the same is the case for many of the unhealthy behaviors: consumerism, entitlement, conformity and materialism.

RECONNECTING IN THE WEB OF LIFE

Re-establishing the connection of humans with the natural world is an essential step in solving many of today's social, economical and health problems. Living connected with Nature means to be rooted in one's **deep purpose, somatic and emotional intelligence, wisdom of the heart and gratitude** to all living and non-living beings of the Cosmos where we fully belong.

Raising the awareness of youth and social workers, psychologists, and educators about the ecological role of humans and humanity is a guarantee for the ecological awakening of future generations. Thus breaking the chains of (patho)adolescent life-destroying materialistic economy and evolving into mature adult life-enhancing culture of environmental justice, spirituality, compassion, acceptance.



AIM OF THE PROGRAM

To provide innovative ways and methods to provoke **deep nature connection and eco-awakening**, and take steps towards personal transformation in a more wholesome and connected way. It will also aim at empowering the participants to offer these methods to the various groups and individuals they work with and **become agents of visionary change** within their communities.

OBJECTIVES

*To develop participant's knowledge in **nature-based human development** by learning and practicing the principles and models of eco-centric development;*

*To develop new skills, competences and ideas in facilitating the **development of deep nature connection**;*

*To provide an opportunity to experience a space of **safety, intimacy, and profound connection** in which personal exploration is encouraged and supported by community;*

*To engage and guide participants through innovative processes of **personal transformation** aiming at eco-awakening;*

*To inspire in the participants a **shift in values and worldviews** that will foster a deep nature connection, empathy to all creatures and a sense of oneness with the natural world;*

*To support participant's connection to their **sense of responsibility** for the environment and Earth's future.*

TOPICS OF THE COURSE

Personal transformation

practices for cultivating wholeness, deep nature connection, empathy and compassion, one's authenticity, gifts, and life purpose

Culture repair

transforming the individual to transform our cultures and learning tools and practices to build authentic connections in our communities

Nature connection

meeting nature as an ally to mirror our deeper selves and discover how to converse with it as a tool for personal revelation and cultural transformation

Sacred practices

rediscovering the benefits, purpose, and ways of ceremony and ritual

Authentic movement

introducing dancing and free movement as a tool to connect to the self and manage oneself authentically

Creativity

using drawing, painting, poetry, storytelling, singing, and chanting as means to express and comprehend complex emotions and thoughts

Personal practice

personal routine practices such as taichi, yoga, breathwork, meditation, etc. to cultivate a grounded and balanced way of being



PROGRAM ELEMENTS

THE WAY OF COUNCIL

CREATIVE EXPRESSION

PRACTICES FOR DECREASING THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

MODELS FOR NATURAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

LIVING AS A COMMUNITY

TENDING TO OUR RELATIONAL FIELD

BEFRIENDING THE NIGHT-TIME

NATURE-BASED METHODS

FASTING FREE AUTHENTIC MOVEMENT

PRACTICES FOR CULTIVATING WHOLENESS

SOLO TIME IN NATURE

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE

This program is for people who are working in the field of inclusion, social support, youth work, or mentoring. These could be **non-formal educators, youth workers, psychologists, schoolteachers, career counselors, wilderness guides, or anyone involved in supporting or guiding the development of a person.** Most importantly, the program is for people who have a hunger and readiness to look at their own personal transformation with a view to thereafter offer their gifts to others. Participants also need to have an interest or curiosity for nature and the wild outdoors as this will be a pillar method and they will spend a week immersed in a natural environment.

You can apply for this training course if you are resident of any **EU Member state (Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Spain, France, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Malta, Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden)** or any of the associated with the Erasmus + Programme countries (North Macedonia, Serbia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Turkey).

Participants must be over 18 years and have a good level of English as the entire course will be held in English.



SOBRIETY POLICY

We ask that you **refrain from using any consciousness-altering substance** (alcohol, cannabis, any drug, etc.) for the whole duration of the course. This is because the program will be offering nature-based methods of consciousness shifting for which your whole mental and physical capacities will be required.

By applying to the course, you commit to respect this agreement.

ONLINE PREPARATION

In order to make the most of the course, the selected participants will benefit from a preparatory process online. This will include articles to read and videos to watch to familiarise yourself with the theoretical background of the course, as well as nature-based practices to do at home in the weeks prior to departure.

By applying to the course, you also agree to engage in these activities if selected.

FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENTS

As we are committed to the sustainability of this work and the long-term transformational impact of the course we offer, we will ask each participant to **create at least one dissemination activity** in their home community (organizing a workshop, writing an article, etc.) after the course.

By applying to the course, you agree to this commitment if selected.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES AND DEADLINE

To participate, please fill in the application form available at this link: [APPLICATION FORM](#)

Dates of the course: 21 – 30.09.2024

Arrival day: 21.09.2024 before 12:00 (AM) in Sofia

Departure day: 30.09.2024 after 2:00 (PM) from Sofia.

The **deadline for application** submission is 30 June 2024 (included).

The selection results will be published on 10 July 2024.



CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS

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GUIDES TEAM



TONI MALLACH (Sweden) is a violinist, dancer and connection weaver. They are a curious human being, fascinated by communication: telling stories through dance and music, finding stories through improvisation theatre and listening to stories through community building practices such as deep listening and non-violent communication.

Toni dreams of a social and ecological regeneration of human society and planet Earth. They wish for humanity to find back into the ecological system. This dream led them to live in an eco-community and to become part of the Global Ecovillage Network. With the aim of spreading new ways of Being, they share their passion as a trainer and facilitator. Their life mission is to create spaces for love and laughter, for feeling and expressing, listening and holding and daring to step into the unknown.

Toni holds a masters degree in classical music performance from the Royal conservatory of Brussels and an Ecovillage Design Certificate from Gaia Education.



OGNIAN GADOULAROV (Bulgaria) is a passionate naturalist, rock climber, and expert in wildlife, birds, and forests. For 11 years, he has been working in the field of non-formal education and personal development.

Ognian supports people to unfold their full potential in life and to discover themselves. He is a guide with interests and experience in meditation, yoga, and energy practices. His favorite topics are personal development, self-discovery, responsible consumption, human-nature reciprocity. He lives as an activist for cultural evolution, re-sacredtising life and reconnecting people with more-than-human-world. As a participant in the Great Turning, he likes to be known as Fire of Life and The Tree Listener, dedicated to the Great work for fair future for all living and nonliving beings on Earth.

Ognian is part of Nature-based Wholing and Self-healing Wild Mind Training Programme (WMTP) at Bill Plotkin's Animas Valley Institute, Colorado, USA.

FINANCIAL AND PRACTICAL CONDITIONS

FINDING THE LOST PATHS is a project funded by the Erasmus+ Programme, thus all the activities, accommodation, and food are 100% covered by the EU grant. The travel costs will be reimbursed to the participants after the course in the amounts limit according to the Erasmus + regulations.

TRAVEL

If you plan to arrive earlier or leave later, your expenses for accommodation out of the days of the training will not be reimbursed by the organizers. An exception will be made in case you choose “green travel” and you need to spend the night before or after the course in Sofia to wait for your next connection.

The transfer from Sofia to Gudevitsa (approximately 280 km) will be arranged by the host organization by bus. The price of the bus for the whole group is 1400 euros for the return trip. Half of the price will be paid by the hosting organization from the project budget. The rest will be equally divided between all the participants and deducted from the travel reimbursement.

NON-REIMBURSABLE EXPENSES ARE:

- Taxi fees;
- Accommodation for extra days in Bulgaria (unless you choose “green travel” and have prior approval from the organizers);
- Insurance.

PARTICIPATION FEE

In order to make this training possible to the quality standard that we usually deliver, we need some extra income aside from the European grant that we got. For this we invite participants to contribute to the expenses with a participation fee. We have set a **sliding scale from 50 to 150€**. You will be free to choose your contribution according to your own personal financial possibilities and the value you see in this 8 days training program.

VENUE

The training course will take place in the Educational centre “School in Nature” in Gudevica village. The centre is situated in the mountain next to the Greek border in a thinly populated region. There is **NO PERMANENT WIRELESS INTERNET ACCESS** in the centre.

The educational centre “School in Nature ” is placed in an old school building surrounded by beautiful nature, high in the Rhodopy Mountains. There are a lot of nature phenomena around – Springs of Arda River, Uhlovica and Golubovica caves, Peak Kom and also natural reserves. Today only 18 people live in the village.

The place is **RURAL AND REMOTE**. So you need to be ready to live close to nature, in a small community far from the city civilization! You would enjoy the place if you are a person who likes the outdoors and country life.



Food

During the training rich and healthy VEGETARIAN food will be served. It will include products from local farmers, homemade cheese, butter and milk, and lots of vegetables and grains. The food will be prepared by a professional cook.

Please, inform us about any special diet and food allergies by stating it in the application form.



Accommodation

The accommodation will be in a village house (hut-type) with big common sleeping rooms. The beds are equipped with sheets, blankets, and sleeping bags. There are two bathrooms with hot water in the house. There is also an outdoor bathroom (with an amazing view of the sunset). The toilets in the center are 5 – 2 internal and 3 external compost ones. There is also a possibility to use tents and camping equipment for free.



The training is hosted by "Learning for Change" Foundation.

www.learningforchange.net

www.facebook.com/LFCFoundation

Who we are

"Learning for Change" Foundation was established in 2016 by experts in the field of education, training, and project activities. The main motivation of the team of the organization is to provide learning and transformational opportunities for youth.

The experts and professionals behind the organization work actively together in the field of Youth work designing and offering activities in different areas: personal development, motivation, youth projects and volunteering, interactive teaching and environmental education, adventure programs based on the methods of experiential learning and outdoor education, sustainability, responsible consumption, spiritual intelligence, training design, anti-globalization, social change, and Environmental rights.





Our **shared values** are: solidarity, social justice, the right to education and training, mutual cooperation, intercultural and interreligious dialogue, public and personal responsibility, peace, and sustainable development.

MISSION: To support young people in the search for their true life purpose by raising personal awareness, connection to nature, and building sustainable core values.

VISION: To live in a value-driven society that provides opportunities for natural growth and personal development through one's unique talents as an integral part of the global ecosystem.

Two main **areas of work** of Learning for Change are:

1. **Ecocentric (soul-oriented) personal development** – developmental psychological concept facilitating holistic personal growth;
2. **Nature-based experiential learning** – reconnection with Nature (inner and outer) using outdoor education and learning by doing in wilderness settings.



SOMETIMES

Sometimes, when a bird cries out,
Or the wind sweeps through a tree,
Or a dog howls in a far off farm,
I hold still and listen a long time.

My soul turns and goes back to the place
Where, a thousand forgotten years ago,
The bird and the blowing wind
Were like me, and were my brothers.

My soul turns into a tree,
And an animal, and a cloud bank.
Then changed and odd it comes home
And asks me questions. What should I reply?

Herman Hesse