



WHISPERS OF NATURE

Call for participants: Erasmus + Training course for youth workers

Beautiful wild forest Pohorje mountain, Slovenia

11th – 19th September 2024

Travel days: 10th September and 20th September 2024

Application form: <https://forms.gle/8KR5m5x6ofLQDiPL9>

Participants from Greece, Italy, Croatia, Serbia, Hungary, Germany, Estonia, Slovakia, the Netherlands, France, Slovenia

Application dead-line: 10.7.2024

Results of selection: 15.7.2024

**“Nature is an incomparable guide if you know how to follow her.
She is like the needle of the compass pointing to the north,
which is most useful... when you know how to navigate.”**

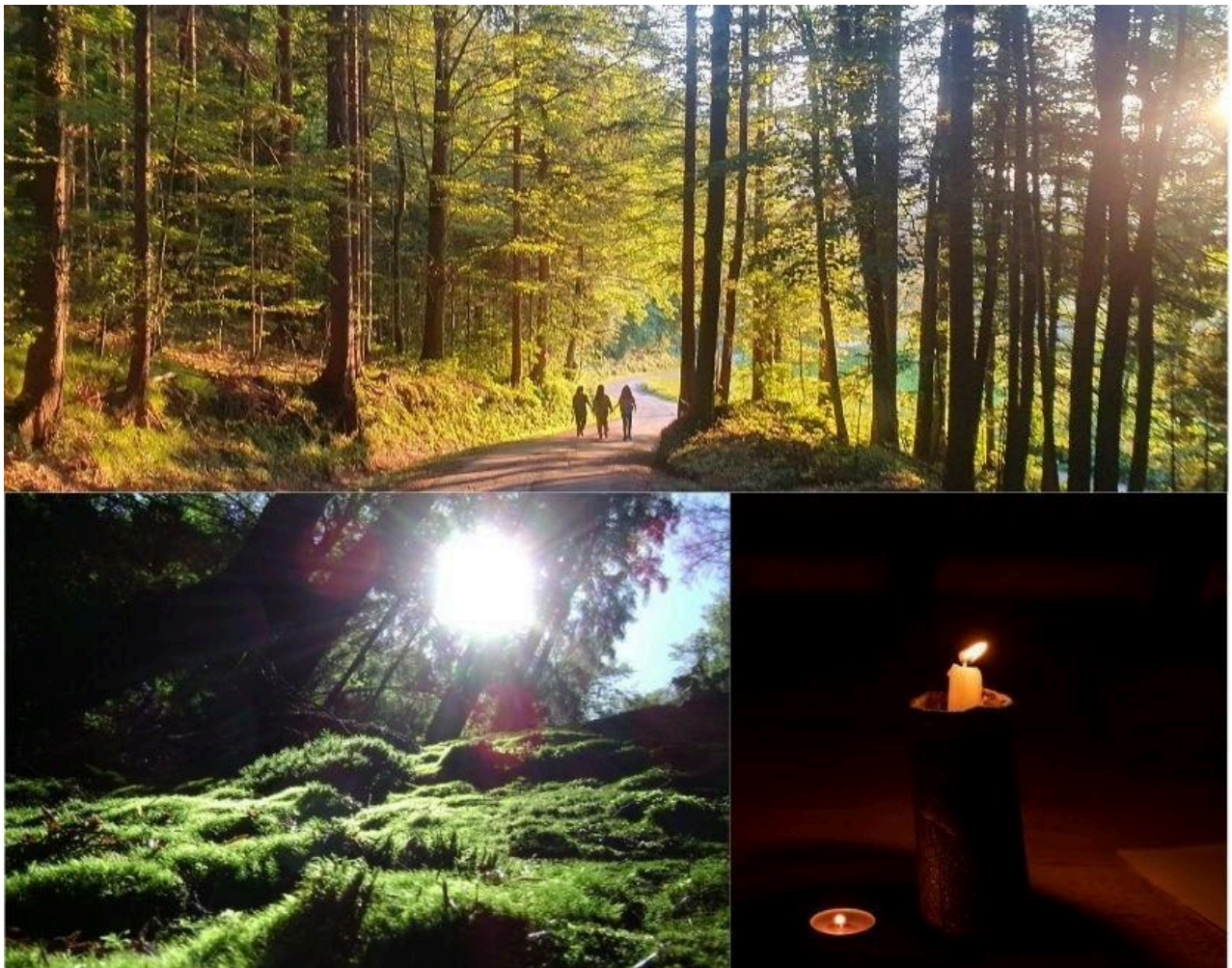
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SUMMARY:

In the training course we will focus on inspiring participants through using nature models, such as Ecocentric Development (Bill Plotkin), adventure pedagogy, using creative art media and embodiment, accompanied with positive psychology and lifespan development.

We will mainly work on well-being and holistic development. We will research our strengths, weaknesses and other qualities we possess and see how they can serve us and the people we are working with. We will also research and learn how we can build/support capacities in youth with the use of nature and creative media, that are important to build their resilience in nowadays society, and help them to be stronger in times of crisis (personal or global).

We will also address the challenges of global warming, and what can we as youth workers do: how can we encourage and empower the youth in a positive way and help them to deal with difficult facts and emotions coming with it.



We want to dive deep into connecting with nature and your own inner landscape.
Experiencing nature as a living being, our teacher, mirror, guide, healer and lover.
Exploring different ways how nature can serve us on our path of self discovery and better how nature can connect us with our own being.
Discovering how we can act as an active agent for the transformative culture on our planet.
Learning different ways to mentor and help others on their path of self exploration and authentic connecting.
Connecting with each other and finding your authentic, vulnerable and unique expression/way of being.
Experiencing the energy and transformational power of the intentional sacred spaces and rituals.
Develop different ways and capacity to speak with the Mystery, Universe around us and within us.



MAIN PILLARS OF THE PROJECT:

- **Connecting and learning with Nature**

Nature is a source, a mirror and a teacher. It's a way of the world communicating with us. We will interact with nature through different activities such as wandering in nature, solo quests, earth art, movement, connecting with different non-human living beings. Observing and listening to nature, using nature as a helper for being mindful and present in the moment, using different experiential exercises in nature to know oneself better

and also develop/practice different qualities. The main concepts we will use are the teachings from Bill Plotkin, experience pedagogy in nature for a holistic development.



● Inner landscapes

We will explore our inner world, emotions and perception. Being aware of what is present in our bodies brings us closer to ourselves and offers opportunities for transformation. We want to tune into our stillness, come back to the present moment, to rediscover our own rhythm by listening and observing what is around us and inside us. We will investigate our strengths, powers, qualities and weaknesses and research how we can balance them in our life better. Knowing and embodying different archetypes such as inner beloved, wild man, innocent sage, nurturing generative adult and similar. Which can help us on our way to wholeness.

● Authentic Expression and relating

Expressing who we are and letting through our captivating authenticity is what we all crave for and deeply desire from each other. We are going to explore and practice together: how to be in relationship with ourselves and with relationship with life. Listening to our bodies as much as possible. Learning the art of slowing down, learning how we can sit with discomfort and how to welcome everything. Exploring how we can be together in an empathic and curious way to grow connections. We will create a space for holding ourselves and others through sharings, ceremonies, movement, dance and art.



Additional Methodology:

- Experiential exercises and learning, that also applies to theory, self-reflection and contemplation. The training is process-oriented, so we follow what emerges and support what is awakening.
- Nature-based methods: Solo time in nature, plants and animals communication, befriending the darkness, meeting our wild self, the river of life, other experiential exercises in the nature
- Using different art/expressive mediums for different goals. We will use visual arts, expressive arts with natural materials, body movement, dance, somatic practices, poetry
- Authentic relating and sharings: five practices of authentic relating, method of the way of the council
- Practices for wholing and self-healing by Bill Plotkin
- Practicing being present, deep listening and train our awareness
- Living as a community (communal cleaning, cooking etc. and tending to our relational field.)



Be ready to go deep, go out of your comfort zone and challenge yourself.

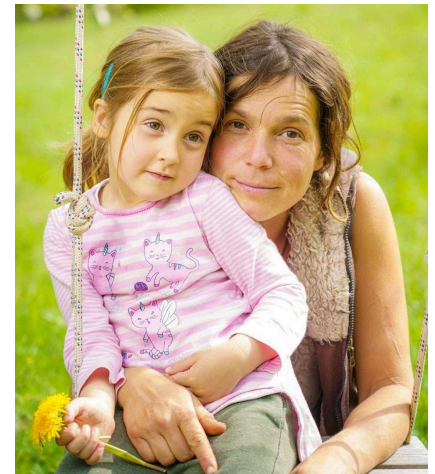
Be open to discover new horizons of yourself and see things with different eyes.

About the trainers and team:



Urša Belak is a psychologist and a co-founder of a small community called Institute by the forest. After exploring many different alternative and holistic approaches to self and soul healing, she found the foundation of her work to be in individuals' connection to nature as a way to personal and collective wholing and healing. The methods she uses are a combination of eco-depth psychology, different movement practices and ancient women mysteries. She likes to go to the depths and search for pearls in the darkness. She works as a trainer in different EU projects, a mentor and an organizer of different events with the intention of bringing the seeds of the “New Earth” on our beloved planet. She lives her life as a prayer, a devotion to nature and as an embodiment of her teachings. Growing her food, living in a natural home in daily connection with the natural elements and like minded people.

Priya Barbara Balan is a social pedagogue, nature lover, farmer and facilitator. She has decades experience of group dynamics, group process management and facilitation, counseling and mentoring for young people. She feels a passion for deep community work, empowering people, strengthening the well-being and researching elements of oneself using different art, creative, body/somatic media and experiential pedagogy in nature. She is also a trainer of community oriented methods, sustainability-oriented practices, Non-Violent Communication, Dragon Dreaming, tools and processes of the Hero's Journey, teacher of permaculture. At this moment she is building up her own social, educational and permacultural farm - where experience learning through nature and creative media is one of the main focuses.



Tjaša Jamnikar is an expressive art practitioner and a somatic trainer. After a decade of traveling, studying various alternative and holistic approaches she discovered that her pillars are self-love and relation with nature all around us. She loves to create ceremonial spaces for exploring unique and genuine expressions of a human being, discovering our true selves from moment to moment. Methods she uses are a combination of authentic relating, art, various movement and mindfulness practices. In her work she guides you to reconnect, to remember and integrate body, mind and soul with the support of somatic art and shamanism.

Her core values are safety, home, family, love, playfulness and authenticity - she brings with her wherever she goes.

“Awareness is the key for change and transformation.”

PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS

Requirements

- A lot of activities will be outside in nature.
- There is no drugs and alcohol policy.
- There is a small preparation required before the training which consists of reading some material and making a preparation practice/activity in nature.
- To limit your contact with technology and use it only for urgent work and urgent conversations.
- To dedicate yourself to the process and give your 100%.

Food and accommodation, Travel and Costs

Slovenia, beautiful isolated nature place in Pohorje mountain, check it out:

<http://www.kpn-smolnik.si/page/klub-prijateljev-narave-smolnik>

The venue is surrounded by a beautiful forest and is isolated (don't expect to go to the city during the project). Activities will take place outside in nature and a big hall.

There will be space to sleep in shared rooms.

Food will be mainly vegetarian (with possible tuna) and provided as much as possible locally from permaculture farms. We will have great cook

The project covers the costs for food, accommodation and travel, according to your distance band

You can calculate the distance with the distance calculator:

<https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/resources-and-tools/distance-calculator>

For the final destination you write is Ruše, Slovenia. The distance is calculated from your place of residence to the place of the youth exchange (one-way). The budget is the maximum budget for reimbursement for both ways (two-way).

Distance of travel	Maximum amount of reimbursement	Max reimbursement for green travel (car share, train, bus)
from 10 to 99 km:	28 EUR	56 EUR
from 100 to 499 km:	211 EUR	285 EUR
from 500 to 1999 km:	309 EUR	417 EUR
from 2000 to 2999 km:	395 EUR	535 EUR

More information:

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