

THE NATURE OF COMMUNITY REDISCOVERING THE INHERITED BONDS

Erasmus + Training Course

21 – 30/11/2024

Torri Superiore Ecovillage


Ventimiglia, Italy



Torri
Superiore



Co-funded by
the European Union



ENROLL NOW:

APPLICATION FORM

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THE NATURE OF COMMUNITY

is a training course aimed at youth workers and in general 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

The need for **CONNECTION** is basic for every being in the ecosystem. **Meaningful connection** is essential for every human being. Everything is what it is as a result of its relations with all other things. Nowadays humanity lives the most disconnected life we can ever imagine. All the relationships are mediated by electronic devices, processed information, protective fences and imposed values. Dominant-materialistic-industrial culture destroyed connection of the people with their inner **inherited wisdom, wild nature, spiritual world, emotions and imagination, dreams and visions** and our place in more-than-human world. By offering an eight day intensive immersion program we are creating a space for rediscovering bonds among humans and the wild world.



THE NEED

In today's Western society, the values of consumerism, conformity and industrial growth rule. All of them have proven to be **toxic and destructive** to the Big Web of Life of which humans are an integral part. By destroying ecosystems and using nature as a mere resource for personal profit, we are not only destroying the future of our children and grandchildren, but already negatively impacting many people's lives today.

Humanity needs an urgent change, to transform this world of deepening inequality, violence, addictions and continuing disconnection from nature (both external and internal), into one based on peace, equality, real freedom, and connection to ourselves, others and the rest of the natural world.

There is a need for people who, through their actions, demonstrate a life based on **ecocentric values**. People creating and affirming a life-enhancing culture, who inspire future generations of youth for psychological, spiritual and professional growth in harmony with nature. People laying the foundation for a future built on environmental justice, deep spirituality, compassion and acceptance.

RECONNECTING IN THE WEB OF LIFE

Re-establishing authentic human relatedness to one another is an essential step in solving many of today's social, economical and health problems. Living connected 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.



AIMS OF THE PROGRAM

To provide innovative ways and methods to address the developmental needs for **belonging, meaningful connection, authenticity and purpose**, 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 meaningful connection and authentic relating**;*

*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**;*

*To inspire in the participants a **shift in values and worldviews** that will foster empathy to all creatures and a sense of oneness with all human and non-humans;*

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

TOPICS OF THE COURSE

Personal Transformation

exploring practices for cultivating wholeness, 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 deep unconscious 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

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



PROGRAM ELEMENTS

PRACTICES FOR CULTIVATING WHOLENESS
CREATIVE EXPRESSION FREE AUTHENTIC MOVEMENT

TENDING TO OUR RELATIONAL FIELD

COMMUNITY BUILDING

LIVING AS A COMMUNITY

MODELS FOR NATURAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT NATURE-BASED METHODS
THE WAY OF COUNCIL

BEFRIENDING THE NIGHT TIME

GUIDES TEAM



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.



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.

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 personal transformation with a view to thereafter offer their gifts to others.

You can apply for this training course if you are a **resident** of one of these countries:

- **EU Member states** (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)
- **Associated countries** (North Macedonia, Serbia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Turkey)
- **Non-associated countries** (Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia)

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



SOBRIETY POLICY



We ask that you refrain from using illegal consciousness-altering substances for the whole duration of the course, and to limit your consumption of alcohol during meal times. 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: 22 – 29/11/2024

Arrival day: 21/11/2024 after 2pm

Departure day: 30/11/2024 before 1pm

The deadline for application is September 15th, 2024

The selection results will be published on September 23rd.



CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS

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FINANCIAL AND PRACTICAL CONDITIONS

THE NATURE OF COMMUNITY 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 in the limits set in the Erasmus + Programme Guide. Participants will have to buy their tickets in advance and will be reimbursed after the activity. If this arrangement is an obstacle to your participation, please let us know. The tickets will be reimbursed up to a maximum amount that depends on the country where the travel starts. To be eligible as a participant, your country of departure and arrival have to be the same.

GREEN TRAVEL

To reduce the project's environmental footprint, participants coming from less than 1500km from the venue will be asked to avoid flying for travelling to and from the training. Please make sure that you are comfortable with this condition if you apply. Additional funding to cover food and accommodation along the way for those travelling green can be provided on an individual basis.



IMPORTANT! Please note that this measure is not intended to support holidays or other detours before or after the training, and that the amount spent will be refunded only if it is part of a coherent travel plan coming from and going back to your place of residence.

NON-ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

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

VENUE

The mediaeval village of Torri Superiore is a small jewel of popular architecture located at the foothill of the Ligurian Alps, a few kilometres from the Mediterranean Sea and the French border, close to the coastal town of Ventimiglia. Originating in the thirteenth century, the village is structured in three main bodies with more than 160 rooms, all connected by an intricate fabric of stairways.

Its complex structure has often been compared to a fortress or a labyrinth, perched on the mountainside. The village has been entirely restored and is now open to ecotourism, for courses, meetings and programs of environmental education, and offers accommodation for stays and vacations.

For its character of historical complex, unfortunately the ecovillage is not completely accessible. Please take this into account when planning your participation.



FOOD

During the training rich, healthy and **MOSTLY VEGETARIAN** food will be served. It will include products from local farmers, local cheese, olive oil and milk, and lots of vegetables and grains. The food will be prepared by Torri's professional chefs.



ACCOMMODATION

The accommodation will be within the ecovillage, in shared room of up to 5 people with shared bathrooms and showers. The beds are equipped with sheets and blankets, but you will need to bring your own towels.

WHO WE ARE

The training is hosted by Ture Nirvane S. Coop. in collaboration with "Learning for Change" Foundation.

TURE NIRVANE S. COOP.

Ture Nirvane Società Cooperativa a r.l. was founded in 1999 to transform the abandoned mediaeval village of Torri Superiore into a thriving ecovillage centred on a holistic vision of sustainability that includes ecological, economic, social and cultural dimensions. The restoration of the ecovillage continued until 2016 and the transformation into a Social Community Cooperative in 2020 allowed the cooperative to fully realise its vocation of social innovation and synergy with the territory. The cooperative now runs a guesthouse that has been completely renovated and is open to the public, where people interested in learning about the resident community's experience are hosted, as well as voluntary activities, courses and workshops open to the public, and various events aimed at the local community.



LEARNING FOR CHANGE

www.learningforchange.net

www.facebook.com/LFCFoundation

“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.

A photograph of a forest during autumn. In the foreground, there are several birch trees with their characteristic white bark and dark lenticels. The ground is covered with fallen leaves and ferns in shades of brown and orange. In the background, there are more trees, some with green leaves and others with yellow and orange foliage. The sky is visible through the branches, appearing overcast.

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