

Tools and methods



for eco-centric youth work

A material developed by



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The intention

This short booklet aims at bringing in the youth field few “new” perspectives, eco perspectives. The concepts, activities and ideas which will be presented are not new for the youth field, since they are used already, under different forms, by various trainers and youth workers in different European countries. The eco-centric educational initiatives that rise more and more in Europe are the buds of early spring of eco-centric personal and professional development. This short booklet aims at promoting and developing the eco-centric movement which is emerging in the European youth field.

We have to come back to nature and place it at the center of our being, our lives and our communities. Not only our mental health and fulfilling lives depend on a strong connection with nature, but our human existence on this Planet. So, coming back to our roots is mandatory and we can do this by making few steps closer to nature. This booklet won't help you find your successful life path, but will show you how to make the first steps closer to nature, thus preparing for the future adventures in the wilderness within and without.

This booklet is an icebreaker which prepares the stage for a lovely eco-centric learning experience.

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Author of this booklet



Bogdan Romanică - Is a trainer and youth worker from Romania, living in Cluj-Napoca. He is active in the youth field since 2009, working at local and international level. At this moment he is training with Animas Valley Institute from USA, to become an eco-therapist.

<https://www.salto-youth.net/tools/toy/bogdan-romanica.3421/>

This booklet incorporates the contributions of 3 other international trainers and youth workers:

Stefan Schwarc, **Martin Klajn** from Czech Republic and **Adela Militaru** from Romania.



This booklet was compiled in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, in 2016.

You can find this booklet at www.dreamsforlife.ro

Get to know the background

About Dreams for Life

Dreams for Life is an educational NGO from Cluj-Napoca, Romania, founded at the end of 2011.. Dreams for Life offers educational and experiential programs and activities aimed at genuine self-knowledge and at dis-covering one's authentic life purpose. Our actions focus on the empowerment of those involved, to live in authenticity and in line with one's life purpose. Our programs and activities may be short-term (1-7 days) or they can extend to longer periods of time (2-4 months).

The path of Dreams for Life, its vision, mission, values, work and life principles are deeply rooted in those of authentic, indigenous, traditional communities, that were/are in permanent contact with nature and with the mysterious forces of the Universe. Starting in this direction we have discovered a multitude of educational, psychological, and social approaches, rooted in the same traditional, natural origins. Thus we managed to gather a collection educational tools and methods, connected with nature and which can produce authentic personal and social development of young people and adults.



For more details about Dreams for Life visit: www.dreamsforlife.ro

“Steps on the Wheel” training course

Between 10th and 19th July 2016, 27 youth workers from 13 European countries came to Romania and attended **Steps on the Wheel** course, to learn about nature based youth work.



More about “Steps on the Wheel”

During the training we explored and experienced a wide variety of concepts such as **holistic development, working with vulnerabilities, therapeutic practices, atmospheric games/activities, spirituality, connections, rituals and relations with nature.**

Through this training we supported the participants in exploring these concepts within the con-text of their personal and professional life. The practices which were experienced during the course will be presented in this booklet in order to offer to other youth workers

practical educational tools, methods and activities which can be used in the youth field, for the personal and professional development of young people.



The team of trainers

The training process is the combined work of two Romanian trainers from Dreams for Life and two Czech Trainers from Do Sveta and Os Prevent.

Bogdan Romanică from Dreams for Life

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Martin Klajn from Do světa (Czech Republic) <http://station17.os-prevent.cz/tym>



Watch the project presentation film

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tWlnG4xPFHo>

“Steps on the Wheel” was implemented with the support of the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union



Eco-centric youth work

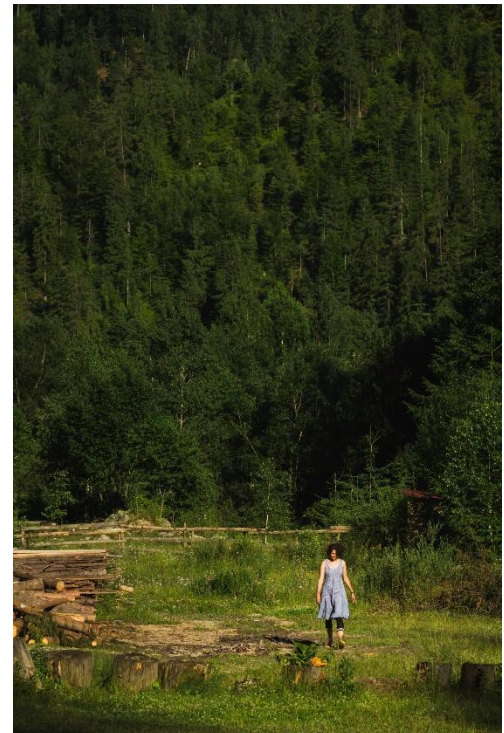
We live in a society which is blindly following a path to self-destruction. The race for personal success, materialism, consumerism, excessive technology, wars, worship of the Ego, discrimination and racism are negative effects of a society which is out of balance. All these effects are leading to the destruction of our Planet, our only home, through aggressive use of the natural resources, destruction of the natural habitats and pollution. Since all the things are interdependent, the unbalanced society is produced by unbalanced people, while the reverse is also applicable, the unbalanced society produces unbalanced people.



But the world was not always like that. Some valuable answers to the contemporary crisis lay in the cultural treasures of the indigenous cultures (nature based or eco-centric) and which for thousands of years have lived in harmony with one another, with nature and with the entire universe of existence. Living in a healthy and authentic manner in our current society requires that we (re)discover and follow the natural principles and virtues that may become a proper compass in our journey towards creating fulfilling lives and sustainable communities.

Being *eco-centric* means at least two things:

- *Knowing that we have an eco-identity.* This means that we are actively aware that we are part of the large Universal Eco-system in which we have a *unique sacred place* that we should occupy (not necessarily a physical place, location). In this place we are ought to offer our unique gifts (native qualities and talents) towards a deep and authentic cause (our life mission).
- *Living in connection with nature.* Nature is full of life lessons, natural and spiritual laws. As we are part of nature, we are entitled to live by the laws of nature that we must follow to keep ourselves balanced and healthy as species, and also Earth, which is our home. By discovering and integrating the lessons offered by nature into everyday life, it means applying the universal instructions on how to live on Earth.



Youth work and ecology?

Youth work has made tremendous positive changes at the local and global levels. Millions of youth all over Europe have developed throughout the years in different areas: personal, professional, social, economic, political, and cultural. Many youth have moved from the lower levels of the society to places where they can live their lives with dignity and satisfaction. Youth work is a vast domain, with specific characteristics from country to country. These things have been researched already, so we are not going to reinvent the wheel or



rephrase what the others have said before. What we want to mention is the fact that the classical forms of youth work are keeping the youth far from the real nature. The classical forms of youth work are developing the social, cultural, economic, political identities of the youth rather than their eco-identity.

The American psychologist James Hillman (in cooperation with Michael Ventura) wrote the book "We've had a Hundred Years of Psychotherapy & the World's Getting Worse". We can expand this affirmation to other areas of human development like youth work. Governments and big institutions are investing enormous sums of money into youth development, but when we look up at how the environment looks like we tend to be skeptical about what has been done.

So, let's get back to nature, from within and without, let's get back to the basics, let's reconnect with the ancient wisdom, let's re-connect with the sacred and spiritual elements, let's make the paradigm shift from anthropocentrism to ECO-centrism.

The Web of Life

Everything in this world is interconnected and interdependent. The world of humans, animals, plants, earth minerals, water, air, Sun, Moon, all are interconnected. The principle that unites them and thus forms



the canvas of life is the principle of harmony, of balance. Understanding this principle and maintaining it is the necessary condition for a balanced life, lived in harmony and respect, where each element of this canvas is equally important as any other element. *Mitakuye Oyasin* (which means *All my relations/connections*) is an expression used by some Native American tribes to acknowledge this principle.

The Medicine Wheel as foundation for eco-centric youth work

The Medicine Wheel is an ancient concept, full of meanings, symbols, characterized by interconnectedness and balance. The Medicine Wheel is ECO-centric, it is based on the characteristics of the **4 directions (N, S, E, W)** and incorporates series of 4 elements.

The 4 elements of nature: Earth, Air, Water, Fire

Each being from nature needs each of these elements in order to live. The earth is the source that all beings grow from, water enables all beings to continue growing, air is the breath and the proof that we are present, fire is the energy we receive from the sun or from burning wood. The 4 elements are part of every human being and we need them in the purest form. We need to be in contact with them, learn from them, in order to keep our balance and the health of our whole being.

The 4 elements of the human being: Body, Mind, Heart, and Spirit

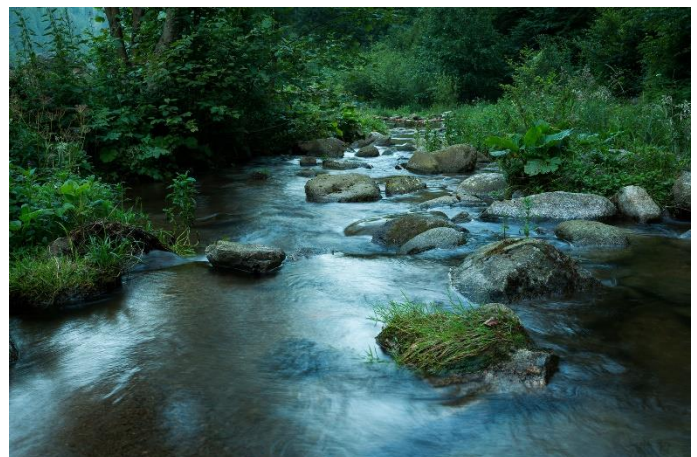
People are Body, by effort and movement, Mind, by ideas and thoughts, Heart, by emotions and passions, Spirit, by meaning and transcendence. We are made of the 4 elements and each of them is equally important, that is why they should be cultivated in balance and synergy.

The 4 stages of life: Child, Teenager, Adult, Elder

Life is a cycle, a full circle that closes in the place where it began. Each stage of life is unique and full of gifts to the community where the person is living her life. The Child is innocent, explorer; the teenager inquires the world's unknown; the Adult is dedicated to fulfilling the authentic life purpose, the Elder is the wise and the mentor. Each stage of life is a blessing, whereby a person can naturally develop, genuinely and spiritually.

The 4 seasons: Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter

Nature is balance, the 4 seasons are balance and they hold key lessons for human development. Spring is a new beginning, planting the seeds; Summer means grounding, energy, working on life; Autumn is harvesting, preparing for winter, appreciation for the results; Winter is rest, learning, stories. Following the principles offered by the 4 seasons, the rhythm of human life resonates with the rhythm of the Earth.



Being exposed to nature

"When a man moves away from nature, his heart becomes hard." Lakota Proverb

"There is mounting evidence that contact with nature has significant positive impacts on mental health. It is associated with reduced levels of stress—which also has huge ramifications for physical health, reduced levels of depression and anxiety, increased resilience, increased engagement with learning for children and adolescents otherwise disengaged from the education system, improved self-esteem and increased capacity to engage socially. " said Mardie Town-send, PhD, an honorary professor at the School of Health and Social Development at Deakin University in Australia.



11 Benefits of nature presented in Business Insider

(<http://www.businessinsider.com/scientific-benefits-of-nature-outdoors-2016-4/#11-reduced-risk-of-early-death-11>)

1. Improved short-term memory
2. Restored mental energy
3. Stress relief
4. Reduced inflammation
5. Better vision
6. Improved concentration
7. Sharper thinking and creativity
8. Possible anti-cancer effects
9. Immune system boost
10. Improved mental health
11. Reduced risk of early death



Since “there's no bad weather, just bad clothing”, let's dress properly and get outside.

Tools and methods



In the following pages are present several educational activities which can be used with young people and adults for their personal and professional development.

You will discover the following activities:

- 1. The Way of Council*
- 2. Atmospheric games*
- 3. Fire making*
- 4. Bread making*
- 5. Drumming*
- 6. Ceremonies and rituals*
- 7. Fasting*
- 8. Solo time in nature*
- 9. Working with symbolic objects*
- 10. Soul-poetry*
- 11. Living as a community*

1. The Way of Council

The Way of Council is a powerful way of deep communication. It is a “tool” (a way), which has its roots in the ancestral ways of communication of many indigenous cultures and traditions, where the people were sharing stories, ideas, concerns, feelings, in a circle (many times around the fire). In a council the participants share personal stories, opinions and life events which are very important for them, while all the other persons are listening. The council can have different forms, it can be made as a ritual (with poems, songs, candles etc.) or in a more simple way.

The important elements of the Council:

- *The Council keeper.* Each Council is facilitated by a person, who is leading the process. This person is presenting the principles and elements of the Council to the participants. This person is opening and closing the council and will be the only one person allowed to speak, besides the speaker holding the talking object.
- *The speaker and the listeners.* Only one person can speak at the time in the council. The person who speaks must hold a talking object.
- *The 4 intentions.* The council has 4 intentions: *Speaking from the heart* (sharing personal stories, opinions which are important for the person, which come from the heart), *Listening from the heart* (Listening with full attention, with empathy and no judgements), *Speaking the essence* (Sharing the most important parts of the personal story, having a sharing which is not too long and not too short), *Spontaneity* (being fully present, not planning what to say, but saying what feels right at that moment).
- *Confidentiality.* Since the participants will share personal stories, some of which can be very intimate, one important element of the council is the confidentiality. The stories shared during the council will remain in the council and the participants shouldn't spread the stories to other people.
- *The center of the circle.* In order to create a ceremonial atmosphere and to prepare the participants for a deep sharing, in the middle of the circle can be arranged a beautiful “altar”. There you can place a candle which can be lighted in the beginning of the council, few stones, feathers, a scarf, wood, important objects for the group etc.



- *The talking object.* Is the object which will be hold by each speaker. The object should be something meaningful for the group or connected with the theme of the council.
- *Passing the talking object.* The first person who will feel the calling to speak will take the talking object. After finishing the story, this person will pass the object to the person in the left side, following the Sun movement. When the talking object is passed the two persons will look into each other's eyes.
- *Share or skip.* The person who is holding the talking object can speak or pass the object to the next person. Nobody is forced to speak during a council.
- *The theme of the council.* Each council has a theme, a question, based on which the participants will share the stories. Few examples of council themes:



- o *Why are you here?*
- o *What is your dream for this world?*
- o *What are your fears and what gives you courage?*
- o *What does trust means to you?*
- o *What do you want to change in yourself?*

- *The duration.* The duration of the council is hard to be precisely approximated. Depending on the theme and person. Normally people are sharing between 1 and 10 minutes.
- *The group.* You can make the council with small groups 4-5 persons up to 20-30 persons. If there are bigger groups it will take longer and the unexperienced people may lose interest.
- *Making breaks.* If the council will last 1-2 hours then you can make it without having breaks, but if it takes longer then the council keeper can make one or more short breaks. The participants can go to the toilet during the sharing if they feel the need, but they should be in silence and not interrupt the process.
- *The opening and ending.* All these elements must pre presented by the council keeper if the participants are attending a council for the first time. At the end of the council the keeper should turn off the candle (if there was one), thank the participants, appreciate them and their stories and announce the end of the council.



2. Atmospheric games

Atmospheric games are complex learning activities where the environment has an important role in the learning process. The elements which surround the participants create a special atmosphere. In this context the participants can experience more intense emotions, can reach deeper insights and can gain new positive attitudes.

For making a successful atmospheric game you should take into consideration few guidelines:

- *The story of the activity* is very important. The game should have a central theme and a learning goal. This goal will connect all the actions and elements of the activity. Few themes examples: life passages, decisions, hero's journey etc.
- *Make use of various elements for senses stimulation* (darkness, fire, smell, music, touching, running, hammering nails, crossing a water stream etc.)
- *Create rituals and ceremonies* in which the participants can get involve. These rituals/ceremonies create curiosity, motivation, introspection, respect. They can change the focus of the participants, from ordinary to more mystical states of presence.
- *Symbolic objects and actions*. By using different objects (candles, lights, mirrors, wax etc.) you can make the participants enter in the game story.
- *Role play*. You can have "actors" in the game. An enchanter, a guardian, a driver, a soldier, a wise person, a monk, a guide from beyond etc. They will contribute to the narrative of the activity and can guide or challenge the participants and offer different messages.
- *Giving objects to participants*, can increase the atmosphere of the game and stimulate the involvement of the participants. They can receive candles, talismans, gifts etc. In this way they will feel more connected with the experience.



You can use this kind of activities in order to address complex topics such as: life passages, life and death topics, becoming courageous, vulnerability etc.

Advice:

- This is just a tool, a method, you can adapt it for your own group and learning objectives.
- You can make an atmospheric activity for groups from 5 to 40 persons.
- It is a lot of work for these activities, because you have to prepare the environment, the details, costumes, roles etc.
- An activity can last from one hour up to several hours.
- You need at least 3-4 people in the team, to prepare the environment and make sure that everything goes smoothly.
- You need a good amount of materials.
- You need large spaces.
- It is a unique and intense experience, full of learning on both sides, participants and facilitators.



3. Fire making

It is a very simple activity which has special effects on those who take part in it. The modern life style has kept the fire far from us. Different heating systems have replaced the fire, thus we have become disconnected from one of the natural elements (fire, water, earth, air).

The fire is like a medicine and its hypnotic powers heal the body, gently nurture the heart and bring the mind in a calm and meditative state. All these things make us be more present and connected, with ourselves, the others and the nature. Fire is a perfect tool of mindfulness.

Gathering the wood from the forest, making the fire, sitting in a circle around it and keeping the fire alive are ancestral elements which make us be more whole and rooted in nature.

Making fire could be very empowering for youth who lack self-confidence and practical skills.

Getting involved in fire making the youth can gain:

- Motor skills (cutting and carrying wood),
- Physical resistance
- Confidence
- Respect for nature
- Understanding of nature
- Responsibility and initiative.
- Etc.

Around the fire beautiful stories can emerge from the hearts of the people, warmed by the fire, thus the sense of community, compassion and joy will emerge.



4. Bread making

Bread is an important element in many cultures. Bread is bringing people together, is nurturing them and make them strong and happy.

Throughout time making bread was a complex process which brought people together. Having bread on the table was full year hard work: preparing the soil, planting the seeds, growing the wheat, harvesting the crop, producing the flour, working with the hands for making the dough and the bread which could feed a big family for a whole week is ready. Bread is an indispensable food for many people, but due to the modernization of agriculture and food industry most of the people experience the bread making chain only in the shop from where they buy it in a plastic bag, already sliced.

Making bread is such an interesting and rich process, when the bread maker can gain lots of things, besides a tasty and personalized piece of bread.



Making bread can contribute to:

- The activation and enhancement of the senses (touch, smell, taste etc.).
- Motor skills development.
- Experiencing positive attitudes and a sense of community.
- Development of team working and cooperation skills.
- Participation and active involvement.
- Creativity development, by trying new recipes and ingredients.
- Understanding of natural process by working with different elements (flour, water, salt, yeast, seeds), fire etc.
- Increasing respect for the food and limiting food waste.
- Development of abstract and symbolic thinking by understanding the importance of bread in different cultures, bread ceremonies etc.
- Etc.



How to make it:

- Decide you want to make a bread.
- Explore the resources you have (stove, wood etc.) and ingredients and prepare what you need.
- Look for the preparation method you want to follow.
- Start making the bread.
- Enjoy the results of your work.
- Express your gratitude for the beautiful process.
- Share the bread and the joy of making bread.



5. Drumming

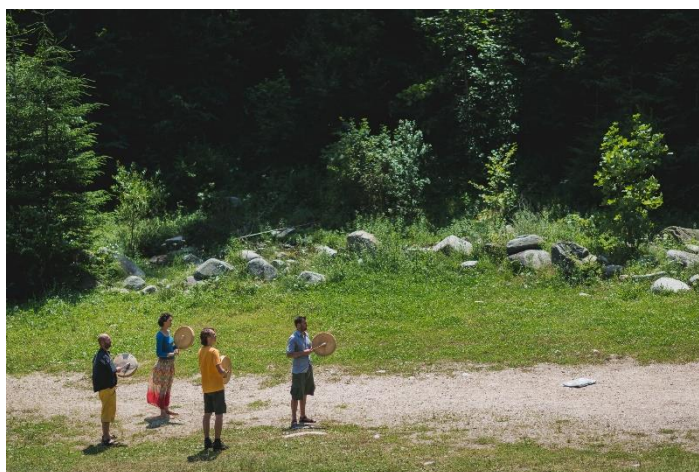
Drums are ancestral instruments. For many cultures they are sacred and have special meanings. Drums appear under lots of forms and they are used in various ways, playing various rhythms.

In this materials we are going to talk about the “shamanic drums” or hand drums. They are pretty simple drums, very common among the Native Americans. They are made out of a wood frame, covered by animal skin (cow, deer etc.) and very well stretched by different strings (made of sinew or animal skin). In order to play a rhythm you need a stick, which is covered at one top with something soft.

On these drums you can play different rhythms, alone or in a group of drummers.

By using drums you can:

- Create a symbolic atmosphere for an activity.
- You can influence the consciousness of the participants and direct their focus towards the aim of the activity you are making.
- Activate and stimulate the inner rhythm of the persons and encourage them to embody their inner wildness.
- Create a sense of community and closeness between people.
- Establishing a way of communicating support to the persons who are going through a solo night in a nearby forest.
- Create a space for ecstatic dances and tribal movement which can lead to free expression and emotional liberation.
- Etc.



6. Ceremonies and rituals

According to Oxford dictionary:

"A *ceremony* is a formal religious or public occasion, especially one celebrating a particular event, achievement, or anniversary."

and

"A *ritual* is a religious or solemn ceremony consisting of a series of actions performed according to a prescribed order."

Rituals and ceremonies are important events that mark and celebrate meaningful moments in the life. Ceremonies and rituals can be very complex, such as weddings, funerals, baptizes, traditional rites of passage, seasonal celebrations etc.

They can also symbolize smaller events and moments, such as a ceremony before going in the solo time in nature, a ceremonial fast when people give thanks and celebrate the abundance of life, the ceremony of eating bread etc.

Celebrating important life events through rituals and ceremonies contributes to celebrating life in general.

Applications in youth work.

By creating rituals and ceremonies the youth can:

- Become more aware of different life moments and internalize their meaning.
- Enhance their imagination and deep connections with themselves, other people and nature in general.
- Develop a sense of community and belonging.
- Activate and develop the existential intelligence.
- Develop their symbolic thinking and enhance the deep consciousness.
- Etc.



7. Fasting

Fasting is a willing abstinence from food and water for a short period of time and it is a beautiful form of cleansing and deep connection with life.

Fasting has been a complex practice for thousands of years in different cultures all over the Planet. Fasting is a practice which influences all the 4 human dimensions: physical, emotional, mental and spiritual.

Fasting can be made in different forms:

- Without food and water.
- Without food, but with little water.
- With little light food (mainly fruits) and with little liquids (water, tea).
- With normal amounts of food but mainly vegetables.

The duration of the fast depends on the person and the type of fasting. It can last from 1 day to several weeks or more.

Applications in youth work.

By experiencing fasting the youth:

- Can become more aware of their body and physical capacities and needs.
- Can gain more understanding about different life aspects and practices.
- Can learn how to control their mental processes and be more in the present moment.
- Can develop a habit which can help them have healthier lives.
- Can enhance their existential intelligence.
- Can gain confidence in their physical capacities and resistance.
- Etc.



8. Solo time in nature

Modern life has become a non-stop race between different stimulus to capture our intention and to influence us to make certain decisions. From big banners and commercials on the street, to social networks, links and online ads, all distract us and keep us away from the important things in our lives.

Thus we need moments of silence and solitude, when we can reflect on the important things of our life, on our dreams and visions, past and future, thoughts and emotions.

The perfect experience for this is having a solo time in nature. A moment when we are hiding in the forest, between the trees, next to a lake, on top of a hill, by a water stream etc.

We can go there for a day or two or only for few hours. We can get a journal, some food and proper gear for making a protective shelter or just a backpack with some warm clothes.

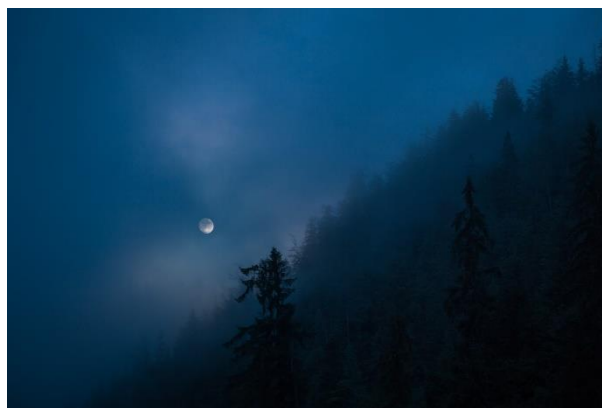
Some people don't take with them not even a watch, phone nor a journal, because they want to be SOLO. Doesn't matter how you experience your solo time, the only thing that is important is not to be distracted (from other people, books, technology etc.).

When you are alone in the forest you become more like the forest. You connect with the rhythm of the Earth and with the Universe within and without. Nature will be your guide and protector, so you may return safe from this solo adventure. Going in the nature with an open heart and with clear intentions can help the Wanderer find revelations which are nowhere else available but in that place.

Applications in youth work.

By having a solo time in nature the youth can:

- Become more connected with their inner and true being.
- Discover more about nature and the natural beings and elements.
- Develop survival skills by making a shelter, spending a night alone in the forest.
- Gain confidence and courage by being along in nature.
- Enhance their existential intelligence.
- Develop respect and care for nature and adopt an ecological mindset.
- Stimulate their reflections abilities and see their lives from different perspectives.
- Etc.



9. Working with symbolic objects

There is a strong connection between our hands, hearts and heads. By making with our hands symbolic objects we can explore our feelings and thoughts in ways that are not available to our verbal capacities.

The symbolic objects created by someone may offer him deeper insights and can connect him with hidden memories, emotions and thoughts which wouldn't have been brought otherwise into our everyday consciousness.

There are different ways for making symbolic objects. Some of them can be:

- Working with clay.
- Modelling fimo.
- Using natural objects.



Working with symbolic objects can be a therapeutic tool through which the youth can explore various personal moments which impacted them. In this way they can analyze more those experiences and "digest" them through exploring the emotions and conceptualizing the learning.

Symbolic objects can be used as a closing activity at the end of a deep learning process. In this way the participants can integrate much better the experience and the competences gained throughout the process.

Making symbolic objects using natural elements is a contemplative practice through which a person can experience a mindfulness process. By using different natural objects a person can explore, understand and integrate much better his thoughts, emotions and values.

Working with the hands and creating symbolic objects could be seen also as a relaxing activity which will generate a positive state of mind. Whatever is the reason for using this method, it is important to integrate it in a learning context that can be beneficial for those involved in the process.



10. Soul-poetry

Each person has within, an artistic part which can play with images, words, feelings, senses. Most of us are unaware of this inner resource which can create through words powerful symphonies of dreams, hopes, love, sorrow, grief, joy and mystery. The notes that compose the symphonies are pieces from our depths, which are called by some, our SOUL.

Soul poetry is a simple way of accessing our profound thoughts, deep feelings, powerful visions. It is a way of being vulnerable and honest, grounded and open, simple and wise. It is a way of letting ourselves overwhelmed by the revelations of life. Soul poetry shouldn't be perceived as the mastery of specialized poets, but rather as a playground through which we can experience the beautiful realms of life. Thus, Soul poetry is for each and every one of us.

"Make a habit of reading the soul poets, alone or with friends. Read each poem loud, very slowly, at least twice at each sitting. Let your imagination and feeling meander. Memorize some of your favorite soul poems. Recite them aloud in wild settings. Compose your own soul poetry and record your dreams in verse. Wander with and in poems and let your awareness cross boundaries. Make notes, in verse or prose, on what you find beyond the frontier."

From the book "Soulcraft" (page 206-208) written by Bill Plokin.



Example of soul-poetry written by one participant from Steps on the Wheel

The While

Fineke de Jong
(The Netherlands)

*One firefly
in the great big darkness
small and vulnerable
but her light so powerful
calling for connection*

*One human being
on this great Mother Earth
small and vulnerable
but her love so powerful
following the firefly's light*

*Light and Love meet
both sharing both shining both playing
and both vulnerable
creating something even more powerful
during this great wonderful While.*

11. Living as a community

This is a collection of principles rather than a method or educational tool. One fundamental pillar in the developmental programs that we are organizing is the COMMUNITY SPIRIT.

In order to ignite and develop this spirit, several things ought to happen:

- *Having positive intentions.* Having a warm and open heart which is willing to love life, people, nature, is a fundamental aspect in creating a healthy community spirit. This thing can happen if the facilitators will emanate these intentions from the very beginning.
- *Being honest.* It is important to live in truth. Whatever happens the truth is better than any other option.
- *Making a space for authenticity.* Creating a space of trust and openness where people can be who they want to be and they can act in authentic ways (playing, singing, laughing, exploring etc.)
- *We are all equal.* There is no one better or worst. We are all the same and unique.
- *Peer to peer learning and support.* Creating opportunities for learning from each other.
- *Participants should play an active role in the organizational tasks:* cutting wood, making fire, washing dishes, helping with the meals, cleaning the training room etc.
- *Celebrating the important moments* through which the group is passing along the program (ceremonial meal after fasting and solo time, ceremony of bread etc.)
- *Community circles.* Begin the morning with a gathering in which the people express gratitude towards each other, share news, offer suggestions and improvements.



Further explorations

We hope that the concepts, methods and activities presented in this booklet lighted your curiosity and motivation to include nature more and more in your work. In order to get deeper into the methods and subjects we have explored, we recommend you few online resources, which can bring you further in your eco-centric journey.

1. <i>The Way of Council</i>	http://ojaifoundation.org/discover-council https://www.amazon.com/Way-Council-Jack-Zimmerman/dp/1883647185
2. <i>Atmospheric games</i>	https://www.facebook.com/dosveta/photos/?tab=album&album_id=593656714066085
3. <i>Fire making</i>	http://www.instructables.com/id/7-Methods-of-Primitive-Fire-Starting/ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6R7hss0_gLY
4. <i>Bread making</i>	http://www.scienceinschool.org/2012/issue23/bread
5. <i>Drumming</i>	http://www.shamanism.dk/tools.htm https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mFRDhgVs-1Q
6. <i>Ceremonies and rituals</i>	https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sweat_lodge https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rite_of_passage
7. <i>Fasting</i>	https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fasting
8. <i>Solo time in nature</i>	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Gl5rqy2hf8 http://jee.sagepub.com/content/34/1/1.abstract
9. <i>Symbolic objects</i>	https://www.brainpickings.org/2011/07/29/the-book-of-symbols/
10. <i>Soul-poetry</i>	https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems http://www.davidwhyte.com/poetry-2/
11. <i>Living as a community</i>	https://www.findhorn.org/ http://gen.ecovillage.org/
<i>The Medicine Wheel</i>	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=flGrFHy463g https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tK-RdmQwlvI https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3HF1UBY2vjQ

Books:

Soulcraft – Bill Plotkin

Wild Mind – Bill Plotkin - <http://www.ritesofpassagevisionquest.org/>

Nature and the Human Soul - Bill Plotkin - <http://natureandthehumansoul.com/newbook/>

The Way of Council - Jack Zimmerman

Last Child in the Woods - Richard Louv

Organizations:

Animas Valley Institute (USA) - <http://www.animas.org/>

The School of Lost Borders (USA) - <http://schooloflostborders.org/>

Wilderness Awareness School (USA) - <https://wildernessawareness.org/>

Rites of Passage (USA) - <http://www.ritesofpassageevisionquest.org/>

Asha Center (UK) - <http://www.ashacentre.org/>

Scandinavian Center for Shamanic Studies (Sweden) - <http://www.shamanism.dk/>

Instead of an official closing formula...a poem

Hieroglyphic stairway - Drew Dellinger

*it's 3:23 in the morning
and I'm awake
because my great great grandchildren
won't let me sleep
my great great grandchildren
ask me in dreams
what did you do while the planet was plundered?
what did you do when the earth was unraveling?
surely you did something
when the seasons started failing?
as the mammals, reptiles, birds were all dying?
did you fill the streets with protest
when democracy was stolen?
what did you do
once
you
knew?...*

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