

## CALL for PARTICIPANTS



Training course  
for  
youth workers

Nature as a teacher –  
*eco-centric development in  
Youth work*

22<sup>nd</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> May

**2017**

Gudevica, Bulgaria



*Dear friends,*

*Through the following pages, we have summarized the information you need to know about our training course **in order to apply for participation**.*

*If you have further questions, do not hesitate to contacting us at [ogi@gudevicallearning.net](mailto:ogi@gudevicallearning.net)*

*Enjoy exploring the information!*



This training course is built around the process of **eco-centric development**, inspired from the **Wheel of Life/Medicine Wheel** concept and is aiming at creating an educational frame which will contribute to the holistic development of youth.

During the training process we will explore and experience a wide variety of concepts such as **holistic development, working with vulnerabilities, therapeutic practices, spirituality, connections, rituals and relations with nature**.

Through this training we support the participants in exploring these concepts within the context of their personal and professional life. The practices which will be experienced during the course will be translated into educational tools, methods and activities to be used in the youth field, for the **personal and professional development of young people**.

This project is hosted by:

Learning for Change  
Foundation

[www.gudevicallearning.net](http://www.gudevicallearning.net)

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learning for  
change

"**Learning for Change**" Foundation is established by experts in the field of education, training and project activities. The Foundation works actively in the field of youth work at national and international level. Main focus of the organization is development of non-formal learning and youth work in Bulgaria and Europe. The team of the Foundation consists of international trainers (SALTO, HRDC), Project Coordinators (EEA, GEF, Erasmus +, LLP, YiA, ESF, etc.) and experts in the field of youth policy (National Youth Council).

Shared values among the team of the Foundation are: solidarity, social justice, the right to education and training, mutual cooperation, intercultural and interreligious dialogue, public and personal responsibility, peace and sustainable development.

"**Learning for Change**" Foundation has deep expertise in the development and implementation of training programs aimed at employment, empowerment, social inclusion, sustainable development, environmental protection, social entrepreneurship, non-formal learning, interactive teaching, modern pedagogy and others.

## About the Course

### WHY "NATURE AS A TEACHER"

Throughout the years we have observed that in many international projects (youth exchanges, courses and other actions) there is a certain point or limit which is not crossed by the youth leaders, trainers or facilitators of the learning process. We could see how the participants involved in such projects are exploring only the surface of their characters and true beings, thus making only small personal and professional changes. But, we believe that sustainable and authentic change is coming from working with young people at deeper levels, addressing deeper personal issues and tackling deeper life topics. In this way the youth can become who they are meant to be.

The youth workers nowadays have the challenge of supporting and empowering young people who are caught in the trap of finding and maintaining unsatisfying jobs in order to make a "normal" living. But the world we live in offers more and more challenges and pushes the youth in areas of insecurity and confusion. Through **Nature as a teacher**, we want to give new perspectives, solutions and tools for youth workers so they can create authentic and sustainable personal changes in young people. Solutions that are rooted in ancient wisdom, in natural laws and strong experiential learning.

*Thus **Nature as a teacher** aims at stimulating personal and professional development of Youth workers by experiencing and exploring innovative methods for self-discovery based on modern psychology and ancient nature-based practices.*



## TRAINING OBJECTIVES

The training course is built on a flow which combines elements of practice/experience, reflection, theory and application. Thus, we are aiming at:

1. Developing attitudes towards **nature based youth work**;
2. Exploring **therapeutic and psychological practices** for personal support;
3. Creating **pedagogical tools** for self-discovery based on eco-centric psychology;
4. Delivering knowledge about eco-centric development and **spirituality**;
5. Developing competencies to recognize young people's strong and weak sides, and be open to their **vulnerability** and personal development;
6. Developing practical skills for planning, organizing and implementation of **local workshops** for personal development, self-discovery and reconnection with nature.

## TOPICS OF THE COURSE

- 🕒 **Eco-centric and holistic development** –exploring and understanding the concept and elements of Wheel of Life/Developmental Wheel(a contemporary concept, based on the principles of Medicine Wheel –an element of Native American cultures)and how it can be used in youth work, in order to facilitate authentic development and transition from adolescence to adulthood.
- 🕒 **Vulnerability and therapeutic practices** –working with personal limitations, vulnerabilities and expectations (personal, social groups), finding strengths and qualities, being open, accessing inner resources.
- 🕒 **Connection with nature** –connecting with nature within, nature without, other people, the outside world (deep ecology), exploring the natural elements (water-earth-air-fire), web of life, nature based methods.
- 🕒 **Spirituality** –exploring secret-sacred things, sharing experiences, understanding human spirituality in different cultural backgrounds, exploring rituals and ceremonies.
- 🕒 **Art and Dance as tools for communication and self-expression** – tools for communication and self expression base on dance and art therapy.



## PROGRAMME ELEMENTS

Wheel of Life/Developmental Wheel

Working with vulnerabilities

Therapeutic practice

The Way of Council

Connecting with nature

Experiential learning

Baking bread

Hero's Journey

Fasting

Solo time in nature

Sharing, peer-to-peer learning, transferability

Living as a community (*cleaning, cooking etc.*)

Network of eco-centric youth workers

## WHO CAN PARTICIPATE

You can apply for this training course if you are from the following countries: **Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Italy, Romania, Estonia, Croatia, Macedonia, Spain and Greece.**

From each country will be selected as follow:

Greece	2 participants
Spain	2 participants
Macedonia	2 participants
Croatia	3 participants
Estonia	2 participants
Romania	2 participants
Italy	2 participants
Czech Republic	2 participants
Cyprus	2 participants
Bulgaria	4 participants



### Participant profile:

The themes and elements of this course make **Nature as a teacher** a quite particular event, thus we are looking for a specific profile of participants.

### The ideal participant has:

1. **RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:** persons who have at least 2 years of experience in youth work and participated in at least 2 international learning mobilities. The participants should have one of the **following roles:** youth workers, youth leaders, educational and career counselors, teachers, general educators, trainers, mentors, coaches, educational nature guides. The people under these roles should work directly and constantly with young people.
2. **MOTIVATION:** persons who feel a strong calling to participate in this course and have strong and relevant motivation for joining the process. The motivation should be a blend of personal and professional factors. We are looking for persons who feel **comfortable being in nature** and who can immerse in natural learning environments.
3. **CAPACITY TO USE THE EXPERIENCE:** each participant must be part of an organization/institution which is connected with the project topics or is willing to incorporate them in the future activities and projects.

### The ideal participant is willing to:

- Work with nature and holistic approaches.
- Work with youth at deeper personal levels.
- Gain new non-formal practices and methods.
- Develop future partnerships in the area of eco-centric development.
- Address in his/hers work elements of universal spirituality.
- Learn how to work strategically.
- Develop personally and professionally.

**The participants must be over 18 years and have a good level of English.**

## TRAINERS TEAM

The trainers' team has a rich experience in providing life changing experiences in safe but challenging learning environments. The "guides" of the learning process are professional youth workers, international trainers, persons with strong backgrounds in human development and psychology, with high ethics and working principles. The team is composed of:



**Bogdan Romanica (ROMANIA)** is a dedicated youth worker, trainer and motivational speaker. He is crazy about changing the world and making Earth a better place to live. He is dedicated to the following actions: supporting young people to discover themselves, encouraging them to dream big, working with youth for personal action plans and empowering them to act according to their dreams and ideals. He has a wide experience in personal development, empowerment and experiential learning, at a national and international level. <https://www.salto-youth.net/tools/toy/bogdan-romanica.3421/>



**Ognian Gadoularov (BULGARIA)** is a youth worker and trainer specialized in international youth cooperation projects. He is involved in interactive teaching and environmental education. Prepares and educates instructors for working with children and young people. Ognian perform responsibilities as a trainer for Bulgarian "Erasmus +" National Agency. Expert in conducting adventure programs based on experiential learning and improving team performance. <https://www.salto-youth.net/tools/toy/ognian-gadoularov.2625/>



**Eleni Michail (CYPRUS)** is a trainer and a youth worker. She discovered youth programmes and non-formal education while she was studying to become a school teacher. Feeling amazed by their impact, she decided to dedicate in offering possibilities for personal growth to youth. Among her areas of interest are personal development and empowerment, volunteering, human rights, active participation and sustainable development. She delivers training courses for the Cyprus' National Agency of the Erasmus + Programme, the Cypriot Commissioner of Children's Rights and other organizations. <https://www.salto-youth.net/tools/toy/eleni-michail.3402/>

## WHEN AND WHERE?

**Dates:** 22-31 May 2017

**Participants' Arrival day:** 22 May 2017 before 12:00 (AM) in Sofia

**Start of the program:** 22 May 2017 at 20:30 in Gudevica

**End of the program:** 30 May 2017 at 22.00 in Gudevica

**Departure day:** 31 May 2017 after 12:00 (AM) from Sofia.

**Location:** in Bulgaria, 250 km from Sofia.

## PROGRAM OF THE COURSE

We are presenting you with a program for the course. However, it is important to notice that it is just guidelines to offer you and overview, which can still be modified and will also be adapted accordingly to the group during the course.

22.05	Day 1 - 23.05	Day 2 - 24.05	Day 3 - 25.05	Day 4 - 26.05	Day 5 - 27.05	Day 6 - 28.05	Day 7 – 29.05	Day 8 – 30.05	31.05	
Arrival Welcome	<b>Intro and teambuilding</b>	<b>Outdoor education and Holistic development</b>	<b>Working with vulnerability and therapeutic practices</b>	<b>Working with nature and basic elements of life</b>	<b>Building the Vision</b>	<b>Integrating the experience and time to recharge</b>	<b>Working on transferability of the training</b>	<b>Erasmus+ Youthpass &amp; Evaluation</b>	Departure Goodbye	
	Circle of connection and community service									
	Official opening Aims/ Program	Outdoor education	Spirituality in everyday life	Connecting with the elements of nature	<i>Hero's Journey</i> as a tool for development	Exploring the local community	Evaluation of the activities and the impact	Exploring Erasmus+ Programme		
	Break									
	Expectations Get to know each other	Pedagogical approaches and results	Working with vulnerability	The basics of life and all my relations	Preparing for the Journey (and fasting)	Exploring the local community	Creation and demonstration of methods	My development and Youthpass		
	Lunch									
	Building the group	Eco-centric development and The Wheel of Life	Principles of therapeutic practices – art and nature therapy	Rites and rituals in personal development	Solo in the nature (and fasting)	Hike to Kom peak	Open space for sharing experiences	Action plan and personal commitment		
	Break									
	Introduction in the topics	Holistic practices	Therapeutic practices for youth work	Bread making workshop	Solo in the nature (and fasting)	Hike to Kom peak	Steps for the future – creation of project ideas	Evaluation and closing		
	Reflection									
Dinner										
Welcome Evening	Sharing stories	The Way of Council	Intercultural break	Dancing as a tool for expression	Creation of personal Vision	Motivational evening	Presentation of project ideas	Closing evening		

## FINANCIAL AND PRACTICAL CONDITIONS

**Nature as a teacher** is a project financed 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 amount limit presented in the table below.

PARTNER ASSOCIATION	COUNTRY	N° OF PARTICIPANTS	N° OF TRAINERS	MAX. REIMBURSEMENT PER PERSON
Learning for Change	Bulgaria	4	2	0 Euro
Civilna, edukativna i transparentna platforma	Croatia	3	0	180 Euro
Dreams for Life	Romania	2	1	180 Euro
Dobroti	Czech Republic	2	0	275 Euro
P.E.CO.	Italy	2	0	275 Euro
allaZOYME	Cyprus	2	1	275 Euro
Asociación Fondo Natural	Spain	2	0	275 Euro
CET platforma Skopje	Macedonia	2	0	180 Euro
Trikalact	Greece	2	0	180 Euro
Simuna Naisteklubi	Estonia	2	0	275 Euro

**INSURANCE:** Due to the complexity of the program each participant must have a comprehensive travel and medical insurance, covering both the travel and the stay from the first until the last day of the way back home. The insurance must be covered by the participants.

If you plan to **arrive earlier** or **leave later**, and you need to find an accommodation, let us know, so that we can support you. Your expenses out of the days of the training will not be reimbursed by the organizers. Please inform the organizers before you buy the tickets to check if the routes and the prices are ok with our budget.



**There is NO participation fee for this training course!!!**

## VENUE – EDUCATIONAL CENTER “NATURE SCHOOL”

The training course will take place in Educational center “Nature school” in Gudevica village. The Educational center “Nature school” is situated **deep in the mountain** next to the Greek border in thinly populated region. There is **NO PERMANENT WIRELESS INTERNET ACCESS** in the center. By the same reason also **not all cell phone companies have network coverage there.**

**The main destination will be Sofia.** All participants can reach Sofia by plane or bus (**preferably on 22.05.2017 before noon**).

**We will arrange transport from Sofia to Gudevica for full group by bus** and to do same on 31.05.2017.

Educational centre “Nature school” is situated in the old school building in nearly abandoned village Gudevica, surrounded by beautiful nature, high in the Rhodopy Mountains. There are a lot of nature phenomenon around – Springs of Arda River, Uhlovica and Golubovica caves, Peak Kom and also natural reserves. Today in the village lives only 18 people.



The place is **VERY RURAL AND REMOTE**. So you have to be **prepared** to live **very close to the nature, in a small community very far from the city civilization!!!!** It will be perfect if you like **outdoors and country life.**

### Accommodation

Accommodation of participants will be done in a village house (hut-type) with big common sleeping room. There is also possibility to use tents and camping equipment for free if anybody wants. In the house there are two bathrooms with hot water produced by solar

panels. There are also external bathroom (with amazing view to the sunset). The rooms and beds are equipped with bed sheets and sleeping bags. In the center there are in total 5 toilets – two internal and 3 external.

### Food

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

Please make sure to inform us about **any special diet and allergies regarding food** by marking it in the application form.



## APPLICATION PROCEDURES AND DEADLINE

If you want to participate in this training course you have to fill in this application form available at this link:

<https://goo.gl/forms/aNdKewSve1eEfzn2>

**The deadline** for applications submission is **10th of March 2017 (included)**.

The selections results will be published on 15th of March 2017.

## CONTACT

**Ognian Gadoularov** – project coordinator and trainer

[ogi@gudevicalearning.net](mailto:ogi@gudevicalearning.net) +359 896 756 267