

CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS

TRAINING COURSE FOR YOUTH WORKERS

LIVING NATURE

NATURE-BASED PRACTICES FOR PERSONAL
AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF
YOUTH WORKERS

GUDEVICA VILLAGE, BULGARIA, "SCHOOL IN NATURE" EDUCATIONAL CENTRE
04 – 12.05.2022

Wild Geese

by Mary Oliver

*You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on your knees
for a hundred miles through the desert repenting.
You only have to let the soft animal of your body
love what it loves.
Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
Meanwhile the world goes on.
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
are moving across the landscapes,
over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
are heading home again.
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.*



LIVING NATURE is a training course targeting personal development practitioners (trainers, youth workers, social workers, mentors, school teachers and councillors). The main intention of the project is to equip the participants with successful tools and methods to support their personal and professional development, thus providing higher quality value-based youth work.



The training process is focused on discovering and experiencing nature-based practices for personal and professional development of the participants. The areas from these practices originate are **Positive psychology, Eco-Soul centric human development, Eco-psychology, Depth psychology, Eco-therapy and Nature-based learning.**

The general background of the programme is based on the work of the American psychologist and therapist Bill Plotkin. Through the last 40 years, Bill and his colleagues in Animas Valley Institute developed two models that depict the very depths of human psyche – Eco-Soulcentric developmental Wheel and Nature Based map of Human psyche. These two models represent the very essence of what we humans are born to deliver in this world, both physically and spiritually. The models describe the ideal template for human development, if it goes in harmony with Nature (inner and outer) and offers a map of all inherited resources everyone is born with.

In our modern westernized world, unfortunately we are living in industrial consumer-conformist society where the free will, expression, wildness, talents and values are controlled and directed by social norms and economical tools. The human nature is trapped in a materialistic prison.

All these lead to gradually in last few centuries of very deep loss of our connection with nature. Thus developing a long list of psychological deficits and health problems. Modern youth are separated from the wild world they are born to grow in and are surrounded by electronical devices and screens. Modern humans are bombarded by negative information and forced to live as consumers and gears in the big industrial machine. At the same time, nature is treated simply as a source of goods and materials. Humanity have lost their very respect to the Nature we are coming from and we cannot survive without.

An alternative to the current industrial consumer model of Western civilization we find in the model of Bill Plotkin – *Eco-Soulcentric developmental Wheel*. The model serves as a guide to deep cultural transformation of society bringing back to life the values of mutual respect, community, responsibility, acceptance, purposeful life and diversity. This map charts the development through life of a human being's consciousness and ego if this person develops "soul-centrally", as opposed to "ego-centrally", and nature-connected. This way the development of a person becomes focused on facilitating the emergence of their innate gifts and soul-purpose and developing the resources to be in reciprocal conversation with Nature and Culture.

The second model – *Nature-based Map of Human Psyche* – provides us with an understanding of what is hidden within every human as a resources and capacities which are waiting to be cultivated and used to enrich our individual lives. The map also offers us a way into identifying and transforming our conditioned patterns of behaviour that originated in our childhood wounding, in order to free our adult life from these unconscious, life unserving strategies.

Both models provide a number of practices, which offer transformative individual and group processes leading to growth and discovery of human's full potential.

This course will offer you...

DEEP PERSONAL JOURNEY FOLLOWING THE NATURE-BASED MAP OF HUMAN PSYCHE AND ECOCENTRIC DEVELOPMENTAL WHEEL

The training approach combines *nature-based methods, mindfulness practices, developmental psychology and somatic practices*. The process is woven around six pillars, collected in the abbreviation SPIRAL.

SPIRAL stands for the basic principles that unite the methods included in the process:

- Spiritual development
- Positive worldview
- Interconnection with all natural beings
- Resilience building
- Active role in the community
- Life purpose identification

TRAINING OBJECTIVES

- 🕒 Exploring models and theories from **Ecocentric development and Nature-based learning**;
- 🕒 Practicing **nature based methods which provoke self-discovery**, thus facilitating personal and professional development;
- 🕒 Developing a **personal relationship with nature (deep nature connection)** and cultivating the **ecological consciousness**;
- 🕒 To discover practices and guidelines for **further use with specific youth target groups** (NEET, marginalized, hard to reach, in a risk of radicalization);
- 🕒 To create environment for **development of social core values which youth workers can foster with their target groups**: compassion, support, unity, respect, empathy, inclusion, acceptance;
- 🕒 To empower youth workers **to adopt and create their own practices** based on personal strengths, talents and preferences in the field of personal development.

THE PARTICIPANTS WILL GAIN

- Awareness of one's own being (who they are, what is their essence, how they can make their life journey in a more genuine and meaningful way);
- Exploration and cultivation of the inner resources by working with the archetypes: Nurturing Generative Adult, Wild Indigenous One, Innocent/Sage, The Muse Beloved;
- Confidence, courage, empathy, naturalness, authenticity, clarity, wildness, Imagination etc.;
- Authentic and empathic connection with others (integrating the principles of listening and speaking from the heart).

TOPICS OF THE COURSE

Self-discovery and resourcefulness - understanding about ourselves and supporting others' self-development process;

Physical exercises – practices based on yoga and other traditions that can be implemented in everyday life;

Meditation and mindfulness – tools for focus and balance of attention, emotions and consciousness;

Outdoor creativity and nature – connecting with the self, nature, other people, the outside world, organize open air learning and creativity activities;

Dance and movement – embodiment as a method for deepening connection to oneself and provoking kinaesthetic learning experiences;

Spirituality – exploring secret-sacred elements sharing experiences, understanding human spirituality in different cultural backgrounds, exploring rituals and ceremonies.



PROGRAMME ELEMENTS

Working with values

Nature based methods

Experiential learning

Methods for self-development

Workshops development and delivery

Solo time in nature

The Way of Council

Practices for wholing and self-healing

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

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE

You can apply for this training course if you are from **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*).

Dates of the course: 04 – 12.05.2022

Arrival day: 04.05.2022 before 12:00 (AM) in Sofia

Departure day: 12.05.2022 after 2:00 (PM) from Sofia.



Participant profile:

1. **RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:** people who have experience in youth work. The participants should have one of the **following roles:** youth workers, youth leaders, educational and career counsellors, teachers, general educators, trainers, mentors, coaches, educational nature guides.
2. **MOTIVATION:** people 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 people who feel **comfortable with being in nature (as the topic will be addressed through nature-based practices)** and who can immerse in natural learning environments.

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

APPLICATION PROCEDURES AND DEADLINE

If you want to participate in this training course, we invite you to fill in the application form available at this link: [APPLICATION FORM](#)

The **deadline** for applications submission is **15 February 2022 (included)**.

The selections results will be published on 25 February 2022.

CONTACT

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TRAINERS TEAM

The trainers' team has a rich history 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:



OGNIAN GADOULAROV (Bulgaria) is a passionate naturalist, rock climber and expert of 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 trainer with interests and experience in meditation, yoga and energy practices. His favourite topics are personal development, self-discovery, responsible consumption, sustainability and environmental protection. He lives as an activist for cultural evolution, re-sacredising 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*.



LUCIE KLEIN (France) At the heart of Lucie lies a commitment to serve the soulful unfolding of all beings. From the red rock canyons of Utah to the dark forests of Transylvania, she has tracked and crafted her soul gifts. As a Chrysotherapist, Soul Initiation Guide and Geomancer, she dances with the veil between the worlds, exploring the subtle movements and voices of the human heart and soul, listening for their echo in the voice of the Earth. She is a lover of the wild, a guardian of thresholds and a guide through life-passages. Through her deep listening and fierce loving, she tracks people's mystery stories throughout life and guides them to awaken to their soul-rooted purpose.

Lucie is part of the **Nature-based Soul Initiation Guiding Soulcraft Apprenticeship and Initiation Programme (SAIP)** at Bill Plotkin's *Animas Valley Institute, Colorado, USA*. She has over 10 years of experience in guiding groups and individuals in transformational, nature and arts-based settings. She has pioneered several nature-based healing and wholing and soul initiation programs for communities across Europe and Latin America. She is the founding director of Via Magus (www.viamagus.org).



FINANCIAL AND PRACTICAL CONDITIONS

LIVING NATURE 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 the Erasmus + regulations. *Additional reimbursement will be provided for the expenses related to international travel regulation due to COVID-19 measures (testing, medical certificates etc.)*

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.

NON REIMBURSABLE EXPENSES ARE:

- Taxi fees;
- Accommodation for extra days in Bulgaria;
- Insurance

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

VENUE – EDUCATIONAL CENTER “SCHOOL IN NATURE”

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 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 in the village live only 18 people.

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



Accommodation

The accommodation will be in a village house (hut-type) with big common sleeping rooms. There are separate rooms for women and men. 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 amazing view to the sunset). The toilets in the centre are 5 – 2 internal and 3 external compost ones. There is also a possibility to use tents and camping equipment for



free if anybody wants.

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.



THIS PROJECT IS HOSTED BY

Learning for Change Foundation

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Who we are?

“**Learning for Change**” Foundation is 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 works actively together in the field of Youth work designing and offering activates 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 share values are: solidarity, social justice, the right for 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 of 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 eco-system.

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;

