

Training for youth workers

From

separation

to

connection



INFO PACK

NOV. 5-13, 2022
AEGINA, GREECE

The Training Course

We observe a growing sense of alienation, isolation and depression in both young and not-so-young people. A sense of separation, from the natural world, each other and even ourselves (a separation of mind/body) is the most important cause for these feelings. We got more disconnected from each other, for example due to mobile phones that reduce face-to-face communication. We got disconnected from the natural world by the increasing urbanisation, while nature has a relaxing effect on our nervous systems. This separateness does not only have an unhealthy effect on our well-being, but also on that of the Earth. Temperatures are rising, weather conditions worsening, biodiversity decreasing, natural habitats get destroyed and many species are going extinct at an alarming rate, because we don't care enough.

While we cannot physically separate ourselves from nature, we do act as if they are separate. Humans' behaviour towards nature is destructive and thereby SELFdestructive. Feeling a part of nature, we see it is crucial to care for both ourselves and nature simultaneously. The two support each other. A connection with nature creates resilience for everyday life and gives new motivation and perspectives for more resilient sustainable ways of living.

With this project we want to explore the separation and move to re-connection, with psychological, personal, collective and practical approaches, to become healthier as a person and as a community. We'll draw from Gestalt Therapy, Deep Ecology and Buddhism.

The **aim** of the project is to provide more awareness and tools to improve both mental health and 'planetary'/ environmental health. The **objectives** of our project are to support youth workers to:

1. Give insight into unhealthy forms of separation with self, others and nature and methods to improve inter-personal interaction, to improve mental health in themselves and others;
2. Explore nature-based ways to restore a healthy connection with the natural world and find opportunities to live more sustainable lives aligned with the capacity of nature;
3. Build a common future vision, their future path within it and identify first steps to include new insights from the course in youth work;
4. Create a network of like-minded youth workers who want to improve (environ)mental health, so they can exchange best practices, learn from each other and cooperate and increase their impact.

The course will have the following themes:

Day 1 "From Separation to Connection"

Day 2 "Mental Health"

Day 3 "Resilience"

Day 4 "Deep Listening"

Day 5 "Reconnecting to Nature"

Day 6 "Heart-Head-Hands for Future Plans"

Day 7 "Looking Back & Forward"

The exact program of the training course will be share with people selected to participate.

PREPARATION

To make the most out of the training course, prepare yourself through watching videos and reading a few articles that we will email. It will also be helpful to write down some learning goals for yourself and keep track of these during the training course in your notes. In addition, we will organise a webinar, to get to know each other a little in advance and answer any questions.

FOLLOW-UP

It is important that you're also committed to follow-up on the training course by **sharing what you have learned** during the training course with others. This has two elements: “dissemination”, meaning sharing about the training course through social media and in informal conversations and “**multiplying**”, meaning **organising an activity** in which you implement what you've learned. This could be a workshop or another kind of project.

The trainers will offer their support to help you implement your idea(s) so that you, as a youth worker, can empower youth to become peacebuilders, and of course also become a peacebuilder yourself :-).

Furthermore, we invite you to stay in touch by participating in webinars or other courses, contributing to the newsletter or involving us with any project ideas you may have. The world needs people that promote peace, solidarity, and cooperation, and we're stronger together.

Selection results

People can apply to participate until the 5th of October and will be notified within 3 days about the results. The application form can be found [here](#).

Only people who are from or residing in The Netherlands, Greece, Spain, Croatia, Latvia and Poland can participate.

Working Together Guidelines

The training will be more enjoyable if we work together and interact in respectful ways, so that everyone can feel safe, cared for and supported. Therefore, we are proposing some guidelines to you that will support us as a group. Based on our experience as trainers, we propose eight guidelines. We will invite you on the first day to revisit them and add or adjust them. The guidelines are phrased as commitments, which we ask you to consider.

1. I will share and participate in the exercises at whatever level feels safe and comfortable.
 - I will share what I want to share. If I choose not to share, that's fine. If I want to share a little, that's fine. If I want to share more, that's fine. Together we will create an environment where our feelings and thoughts are respected. I might want to voluntarily take opportunities to feel uncomfortable when that might aid my growth.
 - I understand that facilitators are not acting in the capacity of professional psychotherapists or counselors. They are ordinary people helping us explore alternatives to the violence in our lives and the larger world.
2. I will maintain confidentiality about personal stories or experiences shared in my small group or in the large group, unless I have been given permission to share them with

others, in order to contribute to a sense of safety and trust within the group.

3. I will strive to appreciate and honor our differences. Diversity is an opportunity for me to grow and learn in a new way. I will try to be open and celebrate persons, approaches, and ways of being that are different from mine. Within this context, I recognize that there are power dynamics in every group, including this one. I will do my best to be sensitive to the use of power based on race, gender, ability, sexual orientation, money, or class. If someone, for example, discounts another person's experience, I will try to respond to this situation in a clear and loving way, seeking to ensure that everyone's needs are held as important.
4. I will listen to whoever is speaking with respect and attention, and I will wait until a person has completed his or her thoughts before I speak.
5. I will be on time for the workshop sessions, to make the most of our time together and ensuring there is enough time for learning. When I need more rest, I will communicate this to the trainers and the group.
6. In order to participate fully in the training and be present to all the learning, I will turn my mobile phone, computer and other devices off and leave them in my bag or in my room during the training sessions and reflection groups. If I need to make or receive a call during one of the training sessions I will speak to the trainers about this beforehand.
7. I will try to be aware and respectful of the needs of the participants, trainers and other people at the venue. I will take responsibility for contributing to a space that is enjoyable to work in, and also encourage others to do so, for example by clearing the room from any cups or personal items at lunch time and after the last session, and putting the chairs back into a circle. I will also be careful with all the materials in the hotel and be quiet between 11PM and 7AM to respect other guests. If disagreement arises I will do my best to practice the nonviolent skills I am learning and I will bring up any issues with the trainers.
8. I understand that I have been chosen over many other applicants to be a part of this project, and that I am receiving financial support from the EU to take part in this training. Therefore, I commit to participate fully in *all the three stages of the project*: I will attend all the sessions during the training. I understand that not participating fully in the training may have consequences for the reimbursement I am receiving. I will also do my best to implement a follow-up activity to share what I have learned with others.

Accommodation

On the island of Aegina, only an hour by boat from Athens, Oikia Karapanou is a beautiful mansion from the 19th century, surrounded by a huge garden close to the sea. It has been restored to provide an atmosphere of peace and inspiration, an oasis on the soul's journeys. Oikia, pronounced ee-kee-ah, means "residence" in Greek and is at the root of words with "eco", like ecology (logos meaning reasoning), economy (nomy meaning law) etc.. Oikia Karapanou is at a 5min walk from the nearest beach.



The house can host up to 20 people. There are 10 bedrooms, 5 bathrooms, a living room, a kitchen, numerous terraces and balconies and of course the spacious garden of 300 square meters in front of the house. The upper floor of the house contains a bright and spacious 40 square-meter hall, surrounded by windows facing in all directions, which leads out onto two big terraces facing east and west.

Corona Measures

In case there are any measures, you will be able to find out more here: <https://travel.gov.gr>

Expenses

This program receives co-financing from Erasmus+, a European institution that supports mobility within Europe as well as the improvement of youth work and other sectors of formal and non-formal education. This funding covers your accommodation and food.



Erasmus+



We ask everyone to pay a participation fee of **45 euro to be paid before the 15th of October**, in order to reserve your space. When we do not receive your payment, we will contact people on the waiting list, as we do not want to have any empty spaces. We can select only 15 to 20% of all the people who apply, so it wouldn't be fair if you occupy a place you're not committed to. Two weeks gives us a little time to find another person, but of course the earlier you can confirm, the better.

If you need a reduction, we can provide this up to 50%, if you can prove to have a valid reason.

Please make your payment to the “Stichting voor Aktieve Geweldloosheid” IBAN NL93 INGB 0000 2665 51. Mention “TC Greece”.

Travel costs (of any means of transportation) to and from your home to the venue (and no additional detours!) are reimbursed, up to the following maxima:

- Greece: for >100km €180, for less €20. For Green travel: €210
- Croatia: €275
- Spain, Netherlands, Poland and Latvia: €360,00

The travel expenses are reimbursed after the training course, upon receiving a PDF that includes all your receipts of your journey. Please note that we are accountable to Erasmus+ to provide them the receipts for your expenses. Therefore, **only expenses for which receipts are presented will be covered!** Also note that international bank transfers or currency transfers are to be paid by/on the costs of the participants.

Organisations and Trainers



You will see two names on our documents and the website: **Foundation of Active Nonviolence** and **Peace Power**.

Peace Power is a new name that I adopted for 2020. The previous one, Towards a Nonviolent World was the title of a project and website I (Nina) started to give shape in **2014**. On the way I found

The Foundation for Active Nonviolence (Stichting voor Actieve Geweldloosheid - SVAG) which was founded back in **1966** and is made up of largely the same people who started it. I explained to them my ideas, and discovered they'd run many trainings until the mid-nineties. While the peace movement has diminished in the Netherlands since then, these people's enthusiasm for the topic of nonviolence and peace didn't wear off during all these years! They decided to support me and I kept the name 'Towards a Nonviolent World' to promote the training and attract young and international people. So far I organized 7 Erasmus+ training courses.

SVAG is currently publishing a "**Handbook of Nonviolent Power for a Peaceful Society**", made available for the few hundred members of the organisation, and the author is working on English translation. At the moment there is a brochure in English.

I myself co-authored a book, the **Study Guide "Engaging Nonviolence. Activating Nonviolent Change in Our Lives and Our World"** published in October 2019 by Pace e Bene Press. [Pace e Bene](#) is an American organisation that provides training courses in nonviolence. You can read more about the book [here](#).

The trainers



Nina Koevoets - Project coordinator and trainer

Nina has been studying nonviolence and conflict resolution for more than a decade. Her master in Conflict Resolution did not include what regular people can do to build peace, so she sought answers elsewhere. She joined a training program with the Metta Center for Nonviolence in the USA and worked several months in India and Israel-Palestine. These experiences gave her new perspectives and ideas about the challenges and potential of nonviolent action. She earned a second master degree in Global Studies in Sweden, with the intention to do a PhD afterwards, but decided instead to teach outside of academia and become an independent trainer. In 2015 she

implemented her first training course in The Netherlands and has organised several since then. She was born in The Netherlands and lives in Greece (Thessaloniki) since 2017.



Anna Makreandreu - co-trainer

Anna Makreandreu has a bachelor in psychology and is a trainee in Gestalt psychotherapy. Her 8 years of field experience includes work within the mental health sector and with NGOs serving vulnerable groups. She has taken a relationship-based and community centred approach while working with people who suffer from severe mental health issues in psychiatry clinics; to individuals and families living with addictions in the "18 ANO" public rehabilitation unit; to members of the LGBTQIA+, as well as refugees, migrants, UAM and sex workers; and also coordinator and group therapist for Christodoulou Orphanage. Currently, she continues her work as a

psychologist with the NGO ARSIS - The Association for the Social Support of Youth. She supported migrants and asylum seeking unaccompanied minors and is currently working on

Human Trafficking education.

Partner organisations

IRIS – Greece

IRIS is a non-profit organisation, founded in Aegina, Greece, in 1995, dedicated to personal and interpersonal development. We organise and host workshops, seminars, residencies and events fostering the development of consciousness, community building and social ecology, locally as well as internationally. It is mainly held by a couple, Christina and Olivier. For 4-6 months we organise a youth program (18 -28 years old), The School of All Relations - SOAR. The program offers a combination of specific trainings interwoven with a daily culture of body work, mindfulness practice, self-investigation, group dynamics, hands-on work, project building, trekking in nature, singing, dancing and celebrating, all embedded in the deep learnings of community life.

Email: aigina.oikia@gmail.com

RADI VIDI PATS – Latvia

Radi Vidi Pats is 15 years old organization with 19 members 2 paid staff and 30 activists (non-members, but those who supports organization from time to time). It started as an association that works with topics related environmental education for youngsters but slowly and very naturally we have grown into the social sphere as well. Of course, sustainability, alternative and DIY life style and non-formal education are still our fundamentals, and we use different tools (games, bicycles, crafts etc.) in communication with the society, especially young adults.

Four years ago we opened a bicycle kitchen – self-service bicycle workshop - which is naturally grown into swap-shop (free exchange place). We do use it to reach out to the local community and bring attention to the environmental issues around and to invite people to be more open-minded, less consuming, more creative and more peaceful in order to co-create a more inclusive society. We do cooperate with different partners all over Europe and implement many non-formal education activities, in which we apply and develop different non-formal education tools.

Email: rvpliepaja@gmail.com

Outward Bound Croatia

Outward Bound Croatia is a member of Outward Bound International whose outdoor educational programs are recognized in over 30 countries around the world as a valuable enrichment of the classic school system. Our main field of activity is the organization and implementation of innovative outdoor programs for school children and youth. We take special concern in empowering youth with fewer opportunities, from struggling families, the social care system, youth with behavioural problems, or emotional difficulties in our courses.

We teach and work by the following values: compassion, integrity, excellence, inclusion, and diversity. Learning through experience, challenge, and adventure in a supportive environment are the principles we use to design and deliver programs with targeted outcomes like character development, leadership, and service.

Email: ana.novosel@outwardboundcroatia.com

Foundation for Holistic and Sustainable Development WINDMILL TREE – Poland

The main aim of Windmill Tree Foundation is to support and promote holistic and sustainable development. By "holistic" we mean physical, mental, social human development. By "sustainable" we understand the re-integration of society with nature, art, economics. Our target groups : young people, children, middle-aged and elderly people. We pay special attention to young people with fewer opportunities.

Spheres of activities : those "fields" that we believe most support sustainable and holistic development: arts and culture, sports/outdoor activities, mixed-ability activities, social entrepreneurship.

Our main objectives:

- supporting, promoting and implementing non-formal and informal education;

- improving the quality of youth work, social work - by introducing creative, innovative approaches, exchange of experiences and good practices;
- Promoting sustainable development on all levels - local, national, international;
- Activating young people from rural areas;

Email: projects.windmill.tree@gmail.com

ASOCIACIÓN SOBRE LOS MÁRGENES – Spain

Our organization was established by an informal group in 2020 in order to continue with the activities already done by this group in the area of youth engagement in social and political life. We identify ourselves as part of the margins, as our members mainly are part of groups that have been historically disadvantaged. Our main goal is to support youngsters with migrant background coming from poor urban areas, especially in the educational field. Research done have proved that migrant children are one of the groups that faces more socio-economical difficulties, especially in education. Our mission is to contribute to the personal and professional growth of the most vulnerable youth in the society, from a perspective that put them in the center and supported by other young people that have faced similar experiences.

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Contact

In case you have any questions before arriving to Greece, please contact Nina by email: contact.peacepower@gmail.com