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Erasmus+ KA1 Training Course

Nature as a pedagogical resource

Dates *

- 25 September - 1 October 2022
- 14 -20 October 2022

**Dates are subject to confirmation and minimum number of participants.*

**The course is planned for 7 days; duration may be shortened according to the participants' individual needs.*

Place: Aveiro, Portugal

"In the end, we will conserve only what we love; we will love only what we understand and we will understand only what we are taught."

Baba Dioum

Introduction

It is well accepted that modern societies urgently need to come closer to nature, again. Contact with nature is a fundamental human need, even if we don't realize it. Modern life styles have drifted us apart from the outdoors, and all the environmental problems that impact our lives and health evidently show us it's time to reconnect.

Nature secures ecological functioning, on which all (human and wild) lives depend, it contributes to reduce stress, benefits general health, and helps children, youth and adults to develop intellectual, social and emotional competences. However, in a digital era, how can we reconnect with nature? How can educators and teachers encourage their learners to (re)discover nature? How can natural resources be used as an asset in education?

This training course will provide nature interpretation skills, and provide pedagogical skills to any teacher or professional wanting to improve their nature-related skills. In class or outdoors, in green areas or in the city, nature is the ultimate and limitless pedagogical resource that all can enjoy.

Target audience

- Teachers and educators with learners from all age ranges and subjects.
- Educational leaders, directive and support staff in schools, NGOs, scouts, Sunday schools, environmental clubs, etc.
- Staff from science centres, museums, environmental education programmes, protected areas, municipalities, educational facilities, training centres, NGOS, among others.
- Tourism guides and managers.
- Environmental officers in any public or private institution.
- Adult education and vocational training professionals.

What can you expect?

Our training course is planned and managed by an award-winning team of nature conservation and environmental education professionals. Each day, training is delivered by the highest-standard quality trainers and field guides.

The **training team** is dynamic, welcoming, and passionate for education and nature conservation. All trainers are well experienced professionals from areas such as biology, geology, forest management, science communication, education, among others.

Training methodology includes in-room classes, lectures, guest speakers, exploitation of case studies, debates, hands-on workshops, field visits to iconic landmarks, demonstrations of pedagogical techniques for in-room and outdoor activities, and a general training on outdoor education. The course will start with key concepts and basic knowledge needed to correctly understand and exploit nature as a learning resource, and build on that understanding to evolve toward hands-on activities. Field visits and in situ explanations will consolidate the acquired competences and boost confidence to implement actions and pedagogical activities to better share, teach, enjoy and protect nature.

The course will be based in **Aveiro**, the amazing city known as the Portuguese Venice. We will take you to some of the most beautiful natural places in central **Portugal**, and show you some secrets you will not find in touristic programmes. You will see endangered species and endemisms you can only find in the Iberian Peninsula, and get in touch with the responsible staff for incredible nature conservation and educational programmes. Also, you will fall in love with the Portuguese food and culture.

The course is planned in the framework of the **Erasmus+ Programme**, especially KA1. You will receive support for your mobility experience and the adequate validation/recognition of the competences acquired (course certificate and signature of EUROPASS documents).

Learning outcomes

- Understand key concepts in nature conservation and environmental education (e.g. biodiversity, ecosystem services, main environmental threats, alien invasive species, endangered species, etc.).
- Techniques and tools for using natural heritage as a pedagogical asset in all environments (urban, natural areas, forests, farmlands, etc).
- Develop skills for organizing indoor or outdoor nature conservation activities and workshops.
- Develop competences for planning and organizing hands-on activities or field visits.
- Improve nature and landscape interpretation/facilitation/communication skills.
- Methods to enhance the learners' engagement towards the protection of nature.
- Improve competences for integrating an ecological reasoning and environmental concerns in all sorts of learning subjects.
- Cultivate environmental skills as a way to promote your learners' and peers' emotional intelligence, social competences, personal development and positive values.

- Train innovative methodologies to teach sustainability and an ecological reasoning, so to compel your learners to take action for climate and nature.
- Develop intercultural competences and improve cultural awareness and networking skills.

Programme

Day 1

- Reception in Aveiro
- Ice breakers and introductions
- Presentation of the course
- Introduction to ecosystem services
- Biodiversity: importance, threats and pedagogical value

Day 2

- The use of endangered species as pedagogical assets
- Urban biodiversity: tools and tricks to use it to improve ecological engagement
- The educative value of merging cultural and natural heritage
- Field visits:
 - University of Aveiro (*a natural campus*)
 - Herbarium Universitatis Aveirensis (*flora cataloguing and protection*)
 - Aveiro traditional salt pans
 - Aveiro city tour

Day 3

- Forests: the limitless 'classroom'
- Invasive species: impacts and the importance of their control
- Civic and educational action towards nature conservation
- Volunteerism as an educational resource
- Field visit:
 - Bussaco National Forest

Day 4

- How to integrate environmental education in the regular subjects and classes?
- Tools to improve learner's engagement towards nature conservation
- Bringing children and teenagers back to nature

- How to make your school/institution more sustainable?
- Field visit to the Municipality of Lousada:
 - Environmental education center 'Casa das Videiras'
 - Mata de Vilar (Internationally recognized 'Forest of high conservation value')
 - Project BioSchool
 - Lousada's award-winning municipal strategy for sustainability

Day 5

- Improving gardens and school yards for nature conservation and interpretation
- Ponds and water streams as pedagogical tools
- Workshops: building shelters for wildlife
- Field visits:
 - Pateira de Frossos (*birdwatching paradise*)
 - Interpretation Center of Pateira de Frossos

Day 6

- Landscape interpretation.
- Biodiversity and geology: different realities, same pedagogical value.
- Habitat restoration and nature conservation: how everybody can help.
- Conservation of key wildlife species: benefits for all.
- Field visit to the Greater Côa Valley:
 - Project Rewilding Portugal (*natural grazing and the reintroduction of wild horses*)
 - Sortelha (*historic village*)

Day 7

- Reflections on the course learnings
- Course evaluation
- Certificates awarding session
- Course closure

Course fee

€490 Tuition + €100 Organisational costs (Total €590).

Amount includes preparation of the course, trainers, training materials, organizational costs, room rental, entrance fees in planned venues, transportations for field visits, cultural and social programme. Accommodation and meals are not included.