

# Pathways to Nature

*Senses – Emotions – Beauty – Meaning - Compassion*

*A Training Course for Youth Workers to learn new approaches to using nature in their work with young people*

Sunday, April 2nd – Saturday, April 8th, 2023

(including Travel days)

Woodstown, County Waterford, Ireland



**Woodstown Residential and Activity Centre**



Erasmus+



# **Information Pack for** **Participants**

## **Background and Theme of the Project**

Have you ever wondered why young people just seem happier and in better form after they've spent the day outside in nature?

Fresh air, glorious sunshine, reviving rain, wild wind, and sparkling snow – they all just seem to add to our positive feelings. It's almost as if we were actually meant to live closer to nature, rather than surrounded by concrete, glass, LED lighting and tarmac!

Many youth workers want to use nature as a background for youth work, simply because it adds enormously to the outcomes that we're looking to create with young people.

Sometimes though, it can be a challenge for young people to motivate themselves to get out in the open air, even though they know that it's good for them. This Course brings together Youth Workers, and people who work with young people, to explore new pathways to connect young people with nature. We'll learn from each other, from different Trainers, and we'll learn from nature itself – all with a view to supporting and encouraging young people to connect with nature on their own terms.

16 participants will live with and learn from each other during a week at Woodstown Residential and Activity Centre on the south east coast of Ireland.

It will be a very interactive week, with participants taking a full active role in all activities. Participants will be outdoors, and learning through doing for most of the week. We'll be exploring the countryside, meeting the locals, and taking part in the unique cultural life of this lovely corner of our little island!

We'll be using the 4 distinct environments of County Waterford on the south east coast of Ireland as a backdrop to the week:

- Seashore
- Mountains
- Forests
- Grassland

Each participant will be asked to prepare a short, interactive Presentation, from their own countries, highlighting the best ideas and examples involving youth work, young people and nature.

The week will be constructed around 5 Pathways to Nature Connection:

<u>Sunday</u>	Participants arrive at Woodstown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting to know each other</li> </ul>
<u>Monday –</u> <b>Senses</b>	<b>Exploring and experiencing nature through all the senses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploring our environment through all of our senses at the beach and along the seashore, with Spanish actress, Elena Serrano, using the methodology of Labyrinth Theatre</li> </ul>
<u>Tuesday –</u> <b>Emotions</b>	<b>Noticing and welcoming the feelings that nature inspires</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elena will be with us for a second day focusing on emotions and feelings, as we seek the wilderness, and untangle our own emotions</li> <li>• Enjoying the hospitality at a local traditional Irish music 'session'</li> </ul>
<u>Wednesday-</u> <b>Beauty</b>	<b>Seeking and appreciating the beauty of the natural world</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploring the beauty of the forests and grasslands of Waterford with Tom Kent, who's a Forestry lecturer at Waterford University</li> <li>• Exploring the Comeragh mountains with mountain leader, Declan O Driscoll</li> </ul>
<u>Thursday –</u> <b>Meaning</b>	<b>Celebrating and sharing nature's events and stories</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharing our experiences from various European countries – learning what works from our partners and friends</li> <li>• Storytelling workshop with a local director and actor, James Rockett</li> </ul>
<u>Friday –</u> <b>Compassion</b>	<b>Helping and caring for nature</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planting trees in remote mountain areas</li> <li>• Clearing the seashore in a wild section of the cliffs and coastline</li> <li>• Celebration and evaluation of our learning</li> </ul>
<u>Saturday</u>	Participants depart the venue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final breakfast together</li> </ul>

## Overall Aim

The aim of this Training Course is to explore different environments and methodologies together, so that youth workers can go back to their own groups in their own countries, and work with young people in new and inspiring ways.

## Objectives

- For Youth Workers to learn about and experience the 5 Pathways to Nature
- To share examples and methods from across Europe, and to inspire the participants to implement similar learning processes after the Training Course with their own target groups
- To reflect on their own learning process by using the Key Competences from the Youth Pass, and giving the opportunity for capacity building in the context of the Erasmus+ Program

## Approach and Methodology

This Training Course will be based on non-formal and informal education with a self-directed learning approach.

During this course participants are responsible for their own learning and the facilitators provide activities, and guide the participants through their own learning process.

The Training Course will be characterised by highly participatory, interactive and experiential methods. We'll be out in the natural environment of forests, coastline and mountains most of the time, so **it's important that participants will be prepared for all weathers!**

Some sessions will be complemented by theoretical inputs, and all of them will be followed by group reflection or self-reflection.

### **PREPARATORY WORK –**

NB. Each participant will be asked to create a short presentation (maximum 15 minutes) BEFORE they arrive in Ireland around an example of best practice youth work involving young people and nature, from their own country. The key thing is that they feel that this would be a good example of work that could be transferable around Europe

## *Profile of the Participants*

Participants will be youth workers, project leaders and educators involved in youth work. The key is that participants want to work with young people using nature as a backdrop.

The participants will have a multiplier role - in other words: they will adapt what they learn in this Training Course to their own context of working with young people. In their future projects and daily work they can incorporate tools, methods and theories which they have learned during this Training Course. They can also use their personal learning and development in their daily work with their own target groups.

## *Outcomes*

- Participants will learn from their peers, finding out about new methodologies and practices that are being used to support young people to connect with nature
- They will be inspired through spending time in the beautiful environments of the south east of Ireland and through working on the 5 Pathways to Nature Connection
- They will create their own 'toolkit' of techniques and methods to work with young people in their own countries and across Europe

## *Practical & Travel information*

### Venue

The Training Course will take place at:

**Woodstown Residential and Activity Centre (WRAC), Woodstown Beach, Co. Waterford, Ireland (X91FX29)**

**Telephone: 00 353 86 3889723 or 00 353 51 309364**

**Email: [woodstown@wstcys.ie](mailto:woodstown@wstcys.ie)**

**WRAC is a Project of the Waterford and South Tipperary Community Youth Service, based at the Edmund Rice Youth and Community Multiplex, Manor St., Waterford City, Ireland (X91TY8N)**

The Centre is situated on the beachfront around 10km from Waterford City – it offers tranquility and privacy in a quiet rural area, and is set on 2 acres of its own grounds.

- The Centre operates on a self-catering basis, and has bunk-bed type accommodation for up to 32 people.
- **Please note that the sleeping space involves two shared 16-person dormitories.**
- There is a fully equipped kitchen, a large dining room, a living room and a TV/Training room with a fireplace.
- Bed linen, duvets and pillows are provided, but you will have to bring your own **towels and toiletries** (soap, shampoo, toothpaste, etc).

## Meals

All food will be provided by the organisers either at the venue or in the restaurant next door. It will be self-catering for breakfast and lunch, and dinner will be provided.

*(NB. If you have any allergies, or other dietary requirements, please let us know)*



*WRAC Training Room*



*Woodstown Beach*

## When & How to Get There

Participants are responsible for booking their own travel – it's up to the partner organizations to support them in the process.

Depending on where you're travelling from, the two closest airports are Dublin and Cork, which are both around two hours travelling time from Waterford City.

You'll need to get to Waterford City yourself.

You can take either a train or a bus from Dublin Airport ([www.irishrail.ie](http://www.irishrail.ie), [www.buseireann.ie](http://www.buseireann.ie), [www.jjkavanagh.ie](http://www.jjkavanagh.ie)) but only a bus from Cork ([www.buseireann.ie](http://www.buseireann.ie)).

If you let Declan know what time you'll be arriving into Waterford City, he'll arrange to collect you and transport you to Woodstown.





*Adventuring in the Comeragh Mountains*

### Other Practical Details:

- We will be taking ALL relevant Covid-19 precautions at all times
- Participants will be accommodated in bunk beds in shared, dormitory-style rooms.
- There is a wireless internet connection available at the venue
- The weather in Ireland is 'changeable'. We will be spending much of our time OUTDOORS IN NATURE, so please bring warm, waterproof clothes!!!  
Don't forget your umbrella, as there might be rain, but you might also need sunscreen. Half the fun of being in Ireland will be guessing the weather! You can follow the weather forecast here: <http://weather-finder.com/Ireland/Waterford/>
- The currency is Euro. If you need to change money, please use the Airport Exchange Office.
- **Insurance:** Insurance is each participants responsibility. We strongly suggest that you have travel insurance and the European Health Card.
- **Working language:** The working language of this Training Course is English. Don't be afraid, your English doesn't need to be perfect, neither is ours! What is important is that your English is good enough to actively participate. Because there will be a lot of vocal sharing in the sessions!
- **Contact details in the case of emergency – If you need him, just call Declan on 086-3889723**



*Youth Exchange Group at Woodstown*

### **Financial Considerations:**

1. The food and accommodation will be completely provided and paid by Erasmus+.
2. Visa costs (if needed) will be reimbursed by the organisers after the Training Course, once receipts are received.
3. Travel costs include plane, train or bus costs from your home country to Woodstown.
4. ALL costs must be receipted.

### **Reimbursement of travel costs :**

Travels costs (plane, train and bus) will be counted by distance calculator provided by European Commission and reimbursed by bank transfer directly to the organisation or participant within 4 weeks of the Course finishing. The reimbursement is determined by the Erasmus+-guide.

The participants have to give the receipts for the travel costs to the organizers. The reimbursement will be made through bank transfer after the Training Course after Waterford & South Tipperary Community Youth Service have received the travel tickets.



## Communications



Contact us anytime if you have any questions, concerns or feedback.

Let us know of any changes that are relevant to the running of the Training Course as soon as you can, such as:

- Your (non) participation in the course
- All travel related issues, including costs and the exact itinerary
- Your contact details
- Anything else we need to know for a smooth functioning of the Training Course – all information will be treated confidentially

***Remember, we're here to help you out in any way that we can, and to ensure that you enjoy your time in Ireland. We want you, your organisation, and most importantly the young people you work with, to get a significant benefit from attending the Training Course, so if there's anything we can help you with or any question that we can answer, just ring Declan on 00 353 86 3889723 or email at [woodstown@wstcys.ie](mailto:woodstown@wstcys.ie)***

## **Woodstown Beach, County Waterford**

