



Natural Minds project

September 2017 - August 2018, Romania

Project impact evaluation report

Project coordinated by **Dreams for Life** and implemented with the support of the **Erasmus+** Programme of the European Union.



The following information represents the results of the impact evaluation realized at the end of the project period. The participants filled in an on-line evaluation form in the last week of the project period.

The content of the report represents qualitative data, offered by the participants.

Number of respondents: 17, out of 25 participants.

The evaluation process, data analysis and report compilation was made by **Bogdan Romanică**, the project coordinator and representative of Dreams for Life.

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1. Has the participation in “Natural Minds” changed/influenced you at PERSONAL level? If yes, please tell us few things on how the project changed/influenced you?

- Yes. I felt different after this project, more confident, more proud of me. I overtake some fears. I discover how to take care more about myself, what contribute to my wellbeing.
- During this spring and summer I took part in various personal growth events focused on connection to nature, discovering my spirituality, simplicity etc. So its really hard to say which influences are coming from Natural Minds - but one thing is sure - it was perfect piece for my puzzle and without it it would be not complete!
- It helped me further my personal and spiritual development journey through giving me an important experiential journey, in which I felt very held by the facilitators but also extremely free, which I appreciated immensely. The gorgeously wild natural setting supported this journey perfectly as well as the strong sense of community that was created in the group, which allowed a lot of initiative and creativity amongst the participants...In short, we were given room, time, supportive and challenging tools and a safe and intimate space to explore new dimensions of ourselves. I came back stronger and more alive for who I truly am.
- Yes. It helped me to discover new dimensions of my personality and to reach deeper level of self-understanding and self-discovery.
- Yes, it gave me a different perspective of life and perception of myself. Project setting gave me a interest in discovering myself and project used concepts deeper, what I keep doing after project by reading materials and participating some self-discovery activities here in Latvia.
- Natural Minds allowed me to spend time with a diverse group of people and see that all of us are struggling in our own ways to find our place in the community of life here on earth. The course gave me time, and techniques that the trainers used with us, to help me to discover what it is that I have come here to the earth at this time for. The work with the inner critic -loyal soldier helped me a lot. I found the solo was probably the most powerful experience that I have ever had as it gave me time to listen to myself without any distractions. I don't have all the answers yet but I'm beginning to ask the right questions.
- yes, it strengthened my connection with nature
- Definitely. I have been influenced greatly and I feel like I gained some kind of balance in my thoughts, and actions. Sadly, it only lasted for a couple of weeks, and then I went back to my 'normal' life and 'normal' issues. What I took for good was the theory or the Wheel and the whole indigenous philosophy that I really liked. I would like to work on projects that will include both the philosophy and experiential learning as so.
- It gave me direction and perspective it connected me to my beliefs and has made me a better youth worker and on a personal level happier and more self-aware.
- Yes, it made me realize what does spirituality means to me and how it affects my everyday life.
- Got beautiful confirmations of where my inner core was rooting and grounding. It was again an invitation and reminder to walk, to move through the forest, to stop and lay only to rest the body and the mind and then again to raise up and share energy and deep presence with other beings.

- The "Natural Minds" training course has been an important experience for me. I have reached the far depths of my inner sanctuary and connected with the spirits of the ancestors, gaining precious knowledge and much needed inner silence. I hope to be able to recreate the kind of connections we had there in my next projects.
- Yes - caused me to reevaluate what is important to me in my life and my relationships. Also converted me to become vegetarian ;)
- Ou jess :) Since then I am more aware of my inner wilderness, that has been showing here and there even before the training course, but now I allow it to come out on public more often, or try to invite her to come to me more often. Now I appreciate her presence.
- Yes. Because of that feeling of community I have experienced at Natural Minds, now I am more confident and I am creating more quality relationships in my life.
- Yes, sure. I am listening more to the Nature and thinking about circumstances and activities, which influence attitudes between the Human being and the Nature.

2. Has the participation in “Natural Minds” changed/influenced you at PROFESSIONAL level? If yes, please tell us few things on how the project changed/influenced you?

- More than on personal level i feel enriched my professional level because this was the reason I wanted to join this training and discover the tools, methods and concepts about nature and spirituality and how to involve it into my youth work and projects. And mainly how does it feel to be participant in this kind of activities. So at professional level this project 100 percent helped me to develop and implement activities in my own projects. THANK YOU and this thank you is coming from participants of projects I did now in September and October and were really amazed:]
- Yes! It basically showed me the approach I have, look for and love in my own personal and spiritual development is absolutely possible to bring into my professional activity. This was exactly what I was longing for! I now have tools, means, examples, inspiration and knowhow to bring more depth and meaning to the trainings of life coaching, personal development and transformational leadership that I facilitate in my job. Through mainly the nature based methods, the deeper personal development exercises and the spiritual practices, I now know how to apply the methods I like for myself onto my professional life.
- Yes. It helped me to clarify the field I want to invest more time and efforts as a youth worker and trainer. It also give me few new possibilities to cooperate with new people on professional level.
- Participation has influenced my professional work indirectly, because through my development it's influencing my working with patients. I better cope situations where before I was impatient.
- I have been using The Way of Council in both personal and professional situations and I find that listening and speaking from the heart has a positive effect on how discussions-debates flow even though the other people involved don't know anything about it. I am also feeling more confident in my own ability.

- Yes, it fostered my will to work with positive psychology/education. It also triggered new cooperation for future projects with other participants
- Yes, it did. I learned how to devise experiential learning activities.
- It completely influenced my own path and new work direction and led to other professional training
- I think that it didn't affect me. Not until now at least.
- Not yet.
- I think the most important change that happened after this training was that I accepted the challenge of starting a self-sustaining and eco-centric community. I hope to integrate a lot of elements from the training course into this community
- No
- Teaching in the academic setting allows for very few natural methods, but I have incorporated into my classes bits and pieces of awareness and self-discovery exercises. I guess since the time I'm less afraid to use them in my teaching practice, since I have had personal experience with it and feel more comfortable and confident about handling and facilitating the unstructured learning outcomes that might rise from such experiences.
- Yes! As a trainer I learnt to always put my participant's needs first and I also see at them better and better results in the direction they want.
- No... May be I am on a way to it.

3. Have you used any activities (methods, tools, concepts, theories etc.) from the project in your work? If yes, which ones.

- I use some tools at home with my roommates. In my work i didn't use it yet because i didn't really have the opportunities.
- I involved more spiritual, meditative and natural inputs into my project and the one i facilitate or run workshops...so far i used the 4 directions reflections and questions, the whirling meditation, heroes journey and working with my dragon, 5 rhythms dance, dancing in the darkness, guided meditation, cleaning with palo santo and salbai, singing mantras, writing and involving poems and working with imagination, tai chi and qigong movements and practices...and now I'm learning how to play drum to be able to implement it as well into the activities.
- Yes! 2 days after coming back from Romania! I built the notion and practice of rituals, threshold walks and intention setting into a training course I was leading with 32 young Europeans, and have done it repeatedly with other groups since then, like for example using the power of Fire and silent individual time in nature with very anxious Indian girls on a personal development and sustainability Training I led. I also used the exercises around working with vulnerability in a transformational leadership training course. I also got very inspired by Eco-centric development theories and have started to actively learn about it in order to implement approaches of this in my long term accompaniment of young EVS volunteers as an EVS coordinator and mentor.
- Yes. Rhythm circle; Medicine wheel.

- I will be using some atmospheric exercise and dancing meditation for children parents at my workplace.
- The only one that I have used to date has been The Way of Council.
- yes: the 4 dimensions and the soul centric development
- Not yet but I'm planning. I am also planning to teach it to other participants of NGO once we all get together. And the concept and the attitude of sharing will be something I will insist on in my organization.
- Yes nearly all of them in different settings.
- I've used the hero's journey so i can get better at my work.
- Not yet but it is going to happen. I am planning to integrate Plotkin concepts and some activities in nature for next future activities with participants to workshops.
- I intend to use the Council method very soon.
- Finger leading trust exercise.
- Mentioned above
- Yes. The medicine wheel, the inner critique exercise, the dances, I always try to integrate nature elements and I am pretty sure I've mentioned just a few.
- Yes, partially. But thinking about more.

4. Have you noticed any positive changes in your work as an effect of your participation in “Natural Minds”?

- Not really for the moment. My coworkers are not sensitive about this topic and way of thinking so it's a bit difficult.
- Yes - probably in question number 2 I pretty much answered this one:]
- Faith! On top of more knowledge and concrete skills that I have been able to implement (as I explained in the previous question), I received a real inner confirmation that the line we adopted in Natural Minds (nature supported work with vulnerability on an individual and community level with a strong platform for spiritual development) is most definitely the one I want to develop professionally (as well as personally but this I already knew!) and that it is possible! So I feel much more confident, having had my intuition confirmed and solidified.
- I perceive my work more calm and without pressure.
- Yes, I more appreciate my work and I am more grateful for my abilities to do things what I do.
- Being more confident in my own ability.
- it made me re-assure myself that I like working with you Bogdan mu and people who share similar vision
- I started concentrating more on the sole attitude during my facilitation activities. I am putting a greater highlight on how I interact with the participants right now.
- I am more connected with myself which impacts my thinking and interactions with youth and youth workers.

- I have more patience.
- Gained a lot more confidence for my storytelling performances. I'm more calm and positive about my environment and activities.
- Yes - more confidence in myself
- I'm more "me" now, taking my responsibilities in more relaxed and self-sustainable way. If that is positive or negative, I'm still not sure :)
- Yes. Because I've changed, people I am working with are much more motivated to go to action in their lives. I received many feedbacks from my participants who tell me that they've gained so much confidence in themselves, some of them made major life changes, like quitting the job they hated to work for themselves, others just started to accept themselves as they are and even see themselves beautiful.
- Yes, we more talked with teens about matters of the programme.

5. Have you initiated any international collaborations with the other participants from the project? If yes, please write what kind of collaborations and how many?

- Yes I wrote a project with some of the people from the group and we have partners from this project (7 persons involved in total)
- Yes - with 4 participants - we are planning projects and activities together.
- Yes I have! In fact I cannot stop marveling at how strong the network of this group seems to be and how much the participants want to not only keep in touch but build together and develop further!
- Yes. Project partnerships - as a partner 4, as an applicant - 2.
- For now there is no collaboration yet, just keeping contact once a while.
- Other than talk over a few ideas with Jenny I haven't been involved with any other participants.
- Yes. we submitted a training called "Plant, Grow, Flow". You and others, are partners in 2 similar projects.
- No.
- Yes I am involved as a participant in one project and have submitted a training in October.
- No.
- Yes, some Erasmus+ projects.
- Not yet, but I hope to do it in the future.
- Honey Festival in my country.
- Yes, you got our picture :) I have at least 5 people from the TC I would love to work with, within the E+ framework and (more preferably) outside of it.
- Not yet.
- No.

6. Is there anything else that you would like to add in order to assess the impact of the project on you?

- I would like to do it again :). Thanks again for everything
 - Dear god...thank you:]
 - The project was so experiential and rich that I am sure more impacts are still to unfold as I was given a lot of nurturing, theories, approaches and people connections that touched me that still need to be digested, grown and developed. Very alive and deep seeds were sowed in me and this might be only a beginning! Thank you!
 - Natural Minds are like inspiration and peaceful, good, blissful memories together. Its feels good to remember and on the same way its gives strength to keep going.
 - No other than to say thanks to all the trainers for putting this course together and giving me the opportunity to take part.
 - You are the soul of the training Bogdan mu! :) thanx a lot for inspiring me!
 - I wish it repeats next year. More people should have the opportunity to participate, hear and experience the ideas of this nice, young folk. Thank you.
 - The best thing I have been involved with on a personal level. I have learned and am growing and I feel I am moving in the right direction :)
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- I would be really happy and curious to cooperate with Dreams for life and Bogdan, to integrate complementary knowledge and wisdom, to create new invisible structure where participants can walk their own path to self-knowledge, peace and compassion.
 - That's about it, for now.
 - Thank you :) carry on with your good work, people appreciate it
 - Just thank you for accepting me to be part of this amazing project.
 - Personal development and new sight - it is most important for grow and share.