



Stories for Life:

STORYTELLING FOR CONNECTING TO NATURE



A FULLY FUNDED RESIDENTIAL TRAINING COURSE

25TH OCTOBER – 3RD NOVEMBER 2022



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



ASHA CENTRE
INSPIRATION • CONNECTION • PURPOSE

“Each blade of grass, each leaf, every grain of sand, each stone or rock, each drop of water has a story to tell, if only we have the ears to listen.”

- Seema Wahi Mukherjee, storyteller

We are looking for youth workers, community leaders, educators and change makers from across the UK and Europe to participate in a fully funded, 10-day residential training course on how to use storytelling to deepen our relationship with the natural world.

The course takes as its focus the potential of folktale and myth to connect us in a deep way to the natural world. Stories ask us to listen with a different kind of ear, one that can cultivate a sensitivity to hear what the land, and all the beings that live on it, are ‘saying’. Developing a practical methodology, you will find, understand and tell stories that can help both individuals and communities make change to our relationship with the natural world.



You will be asked to bring a myth or folktale from a land with which you have a relationship – be that where you live, where your ancestors are from or where you long to be. We are looking for stories which focus on the natural world rather than the human world with emphasis on landscape, animal beings, or a sense of homing. We will share this diverse range of stories, learning to shape, deliver and apply their wisdom.

You will practice core communication skills, create projects and learn new tools through a balance of theory, practice and authentic presence. This course will share The ASHA Centre’s educational framework and methods which includes presentations, artistic expression, group work and games. We will take time for deep reflection and concentrated listening, and offer open conversation and holistic learning in a communal environment that makes use of the vibrant natural surroundings. You will be given opportunities to lead and facilitate, with space to reflect on the methodologies and grow your own toolkit. You will be asked to create dissemination projects in your home communities and to share the experience with your networks.

This is a holistic course that works on deep listening rather than performance training or manual-based content. You don’t have to be an articulate storyteller to reach an audience, this is about bringing storytelling to your communities with presence and authenticity, while strengthening your capacity to allow, listen and receive each other fully. We expect the work to be serious, funny, honest, and to be useful for people from all walks of life.

Why storytelling?

There is no shortage of factual information to warn of the devastating environmental changes we are facing, but to empower young people to protect our environment, we need to address the cause at its heart: disconnection. Stories can foster inclusivity and connection. We will explore how guarding old stories and dreaming new ones enhances our ability to empathise with the animate world and helps us to feel rooted.



These stories have immense value in a changing world; telling them serves as 'currency' to transmit environmentally-friendly, cultural values. Working as tellers of these tales preserves and evolves our environmental heritage and empowers young people to shape and share values. While we do it, we practice the art of storytelling which improves a whole range of important skills in public speaking, personal impact and leadership.

Who can take part?

We are looking for a group of people from across Europe and the UK to come together and share stories. We are hoping to attract a diverse range of languages, cultures, nationalities and perspectives so we actively welcome anyone with broad cultural heritage, living outside their culture or identifying as displaced. This work is ideally suited for those working (or intending to work) in the field of youth work, community leadership, intercultural communication, community building, education or activism.

We welcome all cultures, ethnic origins, races, skin colours, accents, cultural identities, histories, herstories, spiritual practices, religious affiliations, spiritual walks, gender identities, sexualities and life experiences.

We are committed to equal opportunity and inclusivity, and we will readily discuss any access or special educational needs you might have.



We ask for:

- A genuine passion for participating in the course and for storytelling
- The willingness and capacity to bring a specially chosen folktale to the course
- A willingness to take part in sessions in the garden and local forest
- The capacity to bring appropriate clothing/footwear for the outdoors
- Good English-speaking skills
- People 18 years and over



What to expect

The training will run from 9:30am until 6pm each day, with two tea breaks, a lunch break and rest period. Each day offers reflection time, including discussion on working methodology and curated space for silent study. You will have the chance to offer activities over several mornings and evenings. Training is delivered by ASHA's training team and visiting experts, with work inside our studio, the surrounding gardens and forest.

Rooms are dormitory in style and furnished to a high standard, with three home-cooked meals plus snacks provided each day. You will be welcomed into the working community at ASHA, sharing meals and given opportunities to integrate and interact with staff and volunteers. You will be welcome to volunteer in our organic garden in your breaks.

Our courses tend to involve a certain amount of interpersonal work, outdoor activity and physical contact. If this might raise any challenges for you, please let us know in the application form, so that we can discuss how to support you best.

Day 10 is a travel day only and does not involve training content.

Travel reimbursement

ASHA reimburses 90% of your overall travel cost. We feel that a modest contribution from participants to the overall costs of a project helps to create a sense of investment and ownership. However, if you feel that you are a motivated participant who would be unable to come without greater travel support, please let us know in the application form, so that we can consider supporting your participation. Training, accommodation and meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner) are all provided free of charge.



COVID-19 and how it affects your participation

COVID-19 is an ever-changing situation posing challenges to organisations and participants alike. We appreciate that in making your decision to attend a residential course at The ASHA Centre you will have assessed the risks based on your personal circumstances and health relating to the current pandemic.

ASHA staff, course facilitators and volunteers cannot take liability for participants contracting the virus. However, we are working hard to ensure our centre is as safe as is reasonably possible. ASHA's COVID-19 safety regulations and procedures have been developed based on the UK Government's guidance.

How to apply?

Please follow the link below and complete the application form:

<https://forms.gle/B5qpuPJd3qG6BKZX6>

We (The ASHA Centre), or our partner organisation in North Macedonia (CET PLATFORMA SKOPJE), will be in touch with you shortly after the application deadline.

We look forward to receiving your application and can't wait to welcome you to ASHA.

