InterAct

LEARNING PROGRAMME

Outdoor and Experiential Learning for Environmental Education (Learning with, in and from Nature)

5-DAY COURSE

25 learning hours | Course programme

Outdoor and Experiential Learning for Environmental Education (Learning with, in and from Nature) – 5-Day Course

Introduction and Description

This is an intensive, research-informed professional development programme designed to support early years and primary educators, as well as school staff working in inclusion-focused educational settings, in the meaningful integration of outdoor and experiential learning into formal education. The course responds to pressing educational, environmental and societal challenges, including climate change, declining learner well-being and the need for more inclusive and engaging pedagogical approaches. It positions outdoor environments not as supplementary spaces, but as essential learning contexts that enrich curriculum delivery and foster sustainable educational practice.

The programme is theoretically grounded in experiential learning theory, place-based education, environmental education and inclusive pedagogy. It explores how learning *with* nature, through sensory, embodied and relational engagement; learning *in* nature, by utilising outdoor spaces as structured learning environments; and learning *from* nature, through systems thinking and sustainability perspectives, can enhance cognitive, social and emotional learning outcomes. Particular emphasis is placed on the educational value of local and accessible environments—such as schoolyards, parks, forests and coastal areas—as authentic contexts for inquiry, creativity and interdisciplinary learning.

Throughout the course, participants engage in a carefully designed sequence of outdoor-focused learning experiences that integrate theoretical input with practical application. Through guided explorations, collaborative tasks, reflective dialogue and project-based planning, educators develop the competence to design, facilitate and evaluate outdoor learning activities that are pedagogically purposeful, curriculum-aligned and responsive to diverse learner needs. Core topics include inclusive outdoor pedagogy, differentiation through open-ended tasks, risk–benefit assessment, safeguarding, and the organisation and management of learning in outdoor settings.

A central dimension of the course is its focus on learner well-being, social development and inclusion. Participants critically examine how outdoor and nature-based learning can support emotional regulation, cooperation, resilience and a sense of belonging, particularly for learners who may experience barriers in traditional classroom environments. Environmental awareness and sustainability education are embedded throughout the programme, enabling educators to connect everyday teaching

practices with broader ecological systems, nature-based solutions and responsible citizenship.

By the end of the five-day programme, participants are equipped with both a robust theoretical understanding and a repertoire of practical strategies for implementing outdoor and experiential learning in their own professional contexts. The course supports educators in developing realistic and sustainable action plans, strengthening institutional capacity for inclusive, environmentally responsible and learner-centred education in line with European educational priorities and lifelong learning objectives.

Methodology and Assessment

The course employs an experiential, learner-centred methodology rooted in outdoor pedagogy and place-based education. Participants engage in guided outdoor explorations, sensory activities, collaborative tasks, reflective dialogue and project-based planning. Learning is situated in natural environments, enabling participants to connect theory with practice through observation, inquiry and creative engagement. Reflection is embedded through learning journals, group discussions and facilitated peer feedback.

Assessment is formative and continuous, focusing on active participation, reflective practice and application of learning. Participants develop and present an outdoor learning plan tailored to their professional context, demonstrating pedagogical understanding and practical transfer. Self-assessment, peer feedback and facilitator guidance support professional reflection and development.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, participants will be able to:

1. Theoretical and Pedagogical Foundations

- Understand key theories underpinning outdoor, experiential and place-based learning
- Analyse the role of natural environments in environmental and sustainability education

2. Design and Facilitation of Outdoor Learning

- Plan and implement structured outdoor learning activities aligned with curriculum objectives
- Apply risk–benefit and safeguarding principles in outdoor educational contexts

3. Inclusion, Well-Being and Engagement

- Use outdoor pedagogy to support diverse learning needs and inclusive practices
- Promote learner well-being, cooperation and social-emotional development through nature-based learning

4. Environmental Awareness and Sustainability

- Integrate nature-based solutions and systems thinking into educational practice
- Strengthen learners' connection to place and environmental responsibility

5. Professional Transfer and Implementation

- Adapt outdoor learning approaches to participants' institutional contexts
- Develop practical action plans for sustainable implementation in schools

Preparation

After registration participants will receive a pre-course questionnaire which will be used by the trainer to learn about participants' teaching backgrounds and to assess their exact needs. Before the beginning of the course a basic reading list will be suggested to participants to prepare for the training. Participants will also be asked to prepare a presentation about themselves, their professional context and their culture. The presentation will be presented on the first day of the course to facilitate networking opportunities. Participants will receive information about the country they are going to visit in order to prepare them for their cultural experience.

Follow up

After the course participants will be asked to share what they have learned with the rest of the staff in their schools. Further books and articles to deepen the topic and contacts with some other practitioners all over Europe and in the world will be suggested by the trainer. The methods shared and explored and the bibliography given will allow the participants to complete and improve their educational path.

Certificate

Certificate complies with the guidelines of the Erasmus+ programme and includes the topic, number of didactic hours, dates and location of the course. We can list the record of learning outcomes on the Europass Mobility Document on request of participants. In

case a participant requires a specific format of certificate we can accommodate that if requested at least one week before the start of the course. It is necessary to attend at least 80% of the hours in order to receive the certificate.

Accommodation

We do not directly offer accommodation and subsistence and participants are responsible for organizing it by themselves.

Paperwork

We also provide all the support with paperwork you might need for your Erasmus+ project documentation such as mobility agreement and registration letter.

Fee: 400 €

Cancelation policy

We have a flexible cancellation policy in force at the moment and you can cancel your registration up to 30 days before the course and receive a full refund. In case you don't cancel the registration more than 30 days before you will not receive any refunds, but you will be able to choose to attend any other confirmed course session later (within 6 months) without any additional costs. In case you are not able to travel, your school can send someone else to take instead of you and you can change the details of the participant any time before the start of the course at no additional cost.

TENTATIVE PROGRAMME (25 didactic hours - 5*45min per day) Monday to Friday	
Day 1	Foundations of Outdoor & Experiential Learning
09.00 - 09.45	Introductions & Icebreakers
09.45 - 10.30	Course Overview & Learning Agreement
10.30 - 11.15	Core concepts of outdoor & experiential learning
11.15 - 11.30	Break

11.30 - 12.15	Environmental education today: challenges and opportunities
12.15 - 13.00	Reflection circle: personal experiences of learning in nature
Day 2	Learning *With* Nature: Sensory & Place-Based Pedagogy
09.00 - 09.45	Sensory immersion and embodied learning activities
09.45 - 10.30	Place-based learning: reading the local environment as curriculum
10.30 - 11.15	Inquiry-based exploration and observation in nature
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Inclusion and differentiation through open-ended outdoor tasks
12.15 - 13.00	Outdoor reflection and learning documentation
Day 3	Learning *In* Nature: Outdoor Learning Design & Safety
09.00 - 09.45	Mapping and evaluating outdoor learning spaces
09.45 - 10.30	Creating temporary outdoor classrooms
10.30 - 11.15	Risk–benefit assessment in real contexts
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Group management and routines outdoors
12.15 - 13.00	Collaborative planning of outdoor sessions
Day 4	Learning *From* Nature: Sustainability & Systems Thinking
09.00 - 09.45	Observing cycles, patterns and interdependence
09.45 - 10.30	Systems thinking and sustainability through outdoor activities
10.30 - 11.15	Nature-based solutions and local environmental issues
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Outdoor learning for well-being, resilience and social skills
12.15 - 13.00	Storytelling and metaphor-based reflection
Day 5	Transfer, Implementation, Presentations & Closing
09.00 - 09.45	Documentation of learning: portfolios, observation, learner voice
09.45 - 10.30	Preparing the final presentations and individual support
10.30 - 11.15	Final presentations and feedback
11.15 - 11.30	Break

11.30 - 12.15	Evaluation & Reflection
12.15 - 13.00	Validation of learning outcomes and certification

*This is only a tentative timetable. The exact hours or the course might differ and will be announced for each session 2 weeks before the start. However, there will always be a total of 5 didactic hours per day and all will be in line with the Erasmus+ quality standards. The trainer might slightly modify the content in response to the needs of the group.
**Cultural and social programmes will be organized in addition to the academic programme. The exact cultural and social programme depends on the location, season, weather, etc.