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# Authentic Youth Booklet

*Erasmus + training course for youthworkers*

**30th July - 8th August 2023**

Penzión Javorina, Čičmany, Slovakia



# About the project

**Authentic YOUTH** was an Erasmus+ training course which happened in beautiful traditional Slovak village of Čičmany in the middle of summer 2023. With a group of 28 youth-workers from 7 European countries we explored the fear of being honest, while not being rejected, hurting others or being misunderstood with putting our focus on the topics of **authenticity, spontaneity, non-violent communication & radical honesty altogether with inspiration from movement and nature.**



We were learning how staying true to ourselves, being authentic, brave, conscious and resilient adults can improve our lives. We explored how to be role models for the young people we work with to inspire, motivate and support the youth to be more self-aware, proactive, less prone to manipulation and able to establish and keep meaningful connections and relationships, aiming for a better society and life in it.



# Leading Principles and Methods

## **AUTHENTICITY & SPONTANEITY**

Exploring how to be fully authentic while not hurting ourselves and others, what does it mean, how can it change and vary, through different methods incorporating spontaneity, playfulness, inner child and mindfulness.

## **NON-VIOLENT COMMUNICATION & RADICAL HONESTY**

Looking deeper into ourselves, realizing why we behave the way we behave, naming our thoughts, needs and openly sharing emotions & feelings. Learning to use empathy and self-empathy properly. Not taking things too personally.

## **MOVEMENT**

Being fully and authentically in the body, listening to its impulses, guidance and signs by use of somatic and embodied practices, contact improvisation, authentic movement and different dance techniques and practices.

## **NATURE**

Mother Earth is neverending source of inspiration, power and the present. We used it in many ways, levels, layers, combining activities outdoors, hiking together with non-religious rituals.



*Authenticity and Spontaneity*

Living an authentic life may be quite challenging. Being honest and staying true to yourself and others needs a lot of energy. We looked at the topic of authenticity from different perspectives - getting inspired by the nature, observing our bodies and physical interaction with others and environment, focusing on interpersonal relationships. We got inspired by transactional analysis (see more on next side) and practiced three basic rules -

- 1. Everyone is ok;**
- 2. Everyone has the capacity to think;**
- 3. Everyone wants to develop.**

People are deciding about their lives and can change their decisions. Throughout the training course we explored these rules, trying to understand from which position are we acting - Parent, Adult or Child (known also as Snowman model).



**What does it mean to be authentic? How is authenticity connected with honesty, trust and vulnerability? And how can these simple, but not easy principles make us better people on every level - from personal to professional?**

In **Parent** position we can be either **Critical** (or **Nurturing**. **Child** position can go from **free** to **adaptive** child. All of these may be in times manipulative. The most mature position, where we can be fully authentic but at the same time stating our boundaries and staying assertive is the position of **Adult**. Thought everyday is a never-ending dance between almost all of these positions - and it is very natural :).



*The privilege of a lifetime  
is to become who you truly are.  
~ C.G. Jung*

**Transactional analysis** is a psychoanalytic theory and method of therapy established by Eric Berne wherein social interactions (or "transactions") are analyzed to determine the ego state of the communicator (whether parent-like, childlike, or adult-like) as a basis for understanding behavior. In transactional analysis, the communicator is taught to alter the ego state as a way to solve emotional problems.

We also learned about life positions coming from transactional analysis:

**1. I'm OK and you are OK.**

This is the healthiest position about life and it means that I feel good about myself and that I feel good about others and their competence.

**2. I'm OK and you are not OK.**

In this position, I feel good about myself but I see others as damaged or less than me and this is usually not healthy.



**3. I'm not OK and you are OK.** In this position, the person sees him/herself as the weak partner in relationships as the others in life are better than the self. The person who holds this position will unconsciously accept abuse as OK.

**4. I'm not OK and you are not OK.** This is the worst position to be in as it means that I believe that I am in a terrible state and the rest of the world is as bad. Consequently, there is no hope for any ultimate support.

The most important thing is to be aware of which role we are playing in each situation.



*Radical Honesty*



**Dr Anna Lembke** is a professor of psychiatry at Stanford University School of Medicine and chief of the Stanford Addiction Medicine Dual Diagnosis Clinic, having written books like 'Dopamine Nation', where she focuses on different addictions.

*"If you do not tell the truth about yourself you cannot tell it about other people" ~ Virginia Woolf*

### Radical Honesty:

- Enhances awareness (of our actions)
- Hold us accountable to our authentic narrative (truthful autobiography)
- Creates more satisfying relationships & closer (human) connections
- Helps to prevent addictions - it delays gratification
- It is contagious :)

Anna Lebke introduces to the topic of '**Radical Honesty**' in a 15-minute documentary called 'The Power of Radical Honesty'. Its is about reporting what you notice without any particular common ways of lying (politeness, diplomacy) -what you notice outside (senses), inside body (in your skin) and in your mind. That means being completely open and truthful to the people around us as well as ourselves about our actions, motivations, and shortcomings, without hurting anyone. Responsibly owning your words/ acts is crucial. Radical Honesty is hard because it forces us to confront the imperfect reality of who we really are. Adopting radical honesty, we refrain from telling any lies, including the 'white lies' that (seemingly) hurt no one. It helps in reducing stress, deepening connections with others, and reducing reactivity.



A young man with short brown hair, wearing a striped and floral patterned shirt, stands in a grassy field. He is holding a Tibetan singing bowl with both hands, looking at it with a smile. The background shows rolling green hills under a blue sky with white clouds. In the top left corner, there are several colorful, abstract shapes. In the top right corner, there is a beige spiral graphic.

*Non-Violent Communication*



In the beautiful surroundings of the village, we were introduced to the language of the giraffe and the jackal; Non-Violent Communication, a method and tool for open and empathetic communication, developed by psychologist Marshall Rosenberg.

*"With every choice you make,  
be conscious of what need it serves."  
~ Marshall B. Rosenberg*

Marshall Rosenberg stated: *"Every criticism, judgment, diagnosis, and expression of anger is the tragic expression of an unmet need."* Therefore, NVC revolves around the skill of being able to communicate your needs in a way that is both empathetic to the other person and to yourself.

The best way to do so is by using 'giraffe language' and avoiding 'jackal language'; whereas jackal language revolves around making **assumptions, making up stories, coming up with strategies, and making demands**, giraffe language entails **making observations, sharing feelings, stating needs, and making open requests**.



**OBSERVATIONS  
FEELINGS  
NEEDS  
REQUEST**



**ASSUMPTIONS  
STORIES  
STRATEGIES  
DEMAND**



The jackal judges, criticizes, interprets, manipulates, complains, is coercive, and attacks. The giraffe, on the other hand, perceives, communicates from the heart, can put their feelings into words, and name their needs. They listen with respect and empathy and have an eye (and ear) for the other person's needs.

We practiced our NVC skills by taking unresolved and difficult situations from our own lives to see how we would handle these interactions more kindly, with the people around us guiding us back to the "giraffe path" when jackal language was used.



## Jackal/giraffe in/out activity

With this activity one can practice self-empathy and compassion. Practicing on 1 life situation, we can see it from different perspectives - sitting in 4 different positions using jackal and giraffe language internally (eg. self-criticism or self-empathy) or externally (eg. using criticism or empathy towards other(s) in the situation). Thus trying to compassionately connect with what is going on inside us or inside others.

After learning about Non-Violent Communication, many participants have incorporated these tools into both their professional and personal lives, striving to put empathetic language at the forefront of their communication.



*Movement*



## World theatre activity

Writing down an unsolved personal question on a piece of paper. Participants are divided into groups of three sitting on benches (chairs) in a circle. There are 3 rounds; in each two members of each groups go in the middle of the circle keeping his - her question in mind. The people in the middle are invited to do what they felt in the moment - moving, interacting, touching, dancing or just being - with music playing in the background. The once sitting on the benches stay observing "the world theatre". At the end of each session the observers shared what they had observed, what they felt and if some answer to their unsolved question arised during the experience.



It's almost impossible to be authentic if we are not connected to our bodies. Listening to the signals our body is sending us, following its needs, giving it time to relax, to be and get nourished. Moving our bodies and being aware of its different parts. Through our training course we used many embodied techniques coming from theatre, contact and other improvisations, authentic movement and other methodologies.

*"Your body is the ground metaphor of your life, the expression of your existence. It is your bible, your encyclopaedia, your life story." ~ Gabrielle Roth*

## Authentic movement

Allowing oneself to be witnessed by another human being in movement, in nature, in silence. Whole group was split in pairs. There were 2 roles- the observer and the mover. Mover was invited to move by listening to body, how it feels like, following the impulses that are coming from within. No music was used, movers' eyes were closed for the whole time of the authentic movement (18 minutes). Observers' role was to keep the mover safe in case of immediate danger yet not interrupt the process of moving and to witness the beauty of one human being moving and giving trust to the partner. Then participants had 2 minutes to discuss how the movement felt (mover shared), then the roles switched (pairs stayed the same).



## Body sculptures activity

Pairs. In each one person is the modeler (with eyes closed) and the other one the statue. The roles are switching very often having different interactions in which the statue is either cooperating, resisting or passive towards the impulses which the modeler is giving. At the end both persons become modeler and statue at the same time.





Nature



"Nature does not hurry,  
yet everything is accomplished."  
~Lao Tzu



The beautiful surrounding nature of protected area Strážovské vrchy helped us to reflect what moves from within and what moves us from outside. We walked in silence, together sharing our internal worlds, blindfolded connecting through different senses, dancing with the ground, wind and trees. We wandered, had a night walk, got inspired by many different aspects the nature comprises, talked with the nature, asked for permissions and answers.



# Creative spirits

Inspired by the nature, the elements, topics we were exploring and each others' uniqueness, during the week we created many creative and artistic activities, rituals and proposals. From portrait drawing, through project song creating, asking an element for a message or help.



*Who looks outside, dreams;  
who looks inside, awakes.  
~ Carl Jung*



## Letting go unwanted and welcoming new - ritual

Each one of us stood up, expressed the thing s/he wants to let go of, while burning the paper where it was written, and sharing the thing s/he wants to welcome in his/her life. Then, everyone stood up and shared out in the circle the words "I WILL, I CANN AND I DESERVE IT." connecting hands with the person standing next and then ending in spontaneous sounds and vibrations sharing.





ČIČM

Venue

# Čičmany

## Penzión Javorina

Čičmany, nestled in north-west Slovakia, is a charming village renowned for its enchanting wooden houses adorned with intricate white geometric patterns. These timeless designs, rooted in Slovak folk art, create a unique open-air gallery. Surrounded by picturesque landscapes, Čičmany preserves its historical charm, inviting visitors to explore its cobblestone streets and experience the warm hospitality of a community proud of its cultural heritage. Throughout the seasons, this village stands as a living testament to Slovakia's rich past, offering a captivating blend of tradition and natural beauty.

"A venue is not just a place,  
it's a feeling." ~ anonymous



The hills surrounding Čičmany has witnessed the fights of second world war and its hard to reach location in astonishing valleys of Strážovské vrchy, made it cut out of modern civilization till the mid 20th century. You can still feel the vibe of how people lived here, just decades ago, connected with the nature, its flaws, dangers and beauties. Our venue Penzión Javorina, helped us to stay connected to the unique local culture by providing us with traditional food, architecture, folklore and also keeping animals at the venue

# Follow-ups

(examples of dissemination)

1. MINDFULL WALK IN SLOVENIA

2. FOREST WORKSHOP IN SLOVAKIA

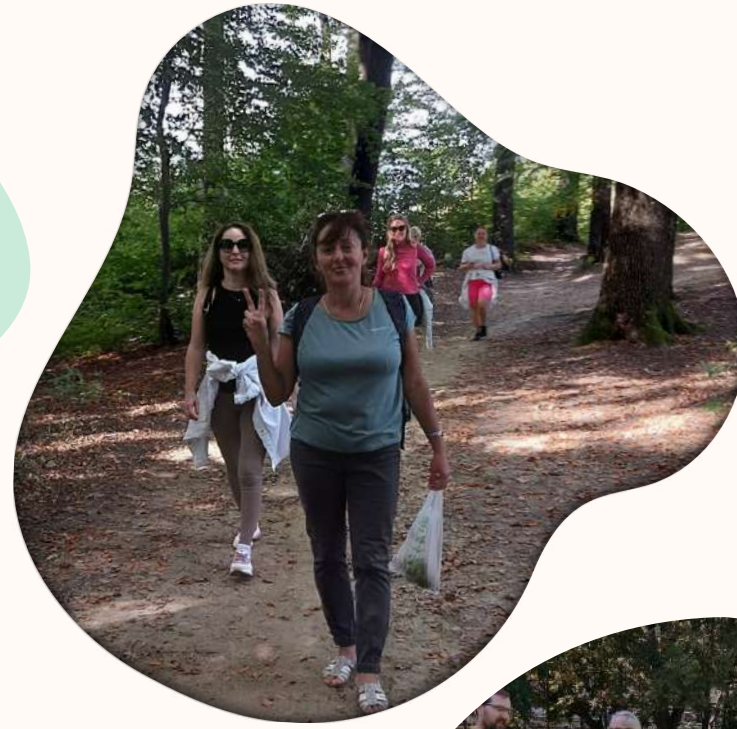
3. WORKSHOP IN CZECH REPUBLIC

4. VOICE WORKSHOP IN FRANCE

5. SCHOOL EVENT CZECH REPUBLIC

6. GUIDED MEDITATION IN PARIS

7. PARK WORKSHOP IN PARIS





Organisers

# Trainers

## **Filip Kňáček**

Trainer, facilitator, self-development guide who loves to encourage people to get to know themselves better through effective communication, nature, emotional intelligence, mindfulness, stress management and embodiment techniques.

[filipknazek.eu](http://filipknazek.eu)

## **Antonio Cargnello**

Passionate trainer who facilitates workshops for students, teenagers, youth workers and adults, using and mixing his expertise and experiences from theatrical improvisation, contemporary dance, martial arts and contact improvisation.



# Hosting organisation

[www.adelslovakia.org](http://www.adelslovakia.org)



# Partner organisations

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"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." ~ Anonymous



Stay true  
to your self  
while not hurting others



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