



# Reducing stress through creativity and nature



**Domain:**  
Climate action &  
Environment



**Place:**  
Kozani,  
Greece



**Duration:**  
Week-end workshop



**Target audience:**  
Environmental  
educators

## Mission

This interaction took place in the framework of an Academy organised yearly by CluBE for local environmental educators. For this year's edition, they collaborated with the University of West Attica (the Department of Public Health and the Department of Education and Communication) to analyse the impact of nature, movement and craft on stress and support the development of new educational programmes, that Environmental Educators would then apply in their daily work with children.

## Engagement activities

The interaction combined traditional courses and knowledge sharing for environmental educators with a focus on mental health that included outside walks, yoga and craft sessions. These activities were supervised by a researchers, to develop a Guidelines Booklet on educational activities that promote active citizens and environmental awareness, and participate in a PhD work on mental health.

## Artistic activities

A crafting activity was organised as a support to explain the latest research on creative activities with children and their link with mental health.

## IMPACT

Connection of environmental  
education with mental health

Holistic approach to mental health

Enhanced creativity and introspection

Creation of an interdisciplinary local network



# WHAT HAPPEND?

Eco-therapy, which highlights the therapeutic benefits of nature in supporting mental and emotional well-being, has become a key focus in Public Health within the Kozani Region, renowned for its peaceful natural landscapes. To enhance this initiative, yoga and craft activities were incorporated into the programme, offering participants diverse practices to reduce stress, improve mental clarity, and promote overall health. The involvement of the Department of Public Health at the University of West Attica ensured that the intervention was grounded in evidence-based approaches to environmental and mental health.

Environmental educators were identified as the ideal participants for this interaction, given their crucial role in shaping young minds and influencing communities. The activities developed during the academy followed creative and interdisciplinary methodologies that could be adapted and replicated in various educational settings, such as schools, museums, and gardens. By combining yoga and artistic expression within a single workshop, the initiative successfully created a holistic eco-therapy model that was both practical and impactful. This approach not only encouraged well-being but also fostered creativity through design thinking methods, equipping educators with innovative tools to  
into their teaching practices.

## PARTICIPANTS ENGAGEMENT

In addition to the more traditional activities and workshops conducted by the Academy over the weekend, the interaction was enriched by scientific contributions from the University of West Attica including walks in the snow, practical yoga sessions, and creative craft activities. The university's involvement provided evidence-based insights into the stress-relieving benefits of nature, mindfulness and crafting activities, ensuring that participants developed a strong understanding of environmental health concepts. The yoga instructor guided participants through mindfulness practices designed to reduce stress, while the artistic component encouraged educators to translate these mindfulness techniques into creative activities suitable for children.

To further support the university's work, a survey was designed to assess participants' state of mind before and after the different activities. The final survey gathered reflections on the overall experience, with participants' input directly contributing to the co-creation of a song, encapsulating their emotions and perspectives on the interaction.



## Artistic activities

Mindfulness, cultivated through yoga, has been shown to reduce self-censorship and fear of judgment, allowing participants to fully engage in the craft activity and make choices guided by curiosity. With this openness, participants worked on triangular wooden pieces as their canvas, decorating them with colouring materials, dried flowers, leaves, nuts, and a variety of colourful patterns and textures. This creative process symbolised the interconnectedness of mindfulness, creativity, and nature, demonstrating how artistic expression can serve as a valuable tool for promoting mental health in children.

The University of West Attica team, leading the activity, provided insights into the participants' choices of colours, textures, and materials, interpreting them in relation to their mood and mindset during the co-creation session. The use of bright, vibrant hues suggested an uplifting and energetic atmosphere. According to colour psychology, warm tones such as red, orange, and yellow often symbolise energy, warmth, and optimism, while cooler shades like green and blue evoke a sense of calm and a connection to nature. The selection of these colours indicated a positive emotional state and a desire to express joy, hope, and mindfulness. Participants may have chosen their colours intuitively, as mindfulness practices encourage individuals to remain present in the moment and trust their instincts rather than overanalyse their decisions. This spontaneity has been linked to increased creative problem-solving and reduced anxiety, as supported by research on mindfulness and creativity.

The diversity of textures, from smooth painted surfaces to rough woven materials, encouraged tactile exploration and deeper engagement with the creative process. The layering of natural elements, such as leaves, with artificial materials suggested an interplay between nature and human creativity, reflecting broader themes of environmental mindfulness. This synthesis highlighted the growing recognition of art as a means of reconnecting with and honouring the natural world. The availability of bright, bold colours—red, yellow, green, blue, and orange—further contributed to the atmosphere of playfulness and artistic freedom, aligning with the workshop's goal of fostering expressive and mindful creativity.

Throughout the session, all participants were actively involved in the co-creation of the craft puzzle, an inclusive process that embodied the workshop's focus on mindfulness, creativity, and teamwork. Engaging as both learners and creators, they experienced the therapeutic and collaborative power of artistic expression.

To conclude the interaction, a song was composed based on participants' reflections and feedback, capturing their emotions and thoughts on the experience as a whole.



## Impact of the interaction

Participants had the opportunity to engage in yoga, mindfulness, and artistic expression, deepening their understanding of how these practices alleviate stress and enhance mental well-being. The workshop illustrated how health promotion and environmental education can be intertwined, offering a holistic approach that participants can adapt and implement in schools and community programmes. It underscored the importance of mental health in educational and communal settings, advocating for nature-based solutions to address stress and emotional challenges.

The interaction fostered collaboration between educators, public health professionals, and creative practitioners, strengthening a network that can sustain and expand these interdisciplinary practices. By incorporating eco-therapy into the Academy's programme, the initiative reaffirmed its leadership in environmental education innovation, setting a new benchmark for integrating health and environmental sustainability.

Through their involvement in the craft-puzzle activity, participants explored their creative potential, linking artistic expression to mindfulness and nature-based therapies. The research team's analysis of their artistic choices provided deeper insights into their emotions and mental states, making the session both introspective and therapeutic. The collaboratively created artwork became a tangible symbol of teamwork, creativity, and emotional expression, serving as both a memento of the experience and an inspiration for future activities.

Overall, the interaction bridged the gap between mental health, environmental education, and creative expression, equipping participants with transformative tools to inspire and educate others while promoting personal and societal well-being. This initiative ensured that educators could use nature-inspired crafts as a medium for teaching emotional awareness and environmental responsibility. The collaborative aspect of the workshop further amplified feelings of social connection and shared joy, reinforcing the idea that creativity in a supportive environment fosters not only individual fulfilment but also a collective sense of well-being.

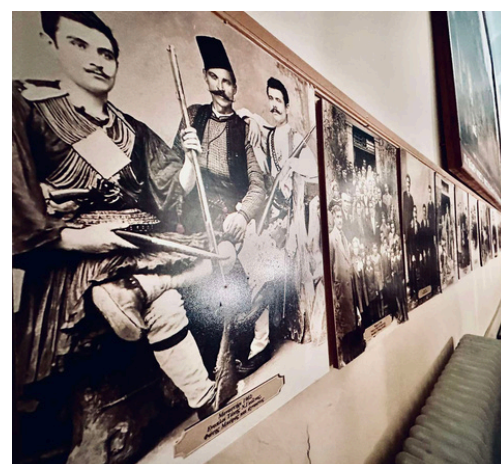
By bringing together academia, wellness professionals, and educators, the workshop exemplified a collaborative model that facilitated a transformative learning experience. The interaction provided participants with valuable knowledge and skills, empowering educators to apply these interdisciplinary practices across diverse educational settings.





For successful replication, CluBE emphasises the importance of focusing on the following key aspects:

- **Promoting a holistic perspective:** When designing an event for educators, it's essential to offer a well-rounded approach that goes beyond traditional learning. Focusing on topics like mindfulness, emotional well-being, and creativity helps educators gain valuable tools they can use in their daily practice. A holistic perspective ensures that they leave the event not only inspired but also equipped to nurture the whole child—mind, body, and emotions.
- **Combining nature, art, and mindfulness for an immersive experience:** blending different sensory and reflective experiences ensures a lasting impact in the participants minds. Pairing yoga sessions with craft activities, incorporating guided nature walks with music, can create a deeper sense of engagement. These thoughtful combinations allowed participants to experience well-being in a way that is both personal and transformative, making the event more memorable and effective.
- **Develop a repository of mindfulness-based activities for educators:** To ensure that the event's impact lasts beyond the gathering itself, it's important to provide educators with practical resources. Creating a well-organised, accessible repository of mindfulness-based educational activities—especially those designed for children—gives participants concrete tools to integrate into their teaching.



## Ressources

As a member of CluBE, the University of West Attica provided its support, ensuring the activities would be beneficial for their research. The interaction was combined with another event, organised yearly by CluBE.



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