LandscapesPerspectives **through Hands on Experience**

**Aim: To provide experiential learning in woodland environments and explore perspectives**

*Time Needed: at least half a day for each activity preferably repeated over a number of days. If feasible include one overnight experience so participants can experience dark skies and being in the natural world after dark.*

**Resources you will need:**

* + Session plan including questions and prompts to understand how the participants feel about being in the countryside and what benefits they derive. (see example questions at end of document)
  + cameras and/or recording equipment
  + first aid kit
  + water for cleaning equipment and for hot drinks
  + kettle (or flasks if no fire planned)
  + natural materials for activities including calico cloth for plant imprints
  + sanitizer, anti-bacterial wipes, sun cream, insect repellant, tick removal tools
  + Technical expertise and tools
  + Access to space and permissions

**Potential elements of session plans**:

Decide of the focus for each day and ensure a variety of experiences in any one day so you can ensure all participants have an activity they can relate to and enjoy.

As this is about both interacting with nature and learning about possible careers you need skilled practitioners. There are many excellent forest school practitioners and countryside rangers available to lead sessions such as the above. They bring a wealth of knowledge and practical skills and will be DBS-checked and have outdoor first aid qualifications.

It is critical to ensure that:

1. consent forms completed for all participants
2. insurance in place
3. appropriate safeguarding in place
4. participants are adequately equipped for the activities in terms of clothing.
5. there is a wet weather plan or temporary shelter as these activities will generally be undertaken in areas without permanent shelters
6. you have completed formal risk assessment and have formal permission to use the site

**Examples of the activity days we created include:**

* Bushcraft
* Woodland Careers
* Art

**Bushcraft Experience**

* + How to light a fire, to cook food on a fire and to make the area safe after a fire
  + Animal tracking – signs of animal activity and identifying species (ideally set traps and trails the night before to see what has been active)
  + Woodland species identification and nature biodiversity
  + Woodland restoration work, e.g planting trees, repair of fences, coppicing
  + Using natural materials to create practical implements (e.g spoons and rope)
  + Leaving no trace
  + Climate change – what is different today than in the past

**Woodland Workers – Charcoal Making Experience**

* + Preparing wood for the kiln
  + Setting up the charcoal burn kiln
  + Lighting and monitoring the burn
  + Learning about making a living in the countryside

This could also work as an experience with foresters or countryside rangers (focus would be on active woodland management and nature recovery)

**Art via natural materials and/or nature inspiration:**

* + Making natural charcoal and using for drawing
  + Plant imprints on natural cloth
  + Bracelets from natural materials
  + Whittling objects such as May whistles from wood
  + Participants’ artwork (any medium) in response to the experience – can be completed during or after sessions

**Example Questions for participants to reflect on any of these activities (can be filmed)**

* What do you see as barriers to visiting these spaces?
* Would you like to come more often?
* What do you like about it when you are there? What do you dislike about it?
* Do you feel at home?
* How can you be made to feel more welcome, more at home?
* If you could change something about the world, what would it be?
* What do the activities do – or not do – to connect you with landscapes?
* How do you feel about the arts and crafts aspects, e.g. in comparison with college work?
* Have you contemplated a career working in the countryside?
* Do these activities change anything about you thoughts or feelings?
* What would you say to other young people about what is good or different about doing these activities (compared to the sorts of activities they usually take part in)?
* What would you say to people who have the power to make woodland activities like these more available to young people?
* What would you say to people who have the responsibility to care for the landscape you are in?