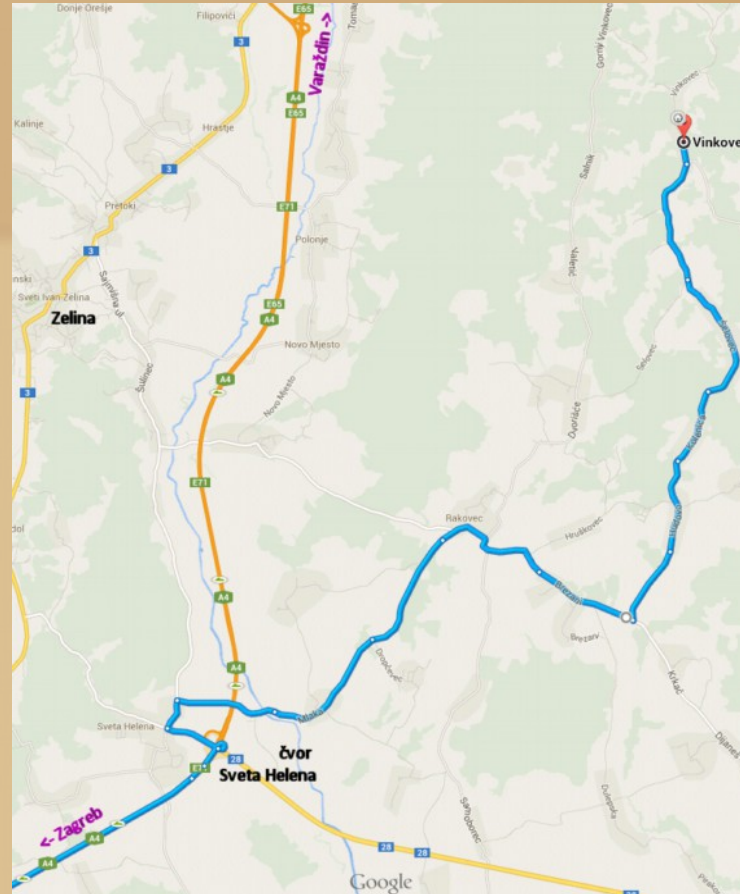


Our Mission

To establish a therapeutic farm on which users, children and youth with developmental difficulties, have excellent working conditions and stay and where they will feel good. Creative interventions - music therapy and therapeutic garden, in very specific circumstances - by integration of indoor and outdoor space - with appropriate activities and programs to improve and encourage creative, psychosocial, and especially emotional development of children and youth.



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ETI
VINKOVEC
EDUKATIONAL -THERAPEUTICAL
COUNTRY CENTRE

ETI Vinkovec – an educational and therapeutic country centre, situated in the hamlet of Vinkovec, between Vrbovec and Zelina is a privately-owned property registered as a smallholding, but which, apart from its basic agricultural function and the provision of accommodation for its owners, was conceived and built with an educational and therapeutic purpose in mind.

The project directors' desire is to provide a context adapted to the needs of these families, where under special conditions and with a suitable programme the creative development of the children is stimulated and encouraged, as well as offering to the parents a pleasant place to relax. At the same time the aim is to provide ideal conditions for qualified therapists, as well as to give students and volunteers the opportunity to improve their skills.

The directors' intent is to make the space available for therapy, seminars and other activities at low cost and in a natural environment, in simple but adequate conditions. The centre has been designed to that end, featuring green construction, renewable energy and careful use of natural resources. Participation and suggestions are invited in its construction, use and further development. Apart from the great commitment of the centre's directors, its users and their families, assistance is to be hoped for from supporters, whose various skills, personal engagement, financial contributions and advice would be gratefully received. Help from EU funds, social programmes from the wider community and civil society initiatives would also be welcome.

The Centre's design

In the first phase a small wooden house is to be built to accommodate the hosts. While this will be all that is visible from the road the basement of this structure would contain a work area, which opens onto the park below. This would consist of a large room, adapted to music therapy, a changing room and lavatory with a large kitchen for the use of both guests and hosts. Below the building a carefully designed park would provide various types of stimulation, the most important of which would be a multisensory garden, providing tactile, olfactory and auditory input for those with sight and other challenges. In addition the park would feature horticultural facilities, where users might enjoy working with the soil. An ornamental fishpond at the bottom of the garden is also planned. A pathway with a gentle incline will wind its way down the hill, giving the park wheelchair access.

The formal basis of the project

ETI Vinkovec offers its users without fee: Use of its therapy rooms, principally for music therapy, but also for other therapeutic activities for special needs children. Natural surroundings and a therapeutic park for horticultural therapy and other open air activities. In addition to therapeutic facilities families received during the therapy, with the possibility of all day or residential stays if required.

ETI does not organize therapy, training or seminars, nor does it provide catering or accommodation. ETI provides the space, while therapies and seminars are organized by individuals or groups. Food is self-catering, with use of produce from the centre. Accommodation and other facilities are available to users, to be used and maintained under their own initiative.

Construction principles

Every effort is to be made to adapt the structures both to the users' needs and to the surrounding environment. Glass walls welcome the outside world into the work area while at the same time sound and heat insulation is ensured. Their south-facing orientation also makes best use of the winter sun, while broad-leaved trees will shade the terrace in summer. The main building is designed to make as small a visual impact on the landscape as possible, and is half-submerged in the hillside. All buildings at the centre are co-ordinated in appearance and will use 'low carbon footprint' materials where possible. Untreated wood sheathing and natural insulational materials are to be preferred.

All waste water will pass through biological filters before being re-used in the park, and care will be taken to maximize collection and use of rainwater.

Floors are to be heated using variable fuel boiler, while fireplaces will be connected to a heat exchanger system to heat the facility when it is not in full use. Solar energy will also contribute power to the facility, as well as possible supplementary income.

Other uses

The centre's main space will be big enough to be used as a meeting place, concert hall or for seminars. The centre itself would be able to accommodate up to 10 guests over several days, and bed and breakfast arrangements with locals are feasible. The use of the cabins and other facilities by committed sponsors would be welcome.