



PERMACULTURE
EDUCATOR'S
TOOLKIT

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Community, Sensibility, Imagination

This document is the fruit of the International Forum of Permaculture Educators that took place on 15 and 16 May 2021, online, and was organized by Biennale Warszawa and Agro-Perma Lab Foundation. The Forum was structured around three themes: Community, Sensibility, Imagination and its main aim was to share practical tools, personal philosophies and inspiring experiences in designing permaculture education. We were trying to explore the role of the permaculture and food-growing educators, imagine how they can grow themselves as educators on this path, and support others in the process of learning to make an impact that is embedded in the Ethics of Care – for the Earth, the people and all other beings on the Planet.

In this publication you can find manuals prepared by participants of the Forum. They are trying to reflect on non-formal education, their own philosophies and best practices, and how to organize and structure different toolkits.

How to organise and utilise outdoor learning spaces and analogue teaching methods in children's education

**ALEKSANDRA
ARENT**

ANALYSIS / KEY CONCEPTS

1 Experiential early education

Reggio Emilia approach focuses on giving children in early education control over the direction of their learning by first observing them in the play area and only afterwards deciding on their educational needs. Furthermore, the decision on the shape of the teaching programme is made together with the pupils. It specifies that children learn through experiences utilising all their senses, not just ears and eyes like in a formal school. This approach also underlines the importance of letting the children freely explore the world through interaction with various objects and other children and should be allowed to have unlimited opportunities for self expression. I believe outdoor interaction with nature fulfils all the objectives presented by this approach.

2 The political side of outdoor education

Another example key to the analysis of the problem is the issue of colonisation of indigenous people, for example in Canada, and passing a law in 1920 forcing native children to go boarding schools with European/Canadian/Catholic church teaching. The study by Alexandria Middlemiss states that children from indigenous families did not perform well at the formal Canadian exams, as that kind education was not profiled to their needs, and was uprooting them from their land and their culture. In their culture teaching was based on outdoor learning from the elders, taking care of the land, ceremonies, taking care of themselves through practical understanding of nature, etc.

This issue applies not only to indigenous people from the colonised territory of current Canada, but to any society that was colonised by the 'rational' West or the Catholic Church that were depriving whole communities of practical knowledge of self-sustainability.

3 Structuring outdoor education

Children in Permaculture Manual provides a list of various activities for outdoor children's education based on the permaculture principles. The authors divide it into 6 sections:

A Introducing permaculture:

- 1 permaculture ethics and principles
- 2 connections

B Living nature:

- 3 soil and stone
- 4 water
- 5 plants and trees
- 6 the animal, fungus and bacteria kingdoms
- 7 air

C Design:

- 8 designing

D Growing food:

- 9 growing food
- 10 preparing food

E Built environment and resource use:

- 11 buildings

- 12 using nature's gifts wisely

F Social permaculture

- 13 my body, heart and mind
- 14 my community
- 15 our human family.

SOLUTIONS / ACTIONS

- Approaching local schools to present them with ideas for permaculture gardens
- Making connection with local culture centres to propose outdoor activities based on permaculture principles
- As a parent – joining parents' committees at schools and lobbying outdoor education

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Permaculture gardens in schools
- Experiential learning as part of all subjects e.g. poetry about nature read in nature, science classes based on nature outdoors
- Letting children design and build the environments they are going to play in
- Education in wild nature
- Natural playgrounds
- Designing education programme only after interacting with the children
- All children have different needs, education cannot be standardised

FURTHER INFORMATION / LINKS

- 1 www.reggiochildren.it/en/reggio-emilia-approach/valori-en/
- 2 *The Children in Permaculture Manual: Earth Care, People Care and Fair Share in Education*
- 3 *Decolonizing Education Through Outdoor Learning: The Learning Story of an Indigenous Kindergarten Teacher* by Alexandria Middlemiss
- 4 www.hortiservices.co.uk/portfolio/schools-and-play-areas/

Symbiotic design. A philosophy for creating bountiful ecosystems in urban space

**MICHAŁ
AUGUSTYN**

PROBLEM / OBJECTIVE

There is a need for a widely shared theoretical framework and belief system that would encourage grassroots and high-level transformation of urban and suburban areas into sustainable ecosystems.

ANALYSIS / KEY CONCEPTS

It is striking and symbolic that the weight of all human-made artifacts has exceeded the mass of living beings. Calls for reestablishing a more balanced connection between humans and other-than-human parts of nature – one that is based on long-term reciprocity rather than rapid exploitation – are becoming mainstream. The need is pronounced especially (though not exclusively) in urban environments because of their often destructive impact on life-supporting systems and human psyche.

A common framework supporting a transition from the technocracy aimed at accumulation of capital towards reshaping the built environment so that it supports life on the planet is urgently needed. I propose the term symbiotic design to delineate any system co-created by humans and non-humans that seeks to balance benefits and costs for every element that is contributing to bountifulness of the system. The goal of any such collaborations is to maintain the highest possible level of satisfaction for each of the contributing parties while maintaining the health of the whole, thus ensuring long-term dynamic equilibrium.

The term bountifulness is used to replace the older term productivity, limited to measuring material output. The utility of

every symbiotic system reaches far beyond production of useful objects for human use; the benefits may be material (food, warmth, safety), emotional (feeling of joy, contentment, comfort) as well as spiritual (sense of belonging, temporary dissolution of ego). The beneficiaries are humans but also animals, plants, fungi and bacteria. The flow of minerals and energy needs to be balanced as well.

The information on the level of satisfaction of beings contributing to any symbiotic system is limited by our ability to measure it. This poses so far the biggest challenge in applying the concept of symbiotic design; without this knowledge it is hard to tell whether any system really is symbiotic. In principle, the level of satisfaction of the living and nonliving components of the system (other than humans, who can verbalize it, it and some other vertebrates who express it in ways understandable to us) can be inferred based on the qualitative evaluation of the state of the system as a whole. In other words, the design is symbiotic when it leads to creation of a healthy, elegant, frugal, resilient, durable system. It ceases to be such when the system malfunctions, heading towards collapse.

A project that fulfills the principle of symbiosis with other organisms is constantly transformed by feedback from the environment. Thus, the boundary between the subject and the object, nature and culture, between the wildness of animals, plants and fungi, and the wildness of humans is blurred; through cultivating symbiotic relationships, various organisms collectively form an order beyond the mental capacity of any designer. It is very much akin to dance, a multispecies dance.

The concept of symbiotic design is aiming to merge ecological and economic thinking. It goes beyond the discourse of resource efficiency and conservation; indeed, it challenges the notion of resource by postulating that all beings are valuable in themselves, which means that life may not be valued on an anthropocentric or mercantile basis (i.e. according to its usefulness to humans or the market). It also has a spiritual dimension since it holds true that nature, as a whole, is sacred.

Abstract as it may sound, symbiotic design can serve as a basis for practical solutions of real-life (not just philosophical) problems. In fact, attempts at creating such systems in the post-industrial era are being made, mostly on a local scale. Common examples of symbiotic designs are community gardens (successfully balancing food production with the well-being of gardeners and the garden ecosystem as a whole), encouraging the settlement of certain birds to deal with problematic insects (e.g. swifts feeding on mosquitoes), setting up compost bins which degrade organic matter through close cooperation of organisms on different trophic levels, or certain forms of animal-assisted therapy. It is important to recognize the value of such arrangements; the umbrella term may serve that end as well.

The concept of symbiotic design is related to, though different from biomimicry, biodesign, ecological engineering and guild. Biomimicry is about imitating natural processes in designing objects; it does not necessarily include biological systems. Biodesign, in turn, employs organisms in the design of artifacts as key components. Neither of these approaches is concerned with balancing benefits of the contributing parties which is the key rule of symbiotic design. A more closely related term is

ecological engineering which combines ecology with engineering to integrate human society with its natural environment for the benefit of both; still, it is a materialistic approach, concerned with resource efficiency rather than well-being of contributors. The concept of guild, understood in permaculture as a mutually beneficial group of species, sees humans as major beneficiaries rather than an integral part of such arrangement.

SOLUTIONS / ACTIONS

- Refining the definition of symbiotic design
- Collecting examples of existing successful applications of symbiotic design concept
- Dissemination: articles, online presentations and books for general public as well as professionals working in engineering, architecture, design and agriculture covering different aspects of the concept and providing real-life examples (case studies)
- Exploring the possibilities of computer modelling as an aid in creating symbiotic designs
- Certification of products, services made in accordance with symbiotic design principles
- Employing the concept in government spending rules (e.g. symbiotic design as a clause in public procurement)

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Explore the relationship between mindfulness and successful symbiotic design

FURTHER INFORMATION / LINKS

Biopolis. Biocentric quarter. An example of symbiotic design at neighborhood scale (in Polish):

<https://mieszkamy.futuwawa.pl/project/82>

SINCE FEELING IS FIRST: ecosystemic intelligence and permaculture education

**JOANNA
BOJCZEWSKA**

PROBLEM / OBJECTIVE

To learn about nature and its design, *is first to feel – to look, hear and feel* beyond our individual selves. It is to feel and think as part of (not just about) the wider ecosystemic field, the 'we-space' of the biodiverse genepool of planet Earth.

Learning and designing permaculture can be a deeply transformational practice for the individual consciousness and for the planet Earth. Beyond conceptual and theoretical principles of ecosystemic regeneration, permaculture education can attune and sensitize learners in different modalities to feeling and widen the horizon of care for other living beings and non-human forms of life. In other words, permaculture can facilitate the development of *Ecosystemic intelligence*, which is both a personal disposition and a type of distributed, collective orientation with a 'swarming', 'butterfly' effect – tilted towards healing of the planet Earth

ANALYSIS / KEY CONCEPTS

In modern times, humans are largely atomized, separated from their bio-physical continuity with nature, and 'extracted' from the environments on which they actually depend for their fundamental life process (water, air, soil, etc). Even ecological (environmental) knowledge is largely abstracted and separated from its original context (we know exotic animals and fruit, but none of the local birds or bushes, for example).

We may even ask, what type of intelligence enabled men to survive in the natural environment for thousands of years, using biodiverse pool of resources in skillful, regenerative ways and

what is its state today? How did modernity change our relation to nature, and our place in it?

Permaculture too, can sway to be principle- and theory-heavy and overly focused on technique-application, rather than discerning ecosystemic-mimicry patterns from within the immediate environment, be it a garden, a farm, or a whole territory. "The more involved people become with the activity of the intellect," said Masanobu Fukuoka, pioneer of natural farming in Japan, "the more they set themselves apart and the more difficult it becomes to live naturally," he argued.

Ecosystemic intelligence (also known as ecological intelligence) is a concept we can apply to the type of modern ecological wisdom that integrates various lines of intelligence with a regenerative, healing, Earth-centric orientation and scales of interaction from planetary to front-yard garden for the design of sustainable human practices. It is compatible with many existing permaculture concepts and practices and can highlight the value of permaculture education.

Intelligence [...] is generally defined as "the bio-psychological potential to process information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture" (Gardner, H.). Various thinkers distinguished between areas of intelligence, such as logico-mathematical, spatial-visual, kinesthetic or emotional, but these are not 'real' but analytical divisions, rather helpful ways to talk about lines of development of human cognition.

In **Ecosystemic intelligence**, the *I think, therefore I am* turns into *I am, therefore there is thinking*. In fact, it offers an even

more radical interpretation of this cartesian primacy of the intellect: *There is the ecosystem, therefore there is I, and there is thinking*.

This could be illustrated with an image in which "the mind" is not inside the person's head, but rather, "the mind" that sees and perceives, is a three-tier interaction: *it includes the environment, the body and the head-mind, all nested together*. In this way, ecosystems are not outside, and we can develop a *feeling* of knowing as part of "the whole ecological mind".

Feeling modalities rely significantly on the ability to rest and relax in the body. It is well-captured by a meditation teacher, Adyashanti, who says: "The body is the sensing instrument of consciousness. Without the body and the mind, the trees couldn't see themselves. Usually we think that we are looking at a tree, but the tree is looking at itself through us" (*The Direct Way: Thirty Practices to Evoke Awakening*).

Through **feeling**, we can expand the range and patterns of information flow, beyond what we already know in language-concepts, opening the intuition, refining and attuning our sensory registers to the yet unknown. Practicing *feeling and being modalities* can broaden the horizon of attention and care.

It is much easier to *feel* one with the entire Earth, than to *think* of oneself and the whole planet (in image or words) as one. Knowing and learning *through feeling*, and therefore, *the education of feeling*, seem critical for the development of Ecosystemic Intelligence in our times.

Ecosystemic intelligence is a *knowing* based on *feeling*, because it transcends and includes individual knower-thinker to include both the body and the environment as interconnected knowing-fields. *Knowing as feeling* supports a much wider 'field-view' processing and gathering of information and can be combined and hold *within itself* the more particularizing thinking and analytic processes of the rational mind.

SOLUTIONS / ACTIONS

In order to help the learners develop personal confidence with complex nature systems and dynamic cycles, and also to deepen their **ethics of Earth care**, we include in permaculture education basic practices for the cultivation of '**Ecosystemic intelligence**'.

These **exercises**, in counter-balance to conceptual knowledge transmission, primarily focus on developing modalities of *feeling and being* in the learner, beyond the thinking mind and experientially nested in the environment around.

Learning about nature's generous food ecosystems cannot be developed through books or words alone – the thinking mind. Nature's manifold dynamics need to be also comprehended, or rather 'absorbed' through the modes of *feeling and being* – *parttaking* whilst perceiving and interacting.

Feeling is a process larger than an individual oneself. Feeling does not finish on human skin. It is interdependent and 'nested' within the body-in-the-environment. "Human beings, uniquely among animals, live a two-tier existence, half-in nature and half-out, both as organisms with bodies and as persons with

minds," explains Tim Ingold in his *Perceptions of the Environment. Essays on livelihood, dwelling & skill*.

The education of feeling can be done through 3 modalities of feeling and perception:

- "I" modalities of feeling (senses, multiperspectivalism, animism)
- "We" modalities of feeling (trust, intimacy, interdependence)
- "Field" modalities of feeling (wholeness, beauty)

In all those modalities, a person feeling means relaxing into a dimension or a field of knowing that wider than the individual, isolated head-based 'knower'. In "I" modality of feeling, one relaxes into or connects specific sense gateways; and in "field" modality – into the gravity of into a sense of beauty or expanse of the sky.

Examples of practices to increase awareness of the ecological context and ecosystemic intelligence, which can be found online.

- 1 Look, hear, feel. Meditation instruction by Shinzen Young.
- 2 Inter-breathing exercise in "After Becoming and Animal"
- 3 Grounding practice Earth-descent-meditation by Reggie Ray
- 4 Openness/expansiveness practice of Sky-gazing of Dzogchen tradition
- 5 Cultivating animistic worldview through "perceiving perceiving" (Integral Ecology book)

This **sensitization and expansion of the perception of the environment** will in turn extend care beyond a human individual person to a much wider interconnected ecosystem of forms

and processes of beings. They may also lead to self-discovery and personal growth. In any event, *feeling* is critical for developing of an expanded ethics of care, from one's garden through to the whole Earth.

And finally, such ecosystemic intelligence practices do not need to be extra ad-ons in the curriculum, but can be very much embedded and part of the practical flow of gardening activities, the morning or mid-way breaks during workshops. They may enhance perception needed for accurate observation, analysis and design of permaculture. They will be more inclusive, more sensitive and more adaptive.

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

When applying any of the abovementioned practices, consider these points:

- Space of rest and relaxation are foundations for these exercises, so look preferably for safe, grounding environment and tranquility
- Say less rather than more whilst guiding others into their bodies or wider environment; if you speak, "speak through your feet" – without losing yourself connection to the ground
- To activate senses and anchor attention in the body whilst cutting through thinking, you can guide the learners to 1) focus on gravity, 2) quiet down visual sense and close eyes or 3) turn up attention in the hearing sense 4) sit at least 5 min in silence and stillness before giving instruction
- Consistency over intensity; practice *feeling* in small bits in all environments, not only natural habitats, also in man-made or artificial spaces to know the difference

- In all cases, practices for the cultivation of feeling may lead to unexpected emotional material appearing – take it easy. Focusing on and prolonging breathing can help to ground.

FURTHER INFORMATION / LINKS

- 1 Tim Ingold, *The Perceptions of the Environment: Essays in Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill* (book)
- 2 Ch. 10 in *Integral Ecology Intelligence: Unifying Multiple Perspectives on the Natural World* (book)
- 3 Ecological Intelligence:
<https://www.ecoliteracy.org/article/ecological-intelligence>
- 4 Masanobu Fukuoka, *The One Straw Revolution*
- 5 After becoming animal: Three simple mind altering exercises:
https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/scotdoc/pages/4740/attachments/original/1572360952/after_becoming_animal_211019.pdf?1572360952
- 6 Reggie Ray: Earth Breathing (audio track, instruction):
https://insighttimer.com/insightearth_/guided-meditations/guided-meditation-earth-breathing and <https://yourskillfulmeans.com/knowledgebase/earth-descent-meditation/>

How to develop a permaculture demonstration space for education?

**ANNA
CHEĆ**
Dolina Bawole Serce,
Fundacja “Świat w Naszych Rękach”

PROBLEM / OBJECTIVE

Permaculture, as we know, is a huge area and education conducted directly in the garden means showing processes and patterns in real life.

When creating such an educational place, we need to ask ourselves two questions:

- What do we want to show / present, what to educate about?
- How to do it?

ANALYSIS / KEY CONCEPTS

It is important to look at all the elements – explain what permaculture is and its basic principles, as well as the contribution of individual elements.

People who come to this garden or educational path may not be able to see and understand its different parts at first, because they have no knowledge in this area and may be used to other concepts of garden (and life).

So we want to show the whole, but also focus their attention on elements like inhabitants of the garden, various plants, weeds, the water cycle, the composting process, life in the soil, insects and many other elements. Moreover, we want to explain the relationships between them.

And here comes the second question – how to present it and convey the information?

Let us remember that there are different styles of learning: visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and reading/writing learners.

Our garden or educational path should meet these educational needs.

It should also connect our themes and show the processes taking place.

SOLUTIONS / ACTIONS

As an example, I will describe the existing educational path "Gardens for the Earth" which I created with the Polish Foundation "The World in Our Hands" in the permaculture homestead of the Oxheart Valley.

It features educational boards in the form of texts and infographics that explain particular elements, such as various kinds of earth-beds, water circulation system with a pond and a drainpipe collecting rainwater from the roof which is connected to the reservoir, a composter, houses for wild pollinators, leftover heaps of branches and leaves where hedgehogs live, a piece of a completely wild meadow, geodesic domes – greenhouses and thermophilic vegetables, various weeds, etc.

Therefore, for those who prefer reading and visual learners, we have educational boards about wild pollinators to provide theory. The board is located next to the house for wild pollinators with real-life creatures where you can observe them. Next to it, there are flowering wild plants, so we can talk about how important they are, from which we move on to not mowing lawns and their other uses, like growing vegetables, and then we go to

the topic of seeds and we can do a short workshop on obtaining (collecting) seeds, etc.

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Show the big picture, then small elements
- Mix elements: education boards and real objects
- Do something practical with visitors/ audience, let them get their hands dirty
- Prepare place for the workshop in advance

FURTHER INFORMATION / LINKS

<https://www.swiatwnaszchrekach.org/>

How to use and prepare different urban spaces (outdoor/indoor) for permaculture education activities?

**AGNIESZKA
CHOŁUJ**

PROBLEM / OBJECTIVE

One of the goals of permaculture is to bring food production back to cities. Its implementation faces many challenges, including inefficient administrative procedures, constant pressure from commercial developers, and lack of belief by city residents that growing their food is possible. One of the essential activities to overcome these obstacles is efficient use of existing green urban spaces for permaculture education.

ANALYSIS / KEY CONCEPTS

Successful permaculture education is not only to transfer knowledge but also to foster enthusiasm, personal involvement and create a community that takes responsibility for functional ecosystems. There are several approaches towards this end that, however, need to be carried out in appropriate outdoor urban spaces. Such spaces for permaculture education can be ranked from easily accessible to those which require substantial effort and pose substantial organizational challenges.

SOLUTIONS / ACTIONS

Practical places for successful permaculture education, assuring both transfer of knowledge and building the vibrant permaculture community include:

- Community gardens or gardens at Community Centers
- Family Allotment Gardens
- Small properties which are surrounded by green areas accessible to residents
- Single-family houses or terraced houses on the outskirts of cities

- Unused plots, industrial areas, forgotten corners, green zones along pedestrian and bicycle paths
- Unutilized green areas that are used for artistic or cultural alternative events

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Educate community already gathered in Community Centers and Family Allotment Gardens
- Organize “permablitz” engaging residents of small properties in permaculture gardening projects in their surroundings
- Use the “Neighbor’s Example,” to form local permaculture “network” in single-family houses residential districts as “Private Green Hot Spots”
- In challenging areas and reluctant environment, develop projects which require only occasional, basic care that can be provided during annual meetings
- Whenever possible, convert abandoned places that serve other purposes according to 12 permaculture design principles, so that such converted spaces can serve as a backdrop for cultural, social, horticultural as well as aesthetic and recreational events

FURTHER INFORMATION / LINKS

- 1 <https://www.sdk.waw.pl/warsztaty/rodzina/wspolny-ogrod>
- 2 <http://bujnawarszawa.pl/motyka-i-slonce/>
- 3 <https://sherrettfoodforest.org>
- 4 <https://stadtmachtsatt.de>

How to prepare content for a day-long course or workshop and structure its programme and rhythm?

**MAREK
GOLONKO**

PROBLEM / OBJECTIVE

- 1 How should the scope of the workshop be defined?
- 2 In which environment can, or should it take place?
- 3 How to balance theory and practice in a workshop?
- 4 How to keep the group interested and energized?
- 5 Who takes part in the workshop, who doesn't and why?
- 6 What other elements should be taken into account?

ANALYSIS / KEY CONCEPTS

- 1 First of all, the target group and its knowledge of the topic is important, as well as whether we are constructing the workshop as an open offer to individuals or whether it is a commissioned task for a specific group.
- 2 Consider the ideal or preferred conditions for such a workshop in relation to the opportunities available to us.
- 3 The topic and content of the workshop should first be tailored to the individual's cognitive abilities and how much knowledge they are able to practically absorb during the workshop. It is also worth considering what the aim of the workshop is, what the participants would like and be able to do with the knowledge and skills acquired during the workshop, and what the further learning process could look like.
- 4 Here, in addition to topics and educational methods, we should consider a reasonable duration of the workshop, breaks and understanding their role of free socialization in the learning process. Another important element is also the variety of group work tools: group, subgroup, pair, individual work.

- 5 We are very different people with very different socialization, beliefs, privileges, we are subject to very different exclusions and limitations, so it is worth paying attention to this, because it can seriously affect the learning process of both the individual and the group.
- 6 We should reflect on our willingness vs. ability and how much energy and resources we are able to commit to adapt our workshop as much as possible to exclude elements that may negatively affect the learning process.

SOLUTIONS / ACTIONS

- 1 On that point, when building a workshop for a specific group, it is important to get to know the group, its needs, level of knowledge and how diverse it is.
- 2 Even if the possibilities of the venue and the surroundings seem inadequate at a glance, it is possible to take a broader look to see if there are elements in the surroundings which can be used and incorporated in the spaces where the workshop is held. Another solution is to find another, more appropriate place. At a minimum, consider how to adapt the available space to the nature and needs of the workshop.
- 3 Giving "only" as much theory as necessary, understanding that learning takes place on different levels and that the acquisition of knowledge is only one element – necessary but not more important than the emotional or sensory experience and learning by doing.

- 4 Diversifying the tools of group work gives us different possibilities for the active participation of individuals and increases the space for action, activates and breaks out of the routine. This effect can also be achieved by suitable facilitation, i.e. paying attention to the varying involvement of the people and giving more space to those who, for social, cultural, gender and other reasons, take less space. You should also include some kind of exercises like group building, ice breaking and energisers. The latter will be especially useful to keep up the attention and energy in the more theoretical modules, in the room and focused on theoretical knowledge transfer. It is also important to encourage looking for answers rather than giving them.
- 5 Reflect on which persons, social classes, identities, backgrounds (also class) and life models are represented by the participants. If we want to diversify but also enable under-represented people to participate, we can do this at the workshop recruitment stage, or if this still does not solve the under-representation, we should pay special attention to the people representing the groups we care about and their specific needs and conditions that prevent them from participating (if we want women of a certain age to participate, we can assume that it is important to take care of dependants and that we are able to find care for them during the workshop; if we are addressing the workshop to economically disadvantaged people, it might make sense to provide an adequate remuneration for the participation in the workshop, etc.)
- 6 There are many things we can predict and design with good analysis and based on our experience, but we should also encourage participants to include such information, e.g. in a questionnaire, while making it clear that it is important for us,

so that people do not feel that answering this question may somehow disqualify them.

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Do a survey to get to know the group and the people better.
- It seems necessary for the space to offer a practical opportunity to educate through experience and to give us practical examples and respite.
- Ensure a variety of tools and activities in the workshop, even at the expense of theoretical knowledge.
- Use group building tools, energisers, brainstorming, meditation, sensory learning, and make sure the activities are not just for the whole group.
- Try to think of ways to get people from the groups you particularly want to work with in the workshop.
- Don't forget to have some form of evaluation of your work.

FURTHER INFORMATION / LINKS

- 1 Spina.noblog.org
- 2 Kommunikationskollektiv.org
- 3 ecodharma.com

Positive garden psychology for beginners

**MARCELINA
HAREMZA**

PROBLEM / OBJECTIVE

The objective of the project is on the one hand to encourage novice gardeners, and on the other hand to remind educators how difficult it is to be a novice and what problems such people face.

ANALYSIS / KEY CONCEPTS

Novice gardeners are most often people from the younger generations, 20-30 years old, living in apartments without access to a garden. Their main problem is that they are absolutely disconnected from nature, devoid of family gardening traditions and related garden skills. A significant social problem created by the education system is perfectionism resulting in the fear of failure – which is a strong mental barrier and the cause of procrastination.

Besides, young people do not trust their intuition, which makes it difficult for them to find themselves in the enormous amount of information and knowledge they need to acquire to successfully cultivate a garden. It is a very overwhelming experience for them.

SOLUTIONS / ACTIONS

To help young gardeners, it is important to show them that they are a part of nature.

That they can, and even should, listen to their intuition because there are no simple answers. They should be able to relate any acquired knowledge to the conditions that exist in their garden.

We should not build a narrative in which man is the greatest evil in the world – because it has a negative psychological effect of guilt and takes away the belief that our existence as representatives of the human species can also have a positive impact on the surrounding world. This causes a feeling of resignation and delays action.

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Patiently answering obvious questions because they are often not a symptom of laziness, but being lost in the topic and being overwhelmed by the complexity of the issues.
- Displaying stumbles and failed attempts on your social media as well, to show that mishaps can happen even to experienced gardeners.
- Documenting and showing your own learning journey as a journey of failure – just to show that learning from mistakes is not a bad thing.
- Avoid narrative in which humans, as a species, are thoughtless destroyers and instead of merely criticizing existing solutions, promote solutions to problems – build positive messages.

FURTHER INFORMATION / LINKS

<https://www.bestcounselingdegrees.net/resources/ecopsychology/>

Learning the natural way – creating experiential learning cycles and making progress visible

SUSANNE
HOFFMAN
SOUKI

PROBLEM / OBJECTIVE

Children show us how we learn with ease: through curiosity, trial and error – that is, through motivation, experience, reflecting on the experience, and planning an improved experience. This way of learning occurs naturally without us realising that it does, and most of our applicable knowledge stems from such unconscious processes. If learning processes – be it workshops, courses or gardening groups – are consciously designed in such a cyclical way, we can learn effortlessly and make our joint knowledge visible.

ANALYSIS / KEY CONCEPTS

Basic principles:

- 1 People learn only if and when they **WANT** to understand something: Our educational offers need to **start from this curiosity and the personal interest of people**. It is the basis for formulating relevant learning objectives and a driving force that can be stimulated throughout the learning process.
- 2 Information becomes knowledge only when people may **connect it to existing knowledge and experience**. We need time at the beginning of a learning process to understand what people bring with them (experience, knowledge, language, philosophies and viewpoints). It helps to explore what each person may contribute to the joint learning process – and **EVERYone** has something to contribute, otherwise they would not be curious to learn! – Knowledge and curiosity go hand in hand.

- 3 **Learning objectives** may be formulated on different levels:
People may either “have gotten an overview of...”, “understand...”, “have applied...”, “are able to critically reflect...” or other. Logically, the different levels **require different types of learning activities** (theoretical input, practical trial, joint conversation, individual reading etc.).
- 4 It is **the educator’s/facilitator’s responsibility** to ensure that the process includes all learning activities necessary for people to actually learn what is stipulated in the learning objectives. Besides, it is **the responsibility of learners** to ensure their learning issues are clear for themselves and others, and to follow them up.
- 5 **The learning cycle** as described above includes more or less explicit phases of conceptualisation (theorising, planning), practice (experience, test), and reflection. A learning process may start at any point in the learning cycle, educators just need to ensure that all phases are included at least once.
- 6 **Visualising learning progress** in particular during reflection and conceptualisation helps to make learning explicit; it fosters the use of a common language and a shared frame of reference.

We could also understand the learning cycle in analogy to the plant life cycle – we sow seeds of knowledge and experience that sprout and blossom in new places...

Applied to a polyculture seminar, a learning process could be designed as follows:

Phase	Activity	Stage in the plant life cycle
Exploring	Preparatory discussions in the organising/facilitating team, At the start/first event: Collection of expectations and questions towards the event/process	leaves sprouting on the soil surface
Reflecting	Agreement on learning objectives and programme, based on the above exploration Eliciting past experiences/understanding using various objects (visualised conversations)	stem roots in the soil
Conceptualising	Short introduction to the polyculture concept on the farm / preparation of practice session	stem/ branches
Experience	Practical activity e.g. farm tour or something specific (depending on learning objectives)	more roots growing
Reflection	Visualised discussion: What have we observed? What does it mean? Collection of new questions coming up	branches and leaves
Conceptualising	Elaborate models and/or planning next practice sessions	buds
Experience	Practical activity depending on learning objectives and weather/farm conditions	flowers; seeds returning to soil

Reflection	Visualised discussion: What have we observed? What does it mean? – continue the joint visualisation Collection of new questions coming up, check which are already answered	branches and leaves
Conceptual-ising	Improvement of models and plans Inspiration e.g. through additional inputs and help from others	buds, new sprouts insects, sun
Experience	...continue phases	
...	...	
Final reflection	Completing the joint model/visualisation and answering questions that were still open Final evaluation	

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- In case of questions, ask (fellow) participants before giving your own answers. In this way everybody will learn something.

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Biggs, J and Tang C. (2011): *Teaching for Quality Learning at University*. 4th ed., McGraw-Hill and Open University Press, Maidenhead.
Explains in detail the logic of constructive alignment in course design, for example how to phrase useful learning objectives, how to link learning activities to them, etc. Written for the university context but the principles function in any learning context. The full-text of the 3rd edition (2007) may be found online.
- Acevedo Osorio, A.; Hofmann-Souki, S.; Cruz Morales, J. (2019): *Holistic competence-orientation in sustainability-related study programmes: Transdisciplinary Student Team Research in Colombia, China, Mexico and Nicaragua. Sustainability Science*.
Explains and reviews the abovementioned approach in the context of student team research projects where students practice self-directed research (learning) in/with local stakeholder networks in farming contexts.
- Hofmann-Souki, S.; Pham, V.H.; Tran, T.L.H.; Ashabul, A. (2011): "Learning to teach learning – Towards a concept for the training of lecturers in conducting Problem-Based Learning study projects in Asia", *Acta Horticulturae* 920:45–53

- 4 Margarete Langerhorst: *Meine Mischkulturenpraxis, nach dem Vorbild der Natur*. Xanthen, OLV Verlag, 4. Auflage 2017, 140 S., Fotos. ISBN 3-922201-21-0
- 5 Gertrud Franck (Brunhilde Bross-Burkhard): *Gesunder Garten durch Mischkultur*. Oekom Verlag 2019
- 6 Videos with Dr. Christine Jones on Youtube, such as <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V4uVKIGBk2s> .
A wealth of insights into plant-soil dynamics, debunking some existing beliefs on how this Earth functions.

Attitude analysis & (eight)finity lessons on learning to grow food

IRYNA
KAZAKOVA

PROBLEM / OBJECTIVE

Fears and prejudices are the reasons that prevent people from starting new activities, such as growing their own food.

Attitude analysis allows you to identify positive or negative statements that contribute to or hinder learning, and growing food directly. History therapy aims to debunk the myths about growing food, soften or even get rid of prejudices about this process, and allows you to draw conclusions and learn an infinite number of lessons from each life story.

ANALYSIS / KEY CONCEPTS

Information about growing food comes to us from childhood and is replenished throughout life. Some people have this kind of information from practical experience, others from family stories, or books and videos. Some impressions are passed down through the generations, they are related to the difficult experience of our relatives, and form our basic attitude to this process. In adulthood, attitudes towards agricultural activities are influenced by our lifestyle, status, eating, and consumer habits.

A survey of PDC students revealed three basic reactions to the question of what does it mean to grow food for you? The first reaction was 'It's cool, but not for me because...'. The second was 'It's cool for me because...'. And the third was: 'It's not cool at all because...'. The last reaction is very important. It is caused by the most common attitudes which are "agricultural activity is an ungrateful thing", "you will not make a fortune by growing food", "if you return to growing food, it means that you have not

survived in the city." Those people who were confident in their food-growing life choices answered that growing food is good, that "you enjoy the results", "it's great to know that you're eating healthy produce." Those who have doubts about agriculture in their lives had the following fears: "growing food is difficult", "growing food is not for everyone", "growing food is only possible in the village", "it is impossible to leave the household" and a lot of others.

In my opinion, to achieve qualitative changes in society, to encourage people to grow food is possible when people do not have prejudices that directly affect their sense of security, and therefore working with fears and prejudices is very important.

SOLUTIONS / ACTIONS

It is possible and necessary to work with attitudes. You can work on your attitudes individually, with a buddy, or in a group.

Working with attitudes at the beginning of the PDC can be very effective, as it allows not only to identify your most common statements and prejudices but also to make a list of positive attitudes collected with the help of the whole group.

There are many ways to change attitudes. Two of them seem to us to be very effective and convenient for both individual and group work.

→ *Find a person whose opinion you can take for granted*

It could be a favorite permaculture teacher, or an old friend, or a blogger you follow, someone you trust. In conversations with this person, their podcasts, posts, you can hear or read some-

thing that can change your attitude. For example, if I doubt whether to prune trees or not, and my favorite permaculture teacher will say 'no', then I'll think about whether I'm doing it right. It may take me a while to trust their opinion implicitly (a month, a year or two), but if I find confirmation of their thesis, I will most likely stop cutting trees. Similarly, with a person who is afraid to start growing greens on the windowsill, but their favorite singer, or TV presenter, will show how they grow rocket or basil, you will most likely want to repeat their experience. In addition, you may be impressed by an article you read in a magazine about someone who is very similar to you, with a similar story, but who has already done what you only consider. It can also be a trigger.

→ *Assume the possibility*

Assume the possibility that you may be wrong, that the way you think may not work for everyone. Build the phrase on the principle: **"I have the impression that... and I like the idea that...."** For example, "I have the impression that growing food is not for everyone, but I like the idea that it might be, because my university friend not only started growing her own food, but also earns money from it." Or "I always thought it was impossible to stay well-groomed while working in the garden, but I visited a farm whose founder had such stylish but comfortable clothes and such an incredible hairstyle that now I think it is possible."

Both of these methods can have great results, although both may take time.

The attitudes change due to other experiences, our own or other people's. Therefore, it is very important to gather a va-

riety of experiences of people in your country, in a variety of circumstances, people of different ages, occupations, etc. The more you can spread such stories, the more people will be able to recognize themselves in them, see the answers and help themselves and others in learning to grow food.

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Work on yourself:

- Found out your attitudes.
If you are in doubt about whether you want to grow food or not, if there is something that keeps you from moving on, **ask yourself** what exactly keeps me in place? What did my parents and grandparents tell me? What did I hear from my friends, acquaintances? What are my relatives saying now?
- **Write down** all the statements that you can remember from the past. **Make a list.** You can rank these statements in order of importance to you.
- **Paraphrase** your statement to a milder version: "I have the impression that... and I like the idea that..."
- **Find confirmation** of this new idea.
- If there is no confirmation that your statement is false, **give yourself time**, check this statement for viability.
- Read, listen, talk to others to find new evidence for a new statement, or ways to soften the first one, or ways to coexist with a negative statement.

Group work:

- Form groups of 5–6 people. Take a piece of paper and divide it into three columns.
- Ask about each person's attitudes.
- In the first column, write down your statements in order: those

that received the most votes – first, those that have the least – last.

- Opposite each of these negative statements, in the second column write down one positive attitude. Ask each group member to find a positive statement or example from life that proves it.
- Make another circle and in the third column and write down the ways to alleviate this problem or solve the problem.
- Present the results to the whole group.
- Leave the paper on an open space so other participants could write down their statements, positive statements, and ways to mitigate the problem.

FURTHER INFORMATION / LINKS

Find an inspiring story:

- 1 The story of a city girl who did not know how the carrots grow, but who is now the head of a permaculture organization
- 2 The story of a girl who presents seeds so that everyone can create their own paradise on earth
- 3 The story of a businesswoman who could combine work and growing food
- 4 The story of the people who turned a landfill into a flowering garden and now teach children there
- 5 The story of a man who defended his land and then began to take care of it

- 6 The story of a teacher who taught permaculture in the class all her life, and now does it knee-deep in water
- 7 The story of a man who is trying to grow a garden from the ashes of the soul

Participatory learning needs active participants

**WERONIKA
KORALEWSKA**

PROBLEM / OBJECTIVE

Theoretically, permaculture teaching can include all the pillars of non-formal and participatory learning. However, the learners who are used to the formal top-down educational environments, sometimes find it difficult to understand what NFE really means in terms of the degree of engagement and responsibility for their own learning process. Our role as organizers and educators is to counteract this problem even before the learning process starts.

ANALYSIS / KEY CONCEPTS

The Council of Europe (Council of Europe Symposium on Non-Formal Education: Report, 2001) defines essential features of non-formal learning by highlighting its main features such as, for example:

- “balanced co-existence and interaction between cognitive, affective and practical dimensions of learning” – which means the focus of learning on the three dimensions of a competence
- knowledge, attitudes, skills,
- “linking individual and social learning, partnership-oriented solidary and symmetrical teaching/learning relations”,
- “participatory and learner-centred”,
- “holistic and process-oriented”,
- “close to real-life concerns, experimental and oriented to learning by doing, using intercultural exchanges and encounters as learning devices”,
- “voluntary and (ideally) open-access”.

As for the participatory learning, Rosemary Morrow (Morrow, 2015, p. 164) defines it as the type of learning which “helps foster personal, educational, and professional growth organizations; moves from closed, top-down models, to more open, conversant, divergent, social ones; develops learning environments that benefit from decentralized organization; organizes for learner-driven inquiry; and leverages new media and social technologies for group forming”.

Analysing the assumptions behind the non-formal education framework and especially participatory learning, most of the literature has the tendency to highlight the role of the educators in providing the specific tools and methodology of learning. I, however, would like to focus on the overlooked problem, which is how we talk about the learning process before the actual workshop or training actually happens.

When looking at all the features listed above, as well as understanding the topic from practicing it, one must start to think what “profile” of a learner does this system implies. That is to say, **participatory learning cannot successfully happen without engaged participants who understand that the responsibility for their learning process is not solely in the hands of one teacher/educator, but it mostly rests in their own hands.**

No matter if we are organizing a training for a group of adults, or for youth/children, unfortunately, statistically speaking, both of these groups do a large extent have already learnt being passive and being used to the top-down methods (from schools). Informing the potential participants at the stage of the announcement of the workshop/event about what are the implications of the NFE environment is crucial. The participatory

and NFE framework is a more egalitarian, less strict, more interesting and most of the times more successful way of learning, however, the prerequisite is that the learner understands that the degree of “freedom” in NFE assumes a big degree of maturity and the profile of learner who actually wants to share, wants to be involved, wants to be both a learner and a teacher.

While organizing different paid or unpaid permaculture workshops, many of the offers follow the commercial style of advertising. Phrases such as “thanks to this course, you will learn...” or “in three days you will know how to design a garden...” have become quite common. However, if we want to rely solely on non-formal and participatory learning, it is problematic to make such promises. I strongly believe that while preparing the participants of our activities, **we need to prepare them for the non-formal participatory learning setting**, in order to avoid misunderstandings and in order to provide a proper learning environment which requires engagement. In my presentation, I will use examples from my experience as a NFE trainer, case studies that demonstrate what can go wrong and what can become successful, depending on the degree of maturity and preparation of learners.

SOLUTIONS / ACTIONS

There is a strong case for believing that while preparing the participants of our activities, we need to prepare them for the non-formal participatory learning setting, in order to avoid misunderstandings, and to provide a proper learning environment.

- The teachers/educators need to understand fully what are the implications of the NFE approach, and what they mean in prac-

tice both for the teachers and for the learners.

- Both the teachers and the learners need to understand that symmetrical teaching/learning relations are a departure from the traditional one expert vs. students model.

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Adjust the methodology to your target group. Knowing both approaches in depth (participatory and non-participatory), you will know when to use which method,
- While announcing/advertising your workshop, pay attention to the words and phrases you use,
- Provide a preparatory phase, if possible, use Participatory Curriculum Development,
- Get to know what are your groups' previous experiences with participatory learning environments and explain it to those
- who have never participated in an event following this kind of teaching paradigm,
- Try to develop the curriculum together with the participants – use the preparation phase as much as you can.

FURTHER INFORMATION / LINKS

- 1 Colley, H., Hodkinson, P., & Malcolm, J. (2002). *Non-formal learning: mapping the conceptual terrain. A consultation report*. University of Leeds. Lifelong Learning Institute. Retrieved from http://www.infed.org/archives/e-texts/colley_informal_learning.htm
- 2 *Compendium of Non-Formal Education*. (2012). Retrived from <https://rm.coe.int/2012-compendium-non-formal-education/168077c10b>

- 3 https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-2694/GP_Tools-For-Learning-in-non-formal-educ_GB_130912_HD.pdf
- 4 Council of Europe. (2001). *Symposium on non-formal education, Strasbourg (EYC)*, 13-15 October 2000. Report. Council of Europe.
- 5 Morrow, R. (2015). *Permaculture Teaching Matters*. Mountains Wildfire Press. Retrived from www.bluemountainpermacultureinstitute.com.au/new-book/

Old wisdom for modern, hungry cities – how to activate seniors through urban gardening

KLAUDIA
KRYŃSKA

PROBLEM / OBJECTIVE

As the World Urbanization Prospects report showed, in 2007, for the first time in history, it was reported that more people live in cities than in the countryside. Currently, it is 54% of the world's population, and forecasts estimate that by 2050 it will be as much as 66%, i.e. nearly 6.5 billion people.

Moreover, according to World Population Prospects 2019, by 2050, 1 in 6 people in the world will be over the age of 65, up from 1 in 11 in 2019. Population ageing is a global phenomenon: virtually every country in the world is experiencing growth in the size and proportion of older persons in their population. Women currently outlive men by 4.8 years, but this global gender gap is expected to narrow over the next three decades.

The growing population of seniors is also influenced by the change of the life model, the rise of living alone. The share of adults who live alone nearly doubled over the last 50 years. Single-person households have become increasingly common in many countries across the world, from Angola to Japan.

Social connections – including contact with friends and family – are important for our health and emotional well-being. Hence, as single-person households become more common, there will be new challenges to connect and provide support to those living alone.

ANALYSIS / KEY CONCEPTS

One of its principles is to **integrate rather than segregate**. After all, seniors do not have to be a separate group. They can

work together successfully, teaching passing their knowledge to younger generations. Allotment gardens popular in Poland in the times of the People's Republic of Poland were for them a place for gardening experiments in which they practiced natural cultivation of vegetables and fruit trees. In contemporary urban gardens, they can therefore become experts on these matters, gain authority, and thus find their place in a diverse age group faster.

What we must remember when preparing the space itself, is planning infrastructure that is easily accessible to seniors. Here, raised permaculture beds or cultivation in tall bags will be useful. Tables for preparing seedlings or growing herbs, as well as benches and sheltered resting areas are also helpful.

Permaculture, however, can teach us not only to care for people, but also to reach them easier with our actions. We can look at the garden community and its surroundings as **permaculture zones**. Then it will be easier for us to work within them. The model that we can use when planning the work schedule and the calendar of events may be "Circles of Engagement".

The author of the model is Mike Pulford, but the concept was taken from Pastor Rick Warren's book *The Purpose Driven Church*, on the operation of mega-churches. According to this model, we can distinguish six levels of involvement of members of the organization:

Core members – the backbone, leaders, founders, core of the community, they have the greatest knowledge of the organization and the greatest sense of agency.

Involved – they can talk about the organization, they know it, they constitute 10% of the community.

Ordinary members – often the largest group in a given organization, they can constitute up to 80% of the structure, weekend gardeners, sometimes come to open events.

Supporters – satellites of a given organization, they "like" us on Facebook, but they have never visited us.

Passers-by, random people – those who pass us by and sometimes glance at our work "from behind the fence".

Potentially interested – in the case of business, these are potential customers we have not yet reached with the offer, in the case of the garden – lovers of nature, gardening and botany.

SOLUTIONS / ACTIONS

- Preparation of garden infrastructure that will take into account the needs of seniors
- Strengthening bonds by doing things together: cooking, baking bread, preparing meals from garden crops
- Inviting seniors as local guides: planning walks along the trail of wild edible plants, showing around the garden and presenting its history
- Including seniors in the community by treating them as teachers: organizing workshops on pruning fruit trees, taking care of plants using old, traditional methods

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

→ <https://e.org.pl/pomysly-do-zrobienia/>

FURTHER INFORMATION / LINKS

- 1 <http://senioralna.um.warszawa.pl/camnowolipie>
- 2 <https://e.org.pl/projekty/>
- 3 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271821459_The_Benefits_of_Gardening_for_Older_Adults_A_Systematic_Review_of_the_Literature

Developing urban permaculture landscape

MACIEJ
ŁEPKOWSKI

PROBLEM / OBJECTIVE

How to support an education network towards urban ruralization.

ANALYSIS / KEY CONCEPTS

There are about 20 community gardens in Warsaw. Their number is constantly changing – some initiatives fail, others emerge. But every year there are new ones. Bujna Warszawa is a programme that supports them in various ways. We try to look at individual gardens as places of education, where residents have the opportunity to learn about pro-environmental gardening, inspired by the premises and solutions of permaculture. From this perspective, individual gardens form an educational network which, due to its dispersed and diverse nature, covers a fairly large group of recipients. On the one hand, our support is dedicated to individual gardens, and on the other hand, it serves the city-wide education process. Bujna Warszawa provides gardens with materials and knowledge (in the form of workshops, articles, consultations, films, etc.), the nature of which is rooted in the practice of permaculture with great sensitivity to what is wild in the garden and the city. In this way, Bujna Warszawa "smuggles" the way of spatial management and a certain vision of the city. It tries to strengthen the local impact of gardens and create the context for their operation, having in mind the utopia of urban ruralism – a long process changing the way people live in cities and influencing what is outside the city.

SOLUTIONS / ACTIONS

There are several permanent elements which are the easiest way to share these ideas with both residents and officials. One of them is soil. Research shows that in urban gardening, particular attention should be paid to the cleanliness of the soil, which in many places is heavily polluted (including heavy metals). You can buy gardening soil and transport it, but it's best and cheapest to make it yourself. This is where permaculture is at its best. This argument opens up a whole range of educational opportunities regarding the local processing of organic matter and biodiversity. The security and economic arguments open the door. The second way is to design the space, i.e. to present it in a nice, informative drawing. A concrete example is the case of transforming a fragment of the area adjacent to the Motyka i Słońce community garden. The place was a trampled dirt floor with scarcely a single blade of grass growing out of it. Our initial intention was to stop raking the leaves and leave them for the soil recovery. The residents did not want to agree to it. In their opinion, unchecked leaves are tantamount to mess. So we created a design – an aesthetically pleasing and attractive in form informative drawing presenting the main goal of not raking leaves. This time it was positively received and we got support from the locals. In the end, we managed to achieve what we intended from the beginning, and the key to this turned out to be the design, which was used primarily as a communication tool.

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Community gardens form an educational network
- Spatial designs help to communicate and come to an agreement
- Soil in the city is the key to infecting people with permaculture

- Looking for inspiration and context in a broad plan and vision of the future

FURTHER INFORMATION / LINKS

www.bujnawarszawa.pl

PERMACULTURE IMMERSION. Observation without imposing

ŁUKASZ
NOWACKI

PROBLEM / OBJECTIVE

It is not uncommon to see that people dealing with permaculture design forget about the most important skill – observation! They jump right into detailed design, making herb spirals, raised beds and mulching everything with straw, without even trying to make a connection to the real world around them. This exercise will help people to understand the importance of observation without imposing our ideas on Nature.

ANALYSIS / KEY CONCEPTS

The key concept of this exercise is to immerse yourself in a real world situation without the usual things that support our daily life. Go beyond, let go of everything you can... just observe.

SOLUTIONS / ACTIONS

Near the place where you live, find a peaceful sanctuary. If not right this moment, then somewhere during your day, and if not quite near you, then at least within your daily travels. This need not be a place far away from the sights and sounds of the modern world, somewhere in a deep forest – just a place where you can feel comfortable and relaxed. A place where pausing for a moment and enjoying the relative peace and quiet is possible. Wherever you have selected, take a seat if you can. Close your eyes for a moment. Take a deep breath, and then open your eyes and focus on what you can see, hear or smell around you.

What drew you to this place? What about it creates that peacefulness for you?

Make some notes on your thoughts in a notebook.

What do you notice right away? What about this place stands out or draws your attention?

Make some notes on your thoughts in a notebook.

Are there any plants, animals or fungi in this place that you recognize?

Make some notes on your thoughts in a notebook.

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Try to describe this place, during your visit, on the same day but do not focus on what you want this place to be in the future, just focus on what it is today.

Make some notes on your thoughts in a notebook.

- Now try to imagine that you have very little money and no credit card, no place to live, no job, no car etc. You have only a couple of necessary hand tools, an old tent, a backpack, one book (imagine which one you take with you on this adventure) your notebook and a pencil. Try to visit the same place and stay there for 3 days (Friday, Saturday, Sunday).

Make some notes on your thoughts in a notebook. What do you feel?

- During that time try to make a simple drawing of all the stuff that you can build / make / find at your place, that can help you or that are necessary for you to survive (for example: a camp fire, a shelter made from natural materials, wild food, a camp shower, a composting toilet etc.). Make connections between the things that support each other's function. During this exercise remember the THREE PERMACULTURE ETHICS

PRINCIPLES: Earth Care, People Care, Redistribute surplus and „Make / Leave no waste” rule.

Make some notes on your thoughts and drawings in your notebook.

- Later, when you come back to your home, reread what you wrote and make notes about your visit. Can you recapture the feelings of that place, what was on your mind? Were you afraid or did you feel strong and confident? Record your thoughts.

FURTHER INFORMATION / LINKS

- 1 <http://senioralna.um.warszawa.pl/camnowolipie>
- 2 <https://e.org.pl/projekty/>
- 3 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271821459_The_Benefits_of_Gardening_for_Older_Adults_A_Systematic_Review_of_the_Literature

Finding best practices of hands-on garden education while achieving all practical woodchips organic food growing goals

**WOJCIECH
NOWAK**

PROBLEM / OBJECTIVE

Traditional bare-ground gardening is a very time and effort consuming process, especially when it comes to weeding. That aspect makes it very unappealing to many people who would be interested in learning how to grow their own food.

ANALYSIS / KEY CONCEPTS

- A The traditional way of starting greens from the seeds in the spring requires a lot of time for the plants to grow big enough to become a significant source of spring greens, which puts a gardener in a position where they have to buy spring greens commercially to satisfy their needs.
- B A longer, extended periods of work in the garden might become monotonous. Done only by gardeners with a simple prospect of having all the yield for themselves.
- C Guests and helpers visiting the garden often miss the garden and connection with nature and plants when being back home.
- D Today's society disconnection from nature keeps people in a stressed, anxious state of mind and emotions which is unhealthy and uncomfortable.

SOLUTIONS / ACTIONS

- A All garden visitors admire a lazy, successful gardener with a garden full of food. This impression brings a lot of motivation and fascination with woodchips permaculture gardening.

- B Year-round mulch cover enabled greens like nettle, arugula and lamb's lettuce to survive winter underground and start growing green parts in a very early spring, without any effort from the gardener. It's an automatic abundance of permaculture. High-quality green abundance as opposed to commercial greens sources leave all garden guests in awe. Zero-effort spring greens are everyone's desired treats.
- C Sharing crops in exchange for help in the garden. Hands-on education gives garden guests practical skills and confidence. They can successfully contribute to the garden's well being. They come back home richer in experience and some food freshly picked from the garden to share further.
- D Woodchips gardening in a pot – sharing living plants. For those who don't have space to start a permaculture garden and still want to have a piece of it at home: a potted, personally replanted, edible plant is the best fun you can make of woodchips gardening at home.
- E Relaxing in the garden for mother nature's purifying vibration experience. The best way to calm down your stressed mind and emotions is to experience the cleansing and calming power of mother nature's vibrations. In practice, it means grounding yourself by, for example, laying or sitting on the ground in the garden, with blooming flowers and singing birds around you.

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Any permaculture gardener should involve helpers and volunteers in their garden experience for a more enjoyable and connected garden life.

FURTHER INFORMATION / LINKS

Facebook: [@permakulturalodz](#)

Gamification in permaculture youth education

**DANIEL
PACEK**

PROBLEM / OBJECTIVE

Today, an increasing number of adolescents show signs of a stronger or weaker addiction to computer gaming. They may feel discomfort when taken away from the safe virtual world and thrown into the reality of a permaculture farm or garden, which they do not necessarily see as friendly or inviting.

ANALYSIS / KEY CONCEPTS

Permaculture farm or garden undoubtedly constitutes a therapeutic environment supported by the practices of horticulture and zootherapy. This environment may not seem friendly and relaxing at first, especially for young people who have not had experience with the garden, or who are simply not in the habit of spending too much time outdoors.

Thanks to the implementation of the self-determination theory – used in computer games to make them more addictive – to the gamification of farm life, we can influence the internal motivation to engage the learning process by referring to three motivating factors: autonomy, competence, relatedness.

SOLUTIONS / ACTIONS

In order to help modern youth become involved in activities on a permaculture farm, we should present this reality to them in a way that is familiar to them. For this purpose, various levels of reality gamification can be used to support the educational process.

The first element worth considering when creating an educational game is the narrative. It should be suited to the age group, so that it is neither too infantile nor too complex. It may refer to a fantastic / fairy-tale reality or a real-life situation. One of the more curiosity-sustaining elements is adding mystery to our game. This may be a reveal at the end, or parts of the mystery could be unveiled as they explore subsequent stages of the game. Depending on the narrative, players can also play different characters with different statistics / skills developed or obtained during the game.

It is also important to have a transparent system of progress in the game, so that all participants are aware of what they have already achieved and what still remains to be discovered.

Another important element is the clear structure of the game. It consists of: winning conditions, goal, actions, obstacles and rules. At the beginning, it is a good idea to create simple games or even short mini-games to build a more extensive gameplay over time.

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Burying a treasure or treasures that young people can find during the game. To get their location they would need to solve some riddles which will require the knowledge gained during the classes.
- At the beginning of the meeting, you can distribute cards to the participants with the progress of their character development. As they gain new skills, they can mark their progress in the game on them.
- The educational process can be divided into individual ele-

ments – quests from which young people can choose the adventure they prefer to go on first.

FURTHER INFORMATION / LINKS

- 1 http://selfdeterminationtheory.org/SDT/documents/2010_PrzybylskiRigbyRyan_ROGP.pdf
- 2 <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0747563219304297>
- 3 <https://www.oriigamification.com/blog/gamification-principles>
- 4 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O_DvbOtxBTQ&t
- 5 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mOssYTimQwM&t>

Community Gardens – Community Building in pandemic times

KAROLINA
PAJAŁ

PROBLEM / OBJECTIVE

A community garden is a single piece of land gardenized collectively by a group of people. Community gardens utilize either individual or shared plots on private or public land while producing fruit, vegetables, and/or plants grown for their attractive appearance. Around the world, community gardens can fulfill a variety of purposes: aesthetic and community improvement, physical and mental well-being, land conservation. In the past year (since the beginning of 2020) many of community garden projects have either collapsed, or faced paralysis due to the social distancing caused by the pandemic situations.

ANALYSIS / KEY CONCEPTS

Many local activists who try to run projects like public, social, community gardens, especially in small towns where it is still very new and rare, face a big challenge during the pandemic. Community building is all about gathering, acting together in physical dynamics and growing real, deep connections between neighbours, friends and families. As community gardens are usually connected to Local Authorities or NGOs, that are still obligated to follow the law, and as it turns out, this makes running projects collectively, passionately and actively problematic. In this pandemic, we are most at risk of burnout and losing enthusiasm and community, which are basically at the core of any undertaking of this kind.

SOLUTIONS / ACTIONS

The solutions during the lockdown are to follow the restrictions of the changing Corona-regulations and organise as much on-

line activities as we can, so that the projects are still visible and we keep running them actively.

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Available opportunities:

- 1 Have a website or a fan page and publish posts about biodynamics and permaculture gardening in cities and in private gardens. Use the lockdown for reading education!
- 2 Record videos with workshops that people can attend online and practice in their own houses (balcony gardening, yoga, DIY, etc.) This can also get them back into the enthusiasm of creating the online community and then share the results with each other.
- 3 Organise webinars with experts in their field.
The good part about the pandemic is that we can invite anyone (no matter if it is a neighbour or a person living on the other side of the world).
- 4 Motivate people to go to the community garden for a walk (if the area is open) and leave something there, bring some life there, and see how nature changes.
- 5 Have small meetings in the garden, where you can organise workshops or classes for children.
- 6 Finally – hope for the change to come soon and start welcoming people in the garden.

FURTHER INFORMATION / LINKS

To create a garden, we want to invite specialists on a given topic – elements of a natural playground, willow architecture, a dome, a table and boxes for cultivation, wooden furniture, a

clay stove. Some of the elements (e.g. vegetable crates, stove, living willow architecture, some plantings, mud kitchen, sensory path, work table and sitting boxes, etc.) of the garden equipment will be made via workshops with local residents, so that they would be involved in creating a garden from the very beginning. This way, they will create a bond with the garden and a sense of shared responsibility.

We also want to weave educational elements into the actions taken – to build ecological and natural awareness in children and adults. And to establish the rules, e.g.: no smoking, drinking alcohol, matters of presence and participation in the garden (apiary, flower beds, tools, etc.), responsibilities of the organisers and visitors, etc.

The content includes links to other places of this type, photos and maps.

As part of the preparation of this project, it is important to contact various potential subcontractors with relevant experience and conduct workshops involving residents in the implementation. Many of the planned elements are not solutions that are very common on the market. Staying open to close cooperation with local government in the search for and selection of appropriate subcontractors is sometimes the key.

Community gardening is what we make of it and the creative mind is the only limit. As long as we are still able to come up with ideas, we can keep the projects running.

Pattern recognition as a universal teaching tool

**KRYSTIAN
STEMPEK**
Permakultura Chocianów

PROBLEM / OBJECTIVE

People often copy particular solutions / methods of permaculture without understanding the problem behind that method.

Objective of the pattern recognition is to observe and understand events / structures occurring in space and time, and then to apply that pattern, manifested in different means, to solve the problem.

ANALYSIS / KEY CONCEPTS

It is not uncommon to hear questions like “What layers should I create in my raised bed” or “What to do to handle the great population of snails”, which are often followed by a dozen answers, usually varying, yet accurate. It often results in more questions, more problems and even fewer answers.

The example of the “layers in the raised bed” questions may result in thoughtless mimicking of a particular solution, often going more out of the way than necessary – people get fixated on acquiring manure or other materials, forgetting about the ethics and guidelines of permaculture such as Earth care or working with locally available materials.

Similar problems may occur in many forms during a personal permaculture practice and development. If not addressed properly, it can even result in a relatively negative pattern itself – focusing on solutions, presented by the other people, to a problem which may be caused by completely different things.

On a broader scale it can erode the ethical principles of the permaculture from one's practice, resulting in permaculture being identified as "another approach to eco gardening".

SOLUTIONS / ACTIONS

A solution can be the strategy of "giving man a fishing rod rather than a fish", achieved by addressing the roots of the problem that is being solved.

For example, if one wants to fill their raised beds – educate them about the process of composting. It will result in a better understanding of soil health or the creation process, which will allow that person to successfully fill the beds with materials available to them at a given moment.

The understanding of patterns and their practical application can be presented basically in every aspect of permaculture practice. We share the evolutionary path with the ecosystems of the Earth, and in the end, Nature is run by the same rules, in every climate, in all conditions. The ability to notice these patterns, of various shapes and forms, is deeply ingrained inside us. We are able to reactivate that way of seeing the world which became limited due to the rapid change of the environment we are nested in. The play is basically the same, only the actors change.

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Practical recommendations may be a set of basic ecological concepts properly explained, backed up by an example driven from wild nature, and then forged into a more practical appli-

cation. Concepts like:

- niche in space and time,
- ecological succession – stability and disturbance of ecosystem,
- stacking of functions in space and time,
- energy flow through the ecosystems,
- chemical cycles of nature such as water, carbon or nitrogen cycle,
- food web as the omnipresent interconnection of food chains,

should be translated into practical examples and way of thinking about the ecosystem (of the garden, farm, local community etc). If we achieve that as a tutors, then people will fully understand the famous quote by Bill Mollison: "You do not have the snail problem, you have the duck deficiency", and will not buy ducks to address snails, but will actually see the fact that some niches in their ecosystem are not filled.

FURTHER INFORMATION / LINKS

- 1 Geoff Lawton talks about patterns during PDC:
https://youtu.be/RIaxl_-OIOA
- 2 Energy flow through nature, presented by Alan Savory Institute
<https://youtu.be/SVs7brlVOzU>
- 3 18 day compost, Berkeley method, to understand the processes of soil creation
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ITk_melmv14
- 4 Geoff Lawton on the niche identification:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8KWpz5H-V6>

Museum of Neighbourhood as a tool of permaculture education. Short introduction

**EWA
TATAR**
(Neighbours)

PROBLEM / OBJECTIVE

Permaculture is not only a trend, it is not only about design, it is not only about more sustainable forms of production and distribution, but crucially, it is about creating the community around the change, and creating culture as long as art practices can deliver the tools to dig and recreate what is desired. The aim of the method presented is not to alienate the practice from what is found, not to oppose the new to local practices and traditions, but to embed the methodologies of permaculture practice and the action itself in the grassroots context, different in every place.

ANALYSIS / KEY CONCEPTS

One of the biggest shifts in the visual art strategies and the politics of art institutions, forced or intensified in the time of the pandemic, is to observe the closest surroundings, to catch the local directions or interests, including vernaculars and affects, and to support them. One of the most vibrant example of those will be BAK in Utrecht with its programmes, for example *Trainings for the Not-Yet or To Live as Equals* coming together as a bigger one entitled *Propositions for Non-Fascist Living*, where fascism is understood also as *love of power or desire that very thing that dominates or exploits us*. As artists living on the outskirts, appreciating the geopolitical consequences of peripheries, we research and test art practices and methods which help local community to write its own history and to question its traditions according challenges of the contemporary world. One of the crucial issues is how to manifest the ethics of the inclusive and the sustainable in the forms of everyday practices and aesthetics.

SOLUTIONS / ACTIONS

The good starting point before acting and entering the community with the ideas of change is the research on what is common, and what is unique. To develop it, we can use the popular among kids form of pêle-mêle (questionnaire). It can be shared during the workshops proposed to the specific audience, or just an intergenerational group. In our opinion it is good that the formula of the workshop is the simplest possible, in which everybody does the same, at the same time and space, supporting each other, learning new things but also digging in the individual and collective memory. The topic chosen can be anything which is around. We chose bread in its traditional form, kneaded by hand, as only one of us (Łukasz Radziszewski) has been developing its production for a while. We chose bread because in our environment (the village) it is easy to come back (only 3 generations) to the tradition of making one's own bread at home. We choose the most common theme, something which – not only as a discourse – we had incarnated, but what offers the grounds to ask the very permaculture questions about the food chain: the origin of the seeds we make the flour from; cultivation, transportation, etc. We can pose some more metaphorical questions, in this case about fermentation, etc. Our workshop can be accompanied by a walk in the neighbourhood in a search of plant varieties for farming and wild plants we can make bread from. We can share other traditions of making bread from all around, etc.

This collective act of work and the testimonies (oral, written, visual, material or other) as the remnants of the process of sharing, collected together illustrate the variety of the positions we can take as the consumers/eaters as well as the wizards

of the bare life. What helps at this stage of the process of re-imagining the community, is the practice called folk or social museum (that can be developed with local institutions as well as through the Internet), which is the collection of vernacular outlooks and stories. This form rests on what is common and local, and involves people in creating the space of the common gathering and critical thinking equally, as well as further (direct) actions. One of the most interesting presentations offered by the folk museum was one dedicated to the Basque Country, developed by the artist Jeremy Deller.

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Do your research: explore the environment
- Reimagine what is hiding and its potential
- Find them, bridge them
- Smile
- We need more poetry

FURTHER INFORMATION / LINKS

- 1 Massimiliano Gioni, *Jeremy Deller. Working Class Hero*, <https://curamagazine.com/digital/jeremy-deller/>
- 2 Maria Hlavajova: https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=218312539745041&ref=watch_permalink
- 3 <https://culture.pl/pl/artykul/11-najwazniejszych-prac-pawla-althamera>

- 4 Bródno Sculpture Park,
<https://artmuseum.pl/pl/wystawy/park-rzezby-na-brodnie>
- 5 Social Museum,
<https://makinguse.artmuseum.pl/en/krzysztof-zwirblis/>
- 6 Jeremy Deller, *Speak to the Earth and It Will Tell You*,
<https://www.skulptur-projekte-archiv.de/en-us/2017/projects/180/>
- 7 Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells; Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, Verso 2012.
- 8 <http://www.flatbreadsociety.net/>

Permaculture for beginners

MAŁGORZATA
WITCZAK

PROBLEM / OBJECTIVE

How to introduce permaculture and its relevance to a 'total-beginners / resistant' group, and what permaculture myths to address?

ANALYSIS / KEY CONCEPTS

I live permanently in a small homestead in Central Poland, after spending most of my life working in the corporate world (banking/IT). I work with the soil creating a food forest, I conduct a permaculture teaching practice (mainly online through social media), I am in the process of learning (PDC with Permaculture Women's Guild). I concentrate on teaching and inspiring women like me, who are in the process of building their own independent lives or businesses. I show them how working with nature can make this life-changing process more beautiful, creative, influential.

Myths, convictions and beliefs I work with and work around:

- permaculture is not for city people
- life in the countryside is hard by nature
- agriculture is the drudgery of our ancestors, not for us
- our ancestors wouldn't want us to go back to their hard labour, they fought for us to live in better conditions
- permaculture requires living in difficult conditions, often in a group or ecovillage, where you can lose your individuality
- you can save the world only through monoculture food production
- you can do nothing to change the world, climate will collapse, politics will not change, etc.

Myths, convictions and beliefs typical for my community (a FB Group: **Lazy Gardening Girls Change the World**):

- gardening is hard work requiring heavy tools completely unsuited for women
- gardening is a strange pastime for pensioners
- I have to work in the garden the way everybody else does, which is boring and involves a lot of repetitive, useless work (pruning, weeding, watering)
- **there is no way I can make independent, ecological decisions in the garden even if it is my property** (what would other people say)
- soil is dirty, full of unpleasant creatures
- there are dangers associated with the garden (allergies, accidents)
- having vegetables in my flower garden is **shameful** (a surprisingly strong, blocking conviction), vegetables cannot look good, they are not suited to a dreamlike quality of the garden
- working in the garden does not agree with romantic countryside women's clothing style

SOLUTIONS / ACTIONS

The times of the pandemic evidently weakened the most obvious convictions such as 'the world cannot change, you have to do things like others do'. People opened their eyes to the contact with nature. However, there is still a lot to do about raising awareness and making people feel more confident that they are on the right track when they enter the permaculture world.

Creating a safe community, making people feel better in a fast-changing world is for me a very important aspect of

teaching permaculture these days. I concentrate on changing mindsets, always with practical gardening work in the background.

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Useful techniques and arguments in teaching permaculture:

- Serve as an example, work and live according to permaculture principles, but do it in 'your size'. E.g. do not turn over huge compost piles if you do not feel physically fit (or interested in the idea).
- Do not enter into the energy of conflict, online hate debates, convincing people who resist only because they thrive in duality.
- Work with mindset first, detailed techniques later.
- Look for ways to encourage students to see the advantages of working with soil – and the advantages outside gardening (creativity, beauty, emotional growth).
- Always see that saving yourself should go before saving the world, take care that students do not drain their energy (do the lazy gardening way).
- Create community, be it real or online group.
- Remember about weather safety and work safety (teach to use tools appropriately), do not encourage working with bare hands or feet at first.
- Teach a positive side of individualism – you can create and work in your garden your way, you can make independent decisions, you can succeed even if others want to prove you wrong.
- Teach starting small, choose realistic tasks, delegate, work with local community.
- Make use of patterns important for your target group (e.g. for

us women gardeners, the cyclical aspect of nature is very important).

- Try to connect as often as possible the aspects that were separated in gardening so far: beauty and yield, lazy work and earning fair share, being happy with the surplus.

FURTHER INFORMATION / LINKS

- 1 <https://www.facebook.com/ekoKompostella>
- 2 <https://www.kompostella.pl/>
- 3 email: malgorzata@kompostella.pl

Food growing and migration

H. YOUSSEF
LA BOLINA

PROBLEM / OBJECTIVE

Food growing using agroecology, permaculture or regenerative agriculture techniques (to name a few), is faced with many challenges to position itself as a real alternative to the Supermarket Culture that currently dominates many parts of the world. As food growing educators, we are a vector for a variety of knowledge. Apart from teaching how to grow food, we can also share valuable knowledge about food sovereignty, commercialization, conventional food growing, working conditions of producers/migrants, migration as a consequence of food production (for animals or for humans), developing principles of life/integration through nature observation. Migrants are a major feature in the food growing system. In many parts of the world, they are the main workforce behind it. One of the ways to improve the food system is to give the attention needed to this issue.

ANALYSIS / KEY CONCEPTS

The cheap labor that migrants represent is one of the most important conditions for producing cheap food under the Supermarket Culture. The access to cheap food is so internalized in people's minds, as most of them don't realize how unjust, ineffective, and unreal the food system currently is. The position of food in the expenditures of consumers is very biased: it decreased with the lower prices that don't include many externalities, like labor. Moreover, cheap food is a necessary condition for preserving this cheap labor, as they (cheap labor) are also the main consumers of the cheap food produced (see article below, English summary).

SOLUTIONS / ACTIONS

Food growing and teaching food growing would increase its ability to have an impact if it included migrants in the process; that can be done through including spaces for them in the courses, creating special courses directed to migrants together with local people, introducing the concepts of agroecology/permaculture/regenerative agriculture to migrant collectives to increase their awareness about this issue, and also have the capacity to create their own projects or choosing (when they can) to work in agroecological farms.

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Language should not be a problem, include bilingual people in the courses that can help in translations. Present agriculture as we defend it. Working in agriculture is seen as a failure for many people, including migrants. It should be presented as an important job and farmers as essential actors in society; visits to farms run by local people can create a feeling of companionship. Small machines, if used consciously and only when necessary, can serve as a good support to feel empowerment; it is a useful sacrifice (i.e. using petrol). Also, introducing appropriate technology and human powered tools to migrant collectives to show alternatives to petrol-powered machines. Include crops that are grown in migrants' places of origin.

FURTHER INFORMATION / LINKS

<https://repositorio.uam.es/handle/10486/692263>

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