

BRIDGEDALE



360

Welcome to Bridgedale360!

A fun and free online toolbox for inspiring youth towards sustainable living and active citizenship:

For those working with youth – in schools, youth groups, and local communities

www.bridgedale360.org

Bridgedale360 is the end product from the EU Erasmus+ partnership Youth-led Societal Innovation for Resilience. The partnership involved seven organisations - all working with sustainable development and youth - from Sweden, UK, Germany, Italy, Spain, Macedonia, and Slovenia. Globally over fifty people were involved in the creation either directly through partner organisations or working as volunteers. The project was started in February 2015 and will be finished in January 2017 with the goal to keep spreading the project results by January 2018 and beyond.



INSPIRING FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVING AND ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP:

FOR YOUTH WORKERS, MENTORS, EDUCATORS –
IN SCHOOLS, YOUTH GROUPS, AND COMMUNITIES

WWW.BRIDGEDALE360.ORG

 #BRIDGEDALE360

Bridgedale360 is a free online toolbox comprised of over 80 experiential activities with which youth workers can inspire youth toward sustainable living and active citizenship. The core 21 activities have been translated into 6 European languages: German, Italian, Macedonian, Slovenian, Spanish, Swedish. With the advent of the internet and the digital revolution in education, we opted for an online toolbox for the great advantage that it is freely available to anyone, all over the globe! Even if the toolbox is designed mainly for people working with youth, the toolbox content is highly relevant for anyone interested in sustainability, resilience and a holistic approach to life. Thus, in addition to group activities, you will also find many individual activities.

The design and content of Bridgedale360 were inspired by the experiences and knowledge of the global ecovillage movement, political communes, and many different activist solidarity initiatives. All those involved in creating the content drew heavily on their experiences as youth workers/leaders/trainers and as actively engaged citizens on a global level.

Among its main innovative approaches Bridgedale360 fosters **cooperation** as opposed to competition; most courses and traditional education nurture the competitive spirit and have a grading system as its cornerstone - instead we nurture cooperation and mutual aid among the students, as the quintessence of a post-growth system where people come before profits.

Bridgedale360 provides 4 modules (imagine this being a broader theme) for each dimension of sustainability, in total 16 modules. Each module gives the youth worker a short description in a storytelling way of what the theme is about and then provides a list of activities that youth workers can do with their youth group. We aimed to create activities that are engaging and experiential as well as educational. Bridgedale360's 16 modules are presented as tangible locations and concepts - enter the 'The Bank' to explore ethical financial solutions to the current financial crisis, or 'The Garden' for sustainable agriculture models. In 'The Beehive' you will find systemic approaches to current global challenges.

Offering over 80 experiential activities with which youth workers can inspire youth toward sustainable living and active citizenship, we are addressing the following topics:

The topics of the 4 dimensions are:

ECONOMY

1. Global economy
2. Local economy, economic resilience
3. Share and gift economy
4. Right livelihood

www.bridgedale360.org

ECOLOGY

1. Waste and closed cycles
2. Energy and construction
3. Food systems and soil
4. Water systems and cycles

WORLDVIEW

1. Body, mind and soul
2. Coming back to nature
3. Art, music and theater
4. Integrative systems design and collective intelligence

SOCIAL

1. Communication and conflict resolution
2. Decision making and meeting tools
3. Community building and group dynamics
4. Leadership, empowerment and education

Partner organisations in the project

Sweden - [RELEARN Suderbyn](#)

RELEARN Suderbyn is a non-profit NGO working locally and internationally with the promotion of and engagement in a more sustainable lifestyle. Our strong focuses are environmental resilience, social justice, education and international cooperation for sustainable development. Three directions of our activities are:

1. Non-formal education for youth and adults
2. Action Research and outreach
3. Cross-border cooperation: across national borders and across different sectors

Our mission is to work for a sustainable society where innovative solutions are integrated with forgotten knowledge. Through experiential methods we work with holistic learning considering the society, nature, economy, culture and individuals as integrated parts of one complex system. In order to help to bring a social change in the system we work with individuals, groups and international projects in various aspects of global, local and inner sustainability.

Spain - [Arterra Bizimodu](#)

Arterra Bizimodu is an association which aims to create a living space to experience sustainability in 4 dimensions: ecologically, economically, socially and culturally. Hence, the development and realization of training courses aimed at the dissemination of this lifestyle.

Macedonia - [Asocijacija za napredok, edukacija i lobiranje \(PEL\)](#)

PEL is a non-governmental organization which aims to improve the conditions of young people and women in all areas of social life. This is achieved by promotion of human rights and voluntarism and their values and by making these things possible to all citizens.

Italy - [Rete Italiana Villaggi ecologici \(RIVE - Italian ecovillage network\)](#)

RIVE is funded in 1996 as the umbrella organisation for ecovillages, international communities and several Italian transition projects. RIVE's members are active citizens working in the educational field, they promote seminars and practical workshops for the identification and dissemination of "best practices" of sustainability through a responsible attitude towards the territory, its resources and all its inhabitants.

Slovenia - [Preplet - drustvo za ustvarjalno skupnost](#)

Preplet is an NGO active locally in Grosuplje. The core team comprises 3 women who have been working together since 2008 with the support of about a dozen of other individuals and organisations. The main scope of the work is working with children including the ones from Roma community. The aim is to bring together ecological, social and cultural aspects to create a holistic approach regarding the expression of creativity.

Germany - [The ecovillage of Sieben Linden](#)

Sieben Linden is an intentional community of 140 residents established in Germany since 1997. Sieben Linden is a vibrant living and learning center and a tangible example of all four dimensions of sustainability (worldview, ecology, economy and social aspects). The

"Freundeskreis Ökodorf e.V.", with about 300 members, performs the task of public relations. It spreads the concepts of a sustainable and satisfying lifestyle which are developed in Sieben Linden.

United Kingdom - [GEN International \(Global Ecovillage Network\)](#)

GEN international was formally registered as Scottish Charity in 2013. Despite its young legal history, the network has been actively involved in the European Regional Network of Ecovillages since the late 90'. The Global Ecovillage Network envisions a world of empowered citizens and communities, designing and implementing their own pathways to a sustainable future, and building bridges of hope and international solidarity.

Instructions

How is the course structured?

After logging in and entering the course you have arrived on the Module selection page.

The course is structured in 16 Modules:

- 4 modules about Economy: [The Bank](#), [The Free Store and the Bike Pool](#), [The Marketplace](#), [The Workshop](#)
- 4 modules about Ecology: [The Compost Pile](#), [The River and the Sea](#), [The Garden and the Farm](#), [The House](#)
- 4 modules about Society: [The Town Hall and the Community Centre](#), [The School](#), [The Town Square](#), [The Fire Circle](#)
- 4 modules about Worldview: [The Woods](#), [The Dojo](#), [The Amphitheatre and the Studio](#), [The Beehive](#)

Each module contains:

- Module introduction text
- Learning outcomes
- Activity list - showing all activities available in this module. Check-boxes on the right show which activities have been completed.
- Activity presentations - the same activities briefly presented, where you can see if the activity is group or individual, as well as read the learning outcomes of that particular activity.

How to complete an activity?

In order to complete an activity you have to:

1. Submit your written reflection, text, summary etc. and (if requested) a picture after you have followed the steps indicated in the activity. The written submission includes a written reflection (answers to the questions in the Reflection section at the end of each activity), summary about the process you have gone through or other type of written text as requested.
2. Review at least one submission by another participant that has done the same activity and provide written feedback to them.

The activity will be marked as complete automatically as soon as you have done the steps mentioned.

You may not be able to review other people's submissions sometimes. If you are the only one that has done an activity and thus cannot provide feedback to another participant for that specific activity, simply post your submission without providing feedback and proceed with another activity.

However, if the activity has been completed by at least one other person, please provide feedback to them.

How to post a submission and/or picture?

1. Find and click the “Post a submission and/or picture” button at the end of each activity.
2. Enter the submission and picture editing form. Leave your written submission (written reflection, summary, other type of text as requested in the given activity)
3. Think of an original subject line - this is the only part initially visible to other students.
4. Check the “Notifications” box, if you want to get notifications when someone posts feedback to your post.
5. Add a picture, if requested, by pressing the symbol on the upper left corner.
6. The maximum upload size is 2 Mb. You can upload only 1 picture per activity.
7. In case the picture exceeds the size limits, use any picture editing software on your computer to downsize it. You can use online tools, too. We recommend:
 - a. for adjusting a single picture: <http://www.resize-photos.com/>
 - b. for adjusting several pictures at once: <http://birme.net/>
8. The recommended picture width is 1000 px.
9. Press “Submit”. You will find your post at the bottom of the activity.

How to give feedback to someone else?

1. Open any of the submissions by other students.
2. Find and press “Leave a feedback” on the bottom right corner (underneath the picture, if used).
3. Write the feedback in the same way as when posting a submission.

How to complete the course?

In order to complete the course and receive the *Certificate of Completion*, you have to complete all the activities indicated by the "ROAD TO CERTIFICATE" box. Then go to the main page and press this button!

Table of Contents

- List of Activities..... 10
- The Story Behind Bridgedale360 12
- The Bank..... 14
- The Free Store and the Bike Pool..... 34
- The Marketplace..... 53
- The Workshop..... 70
- The Compost Pile..... 82
- The River and the Sea..... 98
- The Garden and the Farm 111
- The House..... 127
- The Town Hall and Community Centre..... 142
- The School 163
- The Town Square..... 181
- The Fire Circle..... 200
- The Woods..... 217
- The Dojo..... 235
- The Amphitheatre and the Studio 253
- The Beehive 277

List of Activities

Economic dimension

- [Banana Split](#) (30 to 45 minutes; Group / Experiential)
- [Refugee Cushion](#) (45 minutes, 15 minutes of preparation; Group / Experiential)
- [Fair-trade clothes](#) (1 hour; Group / Experiential)
- [Wall Street Simulation](#) (2 hours; Group / Experiential)
- [The Free Store](#) (1 day to establish, 1 month for observation, unlimited; Individual or group / Experiential)
- [The Gift List](#) (> 1 hour; Individual / Experiential)
- [Make or Use a Pool](#) (1 day; Individual or group / Experiential)
- [Swap Day](#) (1 day for organizing, 1 day for the event; Experiential / Group)
- [The Vacant Building Map](#) (An afternoon; Group / theoretical or observational)
- [Tragedy of the Commons](#) (40-50 minutes: Experiential / Group)
- [The Future of Shopping](#) (2-4 hours; Group / Experiential)
- [Money Game](#) (2 hours; Group / Experiential)
- [Money Creation Party](#) (1 hour; Group / Experiential)
- [Barter Economy](#) (2-4 hours; Individual / Experiential)
- [A Future for Tourism?](#) (1-2 hours; Group / Experiential)
- [Find Your Secret Giant](#) (30-45 minutes; Groups of three / Experiential)
- [Your Greatest Joy/The World's Greatest Need](#) (30 minutes to 1 hour; Individual or group/ Theoretical)
- [Quest for a Crazy Entrepreneur](#) (>1 hour; Individual / Theoretical)
- [Design Your Dream Social Enterprise](#) (< 2 hours; Individual / Theoretical)

Ecological dimension

- [Design Your Own Compost Toilet](#) (1 day; Individual / Theoretical)
- [How to Make a Compost Heap](#) (1 day for establishing; Individual or group / Experiential)
- [The Buffalo](#) (1-2 hours; Group / Experiential)
- [The Rubbish Entrepreneur](#) (A few hours/days; Individual / Experiential)
- [What a Dump](#) (1 day; Group or Individual / Experiential)
- [Measure Your Water Footprint](#) (3 days; Experiential / Individual)
- [Pee on Your Peas](#) (As long as you enjoy it!; Experiential / Group or individual)
- [The Water Cycle](#) (2 hours; Group or Individual / Experiential and Theoretical)
- [What's in the Sea?!](#) (90 minutes; Group / Experiential)
- [Eating Mindfully](#) (10 - 20 minutes; Experiential / Group or individual)
- [The Ecological Meal](#) (5 hours; Group / Experiential)
- [Dude, Grow Something](#) (30 minutes + 8 weeks to harvest; Experiential / Group)
- [Mini Ecosystem in a Bottle](#) (2 hours; Group or individual / Experiential)
- [Get to Know Your House](#) (3 days; Group or individual / Experiential)
- [Harness the Sun](#) (> 1 hour; Individual or group / Experiential)
- [How Big is Your Footprint](#) (3 days; Individual / Experiential)
- [The Mighty Brick](#) (2 days, with several days apart; Individual or group / Experiential)

Social dimension

- [Another Election](#) (40 minutes, depending on the size of the group; Group / Experiential)

[Sociometry](#) (30 - 40 minutes; Group / Experiential)
[Fishbowl](#) (30 minutes; Group / Experiential)
[Dreaming Circle](#) (15-60 minutes depending on the size of the group; Group | Experiential)
[Facing Facebook](#) (30-45 minutes; Individual or group | Theoretical)
[Sugar Cubes](#) (30 minutes; Group / Experiential)
[Privileges Versus Privileges](#) (2 hours; Individual or Group / Experiential or Theoretical)
[United We Stand, Divided We Fall](#) (> 2 hours; Group / Experiential)
[Girl Power](#) (2 hours to several months; Experiential/Group)
[The Human Car: Shared Leadership](#) (40 minutes; Group or Individual / Experiential)
[Your Favourite/Worst Teacher](#) (30 minutes; Group / Experiential)
[An Act of Kindness](#) (10 minutes; Group or Individual / Experiential)
[Interact with \(Local\) Government](#) (Undetermined; Group / Experimental)
[The Alternative Community](#) (> 4 hours; Individual / Experiential)
[The Movement](#) (Undetermined; Individual / Experiential)
[Solidarity, Not Charity!](#) (1 hour; Individual or group / Experiential)
[Embracing Your Shadows](#) (90 minutes; Group / Experiential)
[The Way of Council](#) (1-2 hours; Group / Experiential)
[Own Side/Other Side](#) (20-30 minutes per "conflict"; Group / Experiential)
[Learning to Listen](#) (1 - 2 hours; Group / Experiential)
[Deep Listening](#) (5 - 10 minutes per round, more rounds are recommended; Experiential / Group)

Worldview dimension

[Be With](#) (30-60 minutes; Individual or group / Experiential)
[Gaia Walk](#) (3-hour walk, 5-hour preparation; Group / Experiential)
[The Council of All Beings](#) (1-3 hours; Group / Experiential)
[The Hike](#) (2-6-day walk, 2-4-day preparation; Group / Experiential)
[Back to Nature](#) (24 hours + planning; Individual / Experiential)
[Alternative Vision](#) (1-2 hours; Experiential / Group or Individual)
[SomaMove](#) (At least 3 weeks; Individual or group / Experiential)
[The Art of Being](#) (10 minutes; Group or individual / Experiential)
[Work is Love in Action](#) (5-60 minutes every day for 7 days; Individual / Experiential)
[Your Body as a Teacher](#) (1-2 hours; Individual / Experiential)
[Community Art](#) (2-3 hours + preparation; Experiential / Group)
[Dance Expression](#) (Minimum a few minutes, as long as it feels good; Individual / Experiential)
[Flash Mob](#) (1 day for preparation, 1 day for execution; Group / Experiential)
[Gender Role Reversal Exhibition](#) (> 2 hours; Experiential / Group)
[The Comics Journalist](#) (1 day; Individual / Experiential or Theoretical)
[The Yaya Box](#) (2-5 hours; Group / Experiential)
[Write and Perform a Punk Song](#) (1 hour to write, a couple of minutes to perform; Individual or group of 3 maximum / Experiential)
[A Pattern Language](#) (2 hours; Individual / Theoretical)
[How Wolves Change Rivers](#) (90 minutes; Group / Theoretical)
[Playing with Systems](#) (1 hour; Group [at least 10 people] / Experiential)
[The Mission](#) (1.5 to 2.5 hours; Group / Experiential)

The Story Behind Bridgedale360

I just had to leave...

I had been walking aimlessly, as if my body just carried me along, for what seemed like forever. I still didn't know where I was heading or what was propelling me forwards. Except the reverb of that thought - I had to leave - and a name. Bridgedale360. My fist tightened around the scrap of paper on which it was written. I didn't have to open it, again, to see it. By now the name and the X that marked it on the spidery map was already etched into my mind. Instead, I looked up and wondered whether the turn in the road was starting to look - not exactly, but still - like the curve of one of the lines on the map. Like one of the spider's legs. All roads lead to Bridgedale360? I first heard about it from a friend a few months ago and then later, overheard it in a bar. Just people talking over loud and dull pop - but I heard it for sure - and then I found this map, or it found me. I had to leave, my heart needed to believe, I had to believe.

I picked up the pace, my heart beating out a rhythm for my legs to follow, and my right side stung. Exhaustion and fear tugged at me, and perhaps it was regret that made me look back every now and again, but this time I wasn't going to let it get the better of me. Not this time. I threw some of what was left over from my bag of dried fruits into my mouth, hoping it would hush my hunger. My feet yelled out in pain; my new boots had still not been broken in. Instead, the boots seemed bent on breaking me in. Blisters and all. My insides screamed at me in revolt.

Suddenly I heard voices. I got cautious, a bit afraid, but my curiosity brought me closer. My ears twitched like antennae, trying to figure out where the voices came from. I stood still. There. "Bridgedale360", I heard it. My heart rattled my ribcage. "Over there, not so far anymore." I had to get to them. "Wait!" I think I said and cut through the row of trees, hesitantly at first, but then found myself pushing and shoving shrubs aside, until I saw them and they saw me. "Hi," said the woman, smilingly. I gasped and smiled back and my insides kept quiet, for once.

We were walking for days, mostly quietly. But there was a sense of unity that I had never felt before. We were all following our dreams somehow, but without really knowing what it was. Layla showed me some pictures of her family, and said that she didn't know any longer where they were, if they were alive. Could we blame the "system crisis"? But I also felt conscience-stricken, because I saw how privileged I was. Yet, I was unhappy. But happiness does not come with abundance, I learnt it the hard way. I could not imagine myself continuing like before. I desperately needed Bridgedale360 to be more than a silly fairy tale...

Once we started off together, everything fell into step so to speak. We moved as if we were one, people from the west, people from the east, just people...fleeing the old system and searching for that unknown place. Conversations bubbled up here and there, naturally without any haste, but then we would retreat into a silence again, as we mulled over things we had just heard, and I imagined how life was for them before in the countries where they were coming from, and how much it sounded like my own in some ways; while in others, mine was completely foreign to theirs. I remembered the things I used to enjoy, but that was in the past, I told myself, as I shook off an all too familiar sense of heaviness. Excess does that to you, somehow. But, here on this

dirt road to Bridgedale360, I was just like them. Bridgedale360 was and will be the great equalizer for us all.

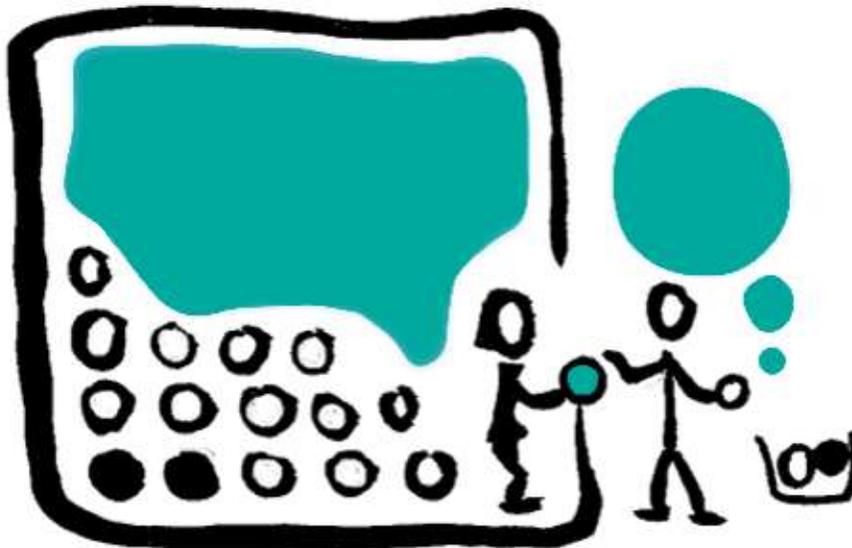
Arriving happened by surprise. We came to a stream and a little further up a girl was playing in the water, singing for herself. We came closer and when she saw us she smiled. "Ahoy there, comrades!", she said. And she smiled and waved at us. I was surprised by the openness with which she was greeting a bunch of strangers. In the middle of nowhere! But it wasn't in the middle of nowhere, we soon found out. Further up the stream we saw a mill and some mechanism pumping water. And then it all just opened up. Without waiting for us, the girl skipped ahead and we followed, not skipping like her, but feeling a slight hop in our own step. We exchanged glances and before we knew it, buildings and gardens and people working appeared from behind the trees. Everybody stopped to greet if only briefly, and smiled before they got back to doing what they were doing. Cows grazed past us. Even they seemed to smile.

Our little guide, we could see, had come to a stop before the most impressive of all the buildings that we had passed. A man stood there rubbing his hands and then approached us, as if he couldn't wait for us to get to where he stood. "Welcome," he said, while his hands rubbed and patted our weary shoulders, "first some rest and then I'll show you around Bridgedale360, ok?"

The Bank

GLOBAL ECONOMY, DEBT, INTEREST-FREE BANKS

*“Anyone who believes in indefinite growth in anything physical, on a physically finite planet, is either mad or an economist.”
-Kenneth E. Boulding*



Introduction

Ivan, consultant at the interest-free bank

Just so you know, here in Bridgedale360, we have abandoned the previous banking system altogether. So now the bank is not really a bank. For us it's more like a museum! We set it up to remind ourselves of our heritage and mistakes of the past. After all, in this new town, we're all refugees of the global financial system! Perhaps it wasn't that horrible for everyone; some left for other reasons. But many were drowning in debts and mortgages, and even those lucky ones with money in their bank accounts were witnessing how the world around was falling apart and how the old growth-based financial system was destroying people and nature. Maybe it is a bit far-fetched to place the blame on the old banking system for all the misfortune in this world, but indeed, people were put into such a vicious circle of earning, borrowing and paying off debt that they focused their entire lives on money! Let me guide you through "the bank" and make my points clear. It can be illustrated well with some stories that are depicted on the walls. Let's go inside!

Story 1. Money is Debt

A visitor comes to the town and is looking for a place to stay. He goes to a hotel and asks if he could have a look at the room before booking it. The hotel manager asks him to leave the money before the visitor sees the room, adding that she will give the money back if the visitor does not like the room. The visitor leaves the money and goes to see the room. The manager is so sure that the visitor will take the room that as soon as the visitor goes upstairs to see it, she runs across the road with the money and uses it to pay for the food she needs for next week. The shopkeeper then gets the money and uses it to pay for his daughter's violin lesson. The violin teacher gets the payment, goes to the milkman and spends the money. The milkman then takes the money back to the hotel and makes reservations for his parents, as they are coming to visit next week. The visitor comes back downstairs, says he does not like the room, takes his money off of the counter and leaves with it. Despite the fact that real money has not been left in the town, temporary money (liquidity) allowed for the transactions to take place, creating wealth in the town. In this story money is used for the exchange of goods and services, where they are available for all, and it is good. But in reality, money is not used for exchange but is concentrated in the hands of a few who use it to earn more money through interest rates. It leads to debt of others. If there was an interest rate in the story, it would mean that the visitor coming to the hotel would ask for 20% more money to be returned than what he left, as the price for using his money, and the manager would be in debt. Now imagine that these are not people in a town, but whole countries trading with each other on a global scale. Moreover, in a real economy system, instead of actually paying each other money, they just write out I.O.U's (I owe you) papers, thus creating a system of debt (capitalist global economy). Moreover, the countries that own the biggest debt ("money") get to make rules when creating more of it, and they force interest rates on the already poorer countries, putting them in even more debt while making the rich countries richer.

Story 2. Globalization. Disparity between Global South & North

Poor Abraham is a Kenyan shoemaker. He makes shoes for a big shoe corporation in Europe run by Jonny. To make shoes, he must borrow money from Jonny's bank. Jonny lends him the money, but at a 10% interest rate. Jonny's shoe company then demands so many shoes at such a low cost that Abraham has no choice but to buy the cheapest materials from local polluting factories. He also can't afford to hire anyone to help him, as he can barely feed his family on top of paying the interest rates for the debt he now owes Jonny.

This means Jonny gets the shoes and the money from selling them at a high profit as well as the money from the interest. Abraham gets no shoes, no money, no resources, but all the pollution. This leads the whole country to get poorer and poorer, creating conflicts. Abraham and his family are forced to seek out a decent life in the country where his money and resources have gone to. However, Jonny knows that if Abraham leaves, he will lose his cheap labor, so tries to make him stay. Jonny persuades everyone that Abraham will cause problems, bring about violence, conflicts and diseases if he comes to Europe.

In this story Abraham and Jonny are not individual people but whole countries and governments. Economic relations create the massive disparity between the Global South and North.

Stay for a while, and you can learn about the different aspects of the current economic system. Economy isn't easy but neither is it that hard. Stay at least to understand enough to see that before we changed our economy, the system in the old society was unethical, unfair and irrational. It was impossible to continue exponential economic growth on a planet with finite resources, therefore we decided to switch to de-growth initiatives. If you would like to learn how we think about economy here in Bridgedale360 instead, have a look at the [Marketplace](#) or the [Free store and the Bike Pool](#).

Learning Outcomes

- To understand the basics of how the global economy functions
- To understand that “money” is debt
- To grasp the disparity between the global South and North and understand the (socio-economic) roots of the issues of migration of people
- To develop critical thinking regarding the issues of the global system

Banana Split

Group / Experiential

30 to 45 minutes

- To learn how the food chain functions and how profits are distributed
- To reflect on how we as consumers can improve the situation

Refugee Cushion

Group / Experiential

45 minutes, 15 minutes preparation

- To get a general understanding of the global distribution of the population, wealth and poverty
- To get better overview of the issue of refugees and understand its economic roots
- To reflect on the economic and social injustice in our world and realize the disparity between the global South and North

Fair-trade Clothes

Group / Experiential

1 hour

- To realize the importance of knowing where the things we purchase come from
- To learn about fair-trade production

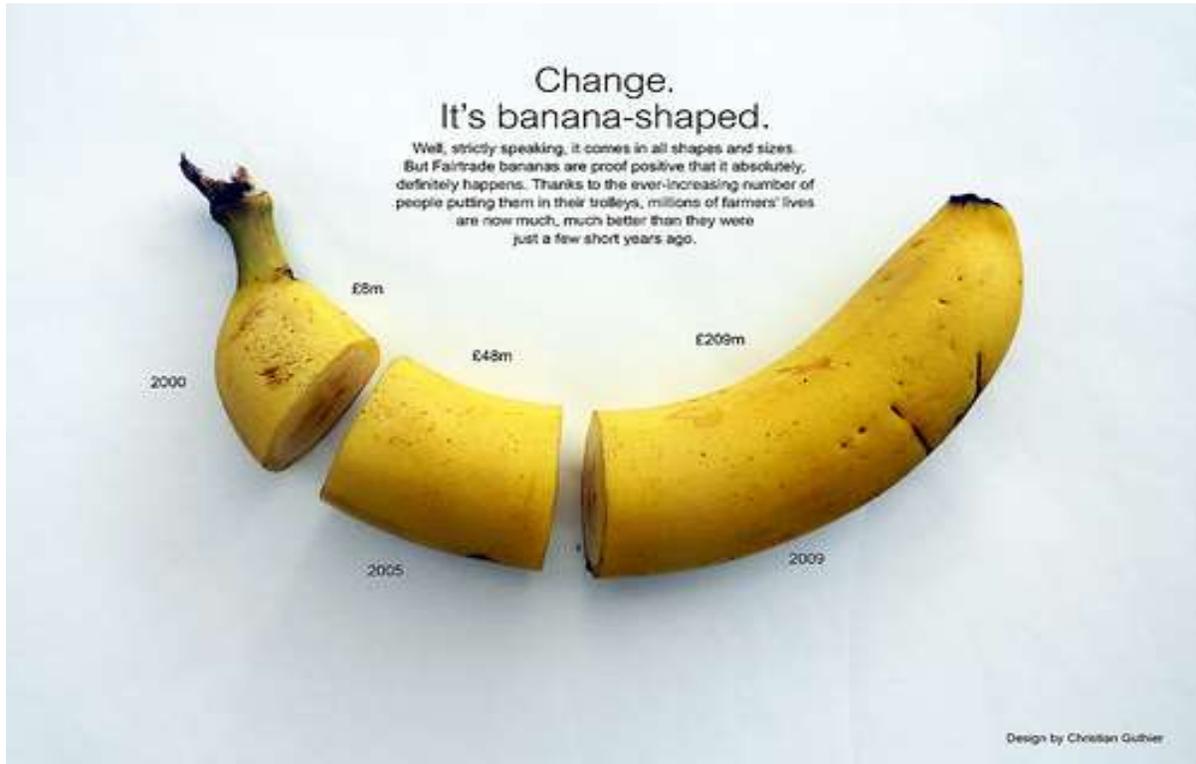
Wall Street Simulation

Group/Experiential

2 hours

- To reflect on the priorities of capitalist companies when they make decisions
- To reflect on how interpersonal conflicts and animosities can influence companies' decisions that affect thousands of people
- To develop a critical thinking regarding how the global economic system works

Banana Split



[flickr photo](#) shared by [allispossible.org.uk](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY-NC \) license](#)

Introduction

“The customer is always right!” – claims the dogma of the growth-focused consumer machinery. The consumers know best and can make their own choices. But the consumers are exposed to a myriad of choices in the supermarket - what if the consumer is blindfolded and makes the choices based only on what is *good value for money*?

We readily buy imported food, as it is significantly cheaper than local food. Yet, most of the time, we don't have the foggiest idea who these people producing our food are. To most consumers, they are just “ghost people” about whom we know nothing – were they treated fairly while producing the food or providing the raw materials, were they exposed to chemicals, were they paid a decent salary (if at all)? We are connected to people worldwide via the food items we purchase. Many items in our supermarkets are made from raw materials that have been imported from the Global South and many of the workers who produced these raw materials are not paid enough to live a dignified life. But imagine if there was a way to actually guarantee that the food items we purchase come from the hands of healthy, happy people who earn a decent living? This is exactly what the fair trade concept strives to achieve – greater equality at an international scale.

This activity provides an insight into the production of bananas and how profit is split among different groups involved in the production chain.

Activity Type

Group / Experiential

www.bridgedale360.org

Duration

30 to 45 minutes

Learning Outcomes

- To learn how the food chain functions and how profits are distributed
- To reflect on how we as consumers can improve the situation

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

- 6 bananas, one for each group in the food chain (5 in total) and one for final demonstration
- 5 knives, one for each group
- cards with role descriptions (optional)

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Tell the group that they are about to play a game that traces the route of the banana – from how it is produced and exported from Latin America to how it reaches the supermarket.
2. Divide the group into 5 different smaller groups representing links in the food chain (worker, plantation owner, shipper, importer/wholesaler and retailer). Provide instructions on what responsibilities each group has in the chain and the costs involved. If you want to, you can create cards with details about each role; inspiration for the role you can find in the support material (see "attached support files" below). Each group is given 5 minutes to contemplate what their role entails. Ask each group to think about the costs associated, ex. the banana worker: How many hours does the banana worker put in daily? How much money does the plantation owner spend on pesticides and fertilisers? How much does the importer spend on transportation or importation licence fee? What about the shipper and the price of a cargo ship used to transport the bananas? What other costs do the supermarkets (retailer) have besides the cost of staff?
3. Ask the participants to imagine that one banana costs 30p. Ask each group to assess how much of that money they would get from each banana sold. Give them 5 minutes to discuss this and prepare arguments, taking into account all the work and resources their role entails.
4. Each group is given a real banana from which they cut a piece representing their share, as they think is fair to have for their role. Make a new "banana" from the pieces (most likely it will be 2-3 times longer than a normal one)
5. Each group presents their arguments about their share, which normally leads to a sum over 30p. Start the negotiations, attempting to reach the sum of 30p. The negotiations can take up to 15 min depending on people's arguments.
6. In the end, reveal who gets what in the 30-penny banana chain – slice up a new banana to better illustrate the real breakdown (plantation worker – 1p; plantation owner – 6p; shipper - 4,5p; importer/wholesaler – 8,5p and retailer/supermarket – 10p)

Attached Support Files

[Resource](#) that inspired the activity

Resources

- <http://www.rgs.org>
- <http://www.globalexchange.org>
- <http://www.fairtrade.org.uk>

Reflection

- Why do some groups benefit significantly more than others, is this a fair situation?
- Who has the power to change things for the better?
- Discuss the concept of fair share – what can we do to make sure we are enabling workers in other parts of the world to exercise their universal rights?

Instructions for Submission

Submit a short summary in Moodle of how the youth reacts to this game – were they surprised that the worker gets so little? Are they open to adopting fair trade practices in their lives? Instructions on submission can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Author

Creative Commons - ySI4R Content Team (Adapted from a game initially published by Christian Aid)

Refugee Cushion



[flickr photo](#) shared by [dan reed!](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY-NC \) license](#)

Introduction

Did colonization come to an end in the 20th century or are we still witnessing a neo-colonial era in which international corporations exploit resources from financially and politically unstable regions? Is it a matter of luck or of historic, economic and social injustice which causes disparity between the Global South and North? The world economic system with its asymmetrical power and unfair trade agreements is a complex topic, but understanding it is crucial for finding the purpose and impact of our local actions.

By using chairs, cushions and the participants' physical movement, this activity explains the basics of the global distribution of wealth, poverty, population, CO₂ emissions and refugees. A guessing game and a simple analogy with physical objects are used to engage the youth in thinking about the current state of world affairs.

Activity Type

Group / Experiential

Duration

45 min

Preparation: 15 min

Learning Outcomes

- To get a general understanding of the global distribution of the population, wealth and poverty
- To get better overview of the issue of refugees and understand its economic roots
- To reflect on the economic and social injustice in our world and realize the disparity between the global South and North

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

- 5 big signs with the names of the continents (N. America, S. America, Africa, Europe, Asia - Australia is included in Asia)
- 1 chart per each continent with the following names of the ROWS in the chart: "Population", "Wealth in \$ (GDP)", "CO₂ Emissions", "Refugees" and of the COLUMNS in the chart: "Estimated", "Actual number", "Difference". You can put each chart on a separate paper or fit all of them onto one paper, but it is important that each continent has its own chart
- Chairs, one for each participant
- Cushions or pillows, one for each participant

Step-by-Step Instructions:

Create a world map of the continents by placing continent signs in different corners of the room and leave enough space in the middle for participants and their chairs.

1. WORLD POPULATION

- a) The total number of participants represents the whole world population. Ask them to guess how they are distributed over the continents, let them position themselves on the continents according to their guess. Write the group's guess in each continent's chart in "Estimated" for "Population".
- b) Present and write the actual number in the "Actual number" column (see the Spreadsheet attached under "attached support files").
- c) Count the difference and write it up in the "Difference" column.
- d) Let the participants distribute themselves according to the corrected numbers.

2. WEALTH IN \$ (GDP)

- a) The total number of chairs represents the whole world income. Ask people to guess how the chairs are distributed over the continents and position them physically as such. Write the group's guess in "Estimated" column of "Wealth in \$ (GDP)" row in the chart for each continent. The participants representing the population of a certain continent can sit only on the chairs available for that continent and this will cause uneven distribution of chairs among people. Make sure that people on continents where not enough chairs are available somehow squeeze on the chairs available.
- b) Present the actual distribution of GDP (see the Spreadsheet attached under "attached support files") write in the column "Actual number".

- c) Count the difference and write down the difference in the chart in the “Difference” column.
- d) Let the participants distribute the chairs according to the correction. The population of each continent can still sit only on the chairs available (in Asia many people for a few chairs, in N.America the other way around).

3. GLOBAL CO₂ EMISSIONS

- a) The cushions represent the global CO₂ emissions from burning the fossil fuels. Ask people to guess how the cushions are distributed over the continents based on the continents’ CO₂ footprint and position them physically as such on the chairs. Write the estimated guess in “CO₂ Emissions” in the chart for each continent. Now the participants representing the population can only sit on the chairs with cushions on them.
- b) Write up the actual distribution of CO₂ emission (see the Spreadsheet attached under “attached support files”).
- c) Count the difference and put it in the chart under the “Difference”.
- d) Let the participants distribute the cushions according to the correction. The population of each country should sit only on the chairs with cushions. There will be not enough chairs and cushions for some while too there will be too many for others.

4. REFUGEES

- a) All participants now have to quit the role of world population and become refugees and they spread out over the continents in the way they guess refugees to be spread over the world. Write their estimated guess in the “Refugees” column on the chart. The chairs (wealth) and cushions (CO₂ emissions) stay and people can only sit on chairs.
- b) Present the real numbers of the distribution of refugees and write them up in the chart.
- c) The participants should try to fit onto the chairs, but be aware that there will not be enough in Africa and Asia. Some of conclusions regarding the wealth distribution become obvious.
- d) Gather the group together and organize a reflection session on what they have observed. It is important to bring into the discussion the distribution of wealth and the sources of wealth - why some countries are richer while others are poorer and what implications this income disparity has in terms of refugee migration.

Attached Support Files

[Spreadsheet for Population, GDP, CO₂ Emissions and Refugees real distribution and calculated numbers of the participants.](#)

Resources

- [Gapminder World](#): Visualisation tool for the world population growth, wealth and other topics
- [Global Carbon Atlas](#)

Reflection

- Was any information a surprise to you?

- What do you think about the root causes of such a skewed distribution of the wealth in the world?
- Why do many people think that most of refugees go to Europe while actually, the large majority settle in neighboring countries?

Instructions for Submission

Upload a photo of the workshop and submit a short summary on how the game was for the group and what topics surfaced in the discussions. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Author

Creative Commons - ySI4R Content Team, inspired by [Migrants and Refugees. A Challenge for Learning in European Schools \(MIRACLE\)](#), experienced at SCI Climate for Peace training

Fair-trade Clothes



[flickr photo](#) shared by [fauxto digit](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY-ND \) license](#)

Introduction

In 2013, in Bangladesh, [the Savar building collapse](#) hit the headlines: an eight-story commercial building collapsed, causing a death toll of 1,129 people. This incident is considered to be the deadliest garment-factory tragedy in history. Bangladesh has one of the [cheapest costs of labour in the world](#) – workers, when paid, are only paid \$0.23 per hour!

But it is not just Bangladesh. This form of modern-day slavery has become a common sight in many poor countries and it is interwoven in the fabric - so to speak - of our consumer-led western economies. In this process of cheap mass manufacturing in low-cost countries, workers get exploited working 12+ hours under extremely precarious conditions, earning extremely low salaries (if any) and quite often are exposed to hazardous chemicals. But what is particularly disturbing is that we are the ones who feed this exploitative, global supply chain every time we buy a dirt-cheap purse on sale from a Bangladeshi shop, or every time we delight ourselves with a dirt-cheap T-shirt from an Indonesian shop.

People are fleeing their countries as refugees in search of a better future, or rather, in search of a future. Once we start to connect the dots, might our everyday choices actually be among the reasons for these migratory escape routes?

The following activity provides a brief overview of the meaning of Fair Share and consumer power - how we as consumers can do our best to prevent workers from poor treatment and misery.

Activity Type

Group / Experiential

Duration

1 hour

Learning Outcomes

- To realize the importance of knowing where the things we purchase come from
- To learn about fair-trade production

Instructions

Preparation work

Ask the group to do research on how workers are treated in poor countries as preparation for the next class.

Ask each participant to select one piece of their clothing that comes from another country (preferably from a developing country if they have such clothes). The participants should do research on the workers' rights in that particular country and could create an A4 or A3 size poster about it that will help them to present their findings.

You can direct them with questions like:

- How many hours per day do people work in the garment industry?
- What is the average salary in different countries?
- What are the working conditions in factories?
- Are they provided with health insurance?

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Invite participants to bring to the table the clothes they brought with them and were used as an inspiration for their research.
2. Based on the size of the group, decide if the group stays together or participants are divided into smaller groups where they hold separate discussions. Each participant in each group presents the piece of clothing they brought and talk about the research they did on the workers' rights in the specific country where that item was manufactured. They can use an A3/A4 poster to present their findings.
3. Introduce the concept of fair-trade clothes and if possible show participants fair-trade clothes that you brought to the class. Discuss the options of buying fair-share clothes in your area or online.

Resources

- <http://www.theguardian.com>
- <http://www.triplepundit.com>
- <http://www.peopletree.co.uk>

Reflection

- Do participants see the importance of knowing where our clothes come from?
- Do participants see the value of purchasing fair-trade items?
- Do participants realise how our daily choices directly affect people in other places of the world?

Instructions for Submission

Submit your written reflection on the activity. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Related topics

Remember, buying fair-trade clothes is just one way of decreasing our ecological footprint. To explore other even more sustainable options (such as swapping or buying second-hand), please refer to [the Free Store and the Bike Pool](#).

Wall Street Simulation



HikingArtist

[flickr photo](#) shared by [Frits Ahlefeldt, Hiking.org](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY-NC-ND \) license](#)

Introduction

Finance and ethics - is it even possible to put them in the same sentence or is “wall street ethics” too big of an oxymoron? [According to a study in May, 2015](#), almost “half of those surveyed said it was likely their competitors engaged in illegal or unethical behavior to gain a business edge, and close to 20 percent felt it was sometimes necessary for people in their profession to engage in illegal or unethical activities “to succeed.”

This activity allows the youth to experience the dynamics of Wall Street and to play different roles that make them reflect on the motives and methods of transnational corporations and the way they function.

Activity Type

Group/Experiential
Multi-agent role game

Duration

2 hours

Learning Outcomes

- To reflect on the priorities of capitalist companies when they make decisions
- To reflect on how interpersonal conflicts and animosities can influence companies' decisions that affect thousands of people
- To develop a critical thinking regarding how the global economic system works

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

- Printed role descriptions for each participant
- Printed handouts of problems and solutions (one set per each "company").

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. The facilitator of the game declares his/her role as the "Wall Street" and divides participants into different groups (max 8) of so-called "companies". Groups are sitting at some distance from one another, so that they don't overhear other companies' discussions; each company has 4 participants.
2. The facilitator gives each participant of the company one of the roles (President, Councilor 1, Councilor 2 and Councilor 3), which must be kept secret and are not revealed to anybody, neither in nor outside the "company". (See the list of roles under "attached support files" below).
3. The person who got the role of "the President" of the company introduces herself/himself to the other members of a group and the game starts. Each company has one president. "Companies" decide on their names and inform the "Wall Street" (the game facilitator);
4. "Problems" are handed out to the "companies" by the "Wall Street" (see list of problems under "Problems" below). "Companies" discuss and vote to choose one of four possible solutions (in case of a tie the president's opinion prevails). Then they let the "Wall Street" (facilitator) know what the preferred solution is.
5. A Discussion takes place among all participants. The discussion is facilitated by the Wall Street (facilitator) who uses the questions provided under "Reflection" below.

NOTE 1: Facilitator can either propose to the group one specific decision-making process or can help the group choose a decision-making method, refer to *The Town Hall and the Community Centre* module.

NOTE 2: Time is of the essence! The facilitator can set up a time limit for solving each problem (i.e. 10 min). If you want to, you can run a second round of problems.

Attached Support Files

LIST OF ROLES

WALL STREET (FACILITATOR)

As the "Wall Street", you are the person who is facilitating the game. You divide the participants into different groups (companies) and hand out the different roles to each participant. You also hand out the different problems and solutions to the group so that the group (company) decides on a single solution for the given problem.

PRESIDENT

As the president of the multinational company you never have a clear opinion on the solution of the problem and always prefer to listen to others' reasons before saying your own. One minute before the meeting starts, a close collaborator tells you that one member of the board is a spy of a competing company. You don't know who she/he might be, but you know she/he will often mention social issues. You obviously have to pay attention to the spy's suggestions because she/he will try to make your enterprise collapse.

COUNCILOR 1

As councilor 1, you are a spy of a competing multinational company. Your task is to convince the other members of the board of directors to take decisions contrary to the ones you believe are right to make the enterprise succeed.

COUNCILOR 2

As a councilor 2, you just got in on the board of directors of this multinational company and you want to establish good relationship with the president. You will try to convince the president of your opinion but never contradicting her/him and always flattering her/him. Still, you want your reasons to prevail because you know the president likes firm people. A close friend told you the president seems to be sensitive to social problems, so you have to include in your speeches social issues such as "President, think of the social repercussions" or "President, what will the society say?"

COUNCILOR 3

As a councilor 3, it's been ten years since you have been a member of the board of directors and you find yourself on strained terms with the president. In a month, there will be the elections of the new president and you do not want to fail in getting that role as was the case four years ago. You will do anything to discredit the president and to make your decisions be approved especially if contradicting the president's. By discrediting her/him, you will always insist on her/his irresolution and on her/his inability to come to a quick decision. You will oppose while the other councillors will always agree with her/him.

HANDOUT WITH PROBLEMS

PROBLEM 1

The production costs of your factory in Haiti rose by 10% because of the increase in salaries and of the adjustments to laws which regulate workers safety at work. Digifoot, a competing company, has just opened a factory in China where salaries are lower and trade unions are weaker. In this way, their shoes cost 15% less than yours.

WHAT DO YOU DO?

- A. You open a factory in China and keep the one in Haiti for at least one year;
- B. You begin an advertising campaign on work conditions in Chinese factories in order to undermine the Digifoot competition;
- C. You close the Haiti factory and you open one in China;
- D. You begin an advertising campaign of your shoes emphasising that buying these shoes will help the poor people in Haiti that work for you.

PROBLEM 2

Your factory in Texas is losing 15% annually and your experts suggest that you should sell it.
WHAT DO YOU DO?

- A. You fire 1000 out of 3000 workers to control the costs;
- B. You invest in a training course for your workers and you begin to make hand-made high quality shoes which will cost \$600 a pair;
- C. You provide income support for the 3000 workers while waiting to find a buyer for the factory;
- D. You fire 2500 workers and you use the rest for administrative jobs.

PROBLEM 3

800 workers who used to be employed in one of your factories in Mexico sued you for damages claiming that you were using a solvent glue which caused their permanent sterility.

WHAT DO YOU DO?

- A. Before the trial starts, you immediately compensate them with \$15.000. To promote your action you buy a page in the Times;
- B. You buy the jury with \$100.000 to make sure you do not have to pay any compensation;
- C. You wait for the trial;
- D. You pay some of the best lawyers in New York to defend you so as to make sure that you will be discharged (it will cost you \$10.000.000).

PROBLEM 4

Greenpeace has discovered that you use an element that causes cancer to produce one model of your shoes. For this reason, Greenpeace activists chained themselves to the gates of your central office in London.

WHAT DO YOU DO?

- A. You ignore the protest and deny the use of the cancerous element;
- B. You call a meeting with the delegation from Greenpeace;
- C. You stop using the cancerous element while waiting for scientific results (you have to close the factory losing 50.000\$ a day);
- D. You kick the activists out.

PROBLEM 5

Activists are distributing pamphlets in front of your Italian shops (around 140) denouncing the dreadful working conditions in your Indian factories. The shop director in Pinerolo sued the ones distributing pamphlets in front of his shop.

WHAT DO YOU DO?

- A. You deny any responsibility of what is going on in India, but you do not take part in the trial;
- B. You establish an inquiry of commission into your Indian factories;
- C. You support the director and start the trial against the activists to defend your image (it will cost you about 800.000\$);

D. You ignore the matter and you do not support the director's action.

PROBLEM 6

You bought 70% of Benzinaï, a Nigerian petroleum company. Many of its oil-wells are located in the middle of the Nigerian virgin rainforest.

WHAT DO YOU DO?

- A. You extract oil but you make sure that every precaution is taken to avoid pollution (this costs you 20% more);
- B. You extract at a lower cost;
- C. You decide not to extract oil from the virgin forest to avoid pollution;
- D. You keep extracting oil and you launch a new kind of petrol: "Pine-petrol", a new petrol that smells of pine which you hope will appease ecologically conscious customers;

PROBLEM 7

Amnesty International accuses a Vietnamese factory which produces laces for your shoes: bad salaries, corporal punishments, prohibition of using the bathroom more than once a day.

WHAT DO YOU DO?

- A. You give \$100.000 to Amnesty International;
- B. You establish an ethical code of behaviour which pledges to engage just companies that recognise dignity to workers. But you reject any kind of supervision;
- C. You deny Amnesty's report;
- D. You close your relationship with the factories;

PROBLEM 8

You have the possibility to contract the most famous football player Bobaldo for an advertising campaign (\$20.000.000).

WHAT DO YOU DO?

- A. You prefer a cheaper contract with the Brazilian volleyball national team (\$10.000.000);
- B. You accept it and you launch a big advertising campaign on television and magazines with Bobaldo;
- C. You refuse it and start a new advertising campaign by doubling the salaries of your 80.000 Asian workers (it costs \$20.000.000);
- D. You hire not only Bobaldo but also his entire team. You launch a huge campaign (\$50.000.000).

NOTE: other problems, more related to the module topics can be created and distributed for the role playing game.

Reflection

- How was it to act out your role?
- How did the group act? Did everybody participate equally? Did you perceive any tension?
- What were the most significant problems your "companies" were struggling with?
- Were your "companies" eager to sacrifice profits for the good of environment, people's health, safety, rights?
- What was the impact of interpersonal relations within the "companies" on the decisions that you took?

- Do you think this game reflects reality?
- How can we make corporations become more responsible?

Instructions for Submission

Submit a word piece (up to 200 words) on your experience from doing this activity. Base it on the questions in the Reflection section. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Related Topics

- Macroeconomics and globalization
- Ethical and social entrepreneurship
- Ethical finance
- Decision making and conflict resolution

The Free Store and the Bike Pool

GIFT & SHARING ECONOMY

*"I discovered that my security no longer lay in my bank account, but in the strengths of my relationships with the people, plants and animals around me."
-Mark Boyle, the Moneyless Man*



Introduction

Zhang Wei, shopkeeper at the Freestore

I remember reading John Steinbeck's "The Grapes of Wrath", which is set during the 1930s depression in the United States. There is [one chapter](#) where the family comes across an orange plantation, to find that all the oranges are being destroyed. It has been decided that this is the most economically viable thing to do, less oranges in the world = higher price. The despair of the family, who had travelled from one coast to the other to find a living, was unimaginable, and while reading, I could feel it in my bones: *"A million people hungry, needing the fruit—and kerosene sprayed over the golden mountains. And children dying of pellagra must die because a profit cannot be taken from an orange. And coroners must fill in the certificate—died of malnutrition—because the food must rot, must be forced to rot. And the smell of rot fills the country."*

It struck me, this is not just a dystopian novel, this is how our economy actually works! Its main objective is to increase the circulation of these abstract paper notes called 'currency' rather than catering to the real needs of human beings. It's both absurd and inhuman!

In Bridgedale360, we are trying to think of the economy differently. Its main objective here is to meet everyone's needs to the greatest extent possible - "from each according to her ability, to each according to her needs". If you have an extra orange, you give it to a neighbour - as simple as that! These values and ideas in practice are manifested in [the Free Store](#) and Bike pool. [The Free Store](#) supplements the market economy and is based on gifts. There is no formal exchange involved; instead you take what you need and leave what you do not need, both money and possessions. It's all based on trust. But as much as [the Free Store](#) requires trust to function it also *generates* trust. To put it simply, if you feel that the economy is there to help you and cater to your needs, you will want to contribute to that economy. Such an economy makes you trust, and you'll want to give back to it. Thus, the most important commodity, instead of money, becomes your relationships. Can you imagine how this different approach to economy can radically change a community, society, life? A gift-based economy can also be a real personal challenge, it forces us to consider the needs of other people before our own egoistic wants. But when successful, it invites a new dimension into our lives, the joy of giving. As a result, we'll also be able to enjoy the quality of a real community.

The bike pool, the carpool and the other pools that we're using are really about practical common sense solutions. Pooling resources like this is also about basic humanity and equality, it is about distributing resources to maximise their utility. Efficiency. While the proponents of a market economy tend to argue that it's (market economy) highly efficient, we ask how can a system that destroys oranges and is prohibiting vacant buildings to be used - even though there are people in dire need of a roof over their heads or hungry people - seriously be called efficient? Well, from a common sense perspective, it can't! That's *inefficiency*! In the bike pool you can ride a bike when it's available, and when you're done you return it to the pool. It's about sharing and shared ownership. In the best of worlds this should be easy, but in this world shared ownership is a real challenge. It's because in the old culture our sense of ownership is so deeply rooted. What's mine I care about while what is yours I care about less. If it belongs to a person that I don't know, I may care very little. Therefore in the beginning you may have a lot of broken bikes in the pool, many flat tires that people didn't bother to fix. But people start to evolve their attitude with time.

When entering [the Free Store](#) or the Bike Pool, it is always good to pay attention to your own attitudes towards money, ownership, giving and sharing. You would find out that in the end, our little Bridgedale360 economy is all about relationships and our attitudes towards one another. It touches upon deep human values. So let yourself be selfless, let yourself care about others. Why? Because you deserve it.

Learning Outcomes

- To have a wider notion of ownership
- To familiarise yourself with ideas about minimizing consumption/excess stuff
- To practice basic concepts of gift economy
- To understand local possibilities for sharing in your area

The Free Store

Individual or group / Experiential

1 day to establish, 1 month for observation, unlimited

- To learn the concept of free stores by doing
- To experience the gift economy
- To understand local possibilities for sharing in your area

The Gift List

Individual / Experiential

> 1 hour

- Create opportunities to exchange and reconnect with your community
- To learn how to engage in a culture of sharing

Make or Use a Pool

Individual or group / Experiential

1 day

- Learn how to make and use a carpool

Swap Day

Experiential / Group

1 day for organizing, 1 day for the event

- To have ideas for minimizing consumption / excess stuff
- To practice basic concepts of gift economy
- To understand local possibilities for sharing in your area

The Vacant Building Map

Group theoretical / observational

An afternoon

- Become aware of the potential of unused property in your town
- Start a discussion about creative uses of space
- Stimulate to become proactive in creating a lively municipality

Tragedy of the Commons

Experiential / Group

40-50 minutes

- To understand the importance of resource management
- To become aware of different strategies to manage resources sustainably
- To deepen awareness of the importance of cooperation and communication

The Free Store



[flickr photo](#) shared by [Vanessa Marie Hernandez](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY-NC \) license](#)

Introduction

It's time to become a shopkeeper! Yes, you can do it!

It is going to be the shop of everyone's dreams - a shop where everything is free. Well, almost free.. While one might not find the latest electronic gadgets in this store and it does not have to be open 24/7, this can be a place where some real good surprises are found to be hiding!

The free store is a place where everyone is welcome to bring anything that they think someone else might find useful, as a gift. While there is no specified cost of the items, people are generally welcome to donate something, whether financial or human resources (there might be some form of costs to run the store).

Let's have fun and start small by creating a space to exchange stuff we no longer use or need. Maybe this simple experiment will even inspire others in your local area - get ready for a world of surprises!

Activity Type

Individual or group / Experiential

Duration

1 day to establish, many days for maintenance, 1 month for observation.

Learning Outcomes

- To learn the concept of free stores by doing
- To experience gift economy
- To understand local possibilities for sharing in your area

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

- Various tools and materials to create a space for your free store

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Find a location that many people in your area will find easy to reach. A good location is normally one where many people including yourself, pass by in their daily routine. Your own front yard might be as good a place as any!
2. Design and build an appealing storage place. It might be a piece of furniture, a sheltered cart, table, etc. We don't really expect you to build a whole shop, but you do need to have a designated space - which can be completely improvised; what matters is that people know that they can leave and take stuff.
3. Do the necessary advertising on site and in the surrounding area. Remember to explain the core principles of your store e.g. it is about sharing and recycling and caring! Spice up the information with intriguing slogans or quotes.
4. Put at least some of your own possessions in the store . You may find them by cleaning up your room, house, garage, etc.
5. Invite people to visit, to leave stuff and to receive gifts. Start with your friends and use the social media and/or local noticeboards to remind people about this opportunity. It will take a few weeks to see the results of this idea - be patient.

Resources

- [Detailed guide on creating your free store on Shareables](#)
- [The website of Media Free Store. A project of Pennsylvania's first Transition Town](#)

Reflection

Do the reflection after 1 month of opening the free store!

- How is your Free Store operating at the moment?
- What challenges have you faced?
- Do you see the benefits of exchanging things you do not need with other people who might need them?
- What has been the impression from the locals?
- Reflect on the benefits on an economic, ecological and social level:
 - Did you make any new contacts / friendships?
 - Did you manage to save up some money?
 - Do you think you managed to reduce your ecological footprint?

Instructions for Submission

Upload 1 photo of the Free Store and submit your written reflection in Moodle (so that your peers can give you feedback). Instructions on how to upload a picture in Moodle or submit your written reflection can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

The Gift List

Introduction

Our modern, money-focused society is driving us towards ever increasing levels of consumption. Even with a struggling global economy and with a general concern for the climate, every year Christmas sales are reaching new heights. We're a society conditioned to consume to such a level, that whatever concerns we have for the global inequality system, we still go out and shop endlessly. However there is a light in the darkness, more and more people are showing that humans are much better at - and get a lot of satisfaction from - giving, than they are at taking. A new culture is emerging in which people once again start to value the virtues of sharing and cooperation. More and more people recognise that happiness and fulfillment don't only come from having, but at least as much from giving and sharing. Instead of feeling smug about the fact that their car is fancier than their neighbours', people actually yearn to connect with their fellow human beings on so many levels and in so many different spaces. In many places, flea markets, swapping days and community sharing initiatives are flourishing, exploring the transformational effect it can have on us when we change our relationship to our *'stuff'*. In this activity we'll explore our relationship with our stuff and try to move from 'having', to 'sharing' and 'giving'!

Activity Type

Individual / Experiential

Duration

Less than one 1h

Learning Outcomes

- Create opportunities to exchange and reconnect with your community
- To learn how to engage in a culture of sharing

Instructions

1. Write a list of all the things that you own, but stay within reasonable limits and don't count your socks or broken pencils.
2. Ponder on the question of how necessary all these things really are. Which things are really important to you and which are not?
3. Create a gift list. Write down all the things that you would like to give away.
4. You have to give away at least 2 items from your list! More is better. Find a way to give them away. Who would need them? Your friends, your neighbours, the homeless person on the street?
 - a) Check out the [webpage of StreetBank](#) and register.
 - b) Use social media to let people know what it is that you want to give away.
 - c) Find local sharing platforms.
 - d) What else comes to your mind?

5. Present the idea of sharing via the StreetBank and invite your friends, neighbours and local community to join in.
6. Think if you also have skills that you would like to offer or exchange. Do you know how to fix bicycles or how to change light bulbs?
7. When you're done, check what others have shared in your neighbourhood. Is there anything there that you need or could help with?

Resources

- <http://www.streetbank.com>
- <http://giveandtakedays.weebly.com>

Reflection

- How did you feel after writing the list of all the things you own and do not need? Were you surprised that the list was that big/small?
- Did you experience any difficulties giving away things that you do not need?
- How does it make you feel that someone is offering something to you without expecting anything in return?
- Will you continue sharing and giving things away in the future? If yes, why? If no, why not?
- Does the StreetBank have a potential to work in your local community? If not, what could be the alternative online platforms?

Instructions for Submission

Take a picture of the things that you decided to share or give away and upload it in Moodle. Submit a short text, explaining why you decided to do that and how it made you feel. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Make or Use a Pool

Introduction

Everybody's seems to be raving about the environment nowadays, and this is of course marvellous. But isn't it strange how the simple solutions are often swept under the carpet, when all we need is a little bit of organising? For example; just think about how much we would save if all seats of every car were occupied every time it hit the road.

Indeed, by having more people share one vehicle, we contribute to resource preservation and thus adopting a more sustainable lifestyle, but also we reduce our travel costs, fuel costs, toll costs, driving stress, traffic congestion, the need for parking spaces *and* we share the joy of making new friends or reconnecting with old ones!

Do you know that [the average Brit spends more time driving than socialising](#)? To encourage carpooling, many metropolitan cities have introduced carpool lanes, which are faster and less congested, meaning your commuting time is significantly reduced. And imagine if we could combine socialising with commuting to work? Join a carpool today for healthy, happy people!

Activity Type

Individual or group / Experiential

Duration

1 day

Learning Outcomes

- Learn how to make and use a carpool

Instructions

1. Create a local gathering event for your neighbourhood where you plan to introduce the concept of carpooling within your local area and explain the benefits of covoiturage.
2. Create a group using social networking tools such as WhatsApp for the people living in your neighbourhood. Anyone interested can join and when they have to go somewhere they can inform the others so that they can share a ride.
3. At the gathering, introduce the idea of ride-sharing at a global level (via websites such as [blablacar](#) for example)

Resources

- <https://www.blablacar.com>

Reflection

- Think about the links among the economic, environmental, social and cultural dimension when opting for sharing a ride.

- Did you manage to make new friends/get to know your neighbours better while saving some money and time and reducing your ecological footprint at the same time?
- Do you feel like commuting with other people can be more fun than commuting on your own?

Instructions for Submission

Upload 1 picture of your courageous experience and submit your answers to the questions from the Reflection section. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Swap Day

Introduction

Have you ever hesitated to throw your old pullover away, because it is kind of still good, however it does not fit you anymore? It keeps collecting dust in your wardrobe year by year... And how about the beautiful set of Christmas-themed cups and plates that a friend of yours gave you? Or your old MP3 player?

Have you managed to grasp how it is at all possible that this world is just not willing to pay for your God-given talents? Otherwise you could give up your 9 to 5 job and teach piano classes or give massages to people, while baking delicious cupcakes in the afternoons...

There are countless possibilities to make use of the talents and (unneeded) things we already have. It can even become a positive addiction that can change your life - literally! It might take a single Swap Day with your friends and neighbours to get new fancy clothes, books, arts and crafts without spending a penny.

Swap Days means swapping - for free. It can be a backyard party with your neighbours or a huge event in the local town hall welcoming everyone who has something to offer and something that someone else might need.

Activity Type

Experiential group activity

Duration

1 day for organizing

1 day for the event

Learning Outcomes

- To have ideas for minimising consumption / excess stuff
- To practice basic concepts of gift economy
- To understand local possibilities for sharing in your area

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

- Things to be swapped
- Equipment for arranging the place of swapping (tables, chairs, noticeboard, post-its, etc.)

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Have a chat with friends to choose the theme of the Swap Day: clothes, books, household appliances or everything together. Decide on the organisational aspects -

- venue, time, who is going to be invited etc. Do the appropriate advertising and make sure that the Swap Day will draw a crowd big enough to get a wide variety of swaps going.
2. Clean your room / wardrobe / bookshelf / etc. Put aside the things that you do not need any more - but that are good enough to be used - and might be of interest for the participants in the Swap Day.
 3. Meet the others in the Swap day. Depending on the size of the event, share the information about the things you brought with you either in a circle or on a noticeboard. Make another round / noticeboard for the things that people wished for but could not find that day. It may be a good idea to collect and share e-mail addresses for people to continue swapping later on.

Resources

- [Shareables - the hub of sharing](#)
- [Detailed tips regarding organizing a Swap Day](#)
- [Swapping experiment in arts](#)
- [36 swapping and bartering websites](#)

Reflection

- What challenges did you face?
- What was the best deal you experienced?
- What would you do differently next time?
- What is the potential of swapping days in your area?
- Do you know any websites / Facebook pages that enable swapping?
- What is likely to be your next swapping action?

Instructions for Submission

Upload 1 photo from the Swap Day and submit your written reflection, so that your peers can give you feedback. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

The Vacant Building Map

Introduction

“There are more than 11 million vacant homes across the EU. The EU estimates the number of homeless people to be 4.1 million - which means that, in theory at least, every one of them could have more than one roof over their head.” - Gone are the days when buildings were used for housing only - they are increasingly being thought of as a speculative, wait-and-see means to grow capital passively, rather than a place to call home.

Vacant buildings concern everybody - both the homeless and those with homes. Because empty buildings mean no activities, mean spooky parts of town. Empty buildings can give rise to spaces of desolation and a sense of abandonment which often turn into crime hotspots. But this can be avoided by simply raising our collective awareness and coming up with some creative solutions! Not everybody who owns a house that is standing empty would want it occupied by homeless people all of a sudden, but surely a cosy coffee shop sounds appealing, while a couple of people fix up and live on the second floor. And why not, maybe that coffee shop could be a social enterprise with zero waste!

Most owners are quite open to temporary habitation or office rent while they wait for the market to pick up. There are even special companies who place people in these buildings, for almost no rent. But this is not ideal either, because two people living in a whole office building is not going to make much difference.

A good place to start is to find out how much of an issue this is in our community, let's start by simply mapping out which buildings are currently lying empty around you.

Activity Type

Group theoretical/observational

Duration

3-4 hours

Learning Outcomes

- Become aware of the potential of unused property in your town
- Start a discussion about creative uses of space
- Become proactive in creating a lively municipality

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

A map of your village/town/neighbourhood, pens and post-its.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

www.bridgedale360.org

1. Take a map (not google maps on your smartphone), you should be able to talk about it in a group and add notes to it.
2. Discuss in the group which areas and places you know that are vacant; look around you when you walk through the town beforehand; look up, many places only have ground floor activity.
3. Go around with your group and cross out the places you think are empty.
4. Write short descriptions on the places you find, such as how big you think it is, what state it is in, and what its original purpose was (living, office, store).
5. Take some pictures.
6. Visit your local cadastre (the register of deeds titles) to find out who owns the buildings that are empty, add this information to your map.
7. Optional:
8. Think of an initiative you want to start. There is a multitude of activities that you could do:
 - a) Opening your own free shop;
 - b) Creating a learning empowerment centre for homeless/unemployed people, people with disabilities or other marginalised groups, where people volunteer to empower these marginalised groups with different skills;
 - c) Transforming it into a homeless shelter;
 - d) Initiating a community pay-as-you feel cafe run by local volunteers;
 - e) Starting a soup kitchen (think sustainably! - the food items could perhaps be obtained by agreement from the supermarkets if they are past their expiration date. However, exercise caution and make sure to be familiar with the legislation of the specific country in terms of this. Another option would be turning to restaurants and taking the leftovers - but here as well, caution must be exercised in terms of the legal and health requirements of the given country;
 - f) Making a community library - a place where people can donate books and come and enjoy a good read!
 - g) Set up a community theatre/art house cinema
 - h) Perhaps you could even find inspiration in the magical world of social enterprises!
 - i) And the options, same as our dreams, are endless!
9. Find the best vacant space for it.
10. Contact the owner and ask for a good deal on the use of the space or try to persuade her/him to let you use it. In case the owner is an organisation/municipality, initiate a dialogue with them and find the department or person responsible for the care of real estate. Expect a bit of bureaucracy, usually present in any organisation. Hang in there.
11. Present your social project idea and try to persuade them to let you use the vacant building for the common good, for free or for a low rent. If the owner is reluctant to make a deal, you could contact the local press to speak about your initiative. This may both raise awareness about the empty spaces in your neighbourhood and put pressure on the owner to make concessions.

Resources

- www.eurogeographics.org

Reflection

- What is your response to the number of vacant building in your area? Are there many/few? Were you surprised by the findings?
- Where is the highest density of vacant spaces?

- Did you find other ways about getting the information about the buildings except the local cadastre?
- What did the youth think about ownership of the buildings? Do they think it is acceptable to have empty buildings while there are homeless people sleeping rough in the town/village?
- Did they change their views on the use of non-public spaces?
- What were their ideas about possible transformation of the vacant space?

Instructions for Submission

Upload a photo of your map with vacant buildings. Submit your ideas in Moodle about what you think a given vacant building can be used for. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Tragedy of the Commons



[flickr photo](#) shared by [Frits Ahlefeldt, Hiking.org](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY-NC-ND \) license](#)

Introduction

“Tragedy of the commons”, is a term coined by William Forster Lloyd and used by Garret Hardin in his widely cited essay. The concept refers to the issue of public resource management: it advocates that the collective use of resources as a rule threatens the collective good, most notably in terms of the environment. In his paper he cited the example of ‘overgrazing’ of common land. The farmers have their own cattle and a common patch of land, they allow their animals to graze as needed, and since the land belongs to nobody, nobody is obligated to maintain it or consider long term sustainability. In the absence of cooperation and an overall strategic management plan, this eventually results in overgrazing the land. Hardin sums up the essence of the issue: “If all members in a group used common resources for their own gain and with no regard for others, all resources would still eventually be depleted”.

However, one must not fail to recognise the potential benefits of cooperation and communal ownership, and often communal resource management can be more effective than public or private management. [Elinor Ostrom in 2009 received the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences for her groundbreaking research proving that ordinary people are capable of managing shared resources fairly and sustainably through collective agreements and the establishment of common institutions.](#)

The reason for this is the knowledge of local residents about their environment, and the fact that their connection to the land increases their motivation to protect, and preserve it. With trust, communication and cooperation the farmers from Hardin's example could agree upon a certain level of grazing or setting 'no grazing zones' in order to allow the area to replenish.

Ultimately, common resources require proper management in order to prevent exploitation resulting in the depletion of natural resources. This issue has become of critical importance with exponential global population growth and touches upon management of water, forests, fish, non-renewable energy, transport congestion, etc. There are a number of ways we, people, can manage and regulate the natural resources and all of them have their pros and cons. Some believe that privatisation is the most effective way of managing natural resources; however this is highly contested as this often results in high costs and therefore high prices for public use while the profit accumulates in the hands of the owner. Others are sure that governments can play a key role as they have a responsibility for the common good of the public. Nonetheless, one can see multiple examples when governments have permitted (or rather sold) the land or water resources for extractive economic activity. With globalisation the lines have been blurred between the public and private spheres merging into "political economy", resulting in the private sector having a major influence in world politics, owing to an overarching system based on capitalism. Therefore, it remains questionable if the depletion of natural resources refers to "the tragedy of the commons" or rather "the tragedy of the private".

In this activity participants will gain an understanding of the principle of the tragedy of commons by taking part in a 'fishing' exercise in order to highlight the issues associated with sharing common resources and then to reflect on possible solutions to the dilemma.

Activity Type

Experiential/ group

Duration

40-50 minutes

Learning Outcomes

- To understand the importance of resource management
- To become aware of different strategies to manage resources sustainably
- To deepen our awareness of the importance of cooperation and communication

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

- 'Goldfish'
- Plastic bowls

- 1 pair of chopsticks or a straw for each participant
- Paper, pens etc.
- Printed spreadsheet for each participant
- Something to represent money

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Put the bowls on the floor to represent ponds, add 16 'fish' into each bowl and ask 4 participants to stand around them.
2. Inform the participants that the objective of the game is to harvest as many fish as you can without destroying the ocean [*Allow 20 minutes for this part*].
3. Give the following instructions:
 - a) Each one of you represents the parent of a family. You must catch enough fish for all of you to eat.
 - b) There is a pond which you can fish from which accommodates 16 fish.
 - c) Once a minute you will be given the opportunity to 'go fishing' and each time, you can take from 0 up to 4 fish from the lake.
 - d) The participants cannot communicate while playing
4. Once the round has finished, you will calculate each group's score and record it on a sheet of paper according to the following rules;

One fish = game over! It cannot sustain your family and you cannot fish the next year!

 - a) Two fish = your family can eat and play the next round.
 - b) More than 2 fish = you can eat one and sell the rest for profit!
 - c) One fish = 10 Euros
5. Lead participants through 5 rounds in total, filling in the score card.
6. Inform the participants that the fish in the pond will reproduce once a minute. At the end of each minute you should add more fish accordingly to have 16 fish again.
7. Participants should Keep the 'fish' they catch. When the group runs out of fish, the game is finished.
8. The winner of the game is the group with the most fish at the end.
9. After the first game invite participants to give brief feedback about their experience based on the reflection questions below [10 minutes].
10. Carry out a second second game, repeating the same steps BUT, this time participants can communicate.
11. Again, invite participants to share after the second round using the second set of questions.

Support Files

[Spreadsheet for each participant](#)

Resources

- www.earthwatch.org

Reflection

In order to facilitate reflection on the experience, gather the participants in the whole group and discuss the following questions, write down key insights on a flip chart for everyone to see [*Allow 20 minutes for this step*]:

www.bridgedale360.org

- *Questions to answer after the first game:*
 - Did anyone in your group take too many fish? How did that make you feel?
 - Did everyone try to take as many as possible? Why or why not?
 - Did anyone sacrifice the quantity of fish, for the good of the community? Why or why not?
- *Questions to answer after the second game:*
 - How did the ability to communicate change the way you played the second round?
 - Is it possible to maximize the number of fish caught and the number of fish remaining in the pond at the same time?
 - Each fish is worth money. Why would it be better to have money than fish?
 - What are some natural resources that are common resources?

Instructions for Submission

Submit the key insights from the questions in the Reflection section. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

The Marketplace

LOCAL ECONOMY, ECONOMIC RESILIENCE,
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

“Small is beautiful.”

“Think globally and buy locally.”



Introduction

Hans, baker, economist

The global economy has its advantages. In the blink of the eye, we can get anything we want from the world. One click on the screen. Almost any product, service, or experience... legal or illegal. It's like an endless combination of everything out there on the market, for sale, to anyone who can afford it. This might bring a certain sense of freedom. After all, the choices are endless. However, monetizing everything also restricts our freedom.

To begin with, we only have freedom if we have money. There is a small segment of the population that has an endless amount of money, but the vast majority struggle. Some struggle to have their basic needs covered, and others their dreams, desires, and self-realisation. As more is monetized (even things like fresh drinking water & plant seeds) - we move power and freedom away from people to a small number of powerful people and corporations. This is called capital accumulation. Take debt and interest, the very basis for the economy, and you'll see that the whole system is set up to move money from the borrower to the lender. In other words, from

the poor to the rich. Therefore, [the gap between the rich and poor widens](#); the rich grow richer and the poor grow poorer.

Here in Bridgedale360, you could say that we have mainly ‘unplugged’ ourselves from the old monetary system. We still interact with the old financial system in certain ways, to buy goods we can not make ourselves or to travel. But in the town and the marketplace, we do not use ordinary money. Instead, we use our own currency named “Local is Beautiful” (LIB). It can be exchanged from the Euro at the stall. With our own currency, we make sure that the money stays *within* the system, and does not disappear into middleman banks. We also do not use interest so the money is less likely to accumulate in only a few places. Because of this, the economy does not grow and brings a lot of stability to make significant steps toward a de-growth system. Everything you see in the stalls is locally produced, and can only be bought with LIB. This allows us to keep the circulation of money and goods within our local territory. With this transparency comes a peace of mind: that all products are ethically and sustainably produced, and that no money is trickling away to banks and multinationals. It also brings independence and resilience, since our economy doesn’t rely on the global economy to be healthy. There are, however, times when we buy from the outside. But when we do, we insist on buying fair-trade and organic, so that we know that no workers from other countries were exploited.

The good thing is that you don’t even need money to live here. Apart from our local currency-based economy, we also use bartering a lot; exchanging things. For instance, if you have problems with your plumbing you would normally check with your neighbours first and often someone will be able help you. Perhaps you give a few litres of fresh apple juice in return, or something else that is of value for your neighbour. Even here in the marketplace bartering is common. Just have a look around! You can see that also the customers often bring their goods, so that they can trade them. As you see, it makes up for a very lively atmosphere, and good relationships are created along the way. But our bartering “rules” are not in the form of: “you scratch my back and I’ll scratch yours” - actually, we try to foster solidarity among all the inhabitants here, so if you need help with the plumbing in your flat, someone might offer to do it even without expecting anything in return, because we know that mutual aid is intrinsic and important for our survival as species.

Psst.. a little secret... not everybody here knows about it. I worked as a stockbroker in Frankfurt before I came here. It’s true. For many years I was living an illusionary life. I was measuring success in how much money I made and my status in the company. I enjoyed driving my Porsche and living in my fancy flat. My ego was growing and growing while I was enjoying more and more success. I was “content”, but only on the surface. There was something missing on the inside. I wasn’t genuinely happy after all, even though I thought I should be. One day, after many years, I just couldn’t bear it anymore. It became absolutely clear to me, that this was all worthless. That my idea of happiness was flawed. Totally. I am thankful I found this place. Now I’m a baker! And I have flour instead of blood on my hands, if you know what I mean. I get up at ungodly hours, but on the other hand, seeing happy people with a healthy economy where there is enough for all helps me sleep like a baby! So... Would you like a baguette? Or this sourdough rye bread? How’d you like to pay? In LIBs, massage or broccoli?

Learning Outcomes

- To form a healthy attitude towards money and the means of exchange
- To identify the local sprouts of change in the direction of alternative economy
- To experience alternative economic systems

The Future of Shopping

Group / Experiential

2-4 hours

- To experience an alternative method of purchasing via concepts such as direct buying, ethical purchasing (fair-trade), buying in bulk, solidarity purchasing, community supported agriculture
- To realise how unnatural and even harmful most other products are

Money Game

Group / Experiential

2 hours

- To help people in all financial situations understand the feelings and beliefs we have about money in our lives and in society

Money-Creation-Party

Group / Experiential

1 hour

- To realise and use other means of exchange than money
- To experience a moneyless system

Barter Economy

Individual / Experiential

2-4 hours

- To learn about the basic concept of bartering
- To experience the principles of bartering
- To understand the local possibilities for bartering in your area

A Future for Tourism?

Group / Experiential

1-2 hours

- To identify issues associated with tourism development
- To explore how tourism can be used to contribute to sustainable development and a fairer society
- To create a sense of responsibility in the decisions we make as travellers

The Future of Shopping

Introduction

How big is our power as consumers? It sometimes may appear that our consumer power only boils down to choosing the product which is best value for money, but just how true is this? [In 2014, thanks to 272,000 people signing petitions and campaigning to urge food and beverage companies to respect community land rights, Pepsi agreed to zero land grabs! Similarly, in 2015 Nestle stated that it would cut artificial colours and flavours from Nestle Crunch and Butterfinger candy which came about directly as a result of consumer behaviour and pressure.](#) It is amazing just how much power lies in our hands without even us realising it oftentimes - our choices as conscious consumers can bring about sweeping changes for ourselves, the environment and other people throughout the world. It is because you spoke that Pepsi listened. It is because you spoke, that Nestle listened.

This trend of speaking out and exercising our influence as conscious consumers has grown even stronger with the advent of social media. And as much as social media has been criticised for sharing foolish and trivial information, it has also given rise to substantive political reform. Social media gives space to share ideas and at the same time raise the awareness about irresponsible corporate behaviours.

In this activity we will explore the alternative shopping possibilities of organic, fair, ethical products etc. Joining any kind of group that shares our values expands possibilities to access the goods we look for and at the same time support the local economy.

Activity Type

Group / Experiential

Duration

2 - 4 hours

Learning Outcomes

- To experience an alternative method of purchasing via concepts such as direct buying, ethical purchasing (fair-trade), buying in bulk, solidarity purchasing, community supported agriculture
- To realise how unnatural and even harmful most other products are

Instructions

Step-by-Step Instructions:

Option A

1. Research the possibilities to use any of the below mentioned forms of purchasing in your local area:

- a) direct buying (from local farmers, neighbours making jam etc.)
 - b) ethical purchasing
 - c) buying in bulk
 - d) solidarity purchasing
 - e) community supported agriculture (CSA) etc.
2. Join them, make friends and order a service of your choice to make a deal on one or more products.

Option B - if you cannot find any of the above-mentioned alternatives to mainstream purchasing:

1. Research the previously-mentioned concepts online (ethical consumerism, direct purchasing etc).
2. Think of a product or service that you would like to have. It should be ethical and ecological.
3. Find at least one friend who would like to join the purchase. The more friends that join, the more likely it is that you will manage to get an advantageous deal. You may try inviting friends - potential partners - for a cup of tea to discuss the deal or advertising the idea on Facebook or within your family.
4. Find a provider of a service / product, keeping in mind all the ethical and ecological aspects.
5. Discuss the deal's terms and conditions with the provider. Try to achieve as much benefit as possible, compared to how you would acquire the product/service normally.
6. Enjoy your deal!

Tips for making an advantageous deal:

- State that you represent a number of co-buyers, a bigger deal is generally a better deal!
- The provider is more likely to offer a good deal if the purchase is likely to re-occur.
- Be ready to collect the goods from the warehouse/site of the provider. Organise the logistics among your friends and co-buyers.
- You can offer advertising the positive experience of the product / service as an exchange for beneficial terms and conditions.
- Think of what, except money, you could offer in return!

Resources

- [Italian ethical purchasing groups](#)
- [Community supported agriculture](#)
- [Ethical purchasing groups](#)
- [Guide for community-buying groups](#)
- [Direct buying groups in Latvia](#)
- [Research on solidarity purchase groups in Italy](#)
- [Power of consumers to influence brands](#)

Reflection

- What was the deal you made?
- How economically beneficial was the deal, both for you and for the group? Were you ready to spend more to support a certain project that would provide you with a specific quality or product (e.g. CSA) or that you can directly witness how it is helping other local groups in your community, especially poorer groups?

- Did you witness how transformative and big our consumer power is and the positive change it can bring forth when we exercise it?
- Did other projects pop up within your community context (if you gathered a group)?
- What would you do differently next time?
- Did the experience/open up new ideas and possibilities for shopping?
- How do you see the potential of alternative purchasing in your life?
- What role does the internet play in alternative purchasing?

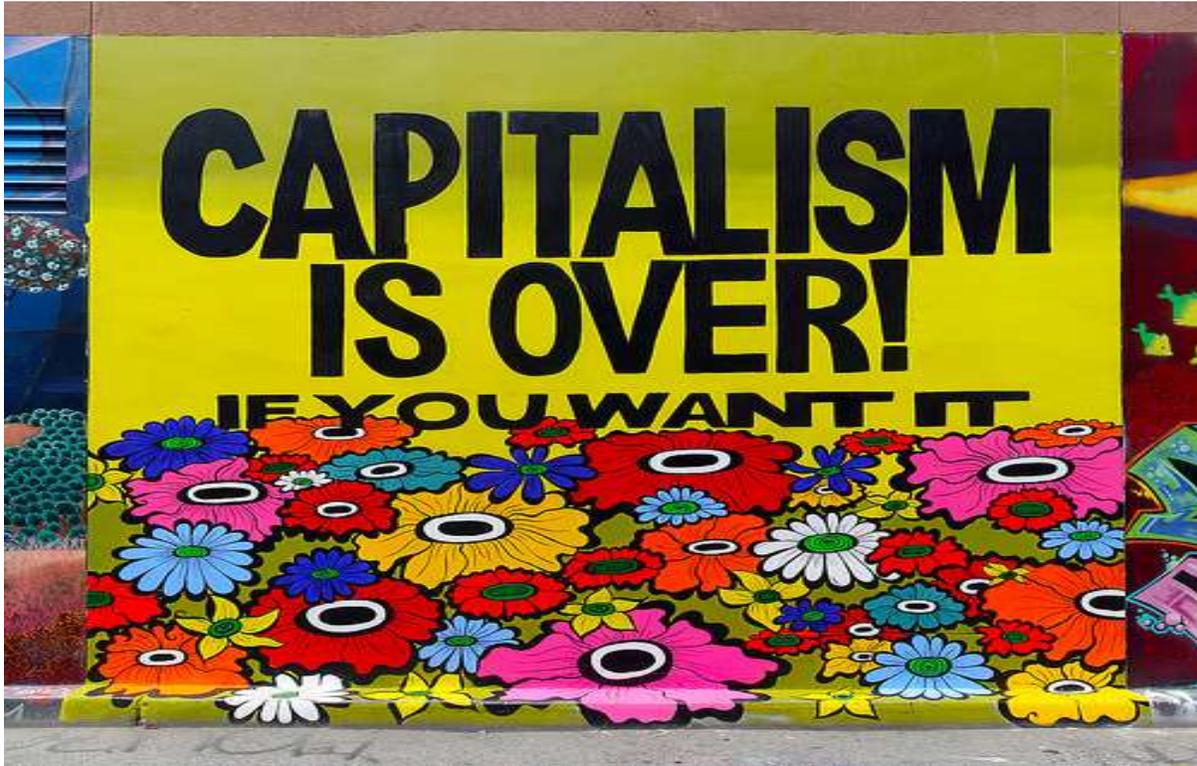
Instructions for Submission

Upload 1 photo from your purchase and submit your written reflection, so that your peers can give you feedback. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Money Game



[flickr photo](#) shared by [funkandjazz](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY-NC-ND \) license](#)

Introduction

The rich get richer and the poor get poorer - a catchphrase most of us have come across. But what are the reasons for this growing rich-poor gap? How does the current banking system enable this?

Imagine you want to buy a house, but you do not have the money to do so. What do you do? You go to a bank to take a loan. What a great invention banks are, right? Well, let's look into that briefly. Instead of just paying back the sum you borrowed, you also pay back *interest* on that sum - which goes to both the bank *and* the lender. The lender is a person that put their money in the bank for safety reasons and among other things, *to earn from lending* to poor people like you through - yes, you are right - the miracle of interest! And this is how wealth accumulates in the hands of the few.

The alternative and is there any? It is no coincidence that [historically usury \(interest-based loans\) was prohibited in different cultures](#), including the Roman empire, ancient China, ancient Greece etc and it was usually interconnected with [the condemnation of charging interest at lent money by Christianity](#), Islam, Buddhism etc. [In Islamic banking, all sorts of interest and exploitative, usury gains are prohibited. There are also the so called interest-free banks in Sweden, based on a similar principle of ethical banking, such as the JAK banks.](#)

Money is associated with power and control as well as dependence or feeling of being taken care of. In this activity, we explore our relationship to money. In addition to that, we look into how the system, where most of the money in circulation is created out of thin air by commercial banks when they issue loans - meaning it has to be paid back with interest - affects us all.

Activity Type

Group / Experiential

Duration

Simple version: 30 min, complex version: 2 hours

Learning Outcomes

- To better understand the feelings and beliefs we have about money in our lives and in society
- To gain a deeper insight into how the current banking system and interest work

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

- Real money, preferably in small coins and bills, the amount is up to you. It has been played with amounts varying from \$1 to \$200
- A journal and pen or pencil
- Time keeper
- Bell

Step-by-Step Instructions for simple version:

1. Each person brings a certain amount of money, preferably small coins and bills. It should not be too big a sum so that you don't lose all your money/go bankrupt, but it still has to be an amount that would cause you discomfort if you were to lose it. If some people don't want to participate, that is fine as long as they don't interfere with the others playing.
2. Split the participants in groups of 4, 5 or 6 people and ask them to sit on the floor or around tables so that they can clearly place their money in front of them and easily reach out for other people's money.
3. Allow some time for people to prepare a piece of paper and a pen to write down their reflections later on.
4. Explain that there will be several 1-minute rounds. After each 1-minute round, ask the participants to stop the activity; you could signal this with a bell or such like. The whole activity should be happening in silence.
5. Round 1: explain to participants that they should take the money in front of them (their money) and give the entire sum to the other participants in their small group (it does not matter to whom they give it). Make sure it is clear whose money is where. After 1 minute, ring the bell and ask the participants to stop the activity. Then, ask the participants to shortly write down their personal observations. How did giving away their money make them feel?
6. Round 2: explain to participants that now they should take money from others and put it in their own pile. They should try to take as much as possible and only from the people in their group. Again, make the bell sound after a minute and let them write down how the second round made them feel.

7. Round 3: explain to participants that now they can take money from whomever and give to whomever. Again, make the bell sound after a minute and let them write down how they feel.
8. Round 4: first ask each participant to take away 20% of the money in front of them. The 20% from all the people playing in the small group is placed in a separate spot - “the bank” and this money will not be included in this round. Explain to participants that now again they should take money from others and put it in their own pile. After a minute stop the process and ask them to check who is the person that has the most money in front of them. This person also gets the 20% from everybody else that was put in “the bank”. Explain the 20% interest-related money accumulation by making reference to the current banking system - the richer get richer and the poorer get poorer. Make sure to also introduce the concept of interest-free banking, as mentioned in the activity introduction above. Ask people to write down their reflections, by also reflecting on an interest-free banking system.
9. You can say that in the real world nobody cares how they feel about the money and that you also don't want to know how they felt during the game. Each person keeps the money gained during the game. Of course other options are possible if people don't feel comfortable with that, let people figure it out themselves. (ex: each person takes back the amount they brought; if somebody made extra money, she/he doesn't give it back but buys some sweets and shares them with the group; all the money collected in each group is split up among all participants equally; all the money in each group is split up in a solidarity way, so the ones that are in a more precarious situation get more etc).
10. Do invite people to share in a group how they felt and what they observed during the entire process. Use the questions from the reflection section.

To play the a more complex version of the game look for instructions under “Support Files”!

Support Files

- [Instructions for the more complex version of activity](#)

Resources

- [Article - Why is it so hard to talk about money?](#)
- [How Interest-free Banking Works - The Case of JAK](#)
- [JAK Members' Bank](#)
- [Capital in the Twenty-First Century](#)

Reflection

- What are the main lessons learned from this activity?
- How is the last round and 20% given to the “richest” person connected to the current banking system with interest?
- How did the participants share the money in the end - did each take back the money they invested or was some other solidarity-based model adopted?
- What types of reflections did the participants write on the pieces of paper, what was their relationship to money?

Instructions for Submission

Upload your written reflection, so that your peers can give you feedback. Instructions on how to upload a picture in Moodle or submit your written reflection can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Author

Creative Commons - ySI4R Content Team - inspired by the exercise from Margrit Kennedy.

Money-Creation-Party

Introduction

Often, we consider ourselves as poor if we don't have enough money. But even if we have no money, we have resources and capacities that we can share and that might be of value to others. Think of the Great Depression in the 1930s, the longest-lasting economic depression of the 20th century - the market crashed, unemployment skyrocketed, there was no money...But then, amid all these dark tidings for the economy, how did the small Austrian town of Wörgl manage to actually flourish and prosper economically? [It is called the "Wörgl Miracle"](#). In these harsh times for the economy, this town introduced an alternative currency which led to increased employment rate and the completion of local projects, such as new houses, ski jumps, bridges etc. Inflation and deflation were reported to be non-existent!

The Wörgl Miracle is no miracle at all - [alternative currencies have always existed](#) and continue to grow as a very strong social movement. They are here to remind us that even when all money dries up, we still have people - and people will always find a way.

With the "money-creation-party", the participants' awareness is raised that money is not the only means of exchange - but that anything we can offer can be used as a means of exchange.

Activity Type

A Game / Activity with the group, best with a big group of 30+ people, as part of a bigger conference / seminar / camp or whatever - where people will have the opportunity to convert the vouchers.

Duration

60 minutes – it is good to have it before a break, so that people can extend it individually.

Learning Outcomes

- To realise and use other means of exchange than money
- To experience a moneyless system

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

- Small pieces of paper to serve as alternative currency (you can also colour them in any colour to spice up the game)
- Pens

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Tuning in: Speaking about the importance that money has for all of us – not because of itself, but because of its power to be exchanged into everything. A lot of things depend on money - but this is due to the power we give to money as a means of exchange. But: we can create other means of exchange, if we want to!
2. Ask people to reflect on what their capacities are, what they can offer and what might be needed for other people – for the group, for the parents of the group-members, for other young people etc. Maybe they also have things or resources that others would like and don't have, like a nice T-shirt or leftover wood from a carpentry. Give them 5 minutes to think about this.
3. Now it is the moment to create your own money. Take the (coloured) papers and let the whole group decide on the name of the currency (it can be something funny, like Red Flying Elephant, no limits!), The coloured papers will serve as money. Allow some time for the participants to embellish these papers, maybe with a drawing or such like. These papers are worth a certain unit of what you offer (you decide how much!)
4. Examples of what you could offer: one backrub of 5 minutes, half an hour of foot-massage, half an hour of translation from English to your native language, half an hour of weeding your garden, surplus salad in summer-time, taking care of kids, private lessons in (...), fixing your bicycle's flat tire, kitten, walking other people's dogs...
5. Then the participants are asked to walk around in "the marketplace" and try to "sell" their services.. You can of course as well give them for free to someone. It's as fun as trading them against other bills.
6. Since during the trading phase you might get paper from other people, you can of course trade these bills as well.
7. The trading phase of the game can have an open end, or end at a certain time.

Resources

- www.en.wikipedia.org
- www.livingwithoutmoney.org

Reflection

- How many people really got into bartering/using this alternative currency system? How much was the option used to give the services away for free?
- After this experience, do you think it would be useful to establish some kind of exchange system in your youth-group?

Instructions for Submission

Upload a picture of the currency that the participants created and submit your answers to the questions from the Reflection section. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Barter Economy

Introduction

[Have you heard of that guy that swapped meat for tyres?](#) Well, it happened in Greece where barter economy is becoming more and more common because of the financial crisis. In simple terms, it all boils down to swapping - a moneyless system in which goods and services are swapped at negotiated rates. To be fair, these barter-based economic systems are one of the earliest monetary systems in recorded history.

But what would you do if there was simply no money readily available? If banks are putting restrictions on how much money you can withdraw and your magical plastic credit cards are nothing else but...well, useless plastic? Indeed, the same as the ingenuous Greeks, we then turn to the magic of holy exchange!

[“Graphic artists are exchanging designs for olive oil. Accountants swap advice for office supplies. In the agricultural heartland and on the Greek islands, informal bartering, which has historically helped communities survive, has intensified as more people exchange fruits, vegetables, other crops, equipment, clothing and services.”](#)

In this activity, we will try to experience the art of simply exchanging things. By doing this, we avoid using money or any other middleman. This is also a way to establish a direct relationship with the one providing / needing your services or goods.

Activity Type

Individual / Experiential

Duration

2 to 4 hours

Learning Outcomes

- To learn about the basic concept of bartering
- To experience the principles of bartering
- To understand the local possibilities for bartering in your area

Instructions

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Think about your profession. List your skills and competences. It's a good idea to list your thoughts on your education, profession, hobbies and skills that could be of interest to others. (ex: If you're an English teacher and you need help with your computer, try offering free English lessons to your computer geek friend!)

2. Do some research on the websites promoting bartering deals on the internet (Craigslist, etc.). Research so-called [time banks](#), if you have interest in exchanging services only. If there isn't one in your local area, you could be the pioneer and set up one!
3. Try to find bartering possibilities in your neighborhood. You might want to make an offer on the community message board.
4. Do not hesitate to ask about bartering opportunities when talking to local businesses. Come up with original fun ideas to propose and be prepared to frequently get a negative answer!
5. Make your first bartering deal.

Keep in mind when making a deal:

- At first, introduce the possible partner to the concept of bartering.
- Start small. Bartering with very valuable items and services involve a bigger risk. In any case, check the item / service before the deal to avoid disappointment.
- Be clear and detailed when it comes to describing the item or service. Include technical data and photos if needed.
- Make sure that the deal is beneficial for both parties. You can balance it out by adding extra services or smaller items.
- Remember to agree on the logistics and deadlines of the deal.

Resources

- [Wikipedia article on barter economy](#)
- [Would you survive? - bartering game for 4 - 8 players](#)
- [3 methods of bartering in detail](#)
- [How to barter anything?](#)
- www.europe.timebanking.org

Reflection

- What was the deal you made?
- What challenges did you face?
- What would you do differently next time?
- What is the potential of bartering in your life?

Instructions for Submission

Upload 1 photo from the thing you exchanged and submit your written reflection, so that your peers can give you feedback. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

A Future for Tourism?

Introduction

Have you ever traveled somewhere considering consciously what impact you had on the the environment and people in the host community? Did you fly, drive, use public transport or hitchhike? What did you consume on your travel and who produced the goods? Who owned the hotel where you stayed?

In recent years in particular, the term “sustainable” and “tourism” have been often paired up together. But here, we are not only discussing booking geo-thermal powered hotels. We must consider the environment and the people living in the host community. For starters, one could pay more attention to the transport used, travelling by train, sharing the car with at least 2 more persons... to fly less and maybe even hitch-hike. Consider investing a bit more money to buy local quality food, that empowers farmers and local vendors in the area to survive. Consider if the geo-thermal hotel that you have booked is owned by an international 5 star company. It is always better to support community-led hotels with local employees as then the host community benefits as well. [In Sierra Leone, the amazing story of one such local community-owned hotel that is investing some of the profits in the schools and healthcare system of the village is truly inspirational.](#) By providing sustainable accommodation to tourists, they actually managed to build more housing in the village for the homeless villagers! And instead of staying at a classic Western hotel, why not opt for staying at the villager’s house and go fishing with them? [The Internet era allows us to cut commissions, connect with locals offering accommodation and see the world and culture through their eyes.](#) These little changes in our habits are an important step towards caring for the planet, respecting people, nature and animals.

In this activity we will examine the positive and negative effects of tourism and look into how we can travel more sustainably and ethically.

Activity Type

Group / Experiential

Duration

1-2 hours

Learning Outcomes

- To identify issues associated with tourism development
- To explore how tourism can be used to contribute to sustainable development and a fairer society
- To create a sense of responsibility in the decisions we make as travellers

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

- Flip chart paper
- Marker pens

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Ask participants to think of the last place they traveled to, then ask them to think of some of the benefits of tourism in this particular place. Then ask them to think of some of the costs [Give 5 minutes for this].
2. Invite the participants to call out their answers and write them on a flip chart under social, cultural, ecological and economic themes so that everyone can see them [For support, refer to Table 1 for examples of benefits and costs of tourism as well as to the resources below under “Resources”. Give 20 minutes for this].
3. Split the participants into groups of 5 with each member representing one of the following stakeholder groups: local community, local hotels and restaurants, tourists, government, foreign investors.
4. In the groups, ask the participants to come up with planning strategies for one of the costs or benefits that emerged from the first part of the exercise either to minimize the negative impact or maximise the positive impact. Give the groups a sheet of flip-chart paper to map out their strategy. [Allow 30 minutes for this step].
5. Ask the groups to present their planning strategies to the wider group [Allow 5 minutes for each group to present, including questions].

Support Files

[Table 1. Benefits and costs of Tourism](#)

Reflection

- What were some of the issues of working with diverse stakeholders in the planning exercise?
- How do you think tourism could be used to contribute to sustainable development?
- How can you, as a tourist, maximise the positive impact you have when travelling?

Instructions for Submission

Upload a photo of your activity. Submit a short written summary of your answers to the questions from the Reflection section. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

The Workshop

RIGHT LIVELIHOOD

“Most of my parents' friends and most of my parents' friends' children also have degrees. This doesn't mean that they've managed to find the kind of work they wanted. Not at all; they went to university because someone, at a time when universities seemed important, said that in order to rise in the world, you had to have a degree. And thus the world was deprived of some excellent gardeners, bakers, antique dealers, sculptors, and writers.”

-Paulo Coelho



Introduction

Moustafa, social entrepreneur

Look at our gigantic socio-economic-cultural system. I call it a system because it's man-made. There isn't anything given about it, nothing in it that follows directly from natural law. It's man-made and therefore it can also be changed, even replaced. When you went to school, the education was designed to equip you with certain skills and knowledge, answering the needs of the system. Ultimately shaping you into a cog in a gigantic machinery. It's understandable, it makes sense. Because without people carrying those distinct intellectual resources, the system just won't work. And we as individuals don't have much choice, do we? Even if you disagree with the system, or if your passions are in a completely different direction, you need to survive, right? And you don't want to be left out, end up on the street or even be perceived as unsuccessful. Most of us, are therefore ultimately driven by fear and we do everything to conform our own ambitions to the needs of the system. “Try to fit in, try to love what you do, don't think too much!”, we tell ourselves. But at the end of the day there is a risk that we start scrutinizing ourselves and see just how much of our wishes and inherent drive we have compromised to be able to fit in. Just to fit in! And to see that can be rather painful.

When we were creating Bridgedale360, we decided the first thing to do is to refuse to just “fit in the system”, refuse to conform. We decided to dream of the possibility of a better world. Here, contrary to the old society, to dream is not a sin - it is a must. Of course, we were confronted with many challenges. How to do things differently this time? Can we lead a life that doesn't begin with the needs of the system, but rather with our own deep longing and the longings of the world? A life where we put people before profits? Are we able to perceive ourselves as co-creators of an organic, living whole, rather than cogs in a machinery? Can we be doing what we love and at the same time be beneficial for others?

This is exactly what we try to do, to combine something that is beneficial for us and humanity on the whole. Have you heard of social entrepreneurs? Bridgedale360 is all about social entrepreneurship; as a matter of fact, I would say most of us living here are some sort of social entrepreneurs! That is what you get when you combine Steve Jobs and Mother Teresa - a hybrid of business and social value creation. There are plenty of good examples where people have turned their passions and their wish for a better world into businesses. By doing this, they are transforming the system from the inside, adding new values and humanness to it. Instead of living in a system ruling us, we as humans should be free agents constantly co-creating and shaping our surrounding and the world we live in. And everyone is an entrepreneur! Because everyone has something genuine and valuable to offer. We just need to find it out for ourselves!

For these kinds of “projects” to work, where we combine our living with helping others and the planet, we need to constantly remind ourselves of what we seem to have forgotten in the old competitive society - mutual aid and cooperation among humans are of crucial importance for our survival. When creating Bridgedale360, we reinvented the (or rather went back to the true) meaning of “survival of the fittest”. In the old world, it was those who are the strongest and most competitive. Here, it is the other way around. Can you read the board at the entrance of the school? Yup, it is the inspiring words of Kropotkin guiding our Bridgedale360 youth: [“But if we resort to an indirect test, and ask Nature: “Who are the fittest: those who are continually at war with each other, or those who support one another?” we at once see that those animals which acquire habits of mutual aid are undoubtedly the fittest. They have more chances to survive, and they attain, in their respective classes, the highest development of intelligence and bodily organization.”](#)

Learning Outcomes

- To understand that there are different paths in your life
- To see possible alternative livelihoods
- To find your passion
- To connect your work to a resilient future

Find Your Secret Giant

Groups of three/ Experiential

30-45 minutes

- To get a sense of our own “Secret Giants”: our hidden potential
- To learn to look at others and see their potential as well
- To learn to speak to one another honestly and openly about what we see

Your Greatest Joy / The World’s Greatest Need

Individual or Group/ Theoretical

30 minutes to 1 hour

- To find one’s greatest joys and one’s greatest passions
- To think about, speak about, and get feedback on how these can be combined to find your ideal life path

Quest for a Crazy Entrepreneur

Individual / Theoretical

1 hour and more

- To see a social enterprise and connect to one such inspiring entrepreneurship project
- To gain inspiration from the variety of entrepreneurial ideas
- To gain an idea of possibilities and challenges in this business area

Design Your Dream Social Enterprise

Individual / Theoretical

< 2 hours

- To envision yourself as a social entrepreneur
- To establish a link between personal talents, interests, business opportunities and benefit for the society
- To gain inspiration from others and open up for collaboration

Find Your Secret Giant



[flickr photo](#) shared by [Andy Saxton3000](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY-NC-ND \) license](#)

Introduction

We all have a great potential to step into our full power and become the women and men that we imagine we can be. Each of us has a “Secret Giant” inside, just waiting to step out and be huge, to fulfill our greatest dreams. But most of us don’t know this giant, as its covered by fear, doubt, and our own feeling of normalcy. Only other people can see the giant fully, waiting inside us. It is possible to tell other people what their Giant is, so we can start to get a feel for it, and let it begin to emerge.

Activity Type

Groups of three/ Experiential

Duration

30-45 minutes

Learning Outcomes

- To get a sense of our own “Secret Giants”: our hidden potential
- To learn to look at others and see their potential as well
- To learn to speak to one another honestly and openly about what we see

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

- Chairs or pillows (comfortable places to sit)
- Pen or pencil and journal or notebook for writing it down afterwards
- Flip chart paper

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Invite participants to form groups of three.
2. Each person takes it in turns to be the 'receiver' while the other two participants tell them what they perceive their 'secret giant' to be.
3. The secret giant represents untapped potential. Maybe they are a true leader, creative, or deeply intuitive, they may feel they have the ability to be more assertive and confident. *[Allow 7 minutes per turn].*
4. After each turn, the receiver should write down what they heard.
5. Once all the participants have had their turn and written down their 'secret giant', invite the whole group to come together to share what they wrote down AND share based on the reflective questions below, recording key words or themes down on a flip chart so everyone can see.

Reflection

- Did your group's' interpretation of your 'secret giant' align with how you see yourself?
- Do you feel that there is any truth in what you heard?
- How do you feel you can cultivate this secret giant?
- How did you gain a sense of other people's secret giants?

Instructions for Submission

Upload a photo of the groups working and submit a short written reflection from Youth worker. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Author

Creative Commons - ySI4R Content Team (Adapted from an activity by Clinton Callahan, founder of Possibility Management)

Your Greatest Joy / The World's Greatest Need

Introduction

Each person has something that brings deep joy and pleasure to our lives. Whether it's making music, photography, reading, writing, acting, running, playing with children, being outside, cooking a meal, or doing math equations, we all have things that we love to do, which others don't like as much. We also have things that call to our heart, issues that create a longing for justice, for resolution, for action. Whether it is the global threat of rapid, human caused climate change, the plight of refugees, or the inadequate education systems around the world, these causes bring us a feeling that we must do something.

This activity mixes the knowledge of each person's greatest joy, with recognizing and seeing the world's greatest needs, to create the possibilities for finding one's passion and ideal life path.

Activity Type

Individual or Group/ Theoretical (with the intention of making experiences)

Duration

30 minutes to 1 hour

Learning Outcomes

- To find one's greatest joys and one's greatest passions
- To think about, speak about, and get feedback on how these can be combined to find your ideal life path

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

- Paper and pen for each participant

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Ask each participant to draw two vertical lines dividing their page into three. Then ask each participant to write in the left hand column of the page a list of their greatest joys (at the top of the list they write "My Greatest Joys". This includes anything they like to do, whatever that may be. The only requirement is that it is something they love and feel excited by or happy about. Examples include any of the activities listed in the introduction. Give them 5-10 minutes.

2. Ask each participant to write in the right hand column of the page (leave the middle blank) a list of the issues in the world (at the top of the column they write “The World’s Greatest Needs”). This is a list of the things that they care the most about, feel the most passion and concern for happening in the world right now. Examples include: poverty, gender equality, deforestation, ocean acidification/pollution, climate change, species extinction, fracking, lack of clean water, the conflict in Syria, Israel-Palestine, Congo etc. Give them 5-10 min.
3. Ask each participant to look at both lists and then begin to match their “Greatest Joys” with “the World’s Greatest Needs”, so that they can start to see the connections between what they like to do and what they care about. Examples include: writing songs about global poverty or pollution, teaching others about climate change, running a race to raise money for cures for cancer, cooking meals for people who need support, etc. Give each participant 5-10 minutes.
4. Have the participants break into groups of three and give each other feedback, support, and help. Sometimes it takes the help of another to see the possibilities, so this is a chance for them to help each other out, to find their possible life passion or career path, that they might not have thought of before.
5. Bring everyone together at the end and do a quick circle of what people’s personal passions, where their greatest joys meet the world’s greatest needs. Make sure the group applauds for each persons’ sharing, to give a sense of support and excitement about all the possibilities.

Reflection

- Was this a useful activity?
- Did participants feel inspired and/or excited by the activity?
- Did participants learn something new about themselves, or what they want to do with their lives?
- How would you do the activity differently in the future?

Instructions for Submission

Submit a summary of your group’s Greatest Joys/Needs lists, so that we can know all of the great ideas that were created. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Author

Creative Commons - ySI4R Content Team (The idea for this activity comes from the Awakening the Dreamer Symposium by the Pachamama Alliance (pachamama.org), but can be found on many other websites).

Quest for a Crazy Entrepreneur

Introduction

The mythos of the crazy entrepreneur is spread worldwide. Generally it's a male, an eccentric and stubborn character with genius ideas but that few others believe in...Until a few years later, when the success is already a fact. He's alone, and he's ready to sacrifice his life and other people's lives to realise his ideas. This figure is worshiped by our culture as a hero, a visionary, a half-god. Just think Steve Jobs.

The problem with this mythical figure is that he's just a bit too selfish. In the classical image of the entrepreneur, his motivation comes from achieving success, fame, making money and outsmarting the competitors, together with a manic desire for having his ideas materialized in the world. To do something that is positive for the world is not part of the equation. But in the 21st century a new type of an entrepreneur is stepping forward. It's somebody, a man or a *woman*, carrying the same ingenuity, passion and drive as the old type but that is primarily motivated by social matters. This new entrepreneur perceives the company as a vehicle for creating a better and fairer world, rather than for personal gain.

The new type is called the social entrepreneur and since the last decade they can be found everywhere. Some are running successful international companies with hundreds of employees while others are owners of cafés and bookshops. But they all carry a similar message: We care for one another and for the world!

In this exercise we'll be trying to discover the social entrepreneurs in our proximity. How can they be found? How can they inspire us? Do we have our own crazy business ideas that we thought were too crazy? Well, maybe these people can help us see that much more is possible than we might have thought!

Activity Type

Individual / Theoretical

Duration

1 hour and more

Learning Outcomes

- To see a social enterprise and connect to one such inspiring entrepreneurship project
- To gain inspiration from the variety of entrepreneurial ideas
- To gain an idea of possibilities and challenges in this business area

Instructions

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Pick a business that you like. You might need to search on the internet. Base your search on following criteria:

- a) It's about sustainability, social responsibility, green thinking in some aspects at least
 - b) It's located in your region or country.
 - c) It's operating in real-life.
 - d) It's innovative or somewhat original.
2. What is it about this business that makes you curious? Which questions would you like to ask them? Maybe you have your own sustainable business idea (for inspiration, for instance see the following activities: "[The rubbish entrepreneur](#)", "[Design your dream social enterprise](#)" and "Your greatest joy / The world's greatest need") and would need counselling on how to realise your idea. Do you have some old business idea about effecting positive change in society that could be turned into social entrepreneurship? (While looking, are there any other business ideas popping up in your head? Think out of the box! For your info: Thinking of such questions is already the first step into becoming your own social entrepreneur. Remember that every successful business starts with a bold idea and a person asking the right questions!)
 3. Connect to the chosen entrepreneurship to explore and to answer the questions you may have. Try to see both the pros and cons with the business. How much is it living up to the ideal as social entrepreneurship? Consider connecting in these ways:

Calling on phone or Skype.

 - a) Visiting the entrepreneurship.
 - b) Talking to the CEO and employees.
 - c) Doing a one-day (or more) volunteering or job-shadowing.
 4. Now you might have gotten to know more, saw things that you liked and maybe things you didn't and that could be improved. Consider asking the company/CEO/contact person, if they want feedback on things you have seen and you feel like sharing about. Businesses have blind spots (just like people) - and might appreciate some fresh insight.

Reflection

- What is the service / product that the business is providing?
- What are the innovative aspects about it?
- How does the business embody sustainability?
- Was there anything that surprised or fascinated you about the business?
- How did you do the research? Was it easy to find the project?
- What ideas / opportunities about sustainable entrepreneurship have you discovered that you didn't know before?

Instructions for Submission

Submit your written reflection, so that your peers can give you feedback. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Design Your Dream Social Enterprise

Introduction

“People before profits”! But in the rat race of profit-making nowadays, is this yet another utopian dream - can we truly put people before profits and still earn enough to make a living? This is exactly what we call a social enterprise - a business motivated by effecting positive change in society and its environment. It can be just about anything, the sole condition is that we are put people and the environment first! Have you heard of Sophia Klumpp, the Canadian who is praised as the woman keeping school girls in school in Uganda? Her story is simple: Sophia ran out of tampons while in Uganda and could not easily find more where she was. She experienced the hardships of many African girls: “We soon realised that local girls were managing with local newspaper, rags and bark each month and often not going to school at all for the whole week of their period”. So Sophia went on to create [Afripad - a revolutionary social enterprise that produces reusable \(washable\) sanitary pads while using pedal-operated sewing machines! The social enterprise is currently the biggest employer in the area!](#)

Indeed, we can put people and the environment first and still earn a decent living. We can be living the dream *and* serving humanity. And what place is better to start than sustainability? In this activity, we will familiarise ourselves with the concept of social enterprise and dare design our own!

Warning! This activity can unleash your entrepreneurial talents and permanently make you happy!

Activity Type

Individual / Theoretical

Duration

<2 hours

Learning Outcomes

- To envision yourself as a social entrepreneur
- To establish a link between personal talents, interests, business opportunities and benefit for the society
- To gain inspiration from others and open up for collaboration

Instructions

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Familiarise yourself with concepts like [Social Entrepreneurship and Transition Enterprise.](#)
2. Decide which business idea you will work on. Go for a long walk, do some brainstorming / brainwriting, meditation, etc. if needed. Consider doing the activity “Your greatest joy /

- the world's greatest need" under the Workshop module. Another way to get inspired could be to check out www.kickstarter.com or some other crowd funding sites. They are full of more or less crazy business ideas, many of them sustainable or ethical.
3. Create a presentation of your business idea including the following points. Try to include as many as possible. Plus, include other information that might be relevant to convince others to support your idea.
 - a) Name of the project
 - b) Service / products it will be providing. What would it cost?
 - c) Design of the prototype if applicable.
 - d) Describe the innovative aspects about the concept.
 - e) Describe how the business embodies sustainability?
 - f) How would you organise the initial funding? (Check alternative funding methods on the internet, like crowdfunding)
 - g) What is the estimated time to become profitable?
 - h) What is your marketing strategy?
 4. Think and design how are you going to describe your project to others, in two ways:
 - a) [Elevator pitch](#): this helps you to distill the essence of your project so that is very clear to others and catches their interest. It is also a very good exercise for you to really know what is the main basis and focus of your project
 - b) [Extended project pitch](#): in case someone is interested in getting to know your project better or if you have the opportunity to present it somewhere, it is good to prepare a longer version of your elevator pitch where you show more details.
 5. Pitching - pitch your idea to friends and to people that you trust, individuals or groups. Ask for questions.
 6. Feedback and possibilities:
 - a) Try this way of receiving feedback and seeing more possibilities: Encourage people to give you feedback/possibilities ("Please give me feedback on my ideas.") Remain open and appreciate that feedback adds value.
 - b) Now it's important that you keep quiet!
 - c) Let one person talk until there is a natural end.
 - d) To encourage further valuable feedback you ask: "Is there anything else on your mind that you might have left out?" Keep quiet again.
 - e) No matter what they say, note it down. It might sound weird in the beginning, but is valuable.
 - f) Allow each person to give feedback a second time. When finished, say: "Thank you!"
 7. See the peers as potential "investors" in your business idea. The investment can come in many forms such as money, ideas, materials or co-working.

*OPTIONAL

Choose an enterprise or organisation with a vision or cause that you feel passionate about. Keep in mind that it has to be connected to social entrepreneurship, so combining social justice/common good/sustainability etc with earning a decent living! This can be a non-profit, for-profit entity, co-operative, mutual organization, a disregarded entity, a social business, a benefit corporation, a community interest company or a charity organization. Try to connect with the enterprise or organisation via email, skype or even by scheduling a meeting in person. Try to organise a field visit to experience first-hand the type of work these inspiring people do and talk to them! Don't be afraid to ask as many questions as you wish - they will appreciate it and you are there to learn and grow! If possible, try to do a one-day (or more) internship, volunteering or job-shadowing! The experience can be life-changing!

For more inspiration, check out the activity "[Quest for a crazy entrepreneur](#)".

Resources

- [An inspiring video to discover an entrepreneur in yourself](#)
- [Article “What Are The Best Ways To Think Of Ideas For A Startup?”](#)
- [The definition and principles of a transition-orientated enterprise](#)
- [A list of inspiring transition-orientated enterprise case studies around the Europe](#)
- [Transition Enterprise Handbook](#)
- [Global Sustainability Jam](#)
- [WeTheTrees permaculture project crowdfunding platform](#)
- [The Awesome Foundation 1000\\$ grants](#)
- [These 8 selling tips are the only sales training you’ll ever need](#)
- www.balticecovillages.eu
- [Project ideas](#)

Reflection

- How does the idea connect to your passion and talents?
- What would your personal role and involvement be?
- Which “needs of the world” would the business fulfil, if realised?
- How is your business idea sustainable and ethical?
- What are the risks and opportunities?
- What support do you need to move forward?

Instructions for Submission

Upload your presentation (1 photo) and submit a short written reflection, so that your peers can give you feedback. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

The Compost Pile

WASTE, CLOSED-LOOP CYCLES & RECYCLING

“Where is away?”
-Julia Butterfly Hill

“There is no waste in nature.”
-Unknown



Introduction

Leticia, rubbish entrepreneur

This is a very easy subject. Easy to see and to solve. Well, in principle. Of course reality has turned out to be, hmm... unpredictable. I will get to that in a minute. Think about the words first. What is waste? It is stuff you do not need anymore. Chew on that sentence for a while. *Stuff you do not need anymore. Stuff*, any stuff can become other stuff if you allow for flexibility. *You* don't need it anymore, but others might. *Anymore*, why? Did it already break? Is there a way to fix it? In any case, in the long run, waste is not an option. Because we live on a tiny planet with a lot of people. Throwing a wrapper over your shoulder might get it out of sight, but it's not going to go up in smoke... well, it might, but that will cost you your atmosphere.

When you still lived out there, in your cosy on-grid stinking western town, you could fill a bin with waste on a calm day, a container on a bad day. This is not strange if you consider that even a toothbrush is packaged in two thick layers of plastic. In the meanwhile, in the Pacific Ocean a floating plastic soup is growing, consisting of billions of water bottles and toilet brushes, all once discarded but not processed. Perhaps they bounced on the outside of the bin and ended up in the canal. The ecosystem is not sending its regards for this, if you would like to know. Don't be

surprised when you choke on a plastic bit while eating a fish you thought was safe because you caught it yourself.

In the meanwhile, farmers sprayed their land with artificial manure, causing the groundwater to turn all kinds of funny colours. Institutions then cleaned this water with high technology and much energy, transported it to our homes, where some of it was drunk, and then used the rest to flush our personal manure down the toilet. The plants in the window screamed with horror when observing this absurdity. Everything ended up in a big pile, which some day, you may find on your way, if you start to wander around. You will recognise it by the chemical odour and the orange soup seeping from the cracks in the ground. Turn around and run, that's my advice!

In Bridgedale360, we have gone about it quite differently. Just look at the compost toilet in front of you. That's where we put our manure. We separate the poo and the urine. The urine is an absolutely amazing fertilizer; it just needs to be distilled with water. And don't pour it straight on your plants! We bring the poo to long term composting at the side of the woods there. After two years it has become excellent nutritious compost to put straight on the fields. The veggies will grow without any artificial stuff, and all the inputs come from around the area. That's what I call a closed loop system. Besides, we're not wasting water or energy to flush away our manure. Heh, why would we ever do that? And what about clothes? I remember back in my old town there was a "recycling centre" to sort out the garbage. There were always two containers full of clothes! Every single day, and this was a small town... and most of them were perfectly fine. Here we recycle our stuff of course, but you will rarely find any clothes. Used clothes that are fine generally go to the community wardrobe. It's great when you put something there and months later you see someone walking around in your old sweater!

Have you already visited the community café? It's called "Waste actually", right beside the Town Hall in the centre. Every single teaspoon in there is waste. The funny looking furniture, the bar, the cider bottles, the windows, the roof. Waste! And the art on the walls. Waste! There are always different local artists exhibiting there, all bringing their garbage! A friend of mine that's an artist, went back to her old town and sold a bunch of welded together tin cans to some art collector. For a lot of money. Talk about increasing value.

But of course, for us, it is not just about increasing value or even saving the planet from piles of garbage. These factors do play a big role, but let's not forget the human factor. As someone that grew up in the slums of Brazil, we would go scavenging in the landfill sites with other kids quite often. We used to come across wonderful items that were considered garbage. What started as a simple altruistic act of collecting sofas or cups from the landfills so that we can give them to poor communities or use them for ourselves - has now turned into an entire rubbish entrepreneurship career. In Bridgedale360, we run pay-as-you-feel courses with a special focus on the poor so as to empower them to turn garbage into things that might actually earn them a sustainable living - and of course, earn all of us sustainable world as well!

Learning Outcomes

- To get an expanded notion of waste management and recycling possibilities
- To be able to separate different kinds of garbage
- To get a notion of the reparability of products
- To become critical about the lifespan of a product

Design Your Own Compost Toilet

Individual / Theoretical

1 day

- To learn the principles of human waste management
- To enhance design skills
- To learn about different compost toilet approaches

How to Make a Compost Heap

Individual or group / Experiential

1 day for establishing

- To learn the basic principles of compost and soil making
- To gain awareness about the food waste and its place in waste management
- To get a notion about nutrient recycling and closed-loop systems

The Buffalo

Group / Experiential

1-2 hours

- To understand how interconnected we are to the natural world
- To realise how seemingly simple objects are related to a complex web of other things

The Rubbish Entrepreneur

Individual / Experiential

A few hours/days

- To change our relationship to and redefine our definition of resources and waste, seeing the potential beauty in what was otherwise thought of as useless

What a Dump!

Group or Individual / Experiential

1 day

- To experience how waste is processed in our neighbourhood / region
- To learn about the basic steps of municipal waste management
- To gain awareness of waste management challenges and impacts

Design Your Own Compost Toilet



[flickr photo](#) shared by [rightee](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY \) license](#)

Introduction

Maybe no other invention represents the modern lifestyle as strikingly as [the flushing toilet](#). Imagine when it was first introduced back in the 16th century! How the huge sanitary problem that all urban areas experienced until then just disappeared, into the ground. Gone! What a relief, what a convenience, what an achievement in hygiene, health and human civilisation! Today, it never comes to our mind that it could be otherwise, or what happens with the stuff that we flush away. The reality is that our modern lifestyle assumes a gigantic societal machinery working for us, making our lives convenient but that also detaches us from the processes that we're part of and makes us oblivious to how we affect the world.

In past civilisations, human excrement used to be a crucial resource. In China and Japan (and elsewhere, including in the UK where they were/are known as "Night soil men") there was a special occupation for trading the excrement produced in the cities with the farmers as indispensable manure for their fields. In this closed loop system, the nutrients were always going back into the soil and once again turned into new crops to feed the urban population. The flaw of the flushing toilet is that it's not a closed loop system and instead produces a lot of waste. [Using fresh water for flushing uses about 27 % of the fresh water usage in an average American home.](#) And the toxic cocktail of freshwater and excrement then has to be treated by using harmful chemicals before it's neutralised, while the end product is not of much value anymore. For anyone having a garden or living by the country-side, a compost toilet is highly useful. By taking care of the excrement in the right way, it can be used as a fertiliser, just as ordinary compost!

In this exercise we will design our own compost toilet. It can be a lot of fun and there are many inventive examples, much cozier than any flushing toilet could ever be!

Activity Type

Individual / Theoretical

Duration

1 day

Learning Outcomes

- To learn the principles of human waste management
- To enhance design skills
- To learn about different compost toilet approaches

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

- Everything you need for creating a visual presentation of your design - it can be a real-life or virtual model, drawing, poster, etc.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Do some research of compost toilet concept. Familiarize yourself with at least the following aspects:
 - a) visual appearance
 - b) various types of compost toilets
 - c) urine separation
 - d) composting and usage of the humanure
 - e) safety and hygiene
2. Think about a compost toilet that would fit your lifestyle, circumstances, aesthetical needs best and create a design of it in a free form. Present the following aspects:
 - visual appearance, location
 - a) capacity - how many people would use it?
 - b) how would you ensure the composting process?
 - c) where would you use the compost?
 - d) safety and hygiene
 - e) legal aspects

Resources

- [The Moneyless Man about compost toilets](#)
- [Wikipedia about compost toilets](#)
- [Practical guide in building and maintaining a compost toilet #1](#)
- [Practical guide in building and maintaining a compost toilet #2](#)

- [Practical guide in building and maintaining a compost toilet #3](#)
- [The Humanure Handbook](#)

Reflection

- How has your opinion and knowledge about compost toilets changed?
- What are possibilities to realize your design in real life?
- Which aspects of your design you see as possible problems / weaknesses?

Instructions for Submission

Upload 1 photo of your compost toilet design and submit your written reflection, so that your peers can give you feedback. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

How to Make a Compost Heap



[flickr photo](#) shared by [Willowtree2005](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY-NC \) license](#)

Introduction

Composting is one of the best examples of nutrient cycles, the reusing of nutrients from dead material to support new life. Yes, the simple compost heap which humanity has been using for thousands of years is a perfect tool for turning organic waste into the rich fertilizer needed for growing food.

Let's learn the basic principles of composting, using just the organic waste you already produce, right in our kitchen. When discarded in a traditional way, through the communal garbage system, a huge percentage of our food ends up in landfills. Instead, we will be turning this into a free self-made fertilizer that works for everything in our garden, even if that is just a window box!

The truth is that there is no one-compost-heap-fits-everyone solution. The composting solution you need is going to be absolutely unique according to your lifestyle and needs. So let's start by creating a space for true creativity!

Activity Type

Individual or group / experiential

Duration

1 day for establishing

Learning Outcomes

- To learn the basic principles of compost and soil making
- To gain awareness about the food waste and its place in waste management
- To get a notion about nutrient recycling and closed-loop systems

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

- Any pre-fabricated or self-made compost bin, if available.
- Compost ingredients.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Observe and assess your lifestyle and composting abilities. This can be done individually or as a team. The following guiding questions might help:
 - a) Do you produce enough composting material for a large heap or just for a small bucket?
 - b) Where can you do the composting? Your kitchen, garden, balcony, allotment site etc?
 - c) For what would you use the ready compost? Houseplants only, gardening?
2. Decide on the size, location and construction of the compost heap / bin.
3. Just follow the guidelines below!
4. Take regular pictures from beginning to end (of your plants!)

The main guidelines of composting:

- The compost heap should be in a place with lots of shade.
- Keep your browns and greens in equal balance! (*Browns are dead leaves, branches, hay, straw, paper, twigs etc. Greens are grass clippings, vegetable waste, fruit scraps, barnyard animal manure, coffee grounds etc. A good indicator for the right balance is when compost is warm and has no ammonia-like smell*).
- Keep the heap aerated and wet. In order to do so, you might add a layer of loose branches at the bottom. Soak the newly-built pile, adding some water occasionally when the heap gets dry.
- Make it like a layered cake. Try to add waste material in thin layers of different structure / density. For example, grass clippings followed by straw and vegetable waste on top. Try to get ingredients chopped as small as possible to ensure faster composting.
- Keep these things off of your pile!: meat, fish, eggs, dairy products, oily foods or grease, bones, cat and dog waste. Diseased plants and seeds of weedy plants. Not only do these things not compost well, they also attract rats!
- The compost is ready when it is black, loose, earthy and smells good. There might be still some coarse pieces within. You may put them into compost again.

Resources

- [Composting guide for beginners](#)
- [Detailed composting guide for advanced users. Includes a table of possible green and brown ingredients.](#)
- [Various types of compost bins](#)
- [Everything You Know About Composting is Wrong: Mike McGrath at TEDxPhoenixville](#)

Reflection

- What challenges did you face?
- What would you suggest to your friends, willing to create a compost heap? Try to name at least one core principle from your experience.
- How could you improve your compost heap in the future?

Instructions for Submission

Upload a picture of your heap in Moodle and submit your written reflection (so that your peers can give you feedback). Instructions on how to upload a picture in Moodle or submit your written reflection can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

The Buffalo



[flickr photo](#) shared by [Shohei Hanazaki](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY-NC-ND \) license](#)

Introduction

Allow your imagination to travel, to travel back in time and out across The Great Plains (what is now known as the central United States of America), to a time when tribes of the Native American people called this land home. Specifically draw your imagination to what was arguably the most important thing to them, whatever tribe they came from, the buffalo. The killing of a buffalo was about more than just providing food for the Native Americans, it was an integral ingredient in almost every part of their life. Their relationship with the animal can be used as an almost perfect example of the embodiment of sustainability. Their ability to create multiple things (products) from one buffalo (source) is the complete inverse from today's civilisations (using multiple sources to create one product).

Activity Type

Group / Experiential

Duration

1-2 hours

Learning Outcomes

- To understand how interconnected we are to the natural world
- To realise how seemingly simple objects are related to a complex web of other things

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

- One modern processed food (we will be using the example of a bag of crisps throughout the activity)
- Flipchart and pen
- Blank paper
- Drawing utensils

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Tell the whole group some form of the following story; "We are a tribe of Native Americans lost on The Great Plains, our emergency supplies are running low and it has been several days since we ate properly, we are starting to get seriously hungry! We know that in order to survive long enough to have any chance of finding our way home, we must find and kill a buffalo as soon as possible. Just as all hope is almost lost, finally, in the distance, the sound of thunder! Clouds of dust! A herd of buffalo! We are all very good hunters, so before we know it, we are sitting around a campfire nice and full after a delicious meal of buffalo steak. Most of the buffalo, however, is yet to be used. We are thankful for the gift of the buffalo and know we must wisely use as much of it as we can. We will not waste any of it."
 2. Now ask the group to propose what else can be done with the rest of the buffalo, what else it can provide us with apart from food. As the group shouts out possibilities, write the answers on the flip chart. *[Allow 5-10 minutes]*
 - a) If the group is struggling or stuck, have a look at the picture [here](#) and suggest one or two options to the participants.
 3. Now break the group up into smaller groups of 3-4 people. Each group should have:
 - a) Drawing utensils and paper.
 - b) A bag of crisps or other processed food.
- d) Instruct the group to draw the bag of crisps in the centre of their page, then to take a few moments to explore and think about it. Think about its origins, how it was produced, its current use and form, its destiny and full life circle. **Now we are ready to create this object's story. The central question at this point is: What did it take to get this object to the place where it sits in front of you. Don't leave anything out!**
- e) The groups should draw aspects of the object's story and then connect them to the object in the middle by a line. *[Leave 20 minutes for whole exercise]*
 - a) A good starting point is to break the object down into its individual components (i.e. the bag, salt, other ingredients, crisps themselves, preservatives) and then to trace the origins of each individually.
 - b) From there you can start to branch out. e.g The crisps come from a potato. The potato is traced (connected by a line) to a farmer, a tractor, the sun, water, soil

- etc. The tractor itself then requires oil, water, fuel and metal to be produced etc etc.
- c) Encourage the group to be as precise and thorough as possible, taking into account transportation of individual ingredients to centralised locations, the cooking process, packaging, pesticides, fertilisation etc. Everything must come from somewhere.
6. Bring the group back together and invite them to discuss, giving time for each group to look at the others drawings and comparing them to their own. Did anyone come up with anything the others missed? Do they all look the same? How is this different from the Native Americans relationship with their food, in general and the buffalo in particular?

Reflection

- Can you give any examples of modern situations where multiple products are made from one source?
- How would it change our world if we would use the 'buffalo' principle in most production?

Instructions for submission

Upload 1 photo of any group's drawings and submit some key messages from the group discussions in Moodle (so that your peers can give you feedback). Instructions on how to upload a picture in Moodle or submit the key messages can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Author

Creative Commons - ySI4R Content Team (adaptation of Chris Uhls ["Transforming the Ordinary"](#))

The Rubbish Entrepreneur

Introduction

Zero Waste is a concept which may seem completely unrealistic to many, a philosophy of redesigning the consumption style and the life cycle of resources so that all waste is reused, nothing is thrown away or discarded. While it is quite uncommon in our societies, there are some working examples of people living this way already, proving that it can be done! The idea of unusable waste is a purely human one, we only need to look out of our windows to be inspired by nature's natural Zero Waste cycles, reusing and recycling everything.

This activity explores how we can make use of the materials that are commonly thrown away as waste, through a process called 'Upcycling'. Upcycling adds value to an object or material that would otherwise be thought of as worthless, this can be done through combining it with other 'waste' or even just finding a new use for it without much modification! Making a bag from an old bike tire, creating art from old vinyl records, using 'scrap' building materials to build furniture and turning organic waste into fertilizer are all examples of 'Upcycling'.

Now it is time to be creative! Time to turn so-called waste into something useful!

Activity Type

Individual / Experiential

Duration

It can take a few hours or a few days

Learning Outcomes

- To change our relationship to and redefine our definition of resources and waste, seeing the potential beauty in what was otherwise thought of as useless

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

- Trash
- Tools to create and repair

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Get inspired! Either individually or in a group, do some research online, read some articles, watch some videos to find some examples of Upcycling that make you feel inspired. Feel free to use the resources provided under the Resources section below.
2. Visit some local recycling centres, dumps or scrap yards, have a look around to find things you can use to upcycle. Feel free to come up with your own ideas or just copy

something cool you found in your research. *[Note: It is always a good idea to check with where you are going, there are often different rules about what you can take for free etc. Remember you can always just use 'rubbish' from your own or friend's and families' homes/work.]*

3. Now it's time to create! Even if you have decided to copy something you found online, it is encouraged to allow yourself to be creative and make your creation personal to you! Remember it is always favorable to work in a team and if you get stuck, feel free to look through the resources again and alter your idea as you go! Especially the first time round, this may take quite a while, but in the end hopefully you will have something to be very proud of.
4. Once done, take the time for reflection. Was there any part of the process that could have been more efficient? How will you do it differently next time?
5. Reflect on the questions: "Can I use 'up-cycling' in my work?" "Can it be a job or business in its own right?" Debate the answer with yourself or in your group. Think who could need the object and how they would use it. How much would it potentially cost or what could it be exchanged for?

Resources

- www.upcyclethat.com
- www.homestead-and-survival.com
- www.facebook.com
- www.hipcycle.com
- www.pinterest.com
- www.boredpanda.com
- Movie: Waste Land (2010)
- Look up 3R principles (Reduce - Reuse - Recycle)

Reflection

- Why do we need to recycle and upcycle?
- What was the most astonishing aspect of the process?
- Do you know somebody having upcycling as their job?
- Do you think it is a useful skill to make new things from waste materials?

Instructions for submission

Upload 1 photo of your creation and submit a promotion text on it in Moodle (so that your peers can give you feedback). The promotion text on your creation should explain why other people should buy it. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

What a Dump!

Introduction

“Feed people, not landfills”, different campaigns keep urging. [Indeed, up to 50% of the food we eat gets thrown away in the garbage by consumers in the US and Europe. But isn't this ironic in a world with approximately 795 million people that do not have enough food to live a healthy life?](#)

If we visit a landfill in many countries, especially in developing countries, we will inevitably come across children foraging the dump for food. And in these mountains of waste, there is actually really good stuff! From nice picnic tables to awesome comfy sofas - it is all there!

Every piece of the garbage travels a road, either of fast or slow destruction. OR - the road of reuse.

So this is going to be a detective story. In this activity, we are going to find out what happens to the waste we have just thrown away in the bin before it ends up in the landfill.

Activity Type

Group or Individual / Experiential

Duration

1 day

Learning Outcomes

- To experience how waste is processed in our neighbourhood / region
- To learn about the basic steps of municipal waste management
- To gain awareness of waste management challenges and impacts

Instructions

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Decide which things you want to spy on - is it going to be a specific item (or a few) going to your trash bin?
2. Follow! We suggest using legal means - like, contacting the local waste management company and making an appointment to familiarize yourself with the waste management procedures. It can be turned into an educational family trip or excursion with your friends. If visiting the facility does not work out, do a telephone interview or research on the internet to find out as much information about the destiny of the waste as possible.
3. Try to reach the final arrival point of the product you are spying on - whether it is a dump or an incineration facility or the place where it is transformed into a new product.

Resources

- [The Story of Stuff project article: Visiting the Dump](#)

Reflection

- Write a short story about the journey of your waste.
- What was your experience like with the local waste management company?
- What could be improved in the local waste management?
- Did you get any surprises about the journey of your waste, compared to the picture you had before?

Instructions for Submission

Submit your written reflection and upload a photo of the final arrival point of your trash, so that your peers can give you feedback. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

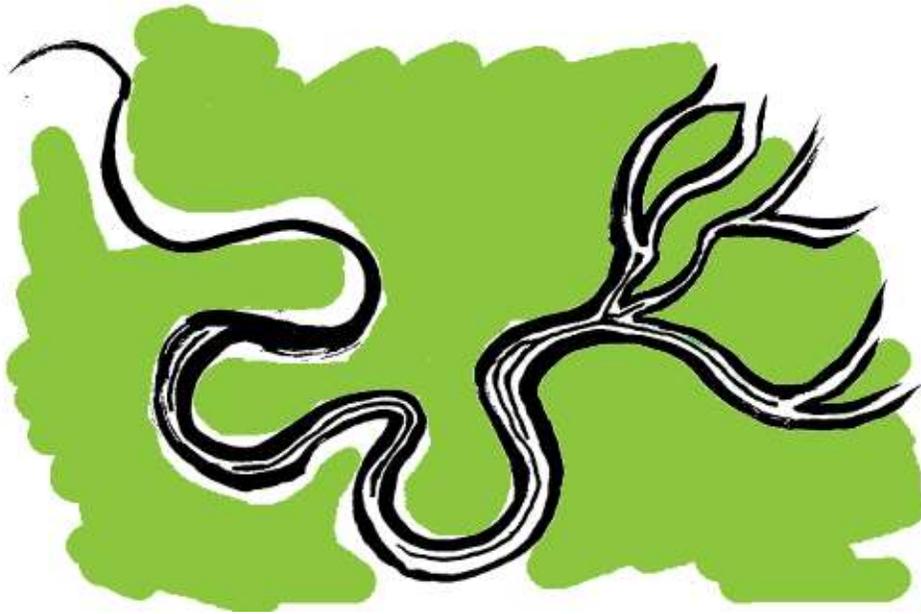
The River and the Sea

WATER & ITS NATURAL FLOW

"1 billion people in the developing world don't have access to safe, drinking water."

"Nearly 1 out of every 5 deaths of children under 5 is due to a water-related disease."

"Water is Life."



Introduction

Lovisa, an old lady, one of the first settlers

When we first came here, oh my! It was many years ago now. When we first came there was no river here. Just a muddy groove in the ground. Of course we understood that once there had been a river. One day there was a massive rainfall; the day after there was plenty of water in the groove, and the water moved fast and violently. Soon the river flooded the place. We had to run with our things; some of our early settlements were destroyed by the water. Luckily no one got harmed. Of course we moved our camp, up on the hill there. But even though we solved the problem with the flooding, we still didn't have proper access to water, especially for our gardens, since the river was dried out most of the time. So we started to inspect our surroundings. Most of the land was barren, absolutely bone dry, and most of what seemed to have been forests had been turned into huge clear-cuttings. By whom, we still don't know. We slowly started to connect the dots. One day my husband came across a book by Viktor Schauberger, and from the first sentence I couldn't put it down. I was mesmerized.

He viewed water as ["a living entity which he termed <the blood of mother earth>, which he perceived as being born in the womb of the forest; water had a life and death"](#). Clearly, I had already seen that the forests were gone and understood that it had a connection to our droughts and floodings... And I understood how ignorant I had been, how ignorant we all had been. Surely I had always loved water, the rivers and the lakes, but I didn't really know anything about water. Reading this man, who had spent a big part of his life in the forest, witnessing first-hand how the water behaved, with such love for this subject and with such vision, gave me the goosebumps, literally! Water, as we all know, is an absolute prerequisite for life on this planet. You could say that water is life, and water is alive. Everywhere where there is healthy water, nature is thriving. We are taught in school that water can be explained by the formula "H₂O", an inanimate chemical compound. But if you drink such water, sterilised, distilled, for a longer period of time, [it's actually poisonous](#). It's because water in this form will absorb anything it comes in contact with, and thus will soon leach out the minerals and trace elements in our bodies and eventually kill us. Such water, like a growing child, is not in a position to give, only to take.

For water to be healthy, it needs to be kept cool, devoid of excessive sunlight, and it needs to be in constant motion. The function of water is to give life, and to do so it has to move slowly, so that it can be enjoyed by more life-forms before it eventually reaches the ocean. How is this happening in nature? Exactly, through the forest. From the forest, water begins its long life-giving cycle. With its natural motion, it maintains its health and purity, absorbing all the necessary trace-elements and minerals from the forest. Once appearing at the surface, as a fresh spring, it has already become the nurturing beverage for which all life is longing.

Do you see the forest over there? Before, that was a big ugly clear-cutting. Now we have a forest, and thus we have a river all year round. Before, when the ground was bare, it became dry and warm. In that state it's not able to absorb water, which resulted in rapid surface run-off. It didn't recharge the groundwater; instead the water quickly ran off to the river in a horrible condition... I read that there are about a billion people today without daily access to healthy water. It's not at all surprising when most of the world's virgin forests have been cut down or turned into forest plantations. If we want to live, we better understand water and start planting trees for our very lives. Of course we should also take a close look at how we're using water in our daily lives. Here in Bridgedale360 we know the value of water, and we always try to use it wisely. No flushing toilets of course! And when you take a shower here, the water won't just disappear with the pipes into some treatment plant, no. Instead, it will continue its journey through our gardens and fruit forests. Sooner or later it will reach the ocean, but with a revitalised eco-system behind it. Then there is food. Agriculture and livestock consume an enormous amount of water. Can you imagine that you need [15,000 litres of water to produce one kilo of beef?](#) Maybe in a country where water is scarce. That is about 60 bathtubs of water! Think about that next time you have a bath. Or I mean the next time that you're having beef. Oh, I'm getting old!

These days I sit a lot here, just watching the water pass by. Often I imagine its journey from raindrops to the underground caverns of the forest, making its way while animating all vegetation, trees and animals around it, until it eventually reaches the river, passing by my gaze within the fraction of a second. But every single drop has its unique journey and its unique story to tell, if you're willing to listen.

Learning Outcomes

- To understand the interconnection between humans, nature, and water systems
- To understand your own water footprint
- To reduce your personal water consumption
- To understand water as a whole planet system
- To understand the biological function(s) of water
- To have a personal experience of water

Measure Your Water Footprint

Experiential / Individual

3 days

- To learn how to decrease our water footprint

Pee on Your Peas!

Experiential - Group/Individual

As long as you enjoy it!

- To learn how to use urine as a fertiliser

The Water Cycle

Group or Individual / Experiential and Theoretical

2 hours

- To gain an understanding of a full, natural water cycle
- To understand the human influence on [the water cycle](#)
- To see water as a planetary wide system

What's it the Sea?!

Group / Experiential

90 minutes

- To increase awareness about the major ocean pollutants and the consequences of polluting the oceans
- To understand our impact on the ocean on an individual level and consider what can be done differently

Measure Your Water Footprint

Introduction

What do you think of when you hear the term “water footprint”? Do you think of the water you drink from the tap? The water you use for doing the dishes or for showering? This is the so-called “direct water footprint”, but the vast majority of our water footprint is actually composed of the “virtual water footprint” - the water usage that is inherent in our consumption. This can be just about anything, from the jeans we buy, all the burgers we eat, the heating in our homes, the transport we use and even the water saved from the paper and plastics we recycle!

Our new [cotton T-shirt costs 700 gallons of water](#). It takes over [80 000 gallons to produce the finished steel for one car](#). On top of that, there is the gasoline in our cars; it takes a lot of water to produce gasoline! Approximately [1 to 2.5 gallons of water for one gallon of gasoline](#)! And did you know that the [food we eat comprises over 2/3 of our entire water footprint](#)? Indeed! This is especially true for meat - [a single pound of beef takes 1800 gallons of water](#)! This is so because of the water spent on the beef’s food (growing the grass, forage), as well as the water the beef consumes itself.

Becoming aware of how we use and reuse things as well as cutting down on our consumption of goods are important steps towards reducing our water footprint. We can [save up to 3.5 gallons of water by just recycling one daily newspaper](#)! In this activity, we’ll try to explore different ways of decreasing our water footprint.

Activity Type

Experiential / Individual

Duration

3 days

Learning Outcomes

- To learn how to decrease our water footprint

Instructions

1. Do research on the internet on how you could save water. This should include both direct water-saving and virtual water-saving. For example, doing the dishes by filling the sink or a dishpan with water rather than running the water continuously, taking a 4-minute shower instead of a longer one, closing the tap when you brush your teeth, rainwater collection systems at a household level, maybe even try to “let it mellow” in the bathroom etc in terms of direct water conservation. More importantly, try to decrease your virtual water footprint. For instance, cut down on or if possible, eliminate cars and buses from your daily routine for 3 days and use your bike only, try to recycle as much as possible, try not to buy plastic products and why not, maybe go vegan for 3 days!
2. Chose 3 different water-saving practices that make a difference in your water footprint and stick to these practices for 3 days.

3. After the termination of these 3 days, reflect back - think about what the must-haves are and what you could eliminate? Make a list, maybe you like meat but you could give up on or reduce the amount of beef you consume (as beef is the biggest water consumer)? Or maybe you need to drive to work but you could consider shared rides? Try to find compromises to which you stick in the long-term, remember - it is not about completely giving up on things, but rather, trying to reduce our overall consumption!

Resources

- www.gracelinks.org
- www.thewaterproject.org
- www.un.org/waterforlifedecade

Reflection

- Did you discover new things when doing this activity?
- Do you feel like you don't need the water that you managed to save while adopting a water-saving practice?
- Do you see the connection between our daily habits and the water used by other ecosystems and people in other places?

Instructions for Submission

Submit a short summary on what you think the easiest and most difficult water-saving technique was for you. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Pee on Your Peas!

Introduction

Did you know that the [average human produces 511 litres of urine](#) in one year? Imagine if you could actually use this amount of liquid for a good purpose instead of simply flushing it away.. Well good news, actually you can! Not only will this be helping to preserve the energy and water needed to flush and dispose of your urine, you will also be getting a powerful plant fertiliser to boot! While modern society perceives urine as something disgusting to be disposed of as fast as possible, urine is actually pretty useful. Being rich in nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium, it has many key ingredients needed for any healthy garden, in fact many studies show it is much more effective than many commercial and industrial fertilisers you can buy over the counter. In a recent experiment in Finland, the [Heinonen-Tanski group of scientists](#) grew 2 categories of beetroot – one fertilized with urine and the other with 'traditional' fertilisers. The ones fertilised with urine were found to be between 10% and 27% larger by mass! Oh, and of course - the urine was free!

This exercise will challenge our perspective on this valuable natural resource. It can be done individually or be offered to a group of youth where each participant does it individually and shares the impressions.

Activity Type

Experiential - Group/individual

Duration

As long as you enjoy!

Learning Outcomes

- To learn how to use urine as a fertiliser

Instructions

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Plant or purchase two identical potted plants, they should be suitable for indoor (house or greenhouse) growing.
2. Label them clearly, one will be fed just water the other with a 10-20% urine / water mix.
3. Mark a jar clearly for collecting your urine, you don't want a friend accidentally drinking from it!
4. Do some research on the correct amount of watering your plants will need, remember to use fresh urine each time they need it.

5. While urine is safe (unless you have some specific infections etc) it is still advised not to just sprinkle it all over the plant, especially any areas you plan on eating.. It is usually a good idea to pour it gently straight onto the soil/roots.
6. Keep a record of the plant growth, taking pictures and noting down height, amount of fruit etc or other interesting things at regular intervals.
7. Make something tasty with what you have grown!

Resources

- www.scientificamerican.com
- www.huffingtonpost.com

Reflection

- Did you observe how things that we consider as waste nowadays can be beneficial?
- What do you think about the paradigm where we are taught to flush valuable drinking water into the toilets and then spend energy for wastewater treatment?
- Are there any ways to use these sources smarter?

Instructions for Submission

Upload a picture of the two pots after a few weeks and submit a short summary of what you noticed. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

The Water Cycle

Introduction

With two thirds of the earth's surface covered by water and it making up [75% of the human body](#) ([the human brain is made up of 95% water!](#)) it is clear that water is one of the primary components of our planet. Water circulates through the land just as it does through most animals, transporting, dissolving, replenishing nutrients and organic matter, while carrying away our waste material.

Let's think about the water in this activity to understand our close and complicated relationship to it, a relationship that connects a glass of water on the kitchen table to the oceans, deserts, glaciers, hurricanes and global warming.

Activity Type

Group or Individual / Experiential and Theoretical

Duration

2 hours

Learning Outcomes

- To gain an understanding of a full, natural water cycle
- To understand the human influence on the water cycle
- To see water as a planetary wide system

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

- A raincoat/umbrella.
- Some sticks, stones etc
- A sheet of paper, coloured pens/pencils
- Flipchart and flipchart pen

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Wait for it to start raining (It's up to you how you entertain the group in this period).
2. Go outside and stand in the rain! It doesn't matter if this is in a city street or the middle of the forest, although if you are with children it's probably safer away from a road.
3. The group should walk around observing the flow of water, paying attention to the path the raindrop travels from appearing in the air until it vanishes. If need be, imagination should be used to follow where the drop may flow once it has vanished/merged.

4. Find a place where the water is flowing, how does placing the sticks and stones in its path alter the immediate course? How about further 'downstream'?
5. Repeat with at least 5 different drops using different materials as blocks/obstacles.
6. Encourage the group to work together using all available 'blocks' to try and hold as much water as possible in one place.
7. The group should be encouraged to consider the unseen path of the raindrop, from after it disappears. What path must it take to get back into the sky to fall again here or elsewhere. How would the various 'dams' and 'reservoirs' affect this on a real-world scale?
8. Go back inside to the paper and drawing materials.
9. Individually and in as abstract a way as possible, allow the story (both seen and unseen) of all the drops to manifest itself on the pages, taking into account all the potential obstacles it can encounter on it's way. *[Allow 10 minutes]*
10. Place all the pages next to each other, making up as large a rectangle as possible, use this layout to get a feel for the similarities and differences between the stories.
11. Get the group to shout out key words that come to them while looking at the mandala of pictures, write up to the first 10-15 words on the flipchart.

Resources

- [The principles of water retention landscapes](#)
- [Regenerating the full water cycle in a permaculture way](#)

Reflection

- How does the disrupted water cycle affect the flora and fauna?
- Consider the role of soil in the water cycle.
- What could be improved in our world to help regenerate full water cycles?
- What was your single most-surprising discovery during this activity?

Instructions for Submission

Take a picture of the complete mandala of all the drawings and upload it in Moodle. Submit a short summary of your experience while doing the activity. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

What's in the Sea?!

Introduction

With approximately [97% of our planet's water residing in the oceans](#), and these in turn making up around 71% of the planet's whole surface and with scientists of the belief that between [50-80% of all life on earth is to be found beneath the ocean's surface](#), the sea is a pretty big deal. Even though humans cannot naturally drink sea water (the salt would make us more thirsty than anything else) and many of us do not live on the seashore, we still rely on it for many everyday things, such as the majority of all global trade happening over water. It's about time we learn more about the impact we are having on our sea and oceans, ignorance is no longer a valid excuse for what we are doing to it.

[The Great Pacific Garbage Patch](#) is an iconic example of this issue. The patch is a collection of marine debris (any litter that ends up in oceans, seas, and other large bodies of water) in the North Pacific Ocean, approximately 80% of the debris comes from land-based activities in North America and Asia. While many different types of rubbish enter the ocean, plastics make up the majority of marine debris for two reasons; first, plastic's durability, low cost, and malleability mean that it's being used in more and more consumer and industrial products. Second, plastic goods do not biodegrade but instead break down into smaller pieces. This kind of pollution causes a serious threat to sea life. Moreover, the sea life ingests the broken down micro plastics that cannot be cleaned up from the ocean; the fish are caught in turn for human consumption and indeed, enter the food chain, and then our bodies. What goes around comes around. One of the few things that can be said to have a worse impact on the environment than the plastics ending up in our seas, is oil spills. Oil spills have catastrophic effects on birds, dolphins, fish and other marine life and the longer-term effects of the multiple oil spills into the oceans on the ecosystem and the subsequent changes to oxygen levels in the ocean are yet to be quantified.

This exercise invites participants to experience the issues around ocean pollution by carrying out 'clean up' activities to gain awareness of the associated difficulties. Participants will also be asked to reflect on their own use of non-disposable day to day items in order to consider where they could make changes.

Activity Type

Group/ Experiential

Duration

90 minutes

Learning Outcomes

- To increase awareness about the major ocean pollutants and the consequences of polluting the oceans.
- To understand our impact on the ocean on an individual level and consider what can be done differently.

Instructions

Required Material and Tools:

- Water
- Vegetable oil
- Cotton balls
- Paper towels
- Cups
- Newspaper clipping
- Food colouring
- Sieves
- Sand
- Grass
- Pebbles

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. *Divide the participants into 2 groups. Each group will carry out a different exercise relating to ocean pollution simultaneously so they can see what another group is doing while focusing on their own task.*
2. *Start the exercises*
 - a) *'Oil spill clean up.'*
 - i. *Introduce to the participants to the topic of oil spills, providing examples (research online in advance).*
 - ii. *To create the oil spill, fill a large bucket with water (the sea) and then pour in a large cup of vegetable oil (the spill).*
 - iii. *Experiment using the various tools (grass, sand, cotton balls, paper towels, sieves, pebbles etc) at your disposal to find the most effective way to get as much oil out of the water as possible. Aim to clean up the water completely. [Note: It is encouraged to do research into filtration systems and have a look at the methods used in the real world]*
 - iv. *Put all used materials together and note how much materials have been wasted to clean up one cup of oil.*
 - b) *'Marine animals and pollution'.*
 - i. *Fill the bucket $\frac{3}{4}$ full with warm or hot water, put 3-5 drops of food colouring into the water, if needed help it spread throughout the water. This represents the vast ocean and the apparent tiny amounts of pollution we spill into it.*
 - ii. *Place one or two cotton buds into the water, giving them time to soak up as much as possible.*
 - iii. *Take the cotton buds out and observe if they changed colour. This is the effect small amounts of pollution can have on the fish and consequently on people who later catch and eat them.*
3. *Organise the groups to discuss their findings and reflections.*
 - a) *Invite them to think about the impact that oil spills and plastic litter will have on the ocean and the animals.*
 - b) *Ask the participants to individually list all plastic products they have disposed of in the last two days.*

- c) What can be done differently, personally and on the society level, to have less litter in the ocean?

Reflection

Ask participants to carry out a written reflection based on the following questions.

- Why is it important to keep our ocean free from pollution?
- Where could alternatives have been used?
- Which materials can be used as a replacement of plastic?

Resources

- [Oil Spills: Sad But True](#)
- [Oil Spills, National Geographic](#)

Instructions for Submission

Submit your and participants' written reflections. Upload a photo of group work. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Related Topics

- Waste management
- Pollution
- Plastic
- Health

The Garden and the Farm

FOOD SYSTEMS, SOIL, PERMACULTURE

*"If you look out your window and don't see food growing, you have a problem."
-Bill Mollison*



Introduction

John, organic gardener

As I got here, I really came from the Eat, Sleep, Work, Repeat. Eat, Sleep, Work, Repeat culture... I was physically and emotionally drained. For me, it felt that food is not as scarce as the time it takes to eat it! Actually, I was so disconnected from my food and the people I bought it from, that I started ordering it online and had my pesticide-gmo-rich food sealed in seven layers of plastic wrap delivered at my doorsteps in a jiffy! Sometimes I was wondering if it was even people that produced it and wrapped it up so nicely in plastics for us... Looking back, now I see how absurd it is that even the breakfast I was eating was brought to me through a gigantic global food system, operated and handled by machines and hundreds of people severely exploited and underpaid; so that it can then be transported all over the world. To reach my table. For me to enjoy those wonderful early mornings, stressed and totally exhausted. Before literally running to work!

When I came here, the thing that first fascinated me was that everyone here is involved with handling the food - in one way or another. Not everyone is a farmer, of course, and some are sitting in front of the computer most of the day, but everyone seems to have a direct connection to food. They might have a small garden; they might be part of a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) and help the farmer a few times a year, for example during the harvest, or maybe

they just bring their kitchen waste for their neighbour's chickens and receive fresh eggs in return. At least everyone gets to witness that no workers get exploited or exposed to chemicals, as we personally know the workers that produce our food. We all live with a general awareness about the seasons and the natural cycle of life and death. Every year a new cycle begins, seeds are being put into the ground, animals are being born - nature is doing its best to grow strong enough to survive the rapidly approaching winter. Summer is full of life, but already in autumn, the cycle ends for many. The harvest begins and calves and lambs are being slaughtered. The ducks have hopefully grown strong, but the winter is harsh and many are caught by the fox or other wild animals. All of this was of course commonplace for most people in the history of humankind; but for me, who had lived all my life in a city, it was a revelation. I didn't know anything about gardening or how nature "works", but I was mesmerised. Soon I joined a neighbour to help out in her garden, and she gave me my own little patch to experiment. Such a joy to see the first pumpkin seedlings sprouting out of the soil! Ever since, I've become addicted to gardening. It's true, every time I see one of my plants really thriving, I'm filled with a deep sense of joy! Isn't that love?

You should meet my friend Tim. He's actually more obsessed with gardening than I am. He also came here without knowing anything a few years ago but soon got hooked on permaculture. The concept of permaculture was developed by [Bill Mollison in the 70ths](#) and came out as a response to the western monoculture food system. It's a philosophy and a practical design tool on how to create holistic food systems and human habitats. Tim has now designed his house and his land using permaculture principles. That means that many different species and plants are growing together, supporting each other, like in a natural ecosystem. There is a forest garden where vines are crawling up fruit and nut trees, and bushes that give shade to strawberries cover the ground. Chickens are tilling the soil, and the ducks help eat snails and insects. Water is flowing through the land and is retained in ponds and swales. Bees are pollinating the trees and producing honey while wild birds help spreading the seeds. The result is an incredible garden and a living ecosystem producing food that doesn't need much maintenance! But to make it work well, you really need to know your land. And you need patience. The first year you have to just observe your land, how it behaves, how water is running through it, which wild animals are there, how the wind and the sun are moving throughout the year, etc. Tim is dedicated to it, and now it's his life.

Moving through the farms and the gardens in Bridgedale360, don't hesitate to put your hands in the soil. You can see how the worms are processing the soil and how much life there is on this microscopic level. Building up the soil and keeping it healthy is really important for anything to grow. When you eat here in our community restaurant, you'll know that it all comes from around here. Every carrot, every potato, every tomato or aubergine. From here. No chemicals, no artificial fertilisers, no GMOs! And certainly no workers' rights abuse! Brought to the table by people you know, who are happy and well-fed, by the care they've put into their work, and by the rain and the heat of the sun. That's quite a different story from how I used to spend my lunches and dinners! Instead, here, you see permaculture ethics in practice - it is all about earth care, people care and fair share!

Learning Outcomes

- To experience that you are what you eat - know what you eat
- To understand the global industrial food system

- To have a somatic experience, an embodied experience of food
- To understand the basic principles and ethics of permaculture
- To recognize qualities and importance of healthy soil

Eating Mindfully

Experiential / Group or Individual

10 - 20 minutes

- To experience the simple, profound enjoyment that arises through [eating mindfully](#)
- Understand how [eating mindfully](#) can bring greater nourishment to your body
- Feel how deeply you are interconnected with the Earth through something as ordinary as a bite of food

The Ecological Meal

Group / Experiential

5 hours

- To understand food from a viewpoint of sustainability
- To become more attuned with food as a local resource
- To understand the central part food plays in our lives, both socially and culturally

Dude, Grow Something

Experiential / Group

30 minutes + 8 weeks to harvest

- To connect with where your food comes from
- To have a practical experience of growing your own food
- To understand the benefits of polyculture

Mini Ecosystem in a Bottle

Group or Individual / Experiential

2 hours

- Understanding of the basic components of biological life
- Experiential understanding for how ecosystems behave in a closed system

Eating Mindfully



[flickr photo](#) shared by [_nvainio](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY \) license](#)

Introduction

Our relationship to food is a central one that reflects our attitudes to the environment and ourselves. Silently eating a meal can be a wonderful opportunity for meditation and reconnection. Through conscious awareness of our meal's origins, patient enjoyment of chewing and tasting, and reflection on the experience, we can cultivate a sense of how the infinite interconnectedness of existence is reflected in something as simple as food.

Being glued to our TVs/laptops and rushing from one place to another in today's typical hectic lifestyle make us also eat faster. But if we are eating too fast, we might not be giving our brain time to catch up with our body. We might end up eating more than we actually need. By eating mindfully, we eat less which improves our health as we feel less bloated and stuffed, not to mention shedding a few pounds! But the real benefit comes from being content with *less*. Over-eating is just another reflection of the consumer society of over-working, over-buying, over-consuming, *over-doing* and losing one's equilibrium... In the following activity, we will explore the joy we feel while eating in a mindful way, we'll remind ourselves that *less is more*.

Activity Type

Experiential / Group or Individual

Duration

10-20 Minutes

Learning Outcomes

- To experience the simple, profound enjoyment that arises through eating mindfully
- Understand how eating mindfully can bring greater nourishment to your body
- Feel how deeply you are interconnected with the Earth through something as ordinary as a bite of food

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

A nourishing meal of any size, preferably something that we have prepared ourselves

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. We begin by noticing the food before us. What are we eating? What concepts and labels do we use to identify it? What flows and processes of the Earth have brought it into existence? Who was involved in bringing this meal before us now?
2. Holding a single bite of food, we slowly move it toward our mouth, noticing any sensations which arise. Anticipation? Impatience?
3. We accept *this* bite, tasting and feeling the food fully, perhaps closing our eyes, again noticing and allowing any sensations which arise.
4. We chew slowly and thoroughly, continuing to taste and feel, until the food has liquefied. This aids digestion, allowing our body to fully receive the food as nourishment.
5. When it is time, we swallow.
6. We repeat this, moving, tasting, chewing, swallowing, until we have fully received our meal.

Resources

- [“Savor” book by Thich Nhat Hanh and Dr. Lilian Cheung](#)
- [Buddhify \(App\)](#)
- [The Center for Mindful Eating](#)

Reflection

- How did eating this way feel?
- Were there any emotions or sensations present which surprised you?
- Did you find yourself tasting or feeling anything new?

- We realise that you can't eat each meal being fully present, but what about starting each meal mindfully?

Instructions for Submission

Submit a written reflection of up to 200 words. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Related Topics

- Mindfulness Meditation

Author

Creative Commons - ySI4R Content Team (adapted from material by Thich Nhat Hanh, Dr. Lilian Cheung, Rohan Gunatillake, and Emily Horn)

The Ecological Meal



[flickr photo](#) shared by [WordRidden](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY \) license](#)

Introduction

"When we eat, we literally take parts of Earth into our bodies and Earth becomes us. When we walk, it is Earth's energy—bequeathed from the Sun—that walks us!"
- Chris Uhl

Food is more than sticking yummy things into our mouth. When we eat, we're intimately participating in the enigmatic movement of life. Something that was once alive, now becomes fuel that animates us and gives us energy. And one day we'll give ourselves back to earth, for other lifeforms to feast upon.

Food is also more than going to the supermarket and throwing groceries into a bag. The global industrial food system is gigantic and affects every being on the planet. When throwing that banana into our grocery bag, do we stop to consider that this yummy, yellow item has traveled over more than half of the earth, with a complex number of stops and middlemen along the way, before ending up in our bag? How is the banana affecting the environment... or other people? How are the living conditions for the workers at the banana plantation? Who is profiting from our banana? Being responsible consumers is paramount in an age where our political power to a great extent lies in our consumer choices.

Also, food is the central moment of celebration in any culture. Can you imagine getting together with your family, relatives or friends to have a good time, without eating or drinking anything? It would be weird, right? Food and drinks have always been the cohesive agent bringing people together. Because food and drinks bring joy and satisfaction. No matter where we are.

In this activity, we'll try to bring awareness to the multitude of aspects of food and have a meal together!

Activity Type

Group/Experiential

Duration

5 h

Learning Outcomes

- To understand food from a viewpoint of sustainability
- To become more attuned with food as a local resource
- To understand the central part food plays in our lives, both socially and culturally

Instructions

Have a meal together! The challenge is to do it in a way that is as cheap as possible, that has as little environmental impact as possible, that is as socially beneficial as possible, and that acknowledges the deep meaning of food in our daily lives. For instance, use a footprint calculator to measure the environmental impact. See how spending money can be avoided (remember that the most ecological and economical is to eat food that otherwise wouldn't be eaten). If you present your project in the right way (what is the deeper purpose of this meal?) people might even want to give you what you need. And maybe you want to invite them in return?

Required Materials and Tools:

- A kitchen
- Some money to buy ingredients, if necessary.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Decide on the menu in the group.
2. Gather ingredients: try to find ingredients that are produced less than 100 km from where you live; this normally includes seasonal food; try to keep away products like beef (especially meat coming from ruminants which emit a lot of methane). Dairy products such as milk or cheese, especially coming from ruminants are also inadvisable.
3. Prepare the meal! Try to use as little energy as possible, the things that could be eaten raw, should be eaten raw.
4. Eat together (How can you bring awareness to eating and the act of sharing a meal together, e.g. see the activity "[Eating mindfully](#)" under module "The Garden and the Farm").
5. Do the dishes as ecologically as possible! For instance, try not to use running water while doing the dishes, but rather, put water in a basin.

Resources

- [Chris Uhl's "The ecological meal"](#).

Reflection

- What importance does food play in our lives? What is the meaning of gathering together around a meal like this?
- What interconnections do you notice between supporting local workers and eating ecologically?
- What else did you learn from this activity?

Instructions for Submission

Upload a picture of the ready-made meal and submit a brief story of each ingredient, reflecting on it through the 4 dimensional lens (ecological, economic, social, cultural). Try to include answers in your submission to questions such as: What are the most intriguing aspects of this meal and the story behind it? What could have been done otherwise to make the meal more sustainable? Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Related Topics

- [Eating mindfully](#)

Author

Creative Commons - ySI4R Content Team (Inspired by Chris Uhl's "The ecological meal")

Dude, Grow Something



[flickr photo](#) shared by [John Fera](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY-NC-ND \) license](#)

Introduction

Globalization has increased our interdependence in all dimensions of life and food is a prime example of this phenomenon. Years ago, and still today for many developing regions, self-sufficient, organic farming with a big variety of local crops farming is a common practice. But more recently, with the rapid increase in population growth, this has shifted dramatically. In order to feed the masses, large corporations employed techniques of monoculture; this resulted in lower food prices (with the help of unsustainable government subsidies) which consequently made it very difficult for small farmers to remain financially viable. A great deal of our food production has shifted to countries or regions where there are lower land and labour costs. Not only has widespread monoculture through intensive use of pesticides compromised the quality of our soil, food and the fair treatment of people producing it, but also, the day to day reality of this wider global food production system is that we have lost the connection to our food, where it comes from, how to grow it, thus many young people are unaware of what many fruit, vegetables and herbs look like! The question is... If for some reason you needed to, could you grow your own food to survive? In this activity the participants will experience growing their own food. The participants will eventually prepare a meal with their ingredients. This will bring awareness to the time and resources involved in food production.

Activity Type

Group/Experiential

Duration

30 minutes + 8 weeks to harvest!

Learning Outcomes

- To connect with where your food comes from
- To have a practical experience of growing your own food
- To understand the benefits of polyculture

Instructions

VERSION 1

Required Materials and Tools:

- Seeds from whatever plants you want to grow.
- Containers to grow plants.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Find somebody in your local area that has a garden. Ask if the person could show you how to grow something that you can take home and grow it alone.
2. Make an appointment and bring any materials needed.
3. With support and guidance from the gardener, plant some things in containers that you will be able to take home.
4. Observe the process of growing and don't forget to harvest and mindfully eat your crops.

VERSION 2

Required Materials and Tools:

- Lettuce seeds, Garlic bulbs, baking soda, Mature compost, All-purpose fertilizer, Seed tray, Spade, Shovel, Garden fork, Organic mulch, Water.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

This is an invitation to employ a 'companion planting' technique, using lettuce and garlic. Garlic acts as a non-toxic pesticide for the garden. It has natural fungicidal and pesticidal properties that work effectively to control pests and works especially well when planted with lettuce.

1. Participants will grow the lettuce initially inside. The temperatures should ideally be between 15°C to 20°C. Ask the participants to sow the seeds 1/4-inch deep in a seed tray filled with potting mix. They should water well so the soil is moist.
2. When the seedlings are about 3 to 4 inches tall, they can be transplanted outdoors. Before transplanting the seedlings, participants should strengthen them by taking the seed tray outdoors. Keep them in a sheltered location for a few days. This will prevent transplant shock. Then find a communal space outside for the participants to transplant

their lettuce and plant their garlic. Head lettuce needs a separation of 12 inches between plants, whereas butterhead lettuce needs 8 or 9 inches and leaf lettuce needs about 5 to 6 inches. Transplant the seedlings. After two weeks, lettuce seedlings will appear.

3. Participants should break a garlic bulb apart into individual cloves, being careful to keep the papery skins covering each clove intact. Then fill a quart jar with water and mix in 1 tablespoon of baking soda and 1 tablespoon of liquid seaweed (available at your local garden store). Soak the cloves in this mixture for 2 hours prior to planting to prevent fungal disease and encourage vigorous growth.
4. Garlic grows best in rich, well-drained soil that is free of weeds. Dig a furrow about 3 inches deep. Place the pre-soaked cloves into the furrow, spacing them 6 to 8 inches apart. Be sure the flat root end is down and the pointy end is up.
5. Cover the cloves with 2 inches of soil and side-dress the furrow with compost or scratch in granulated organic fertilizer. Water the bed in well and cover it with 6 to 8 inches of straw mulch.
6. You should see shoots poking through the mulch in 4 to 6 weeks. The garlic stops growing in the winter months and resumes in spring.
7. Lettuce needs the right amount of water. The correct way to water lettuce plants is to provide small quantities at regular intervals and to avoid too much or too little watering. Harvest the lettuce 8 or 9 weeks after planting. Avoid letting the lettuce becoming over-ripe because it will develop a bitter taste.

Resources

- [Step by step video of how to grow Lettuce](#)
- [Step by step video of how to grow Garlic](#)

Reflection

- Was this your first experience of growing something?
- How did it feel to grow your own food?
- Did you learn anything you previously did not know?
- In what ways is this method of growing food more sustainable?

Instructions for Submission

Upload a picture of what you have grown and submit a short summary of the experience. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Related Topics

- Permaculture
- Polyculture
- Monoculture

Mini Ecosystem in a Bottle

Introduction

If we put soil and plants into a closed room, we create circumstances to get a deeper understanding of basic life processes and interplay in nature. Facts we earlier learned about respiration and photosynthesis in plants suddenly become much more challenging when we put them into a sealed room! – Will they manage to survive, and if they do, how can that be possible?

The life processes that evolve within the bottle can feed discussions from kindergarten to college or university level. In the earlier ages the pupils may just wonder about the beauty and magic of “the enclosed garden”. Higher up, they may have discussions about the different types of circulation that keeps the system alive, or of self organisation and system dynamics. The bottle provides us with a simplified overview of how an ecosystem or the entire biosphere works. It is also a useful model when we discuss carbon dioxide sinks, greenhouse effect and climate change.

Activity Type

Group or Individual / Experiential

Duration

2 hours

Learning Outcomes

- Understanding of the basic components of biological life
- Experiential understanding for how ecosystems behave in a closed system

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

- A glass bottle that can be closed (1 to 25 litre)
- Soil
- Plants (with small leaves, for instance *Ficus pumila*, *Hedera helix*, *Sedum* spp.)
- Funnel with a wide opening or a rolled newspaper
- Rods or sticks long enough to reach the bottom of the bottle

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Make sure that the bottle is clean.
2. Put a sufficient amount of soil into the bottle by using the funnel and the stick. Be careful so that you don't get a lot of soil on the sides of the bottle. It is often good to use fresh

- planting soil, with a high organic content, directly from a flower store. (But of course if you put a cactus inside if you choose soil that suits that type of a plant).
3. Take the stick and make a small hole in the soil where you wish to plant the plant.
 4. If the plant is too big to enter the bottle, carefully divide it and compress the soil around its roots.
 5. Hold the plant in the upper leaves and put the compressed roots inside the bottle. Aim at the prepared hole and drop the plant. Use the sticks to make sure that the roots have sufficient contact with the surrounding soil. Repeat if you want more plants inside.
 6. When satisfied close the bottle and put it in a place with good light conditions, but not in direct sunshine!
 7. Usually you don't have to add any water, but if you don't see condensed water inside the bottle at any point after closing, it might be necessary to add a small amount.

Maintaining the system - light and water

Since the bottle is closed it is very easy to take care of. The most important factor is of course that the system receives enough light, but without the risk of becoming overheated. That means that you might have to protect it from too much radiation during the summer and add additional light during the dark part of the year. Experience is that systems most likely collapse during the dark season.

Another factor that sometimes creates difficulties is that you add too much water. We are so used to taking care of our pot plants by watering them once or twice a week that we tend to give the plants in our bottle too much water from the very beginning. Usually the moisture in the soil is enough, also because that metabolic water is emitted as the bacteria begin to decompose the organic material in the soil.

Resources

- [Instructions by Wolfgang](#)
- [Youtube video with Wolfgang](#)

Reflection

- Do you think it will survive?
- For how long can it grow?
- What happens when the "life space" inside is filled up?
- What keeps the system in balance?
- How does the circulation of water and minerals function?
- Will the bottle gain weight as the plants grow?
- Who or what regulates the amount of oxygen and carbon dioxide within the bottle?

Instructions for Submission

Upload 1 photo of your bottle and submit your written reflection in Moodle (so that your peers can give you feedback). The written reflection is based on the questions under the "reflection section". Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Author

Creative Commons - ySI4R Content Team (Inspired by the work of Wolfgang Brunner)

The House

RENEWABLE ENERGY & SUSTAINABLE BUILDINGS

*"If you want to find the secrets of the universe, think in terms of energy, frequency and vibration."
-Nikola Tesla*

*"We shape our buildings; thereafter they shape us."
-Winston Churchill*

*"Good buildings come from good people, and all problems are solved by good design."
-Stephen Gardiner*



Introduction

Tom, young permaculture enthusiast

This is my house! It's what's called an earthship. I know, it's pretty cool. And I've built it myself! It looks hard, but really, it isn't that difficult. The original vision of the earthship is simple. It should be a house that uses local and reused material wherever possible; it should rely on natural energy sources and be independent from the grid; it should be easy to build. Even for a person like me, who had never built anything like it in my life! The basic principles are quite simple. The walls here are built from old car tires packed with dirt; local and reused materials that provide a lot of thermal mass. The windows are south-facing to use the heat of the sun. The walls are sucking up the sunlight during the day while the heat is released during the night. Thus the temperature stabilizes and is kept nice and comfy most of the time. You can also see how the house is sunk into the earth to provide extra insulation. Energy is absolutely essential. Except for the energy that is passively stored in the walls from the sunlight, electricity is harvested from the

sun and the wind. If you look at the roof you'll see photovoltaic panels as well as a small wind turbine. Electricity is stored in batteries and later converted and used for house appliances such as a washing machine or a vacuum cleaner. It's absolutely enough for me. Also, it's designed for water. Rainwater is harvested from the roof, filtered and stored in a cistern. The water can then be used for drinking, cooking, showering etc. In an earthship, the grey water, used water from cooking and showering, is often used for flushing toilets. I don't have one; to me it doesn't make sense since I need both the manure and the water for my forest garden. Besides, no one is using flushing toilets in Bridgedale360. What is important is that I love to live in this house! I view it as a living system, totally integrated in its environment, and I can feel how energy, humidity and water is moving through it, meeting all my needs without wasting anything! I can't change the entire world, but I know that if the world would start applying this kind of thinking, many problems would be solved.

Of course, it's a fact that the world needs to adapt to a more natural and energy-saving mindset. Energy might have been an infinite resource in the past, but it's not anymore. At least not in the form of fossil fuels. Peak oil and global warming are a wakeup call that our old ways are unsustainable, incessantly taking from the earth without ever giving anything back. Energy must once again be regarded as something valuable and finite and our ways of harvesting energy must change dramatically. The global energy consumption increases every year and that needs to turn around very soon. At the same time, we need to develop our means and capacity for harvesting renewables. And be smarter! Here in Bridgedale360, we take used olive oil from the restaurants to run the local bus. That is the type of clever design that the world needs. Being independent in terms of energy, as I am now, is a great freedom. Over the last hundred years we've built a society where we as individuals are totally dependant on it to cater to our daily needs. Shut down all the provisions from society: no water, no electricity, no food, and you're most likely dead within a couple of days. Not only do we lack the infrastructure and design to live independently, we also lack the skills, knowledge and confidence. I feel much stronger now, harvesting my own energy. It gives me a sense of autonomy and confidence. And less fear, since I know how to use the earth and sun to keep me alive. After all, they are much more reliable than any government, economy or welfare system could ever be.

But for us it goes beyond one's own independence. Do you see any beggars or homeless people here in Bridgedale360? If you wonder how we managed to do away with homelessness or poverty, the answer is pretty simple - all resources are owned *by people for the people*, not by governments or corporations! Everyone here is empowered to cooperate with and rely on nature, houses of natural materials that are much more energy efficient, using solar energy for solar cookers so nobody is hungry, solar showers which do not run on electricity at all, and everything is being re-used in closed loop systems, even our pool! There is simply no room for social injustice or economic inequality!

By the way, are you hungry? I've put some rice in the solar oven; it should be ready soon. Come with me outside, and I'll show you. On a great sunny day like this, it should be done in a jiffy!

Learning Outcomes

- To understand the house as a system
- To be aware of your own energy / ecological footprint
- To have an experience of building something using sustainable methods

- To have an expanded notion of your habitation needs

Get to Know Your House

Group or Individual / Experiential

3 days

- To understand the design principles of your place of choice (home, school etc..)
- To discover the materials used to build this place and develop a critical perspective on them
- To understand the energy consumption of your house and to try to improve it

Harness the Sun!

Individual or group / Experiential

> 1 hour

- To learn how to build a solar cooker
- Reflect on alternative sources of energy
- Reflect on how spreading such alternative energy concepts could be life-changing for poorer communities

How Big is Your Footprint?

Individual / Experiential

3 days

- To learn how to calculate and reduce your ecological footprint
- To understand the impacts that individual actions, lifestyles, and consumption choices have on the world
- To understand the concept of overshoot, natural capital, and that our species is using more resources than this planet can provide at a sustainable rate

The Mighty Brick!

Individual or group / Experiential

2 days, with several days apart

- To gain a notion about sustainable building materials and methods
- To learn the basics about building material properties
- To have a notion about the energy / labour investments in the building industry

Get to Know Your House



[flickr photo](#) shared by [neilalderney123](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY-NC \) license](#)

Introduction

Most buildings constructed before the industrial revolution were more ecologically minded than those built today. Buildings were made using local materials and passive solar energy design was a must because energy was expensive and hard to harvest. So, what happened during and after the industrial revolution?

Energy from fossil fuels became quite cost effective, while making the movement of large quantities of materials cheaper and easier. This had an enormous impact on the architectural design and construction of buildings. Over the last century, cement, a highly energy-consumptive material, has become the third most-used material on the planet after water and sand. The cement industry put governments under pressure to change building regulations to cement standards, so that cement would become the only feasible building material. Architects and engineers were trained in universities to design buildings where the cost per meter square is the rule of success. The result is that buildings became cheaper to build but less comfortable, less connected to the surrounding environment and more expensive for inhabitants to maintain due to the higher energy bills.

Fortunately, in the last few decades, there has been a shift towards a more sustainable approach in architecture and construction to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions and other environmental impacts produced by the construction industry. Building regulations included more requirements to improve insulation, increase the use of renewable energies in homes to reduce energy consumption and improve comfort.

How well do you know your home, school, or workplace? Have you ever seen your attic, or observed the energy consumption in your home?

Do we know what is the energy efficiency and ecological impact of our home, school, or work place? The purpose of this activity is to start discovering this.

Activity Type

Group or Individual / Experiential

Duration

3 days

Learning Outcomes

- To gain understanding of the design principles of your place of choice (home, school etc..)
- To discover the materials used to build this structure and develop a critical perspective on them
- To understand the energy consumption of your house and to try to improve it

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

- A compass
- Paper and pencil
- Monthly energy bill
- Timer

Step-by-Step Instructions:

- Make a list of most of the materials used to build various structures of the building such as walls, floors, windows, etc.
- Explore other types of building materials that can be more energy-efficient.
- Explore the amount of energy used in this building each month. Which energy provider is used? What type of energy is used to power this building? (amount of fossil and renewable used.)

Tips how to make the house more sustainable:

ENERGY CONSUMPTION

The easiest thing is to reduce your energy consumption and it is easier than we think:

- turn off lights, heaters and air conditioners when they are not in use. You could even use motion sensors to turn off the lights when nobody is in the area;
- turn off music and TV when not in use;
- look for "energy thieves" – you can spot them by seeing little red lights on equipment; which mean that the equipment is not turned off but is on stand-by. It is common for high-tech devices such as DVD players. To turn them off, unplug them or switch off the power outlet they are connected to;

- check that the refrigerator and freezer function efficiently which means there should be no ice inside, otherwise defrost it. Refrigerator should be clean on the back side, not overloaded inside and no things should be put on top: these things make it more difficult for the refrigerator to function and take more energy;
- if it is a bad refrigerator there is not much to do, but be conscious when buying a new one. When buying new appliances buy ones with good energy efficiency rating (most of the appliances in Europe have signs with the energy efficiency rating);
- use energy efficient light bulbs;
- wear appropriate clothes :) It is fine to be in a sweater in the winter!

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

- insulation slows heating and cooling losses. Add extra insulation to your attic, and other accessible places in your house. Be sure that insulation is not compressed, and is fully in contact with the area you are insulating (no air gaps), or it won't function;
- check windows and doors, put energy stripping around them to prevent cold and warm air from entering/escaping, simple spray foam could do the trick! - search for cracks around the doors and windows, under sinks, walls, holes drilled for wiring and plumbing, especially leading into the attic and basement. Moisture can build up if houses are completely tight, but this should be prevented using controlled ventilation, not through unintentional leaks into other parts of the building;
- put an extra pane of glass or plastic on the windows from the inside of the room;
- heavy curtain on the door and windows help reduce loss of warm/cold air;
- painting the house in a dark colour absorbs more heat (better for cold areas), painting in white color reflects the heat (good for hot areas).

ENERGY PRODUCTION

- If there is a fireplace being used, ensure that the wood is kept dry;
- If we think of energy efficiency more seriously, it is time to discover and install solar-thermal panels to heat the house. It will save energy and in the long run money.

WATER

- put water saving devices into the shower and sinks – they can lessen water flow while maintaining pressure;
- fix leaking taps, turn off water when not used directly.

Resources

- www.southface.org
- [Home Energy Projects](#)

Reflection

- Do you think that the right materials were used to build this place? What would you change and why?
- Which materials were used to build traditional homes in your area? Does your building use those materials? If not why? Can you propose a better material to be used and why?
- Is this building energy efficient? Is this building dependent on fossil fuels? Could you propose a more sustainable energy source to power this building? Explain your choices.

Instructions for Submission

Submit the list of materials used to build this place. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Related Topics

- Renewable Energy
- Green Architecture
- Ethical Energy providers
- Passive solar energy

Harness the Sun!



[flickr photo](#) shared by [Todd Huffman](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY \) license](#)

Introduction

Most of us are aware of the benefits of using solar-powered devices - it reduces our electricity bills and it is eco-friendly, as we use a natural resource - the sun! But few have stopped to actually consider the life-changing effects for example solar cookers can have on women and children in many developing countries. Namely, many women and girls spend hours on end collecting wood, tending fires and cooking with wood stoves in different countries. This influences girls' school attendance, among other things. Water-borne and smoke-related diseases are among the primary causes of death for children. The smoke from cooking on fires is also a major cause of death for young women in many parts of the world.

Solar cookers are arguably among the best alternatives when it comes to improving [children's school attendance](#) (zero time spent on collecting burning materials and much less attention needed to watch over the meal as it is being cooked!), no smoke is generated leading to significantly [improved health and poverty reduction](#) overall as many more families are able to cook their own meals with significantly lower bills.

In the following activity, we will try to create our own little household solar cooker.

Activity Type

Individual or group / Experiential

Duration

>1 h

Learning Outcomes

- To learn how to build a solar cooker
- Reflect on alternative sources of energy
- Reflect on how spreading such alternative energy concepts could be life-changing for poorer communities

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

- 2 cardboard boxes
- Newspaper
- Aluminium foil
- Glue or staple

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. The instructions are adapted from [WikiHow](#). Please refer to the link provided for a clearer guidance with pictures.
2. Put a cardboard box inside a bigger cardboard box. There should be at least an inch between the sides of the 2 boxes, fill that space with shredded newspaper (insulator). In order to absorb heat, put black construction paper on the inside on the smaller box. Take flaps from cardboard sheets and cut them as somewhat flared squares. The squares will be attached to the box walls, so the width of each narrow end of the square should be the same as the width of the box side where you're attaching them. The flared ends' width should be a few inches wider compared to the narrow ends' width.
3. Cover these 4 squares with aluminium foil, so they become "reflectors". Position each reflector to the top of each side of the big box. Use glue or staple if needed. Position each reflector up at approximately a 45 degree angle. You can use stick rods that can be glued to the reflectors.
4. Put the solar cooker in full sun, put food in the smaller box (preferably in a jar or a dark baking pan) and wait for it to cook.

Resources

- www.fix.com
- www.youtube.com
- www.facebook.com

Reflection

- Did the solar cooker work?
- Was this activity difficult for you?

- Did you reflect on all the energy you are saving and how your energy-saving actions are directly connected to other people all over the globe?

Instructions for Submission

Take a picture of the meal after it has been cooked in the solar cooker and upload it in Moodle. Submit a short summary of the experience. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

How Big is Your Footprint?

Introduction

The Butterfly Effect is explained in *Chaos Theory* (simplified) as the idea that very small changes (for example, a butterfly flapping its wings) can alter the world around it in very large, unexpected ways (in the case of the butterfly, the result being changing the course of a hurricane on the other side of the planet). Today, we have to deal with the very large consequences of what was thought of as unimportant decisions made over the course of human history about how we use our planet's resources.

The small changes we make in our own lives and homes, will help create a sustainable and resilient world for us all to live in. That decision to use our smartphone for one extra year and not get that 'free upgrade' right now? It can have a huge effect on the lives of the hundreds of miners and their families, responsible for mining the rare minerals that go into making our phone, in central Africa. That decision to ride a bike to work one or two days a week rather than drive? That just removed enough CO2 from the environment to stop the last ice cap melting!

Activity Type

Individual / Experiential

Duration

3 days

Learning Outcomes

- To learn how to calculate and reduce your ecological footprint
- To understand the impacts that individual actions, lifestyles, and consumption choices have on the world
- To understand the concept of overshoot, natural capital, and that our species is using more resources than this planet can provide at a sustainable rate

Instructions

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Go to a website where you can calculate your ecological footprint. There are many such websites, for example the [Worldwide Fund for Nature](http://www.worldwildlife.org/footprint)
2. Consider the things/actions that you consider necessary to your life in order to survive and then the things that you can live without. Write these down in two different lists as a comparison of "Wants vs. Needs".
3. Pick several things from your "Wants" list (for example your car, bottled water etc) that make your life better but might be possible to give up without too much difficulty.

4. Do an experiment to live 3 days without these items. At the same time, implement some of the eco-friendly habits you might come across in the ecological footprint (for example, taking quicker showers, purchasing less clothes, fixing your electrical appliance at a repair shop instead of buying a new one, taking the bus, etc).
5. Take the test again after 3 days and see how your ecological footprint results compare to the previous results.

Resources

- www.footprint.wwf.org.uk
- www.wwf.org.au
- wwf.panda.org
- www.rprogress.org
- www.ecocentricdesign.ca
- www.carbonnegative.eu

Reflection

- What does this exercise tell you about the interconnections between all species, and how our daily actions affect other people and the Earth?
- How are you affected by actions and decisions by other people around the world?
- How does it feel to give up some items or activities that are not basic necessities for you?

Instructions for Submission

Submit a short summary (up to 200 words) in Moodle about your experience and list some of the things you are choosing to give up (the ones listed under “Wants”). Write down your ecological footprint numbers in the summary so that other users can compare it to their own. Instructions on submitting things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

The Mighty Brick!



[flickr photo](#) shared by [Imagine India \(Gaurav Jayani\)](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY \) license](#)

Introduction

Houses nowadays can be built out of nearly anything - concrete, wood, steel, glass, stones. You might have heard that ecological houses are built even out of straw-bales... crazy, right? However, when we have a look into the wide range of building materials, bricks are kind of standing out - they are solid, heavy, often red and literally everywhere, though in some countries more visible (like the UK) than in others. Why are they so freaking popular?

Bricks have been used across the world for thousands of years as an easily available (local) building material that can be produced with a low energy investment. Dig some earth, add some clay, mix with straw and water and it is ready - easy as that. This way millions of people were able to create their own building materials that were actually totally sustainable.

You would not do that yourself today - but you will be encouraged to think as if you were building a truly original, ecological and sustainable self-built home where such a material makes perfect sense.

This activity is an experiment in a self-made brick production. You might get hooked and produce some building material for your garden house, bedroom interior and even neighbours - who knows?... Construction is a serious business, and it takes a lot of knowledge and experiments, especially when it comes to well-forgotten sustainable methods and materials. But let's play at first! It might be more fun to do this activity with your friends to compare who is a better brick-producer.

Activity Type

Individual or group / Experiential

Duration

2 days, with several days apart

Learning Outcomes

- To gain a notion about sustainable building materials and methods
- To learn the basics about building material properties
- To have a notion about the energy / labour investments in the building industry

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

- Tools: spoon, bowl, milk cartons
- Materials: soil, water, straw / dry grass / pine needles

Step-by-Step Instructions:

Brick making

1. Gather some straw. If you do not have straw you can use dry grass, or dry pine needles.
2. Put the straw, soil from your yard, and water into a bowl and mix it well.
3. Take an empty milk carton. Pour the mixture into the carton.
4. Mark each of the cartons used to record the information about the ingredients and other specific conditions.
5. Place the milk carton in a sunny and dry place and leave it there for several days to dry.
6. When the brick is firm and dry, peel off the carton.
7. Do the tests.

Tips

- Try out different straw - soil - water proportions when making different bricks.
- Find a recipe for the right proportions (beware - there are dozens of opinions) on the internet.
- Take soil without organic matter from underneath the fertile top-soil layer.
- Try adding clay and sand if available.

Testing - how mighty is your brick?

1. Place the bricks on a solid surface (concrete). Test the strength by stepping on the bricks. Try to load as much weight as possible. Take a pencil or any other sharp object and try to press through it.
2. Leave the bricks outside exposed to various climate conditions. Observe and see how durable they are without protection.

3. Dip the brick into the water which is just before freezing. Use the freezer to test the freeze-thaw cycles. Take the frozen brick out of the freezer, thaw and test its strength.

Resources

- [Similar experiment to explore the thermal properties of self-made bricks](#)
- [Instruction for creating mud bricks](#)
- [Everything about natural home building techniques. Galleries, Facebook groups, expert advice etc.](#)
- [Comprehensive overview about earth-based bricks and structures](#)
- [Mud Brick Making](#)
- [Adobe in Action's 2014 Adobe Brickmaking Process](#)

Reflection

- Compare - which model / brick has been the strongest in various tests (pressure, bending, water, frost)?
- How could the model / brick be improved?
- How can this material be used in your climate conditions?
- What material would you use for building your own house? Why?
- What traditional and sustainable building materials used in your area can you name?

Instructions for Submission

Upload 1 photo of the work and submit a written reflection (up to 200 words). Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

The Town Hall and Community Centre

DECISION-MAKING, FACILITATION AND COMMUNITY

*"No man is an island."
-John Donne*

*"We have global minds, but not global hearts."
-Thomas Huebel*



Introduction

Rita, sociocracy trainer

Living together with other people, which we virtually all do to some extent, we need strong social bonds. If we're living with others without strong social bonds, we're asking for trouble. Because without it, we tend to act selfishly, with a lack of empathy and understanding for others. In society, it's impossible to have strong social bonds with everybody; at the same time it's possible to feel like a member of a greater whole that is cared for by all its members. But for that to happen, a lot of trust is required. Again, trust is created from social cohesion and a sense of mutual benefit. Enjoying time with others just for the sake of enjoyment is a powerful and necessary component in any community, small or large. Therefore, the community centre is of great importance here in Bridgedale360. It was the first house we built, while most of us were still living in tents! But we knew that without a community space, we might lose the interest of really being together. It was such a joy the day the building was completed. Because it's a manifestation of our togetherness, our gratitude and love for one another.

That's all sweet, but when it comes to decision-making, things get tougher! It requires trust, patience and sincerity, but it also requires a lot of knowledge and experience. In the beginning

none of us had any of that. We all came from a society that is very hierarchical, and we wanted to create something different. We wanted order, but no ruler and no one to be ruled, so we had everybody deciding on everything. We tried to organise it in a kind of a consensus fashion and went into it with a lot of enthusiasm and energy. Turns out - it can actually work! We did not do away with hierarchy altogether, but what we have is horizontal hierarchy where we make decisions together, instead of vertical hierarchy.

The Town Hall and the Community Centre could be described as the mind and the heart of Bridgedale360. You could say that in the Town Hall we make decisions, and in the Community Centre we make bonds with one another. But the two places are also intimately interlinked, just like the heart and the brain. If we don't have a strong social sense of unity, if we don't have community, we won't be able to make good and well-balanced decisions either - ones that take everyone into account. And if we're not able to make good decisions with the whole group in mind, it will generate a lot of conflict that will affect the harmony in the group. So, just like the heart and the brain, the Town Hall and the Community Centre are seemingly separate, but at the same time they are intimately connected and equally important for our social life here. It's the same with everything we do in Bridgedale360. We try to do it in a balanced and conscious way. In the old world, the brain is regarded as superior to the heart; for us they must work together to produce anything of value. Dragon Dreaming is a good example. It's a tool for creating projects together, that tries to incorporate the right part of the brain - our intuition, creativity and emotions - into the process. So there is a dreaming part, a planning, doing and celebration part, all equally important for a successful project.

Tonight we have a sharing circle in the Community Centre, and later there'll be some music jam. Almost every day there's something. You can come if you are interested. Sharing is very important since sharing what really matters to us makes us understand each other on a deeper level and helps us foster the spirit of comradeship among us. And of course music is important, too. Some people even say that a third of the time that we spend together we should celebrate! By celebrating we appreciate all the hard work that we've done, and we're letting ourselves enjoy and relax. It's really necessary to keep an energetic and vibrant energy in the group. And fun, of course! For if it's not fun, it's not sustainable, right?

Learning Outcomes

- To learn about the grounds on which trust is built and how to bring trust to a group
- To learn how to build a collective vision
- To learn how to celebrate individuals and their contribution to the group
- To realize the meaning of your engagement and the effect of our individual actions in group work
- To develop team building skills
- To understand the influence friends and peer groups have on people, especially youth
- To understand the beauty of collective work
- To see the power of collective work for a fair and equal society

Another Election

Group / Experiential

40 minutes, depending on the size of the group

- To experiment a new way of voting
- To participate in a transparent, empowering, equivalent election process
- To learn how to facilitate a group election

Sociometry

Group / Experiential

30 - 40 minutes

- To increase awareness of diversity within groups
- To increase ability to engage in effective discussions with people with different agendas/ opinions/backgrounds
- To learn methods to quickly visualise an overview of opinions of a large group

Fishbowl

Group / Experiential

30 minutes

- To learn methods to carry out effective discussions in large groups
- To increase ability to contribute in group discussions
- To increase listening skills

Dreaming Circle

Group / Experiential

15-60 minutes depending on the size of the group

- To learn how to build collective vision, engaging everybody in the group
- To learn about grounds on which trust is built and how to bring trust to a group
- To experience the magic of collective work

Facing Facebook

Individual or group / Theoretical

30-45 minutes

- To understand the influence of friends and peer groups having on people, especially youth
- To recognize limitations and pitfalls of Facebook reality

Sugar Cubes

Group / Experiential

30 minutes

- To introduce a method of appreciation
- To learn how appreciation changes the climate in a group

Another Election

Introduction

Sociocracy is a decision-making process that enables every member of an organisation to have a voice in its management. As such, it creates feedback loops in a system, helping information flow not only from top-down but also from the bottom-up. As each individual is a part of the whole system (be it an organisation or a community), sociocracy cherishes the voice of each individual, knowing that everyone's consent is needed for a decision to be made. It doesn't mean however that everyone necessarily agrees *fully* with the decision. It just means that for now we can give a proposal a go, no one has any paramount objections to it, meaning everyone can live with the given proposal, and people know that in a few weeks/months (as stipulated by a proposal) they can return to this decision and amend it if necessary. "Safe enough to try, and good enough for now".

What makes sociocracy different from majority voting is that it actually puts equality and freedom in practice. It highlights inclusiveness and cooperation among everyone involved. Contrary to majority voting, the participants can actually discuss issues much more thoroughly until consent is given to a proposal and there are no severely discontented people. In a majority voting system, where "yes" and "no" are the key players, we can end up with 60% of participants saying "yes" to a proposal and 40% being severely opposed but the proposal will still be implemented as the majority quorum is reached, leaving 40% of the people severely disgruntled.

In this activity, participants will get acquainted with the sociocratic model by using it in an election process.

Activity Type

Group / Experiential

Duration

Roughly 40 minutes depending on the size of the group.

Learning Outcomes

- To participate in a transparent and empowering election process
- To learn how to facilitate a group election using sociocratic principles

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

- Post-it notes or pieces of paper (at least 1 per participant)
- Pens

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Appoint a facilitator for the election. It doesn't matter how you decide on this, but it should be a person who understands the procedure well in order to lead the process.
2. Define the role the elected person should carry out: tasks to be accomplished, preferred or required skills, duration of the role; how often will the person be evaluated in her/his role and what the evaluation criteria are.
3. Distribute papers & pens.
4. Each person fills out a piece of paper with their own name on the top, and the name of the person they are nominating underneath. You can nominate only a person who is present; nominating yourself is also possible.
5. **Nomination round:** the facilitator collects the papers following the order of the circle and then asks each person to tell why he/she nominated the person they chose (nominations are written on piece of paper so that members can't change their nomination during a round). One by one, the members give their reasons to the entire group. Reasons must be relevant to the skills for this role.
The facilitator writes down how many nominations different people received and is also paying attention to arguments for nomination (and possibly writing them down).
6. **The clarifying round:** people can speak about how they feel being nominated or others can ask questions to people being nominated. E.g.: asking the person with the most votes if they are actually willing and able to take on the role.
7. **Change round:** after having listened to everyone, the facilitator presents how many votes different people received and starts a second round asking each person if they want to keep their nomination or they feel like changing his/her nomination on the basis of the arguments heard from the group. The facilitator changes the number of votes accordingly.
8. The facilitator proposes 1 person based on the group opinion and arguments (not necessarily the person who received the majority of nominations).
9. The facilitator presents three voting options:
 - a) Consent ("I agree, fully support")
 - b) Consent with concern ("I agree, I have some concerns, but they don't stop me from moving forward")
 - c) Objection ("I can't support this proposal, and this is my argument why...")
 By bringing an objection you help the group as you express a major concern, something that could harm the group. You do not block it simply because you don't like the person but because you have a reason why this wouldn't work and you present it.
10. The facilitator points out that the decision must be "good enough for now and safe enough to try", it can always be reversed, and through evaluation you monitor the progress of the selected person in his/her job.
11. **Consent round:** starting from the left of the person nominated each person is asked to express if they consent, consent with concern or if they have an objection. The nominated person is the last one to express their opinion. The person is elected if everybody voted with consent or consent with concern. If somebody objects, the person is not elected.
If the person was elected and there were some concerns now is the time to listen to them. Address them if necessary and adapt accordingly.
If the person was not elected you should listen to reasons for objection from everybody who objected and also listen to concerns. The facilitator integrates feedback in the proposal or asks someone from the group to do it. With the alternative proposal in place you do another consent round.
12. Celebrate!

Resources

- www.thriveincommunity.co.uk
- www.sociocracy30.org
- [Protocol for a sociocratic election](#)
- [A brief introduction to classic Sociocracy](#)

Reflection

- What difference did you notice between this way of electing someone for a role, and the usual way you are used to see/utilise?
- What could the advantages be of using this tool?
- How do you think the person elected in this way might feel? Would it help him/her to feel more committed to the "job"?

Instructions for Submission

Upload 1 photo, submit the role description, and a summary of the election. Notice what went well, what could have been improved. Write personal reflections on advantages and disadvantages of this methodology and of key points made in the participant reflection.

Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here:

[Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Sociometry

Introduction

Sociometry is a method for visualising positions in a group and can be used for all kinds of purposes. It can be used for getting to know each other, for exploring group dynamics and for seeing where the group stands concerning certain topics.

Sociometric explorations highlight underlying group dynamics of a given group: the alliances, the subgroups, the hidden beliefs, the forbidden agendas, the ideological agreements, the 'stars' of the show. In this activity, we'll explore different ways how sociometry can be applied.

Activity Type

Group / Experiential

Duration

30-40 minutes

Learning Outcomes

- To increase awareness of diversity within groups
- To increase ability to engage in effective discussions with people with different agendas/opinions/backgrounds
- To learn methods to quickly visualise an overview of opinions of a large group

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

- A large clear space to move freely in.
- Symbols for two extreme positions (It can be as simple as a red and a green sheet of paper).

Step-by-Step Instructions:

There are several basic prototypes of "sociometric" positioning:

1. Sociometric positioning can be used as a method for getting an overview about some aspects of a group.
 - a) Arrange the group so they are standing in a big circle. Inform the participants that the middle of the circle represents 'yes', and by staying still they answer 'no'.
 - b) Ask yes or no questions, for example; 'everybody who ... likes tofu, has divorced parents, has siblings, has already been to a summer camp, is younger than 15, is looking for somebody to fall in love with, eats vegan (etc. etc.) move accordingly'.

- c) You can start with some questions that you as a facilitator ask, and later on invite the group to ask the question that interests them [allow 15 minutes for this exercise].
2. Sociometry can be used when you have a meeting with different stakeholders. It enables visualising the different stakeholders in order to overcome a feeling of “We” and “Them”.
 - a) Physically divide participants into 4 groups in the room (A, B, C and D), these groups represent the different stakeholder groups. This shows the different groups and makes them more explicit.
 - b) In order to create a sense of connection between the different groups, ask questions with personal content. For example, the question of who is a single child and who has 1- 2- 3 or more siblings.
 - c) Ask the participants to raise their hands in response, this highlights the connectedness which penetrates the original groups and thus reduces the feeling of “We” and “Them”.
3. Sociometry can also be used for mapping opinions of the people in a group. For any question that the group is discussing, you can define points that represent a certain opinion. For example: ‘If you think that we should increase the membership fee, go to this corner. If you think, we shouldn’t go to the other corner’.
 - a) Ask a question relevant to the situation, for example, ‘what do you think of Europe's response to the refugee crisis?’ The middle of the room will represent ‘they have been very accommodating’ and the furthest point away from the centre will represent ‘they have not helped’.
 - b) Invite participants to walk around in the space and to stop at the position that best reflects their opinion.
 - c) When everybody is standing, have the group look at the constellation that has formed.
 - d) Invite participants to explain why they are standing where they are.
 - e) If appropriate, there can be a group discussion about the reasons for the different positions [allow 15 minutes].
 - f) Make the participants aware that they may change position if they wish as a result of the discussion.

Resources

- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sociometry>

Reflection

Gather the whole group after the exercise and ask them the following questions;

- How did you feel in terms of connection to the whole group after exercise ‘A’?
- How might exercise ‘B’ enable the diverse stakeholder groups to work together more effectively?
- What were the advantages and disadvantages of using Sociometry in exercise ‘C’ as a tool to map the opinions of a large group on an important issue?

Instructions for Submission

Submit a written reflection of key points expressed by participants during the reflection.

Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here:

[Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Fishbowl



[flickr photo](#) shared by [leepus](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY-ND \) license](#)

Introduction

Discussions in large groups are often challenging. It can be difficult to have your opinion heard and often the discussion can diverge from the topic.

So how can we solve this problem? Is there a way for having all the advantages of a small-group discussion (possibility for spontaneous interaction, direct answers, no facilitation needed) within a bigger group? In this activity we will try out a different discussion method, the Fishbowl. It can be applied to any discussion within a big group.

Activity Type

Group / Experiential

Duration

30 min

Learning Outcomes

- To learn methods to carry out effective discussions in large groups
- To increase ability to contribute in group discussions
- To increase listening skills

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

- Seating (chair or cushions), there should be an extra 5-6 places

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Prepare the setting: One outer circle with enough places for everyone. One inner circle with 5-6 places. In youth groups, these places can usually be cushions.
2. First, all participants should sit in the outer circle.
3. The fishbowl method involves the discussion taking place within the 'fishbowl' (the 5-6 seat circle in the centre on the larger circle).
4. Introduce the fishbowl discussion method and the topic of your discussion.
5. Give the following instructions:
6. a. The discussion can be free-flowing, remind participants to listen to each other respectfully.
7. b. Only the ones inside the fishbowl talk. (Exception: Facilitator, if things go wrong).
8. c. Everybody has the right to go to the inside circle and sit on a cushion.
9. d. Everybody within the inner circle has the right and even the duty to leave the inner circle at some point in order to give space for others.
10. e. The group sitting in the inside circle should try to always keep one cushion free for new people.
11. f. After you give your contribution, stay at least for one other contribution within the circle. Don't just speak and leave, but wait for the replies.
12. If applicable, the facilitator can make proposal, integrating all the aspects of the discussion.

Reflection

Invite the participants to sit all together in the whole circle and reflect on the following points:

- How did it feel to silently observe the discussion from the outside?
- How did it feel to be observed by the wider group?
- What were some of the advantages of using the method?

Instructions for Submission

Upload 1 photo of discussion taking place & submit a short description of the fishbowl, its topic, its context and your reflection of the participants feedback reflection key points. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Dreaming Circle

“Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world.”
- Harriet Tubman

Introduction

Every project starts with a dream of an individual. Every person has many dreams and yet many of them are not even shared because of fear that they may be ignored or ridiculed. This activity will help you create an atmosphere in which dreams of every single person can be shared in a safe space and other people can add theirs. This process enables an emergence of collective visioning which everybody feels ownership over resulting in a higher level of commitment to implement the actions needed to fulfil the dreams.

Activity Type

Group / Experiential

Duration

15-60 minutes depending on the size of the group

Learning Outcomes

- To learn how to build collective vision, engaging everybody in the group
- To learn about grounds on which trust is built and how to bring trust to a group
- To experience the magic of collective work

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

Flip chart paper, pens, talking piece

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Identify a *dream* - it can be any kind of a project that you would like to do. It could be painting your room, starting a new business or taking a weekend trip with friends.
2. Once a dream is clear, identify a group of people, it can be friends, family, colleagues or anybody else who is interested in the idea and can support it with skills and knowledge. Also, consider people you want to [be with](#) and work with. If the dream has broader scope, think about including people who will be affected directly by the project. Eight is a good number of people to invite, but anything else is also fine.

3. Once you have decided who the people are to share the dream with, invite them to a Dreaming Circle, a process of creating a collective dream. In this process, the dream of an individual dies in order to be reborn as a group dream. Because working for *our* project and not only *your* project means a big difference in how one relates to the project.
4. Participants of the Dreaming Circle are invited to sit in a circle. Some exercise can be done at the beginning to help people relax, let them introduce themselves etc.
5. The initiator of the circle presents her/his dream and explains what the project is about.
6. Then she/he gives people an opportunity to contribute with their dreams by asking Generative Questions ie. "What would this project have to be like in order for you to say this was the best use of my time?". Be clear that no judgement is being made as there are no dreams that are wrong or right. Dreams can be contradictory as this is normal in dreaming and we will "rationalise" them later in the process. The desire is to let diversity be expressed.
7. Starting somewhere in the circle people present their answers, one dream at a time. If a person has nothing to add at a particular moment, they can pass as several circles are made.
8. It is important that every dream in the Dreaming Circle is being recorded and written down on flip chart paper. You can appoint one person to write for everybody or you can share the task. Be sure that name and the essence of the message are being captured, there is no need to capture every word.
9. The Dreaming Circle finishes after everybody has shared their dreams and they feel they have nothing more to add. Declare when the circle is finished.
10. It is very inspiring if you read the whole dream in the past tense as a story that has already happened.
11. Let the dream that you have created together serve as an inspiration for where you want to go as a group. Planning is the next phase of the process. Not everything said in the Dreaming Circle is feasible to be done, so be realistic in and decide together how you will try to make as many dreams as possible come true.

Resources

- [What is dreaming?](#)
- The Dreaming Circle is a part of the [Dragon Dreaming project](#) design methodology
- [Dragon Dreaming Project Design e-book](#)
- [Talking piece](#)

Reflection

- Is the dream you have created sustainable? Why? Why not?
- How did people feel after the Dreaming Circle?
- How motivated were the people after the Dreaming Circle?

Instructions for Submission

Upload 1 photo's of the flip-chart paper with all individual dreams. Submit a written reflection from youth worker. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Author

Creative Commons - ySI4R Content Team (Inspired by Dragon Dreaming)

Facing Facebook



[flickr photo](#) shared by [stoneysteiner](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY \) license](#)

Introduction

Since Facebook was launched in 2004, it's been a space to share openly about what we eat, where we travel and who we spend time with. Social media challenges the definition of the word "friend" as our circles have grown to include everyone from best friends, family, co-workers to classmates, friends of friends and even someone you just met once! What often happens is that we are carefully crafting our Facebook persona, choosing events and posts that feel best to us in order to portray us as happy (and perfect) as *"I'm about to bake cookies for my boyfriend!"* *"I have 2 job interviews this week!"* *"I just had the most romantic night ever!"* How often do we feel envious or bad about ourselves after comparing our lives with our Facebook "friends"?

Dealing with picture-perfect images can be especially challenging for teenagers as they are in a life period which is based on comparing with peers. And at the same time it is a period of forming an understanding of who you are.

In this activity, we reflect on how Facebook makes us feel about ourselves and how it affects our perception of the world.

Activity Type

Individual or group / Theoretical

Duration

30 minutes for an individual, 45 minutes for a group

Learning Outcomes

- To understand the influence of friends and peer groups having on people, especially youth
- To recognize limitations and pitfalls of Facebook reality

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

- Online video [“What's on your mind?”](#). Subtitles for many languages available.
- Article [“Why Generation Y Yuppies are Unhappy“](#)

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Watch the online video “What's on your mind?” and read the article “Why Generation Y Yuppies are Unhappy”.
2. Reflect about how Facebook (& other social media) affects your perception of yourself and the world.
 - a) Is it possible for you to see what is the “real story” behind people's posts on social media?
 - b) How the posts of what others are doing and experiencing make you feel about yourself?
 - c) Do you post on Facebook to “impress” others? If not, what is your criteria to post something?
 - d) Why and how is face-to-face interaction giving a different experience about the other person?
 - e) Do you think you can change the way of using social media?
3. If in a group, talk about what are options to better and more appropriate attitude about “reality” that Facebook shows.
4. If you feel there is something that you would like to change or improve about how and why you use Facebook share it with somebody in person and be clear what it is that you want to achieve and by when (ex.: recognising that one uses Facebook too much and would like to use it only 15 minutes per day for a week). Make the person accountable to check with you if you succeeded in your commitment. Or you can always send yourself a future email using a tool like [Futureme](#) for instance that will help you remind yourself about it.

Resources

- [Facebook Envy: How The Social Network Affects Our Self-Esteem](#)
- [Facebook, Happiness and Self-Esteem](#)
- [Facebook might not be so friendly for those with low self-esteem](#)

Reflection

- Put in your calendar a remark that in one or two weeks after doing this exercise you will remember to reflect on this activity and observe if there is any change in how you use and respond to Facebook (or other social media).
- Please finish the open question: “The changes I’ve noticed in my use of Facebook (or other social media) are.... “

Instructions for Submission

Submit participants’ written answers to the Reflection questions and a written reflection by you. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here:

[Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Sugar Cubes



[flickr photo](#) shared by [howzey](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY-NC-ND \) license](#)

Introduction

Appreciation is the act of recognizing the best in people or the world around us. It is affirming past and present strengths, efforts and potentials. It is about seeing somebody else's glory and at the same time their vulnerability and flaws. If we wish to enable an individual to flourish in community, we need to provide safe space where person is seen, valued, cared for and respected just the way they are. Perfectly imperfect.

It is important that in our work and projects we dedicate enough time to celebration which is not about excessive use of alcoholic drinks and food, but rather expressing gratitude, recognition of the efforts and work done. It is also about healthy attitude to knowing what went wrong and motivation to improve it the next time. In this activity, we will express appreciation to all group members.

Activity Type

Group / Experiential

Duration

Depending on the size of the group, approx. 30 minutes.

Learning Outcomes

- To introduce a method of appreciation
- To learn how appreciation changes the climate in a group

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

- Pens and paper for the whole group
- Sticky tape

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Choose a moment where the group is not hyperactive, but rather in a mood to calm down, ex: at the end of the day.
2. Ask everybody to take one paper and to stick it on the back of another group member, between the shoulders, so that everyone has a paper on the back.
3. Give the participants the following guidance; 'If you have something nice to say about another group member, then stand behind this person and write it on this paper. You may write your name behind it, but you don't have to. Only write things that you really mean. Don't be polite and just write for the sake of being nice.
4. Let participants walk around and write things on each others' backs. As the youth worker, you participate, as well. If there is a scapegoat in the group that you fear will not get many nice comments on their back, think about it before, find nice comments about this person and write on this person's back.
5. Usually, it's easy to notice when it's over. When more than a third of the group is not writing or standing in line for writing anymore, then you should stop the process.
6. Give instructions to take off the paper (the "sugarcube" that you got) and to read what has been written. Usually, you will see a lot of smiles appearing on a lot of faces. You may say that to the group - and maybe encourage to say these things more often.

Variation:

1. After an intensive course you can prepare booklets for every participant and put them somewhere and ask people to share their positive impressions, experiences they had with this person, etc. as a memory of this course-community.
2. This can be done one the last day, and the booklets shall be left for 24 hours so that everybody can write into them.
3. People are not allowed to look in their booklet before the end of the course. It can be a small ritual to hand over the booklets.

Resources

- [Appreciative Inquiry method](#)
- [Dragon Dreaming](#)
- www.tolerance.org
- www.humber.ca

Reflection

- Ask participants to carry out a written reflection based on the following questions [*Allow 15 minutes for this step*]:
- How did you feel with your “sugarcube”?
- Do you think you lack appreciation? Would you wish to have more of that? What could you do for that?
- What can you do to give more appreciation to the people you know?
- Think about 5 people that you want to give positive feedback next week!

Instructions for Submission

Upload 1 photo and submit a short written summary of the process. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

The School

EDUCATION, COOPERATIVE LEADERSHIP & EMPOWERMENT

*"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."
-Nelson Mandela*

*"The whole purpose of education is to turn mirrors into windows."
-Sydney J. Harris*



Introduction

Mattia, 40 year old teacher and pedagogue

Do you remember your old school yard? Do you remember which material it was made from? Asphalt? Concrete? Were there bushes or grass? Do you remember the classes, your teachers, how you usually felt in school? Were you generally happy, bored, scared? How did you feel when you graduated? Was the world full of possibilities or were you confused and didn't know what to do? Try to remember. While remembering, also acknowledge that what you took for granted could have been totally different. The buildings, the rooms, the teachers, the subjects, the classmates, the surroundings... the whole culture, different. Play around with it, change something in your virtual school and see how it makes you feel. Now you're there! Is there something in the school that makes you feel unhappy? Is there something that you feel is missing?

This is a typical exercise we do with the kids, it usually stirs up a lot of creativity and enthusiasm. In Bridgedale360, we have built our school on three fundamental cornerstones: empowerment, education and cooperative leadership. Empowerment is the most important thing. Because if an individual doesn't believe in her own power to bring change, to contribute, then it doesn't matter

what she knows, she will be passive and she will be unhappy. So how do you teach someone to believe in themselves? Hopefully you don't! Kids come to this world that way, confident, and they will grow strong and with a real sense of agency if we just give them the right support. Every kid brings a unique set of gifts, talents, interests and curiosity into the world, our primary job as teachers is to give them what they need so that they can explore in a safe environment. Do you remember how it felt when you really loved the subject that was taught? That's where we want to bring the kids, because that's where they should be! To know as a kid that your interests and your will do matter. That is empowerment!

Every kid will thus choose their own educational path, and develop as naturally as possible. Still we do have obligatory classes. The school's other purpose, except for supporting the development of individuals, is to support the development of society. And the development of society needs a certain common understanding and common knowledge and skills to function. Our modern society has taken this to the extreme, where the education is modelled primarily to fulfill the specific needs of society and the economy, thereby stifling children's creativity. The flaw of such a design is that it views people as bricks in a gigantic machinery rather than as dynamic change-makers. We must always allow the new generation to feel that they can change the current order of things. They are not here to fulfill some mechanic program set up by people that are long dead! At the same time we need them to have a basic common education. So what we try to do is to balance the individual freedom with the responsibilities that society requires. We do teach writing, history, math, of course that is important, but we focus far more on self-expression, creativity and what we call "life skills". Instead of building the house for them, we give them the toolbox. Things like how to ask questions, how to listen, how to resolve conflicts, how to speak from the heart, how to express yourself, how to learn, how to teach, how to lead together, how to change ourselves and how to change the system. And most importantly, how to cooperate and help each other - that is why we refuse to use grading systems that encourage competition.

Right, that brings us to cooperative leadership! The third cornerstone. To partake in society and in our communities we need to be able to lead and to be led. In our school we're redefining the old idea of the leader. We don't see leadership a characteristic of an individual but as a function in a group - it means that all of us work on developing co-leadership skills and co-leading together. Here in Bridgedale360, we cherish our egalitarian values and believe in equality, that's why we try to encourage everyone to develop leadership skills. Every group is different and requires a different kind of leadership. Imagine you want to teach a dance class, then you don't want the old military veteran do the stepping. On the other hand, the old military veteran is great for the fishing expedition, since she knows how to sustain herself in the wilderness. Which knowledge and type of co-leadership is required varies greatly. And as strong, empowered individuals there will always be situations where our co-leadership is asked for by the group. We practice this a lot, using different games and scenarios. It's a matter of seeing that the leader doesn't have to be the person that's the loudest or most confident. We're all leaders, and when we co-lead, we grow.

The school is at times chaotic, sometimes I even long back at my old teacher desk. But that is also because we've taken on a much greater and more complex task than to produce predictable streamlined bureaucrats. Our task is to support individuals to express their talents and their uniqueness to the maximum, and to invite them into society as co-creators, not as passive observers. Seeing a person learning to express themselves in new ways, with all the joy, zeal and energy, to see that happening in front of your eyes is one of the most beautiful things that exist. At least for me. I'm actually really lucky... oh, I'm teaching a class in the woods today actually. Together with the students, we'll be doing some role playing games on gender

equality. That's another important one! We spend a lot of time raising awareness about our gender roles and making sure that girls and boys are treated the same and are co-leading - after all, transitioning to a fairer, sustainable society could not happen if 50% of the world population is left unempowered! If you fancy, join us!

Learning Outcomes

- To become empowered and to empower
- To have an experiential understanding of different educational styles
- To develop cooperative leadership skills

Privileges Versus Privileges

Individual or Group / Experiential or Theoretical

2 hours

- To become aware of the personal privileges, power, influence, disruption one brings into a group, relationship/interpersonal dynamics (e.g. family and friends circle)
- To be more aware of how others might feel and better use your own personal power
- Get to know, accept and then share your rank and privilege

United We Stand, Divided We Fall!

Group / Experiential

2 hours +

- To improve the learning process by employing collaborative learning, equality-oriented teacher/student interaction, discussion rounds, peer review and teacher review
- To empower youth with co-leadership skills by more participatory and engaging learning processes

Girl Power!

Experiential/Group

2 hours to several months

- To get acquainted with and adopt gender equality tools for developing leadership skills in girls in education
- To make youth aware of some of the issues and solutions in terms of gender equality

The Human Car: Shared Leadership

Group or Individual / Experiential

40 minutes

- To recognise and feel the importance of one's own rhythm
- To see own personal light and shadow sides in leadership
- To understand and experience shared and collective leadership

Your Favorite/Worst Teacher

Group / Experiential

30 minutes

- To reflect on your past learning experiences and what a good/bad learning experience is like
- To observe the common themes in good and bad teaching/learning experiences
- To understand that there are similarities and personal differences on how we generally like to learn

Privileges Versus Privileges



[flickr photo](#) shared by [timtak](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY-NC \) license](#)

Introduction

Have you ever felt like you are better or more talented and privileged than other people? Do you feel there are unconscious ranks developing in groups (school, friends...) in which the more “good looking, wealthy and famous” get more attention? Do you see these ranks developing? Do you see how many privileges you have? Are you ashamed of them?

In his book “Sitting in the Fire”, Arny Mindell, defines rank as “the sum of a person’s privileges”. Privileges refer to one’s relative benefits and advantages. He also says that it is “a conscious or unconscious, social or personal ability or power arising from culture, community support, personal psychology and/or spiritual power.” Whether you earned or inherited your rank, it informs much of your communication behaviour. The four types of rank:

- *Social rank* - stems from race, gender, sexual orientation, social class, religion, education, health, age.
- *Psychological rank* - comes from feeling secure and cared for. It also comes from surviving through suffering and as a result feeling stronger and more compassionate. May come from awareness, self-knowledge, inner work or self-esteem.
- *Contextual rank* - comes from a particular situation / context / locality in which a situation occurs (workplace, school, family, sport team...).
- *Spiritual rank* - is independent of culture, family and the world. Comes from having “justice on your side”. Also from a connection with something transcendent that guides you and keeps you centered even in a storm (e.g. Nelson Mandela, Mother Theresa, Martin Luther King Jr., Wangari Maathai). It sometimes frees a person from the worries that plague/block others.

We can't ignore the impact of ranks and privileges in our lives and how they make us feel. However, we can be aware of rank dynamics and use differences of power and privilege for our mutual growth and learning. In interaction, rank is really a fluid process asking for our awareness. The sense of power flips quite rapidly between people from one moment to another, as different kinds of powers are processed and experienced.

Example you might know from school:

- *"I have bad marks and hate studying."* ⇒ I feel a mix of low contextual and social rank.
- *"And I love sports, especially gymnastics and I feel admired for it."* ⇒ I feel a mix of high contextual and social rank.

How do you think this makes others and yourself feel?

In this exercise participants will reflect on their own rank within a certain relationship, get to know it and share it.

Activity Type

Individual or Group / Experiential or Theoretical

Duration

2 hours

Learning Outcomes

- To become aware of the personal privileges, power, influence, disruption one brings into a group, relationship/interpersonal dynamics (e.g. family and friends circle)
- To be more aware of how others might feel and better use your own personal power
- Get to know, accept and then share your rank and privilege

Instructions

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Divide the group into pairs or groups of 3.
2. Think about a relationship with another person in your life within the context of the different types of rank. Briefly share this with your partner/group.
3. Explore and write down insights about the rank complexity in this context with the help of your group. Consider each of the four ranks separately (social, psychological...).
4. Discuss and agree on the differences of these four ranks and how they influence your relationship. [Allow 15 minutes for these steps.]
5. Where do you currently have higher or lower rank within your relationship? [Allow another 5 minutes for this step.]
6. Having done this, switch to the next person in the group and allow another 15-20 minutes.
7. Come together in a big group again. Open a discussion guided by the following questions (see the Reflection section at the end of this activity), putting down keywords or themes on a flip chart for everyone to see.
8. Get back into your small group again and look around. Have you just met or have you known each other for a longer time? Discuss your individual rank in relation to the other group members. [Allow 10 minutes per person], then switch.

9. Group-reflection: Now come together in the big group again. What has surprised you around exploring ranks. Has it become clearer? Specifically, share around the last two questions in the big group. [Allow minimum 10 minutes for this step, let people express themselves and make them heard.]

Resources

- www.aamindell.net
- www.slideshare.net

Reflection

- Which privileges are difficult to “recognise” or “accept” as your own? Do you feel ashamed, guilty or uncomfortable with these privileges and how does it make you feel? How do you express it?
- In what way could you use your higher ranks in these situations to help you in interacting with others?
- In which situation can you see yourself using your high rank unconsciously?
- When do you see signs of low rank in interactions? How do they manifest?
- Do you think there is any connection between rank, abuse and revenge? If yes, of what kind?
- How can you use and share your high rank to empower people that have a lower rank in a certain area?
- How can you learn from and cooperate with people of higher rank in a specific area in which you are low ranked?

Instructions for Submission

Submit a short text based on your reflection (up to 200 words). Instructions on how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Related Topics

- Conflict transformation
- Power, ranks and privileges
- Roles
- Abuse and revenge

United We Stand, Divided We Fall!



[flickr photo](#) shared by [Dewolf Family](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY-NC \) license](#)

Introduction

In the present educational (and overall societal) system, we are inclined to believe that competition is crucial for motivation, improved learning and success in general. But in this immensely competitive environment, what we have become oblivious to is that the human being is a social creature and as such, [mutual aid and cooperation](#) among us are much more important for our survival than competition.

Moreover, studies demonstrate that children learn better in cooperative environments and the competitive grading system actually reduces students' interest in learning itself, restricting creativity and critical thinking. [“One of the most well-researched findings in the field of motivational psychology is that the more people are rewarded for doing something, the more they tend to lose interest in whatever they had to do to get the reward”.](#)

Beyond the traditional teaching setting of an authoritarian teacher, chalkboard and rows of pupils regurgitating, there exists a plethora of participatory and actively engaging teaching methods that leave space for egalitarian teaching, children creativity and motivation, independence, decision-making, youth empowerment and co-leadership skills (think Montessori, Steiner/Waldorf, Harkness, Reggio Emilia, Sudbury etc.)

In this activity, we will examine a combination of some of these alternative teaching methods with focus of collaborative learning rather than individualistic/competitive.

Activity Type

Group / Experiential

Duration

2 hours +

Learning outcomes

- To improve the learning process by employing collaborative learning, equality-oriented teacher/student interaction, discussion rounds, peer review and teacher review
- To empower youth with co-leadership skills by more participatory and engaging learning processes

Instructions

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. The participants sit at an oval discussion table (aka Harkness table). It is important that the table is oval (not round) so that eye contact can be established with everyone present. In lack of an oval table, participants can draw one on the floor or improvise otherwise. Youth workers are encouraged to do the activity in the outdoor environment as it is proven that the outdoor environment can be more inviting for learning than a traditional classroom.
2. It is important that the youth worker/teacher sits together with the youth as their equal. An introductory text is read or a video is presented by the youth worker on the topic at hand (for example [this video](#)). The youth worker then opens up the discussion round with an open-ended question on the topic that is to be learnt/discussed, the youth worker is not restricted. A talking stick can be applied to ensure everybody's participation. Raising hands should be avoided; participants monitor each other's body language or use a talking stick instead.
3. After the discussion, each participant writes a short summary of what they thought the most important concepts learnt are. Encourage participants to focus less on facts, but more on their critical opinion. The papers are assessed anonymously by other participants via short, narrative peer-review, no grades are used.
4. At the end of the session, participants write a 1-minute evaluation paper on the youth worker/teacher and the lesson in general. These types of teacher feedback papers can be extremely useful for improving teacher performance, but also for encouraging youth to be more engaged. The youth feels more inclined to participate if they see their suggestions are taken into consideration next class.
5. Close the session with a few minute mediation round – meditation has soothing effects and it can actually [improve students' performance!](#)

OPTIONAL: as an alternative, the [Socratic method](#) with Socratic circles can be used instead, with which ["the weight and the value of student voices and teacher voices are indistinguishable from each other."](#) First, students read a passage or a text and are then divided into 2 concentric circles: the inner circles discuss the text critically for 10 minutes and the outer circle listens to the discussion. After 10 minutes, the outer circle provides feedback; now it is the inner circle that is silent. Then the 2 circles switch roles and the whole activity is repeated, with a new inner and outer circle. The outer circle must be silent while the inner circle dialogues and vice versa, the inner circle must be silent while the outer circle provides feedback.

Resources

- [School Fights End at Detroit School Thanks to TM](#)
- [Children Full of Life](#)
- [Japanese Students Clean Classrooms To Learn Life Skills](#)
- [Alternative Teaching Methods](#)
- [Montessori Education](#)
- [Waldorf Education](#)
- [Harkness Table](#)
- [Reggio Emilia Approach](#)
- [Sudbury school](#)

Reflection

- What were the biggest challenges when doing the activity?
- Do you find participatory, collaborative methods as more engaging for the youth?
- Do you think participatory methods can be used from a tender age to empower children with leadership skills?

Instruction for Submission

Answer the questions under the Reflection section and submit them in Moodle. Instructions on how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instruction for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Girl Power!



[flickr photo](#) shared by [_lolololori](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY-SA \) license](#)

Introduction

The sustainable revolution in society is being spearheaded by youth. However, it must be spearheaded by both women and men. Gender equality and sustainability go hand in hand. In that sense, developing leadership skills among youth is especially important for girls, as girls become more passive throughout traditional formal schooling. Through various teaching methods employed by teachers in formal and non-formal education, we oftentimes [unknowingly encourage gender inequality](#) (praise and feedback, lack of gender-neutral language, socialization of femininity - teachers socialize female students to strive for a feminine ideal etc., not to mention gender bias in textbooks). Every time we say “boys will be boys”, we further support gender inequality. Every time we label a girl a “tomboy”, we further promote gender inequality.

In this activity, teachers and youth workers are encouraged to employ some of the tools that can be used for promoting gender equality and leadership skills for girls in both formal and informal education.

Activity Type

Experiential/Group

Duration

2 hours - several months!

Learning Outcomes

- To get acquainted with and adopt gender equality tools for developing leadership skills in girls in education
- To make youth aware of some of the issues and solutions in terms of gender equality

Instructions

Required Materials and tools:

- A talking stick, paper for presentation, markers;
- A computer or projector for the introductory video

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Divide the participants into small groups of maximum 6, 7 people; make sure there is equal percentage of girls and boys in the groups. Remember: small collaborative discussion groups encourage both female and male participation.
2. Open the activity by showing a video on gender equality (you can use some of the videos provided in the Resource section below).
3. Give the participants 15-20 min to reflect on the video(s) and discuss what they saw within the group. Ask them to reflect on gender equality nowadays. Use the questions provided in the Reflection section below.
4. Each participant should share their opinion when you start the debriefing session. To promote gender equality in teacher/student interaction, a talking stick can be used - each speaker shares her/his opinion and passes the stick to the next person. Alternatively, in case you opt out of a talking stick, allow enough time (3-5 seconds before calling out a name) - boys usually raise their hands faster, while female participants often wait until they have a well-formulated response. Call on girls as much as you call on boys (according to [research](#), female and male teachers involuntarily and unknowingly call on boys more often than girls). A good way for self-check is to video-record one lesson/workshop. In addition, think of the way you interact with girls and boys - avoid being blokish with boys and gentle with girls. [Studies](#) demonstrate that boys usually receive more praise from teachers - make sure you provide equal feedback to both girls and boys! And of course, make sure you use gender-neutral language in classroom discourse!
5. Now the groups go back to group work and have to think of inspirational women throughout history that challenged the traditional norms (this can also include women of the present-day society). The youth can even do internet research for this. Allow some 20 minutes for this. Each group has to present 2, 3 women that broke the traditional roles assumed by women and took on roles usually undertaken by their male counterparts. It can be female scientists, activists, resistance fighters, anyone from Marie Curie to Jeanne d'Arc! (but stay away from the entertainment ladies, please!) Each group presents the female role models for 10 minutes. A presentation paper can be used. This

can include a drawing, a picture, a few words on the paper or even a figure made out of old newspaper!

*If you are doing this activity in a classroom in formal education, create a “Girl Power” inspiration corner in the classroom, where such female role models can be “exhibited” on paper. This way, girls can be reminded everyday of what they can achieve. The percentage of women in science and mathematics is lower than men and this is often attributable to how children’s attitudes are shaped in childhood. Unlike boys, [girls need to see females involved in certain fields](#) before they can visualize themselves in the same roles. It is also advisable to bring female scientists/mathematicians/engineers to retell their story or organize a small workshop with female students – this way, girls get inspired. Additionally, you can organize field trips to STEM companies (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math education) where girls get a one-day (or even a summer!) internship to get engaged in the STEM sector from a tender age.

Resources

- [Equitable Classroom Practices](#)
- [Childhood Gender Roles In Adult Life](#)
- [Why Gender Equality Is Good for Everyone - Men Included](#)

Reflection

- Reflect on the videos. What are the childhood gender roles? When does gender get formed? What is the difference between gender and sex?
- Why should we care about gender equality – what is its correlation with poverty, the workplace etc?
- What about men, how do men benefit from gender equality?

Instructions for Submission

Submit your written reflection in Moodle. Instructions on how to submit your written reflection in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

The Human Car: Shared Leadership



Marina del Castell

[flickr photo](#) shared by [MaRiNa](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY \) license](#)

Introduction

Leadership is a mix of many qualities, but they can all be summarized in "engagement". When thinking about leadership it is common to think that a group or a person can do almost anything and of course this belief brings disappointment. Leadership is not to be seen as an individualistic process; leadership is rather a collective process. As such, many different rhythms are needed, and if one person doesn't know his or her personal rhythm, what they are good at, the risk is to cause harm in the world, toward the people around them or the leader herself/himself. There are no wrong people, there are only people in the wrong roles.

The paradigm is shifting: there is no more space for individualistic leadership, the world needs collective leadership and intelligence.

Activity Type

Group or Individual / Experiential

Duration

40 min

Learning Outcomes

- To recognise and feel the importance of one's own rhythm
- To see own personal light and shadow sides in leadership
- To understand and experience shared and collective leadership

Instructions

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Walk around the room, move your body, run, go slow, try to find your own natural walking rhythm.
2. Get into groups of 5. Create a line and put the hands on the shoulders of the person in front of you.
3. The person at the back of the row keeps the eyes opened, all the others should close their eyes.
4. The person from the back will have to move the "human car" and "drive around for 10/15 minutes. The other participants can also co-lead/drive, using their body, eyes closed and no words.
5. Bring the group together and reflect on how it went. How was it to be in a leading role, in the front of the car, in the middle...?

Reflection

- How did it feel to find your rhythm?
- How did it feel to lead and yet not lead? To share leadership?
- What are the challenges/difficulties that you faced in this shared leadership game?

Instructions for Submission

Upload 1 photo of the human car, and submit a personal reflection on leadership, how you imagined/used it in the past, what do you think has shifted (if anything) in your way of thinking about leadership (up to 200 words). Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Your Favorite/Worst Teacher



[flickr photo](#) shared by [Ape Lad](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY-NC-ND \) license](#)

Introduction

Through childhood, youth and adulthood we've all had teachers. It begins with our parents and then with our friends. Early on we also embark on the lengthy 10-15 year journey of formal schooling. Some of us hated it, some of us loved it, but surely we've all had both positive and negative learning experiences over those years. Some teachers tend to stay in our memory forever; for their brilliance, for their awfulness, for their character, for their expressions or for some specific moments that are simply unforgettable. While reading this, can you see how your memory videotape is running in the back of your head? What do you see?

In this activity we will reflect back to the teachers we've had and different learning experiences in our life. What stands out as positive or negative? And how have those experiences and impressions shaped as as the people that we are today?

Activity Type

Group / Experiential

Duration

30 min

Learning Outcomes

- To reflect on your past learning experiences and what a good/bad learning experience is like
- To observe the common themes in good and bad teaching/learning experiences
- To understand that there are similarities and personal differences on how we generally like to learn

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

- Paper and pen for each participant
- Possible use of a white board

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Split participants into pairs.
2. In turns, invite the participants to spend five minutes each sharing with their partner about their favorite teacher/learning experience: Who were they, what was it about that teacher that they liked? What was it about the experience that was good? Maybe they have a particular story to tell. Ring a bell after five minutes and switch so the other person can share about their favorite teacher.
3. Give them five more minutes in total to write down anything they took from that, especially if they can identify certain things that made the teacher/experience leave a positive impression.
4. Repeat step 2, but with the worst experience/teacher.
5. Repeat step 3, but with the worst experience/teacher.
6. Bring the whole group together and ask them to share what they've learned/shared with their partner: What are common traits to good/bad teaching/learning experiences? See if there are connections!

Resources

- [Parker Palmer, "The Courage to Teach", 1997](#)

Reflection

- What common themes do you observe in good and bad teaching/learning experiences?
- Are there differences and similarities that are obvious of how we like to learn?
- Did the exercise bring any insight on how you would like to learn or teach in the future?

Instructions for Submission

Submit your response to the Reflection questions. Instructions on how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

The Town Square

SOCIAL ACTIVISM, CIVIC ENGAGEMENT, YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

*"The world will not be destroyed by those who do evil, but by those who watch them without doing anything."
-Albert Einstein*

*"If I were to remain silent, I'd be guilty of complicity."
-Albert Einstein*

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."
-Margaret Mead*



Introduction

Linnea, civil society activist

Even though our lovely Bridgedale360 might seem like our own little heaven - we are far from being isolated. Of course we know that we're not alone on this planet. That there's a whole big world out there that is struggling and deeply wounded, that there is a lot of injustice and if we remain silent and just avert our gaze - we would be nothing short of accomplices in perpetrating this injustice. If we don't help change the world around us - the world will eventually change us, in ways that we don't agree with. We are all deeply interconnected, with people in far-flung places of the world, with our environment. We are part of the world, or the world is part of us and therefore the world concerns us. This is why we have the Town Square, where public debates and social/political protest normally take place.

It's quite big as you see and right in the centre of the town. Not that there was a need for social protest at this time, our views were in line on most things, but we use it mostly to discuss/organise political action as to what is happening in the outer world. It is also a symbolic act, a reminder. We had all seen how power had been abused and corrupted in our past and we knew that our new society, like every society, was in risk of the same abuse. I encouraged everyone to read Orwell's "Animal farm", so in the end we all got quite paranoid! But it's so true, power can easily corrupt people, so we try to do away with big power structures and have self-organised groups mostly. Of course, there are remnants of the old system and we are still experimenting with what the most adequate system is. So we must allow for critique, or not just allow, but to really encourage it! Of our institutions, our system, our collective decisions. The Town Square is sacred in that way. This is the place where we make it a point that the (horizontal) power lies within the hands of people - not institutions.

Our town is of course an act of protest in itself. We're here because the old ways weren't working. We've created something that we think is better, and we've done it because we care. But of course, we try to spread the ideas as much as possible in the old society. For example, in Bridgedale360, it's like we have almost done away with the class system, there are only minor class differences among people. But in the beginning it was difficult as we had homeless people sleeping on the streets and begging for food in the old society (to be fair, some of the inhabitants here were also homeless in the old society). So we tried to come up with sustainable solutions for poverty alleviation, we retook abandoned buildings and old buses and turned them into housing, we created pay-as-you-feel zero-waste restaurants etc. However, there are still many homeless people in the old society, so we try to spread ideas like these outside Bridgedale360. We organise courses and workshops here and outside as well, we even initiate discussions with and make proposals to the authorities (just yesterday we had a meeting with the local authorities and surprisingly, they loved our idea about transforming the abandoned post office into a social centre, where volunteers would offer courses for the unemployed!) Of course, we make it a point that none of this is charity, but solidarity-focused - we are all one, and as such, oppressed by the same system that we are trying to reform. That is why it is important that we don't just give food to beggars and feed the old capitalist system, but rather, that we actually empower people and aim for structural changes (now it is actually a previously homeless friend managing a zero-waste restaurant here - talk about empowerment!). Oftentimes, our social commentary can get more radical, if we are trying to draw attention to a cause, especially with politicians or the police. For instance, last month we made a fountain in a nearby city sprinkle red-coloured water, wanting to place emphasis on all the refugees and migrants that lost their life at sea. One time, several of us literally stripped naked and we had others pouring black colour onto us in protest at the oil industry!

However, what we have grown to understand is that it is never *Us* against *Them* - for the very simple reason that we are all *One*. Have you ever tried to smile to a policeman at a protest? I have, and guess what - they smiled back! So today our protest might be against something (the system) but it's never against someone. We believe that deep down inside everyone is bleeding. And everyone dreams, everyone wants a different world. That everyone has something inherently good in their hearts. No one *really* wants hunger, war or injustice. It's just that some of us may have forgotten that the suffering of the world is also a part of us, and therefore our concern. But I know, that if we speak to people as fellow human beings, with love and empathy authentically in our heart, there is a chance that they will remember that we are all universal sisters and brothers, not enemies. And since we don't have any enemies, the prospects of succeeding in changing the world do seem much more promising.

Learning outcomes

- To learn how to interact with the local authorities in alternative ways
- To initiate positive change in society
- To learn how to connect with grassroots social & environmental movements and initiatives locally

An Act of Kindness

Group or Individual / Experiential

10 minutes

- To see how our behavioural patterns are constraining us
- To experience how breaking out of those patterns can have a transformative effect on ourselves and the world

Interact with (Local) Government

Group / Experimental

Undetermined

- To let youth meet people who have an active role on their daily lives
- To experiment active citizenship and contribute to sustainable development of the local community
- To learn how to facilitate group dynamics and make group decisions effectively

The Alternative Community

Individual / Experiential

> 4 hours

- To get introduced to ecovillages and the ecovillage movement
- To get to know different varieties of ecovillages

The Movement

Individual / Experiential

Undetermined

- To get acquainted with the environmental and social initiatives in your area
- To experience the power of collective work for a social and fair society

Solidarity, Not Charity!

Individual or group / Experiential

1 hour

- To reconnect with marginalised people
- To change our perceptions on homeless people

An Act of Kindness



[flickr photo](#) shared by [mkrigsmann](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY-ND \) license](#)

Introduction

[Have you ever come across groups of people holding free hugs signs and offering free hugs to other people? Perhaps you have read the story of the Greek restaurant owner who opens his restaurant at night to let stray dogs sleep in it? The Canadian muslim who took off his shoes on a rainy day to give them to a barefoot passenger and walked barefoot home himself? The man who celebrated his 65th birthday handing 5 dollar bills and holding up a sign that read: "I have a home and a car and a job. Do you need a few bucks for some coffee?"](#)

There are wonderful stories from all over the world where people have followed their inner guidance of goodness, joy, of right and wrong, rather than the imposed, often unconscious norms of society. We all love these stories, because just by hearing them, we can feel how something is changing inside of us, how we are resonating with the change-maker and want to be one ourselves. We all have the power to create the world that we want to live in, and we need to be reminded of that.

["The ripple effect starts with one. One person to hold open a door. One person to leave a note on someone's car complimenting their awesome parking skills. One person to write a thank you letter to a teacher. One person to be a spark of kindness when another really needs it."](#) And why not be that person? In this activity you'll be encouraged to be the change-maker, the unsung heroine/hero, the breaker of stale norms that no one really wants. Think of your everyday life. Could a small effort from your part make a big difference for others? Could an act of kindness bring you closer to the world that you want to live in?

Activity Type

Group or Individual / Experiential

Duration

10 min

Learning Outcomes

- To see how our behavioural patterns are restricting us
- To experience how breaking out of those patterns can have a transformative effect on ourselves and the world

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

An open heart

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Think about any way that you could be supportive for you community and your fellow citizens or even the world in general. The act of kindness you choose can go beyond your local community, it could be international solidarity. As long as your act would bring you closer to the world that you want to live in, you're on the right track. If you need inspiration, browse the resources below or other sources on the internet. Or recall something that you've read in the newspaper long ago. It could be something very easy, such as saying "thank you" to a stranger holding the door for you; buying a flower from a street vendor that sells flowers and giving it to her/him as a gift; giving a kind note to a stranger; offering a hug to a homeless person...there are limitless ways to make a difference!
2. Perform the action. It could either be a planned action or something that you do spontaneously from an open heart of kindness. If it's possible, take a picture or video of the event.

OPTIONAL

Pay it forward - perhaps you have seen the film or read the book - the concept is quite simple: instead of having the person pay you back, they should be paying it forward. When you do something nice for someone, for example, leaving a kind note to a stranger, ask them to do an act of kindness for three other people The idea is to consciously spread kindness in the world.

Resources

- www.youtube.com
- www.randomactsofkindness.org
- www.stylist.co.uk
- www.kindspring.org

- www.servicespace.org
- en.wikipedia.org
- Feed the Deed: On [youtube](#) and [facebook](#)

Reflection

- How did the act make you feel?
- What influence do you think that your act had on the world?
- Do you think that these kinds of acts could have a substantial impact on the world?

Instructions for Submission

Submit an explanation of your action, your motivation behind it, and your reflection on the experience. Upload 1 photo (optional). Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Interact with (Local) Government



[flickr photo](#) shared by [chrisjohnbeckett](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY-NC-ND \) license](#)

Introduction

You are young, burning for change and a better world...But you feel that your cries often fall on deaf ears when it comes to big-scale institutions or governments. How can you bring about the long-awaited change then? Oftentimes, it is all about the tools we use. While petitions and project proposals in municipalities are still valid forms of interaction with local/national authorities, there is a growing need to go beyond them and explore more creative means of communication with politicians and other relevant stakeholders.

For instance, the people of South Africa have been using [toyi toyi dancing](#) as a political dance during protests - stomping feet and chanting (political) slogans to voice their discontent with the government and push for change. Protests don't have to be all angst and anger, it can actually be fun and silliness to make a statement. To take one example, [CIRCA](#) ("Clown protesters") are using humour at demonstrations. The lessons learnt from Occupy Wall Street and the Arab Spring underpin the importance of another form of citizen organising and modern activism online via different social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, MoveOn.org etc. Other more controversial methods range from civil resistance (nonviolent resistance) to nudity as a form of protest, used for instance by the protest group [FEMEN](#) while staging protests against sexism, sex tourists, international marriage agencies etc. A less widespread but rather controversial tool has been sex strike. When the women from the Colombian town of Barbacoas went on a sex strike ("[the crossed legs movement](#)") to pressure the men to join them in their lobbying of the government to construct safe roads to their town which was thus far cut-off (and thus unsafe for them), the government finally lent a friendly ear to their plight and started reconstructing the roads.

This activity aims to explore alternative methods of interacting with local authorities and stimulate youth participation in local communities.

Activity Type

Group / Experimental

Duration

A lifetime :)

Learning Outcomes

- To inspire youth to become politically active and active citizens
- To experiment with alternative forms of active citizenship and contribute to sustainable development of the local community

Instructions

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Connect with like-minded individuals to fight for a common cause. Agree on a common objective to influence the local policy, infrastructure or related issues that impact negatively the community and that you feel strongly about. The group should create a vision from a common dream related to this (local) issue, define the objectives, tasks, and moments to celebrate. For instance consider questions like:
 - a) Why was the local policy, infrastructure, or practice designed as it is?
 - b) How could it be improved with minimal initial or long-term cost/time/disturbance?
2. Research the issue. Investigate online or via conversation with information officers of your local government, which elected body, civil servant or office has responsibility for deciding on this issue. What are the different possible strategies to get the handling of this issue changed? Consider direct dialogue with decision-makers, media event(s) to raise attention or mass mobilisation of citizens to support your cause. Conduct research on creative ways to get your message across - politicians can often be too set in their ways and more fierce and outspoken forms instead of dialogue might be employed:
 - [Protest Art](#) (Project Orange, Guerilla Girls etc)
 - [Smart mob](#)
 - [Internet activism \(hashtag activism\)](#)
 - [Dance protest](#)
 - [Political theatre](#)
 - [Sit-in](#)
 - [Volunteering as a method to give rise to the unheard voices of ordinary citizens in institutions and government bodies etc.](#)
3. In case you lack support from the local population, try to organise awareness-raising campaigns, such as running for cause, using art to highlight an issue (see above), writing in the local newspaper etc. [Community collaboration](#) and creation of open spaces where people can discuss social issues can bring about critical thinking as well. This can be a simple and improvised space, such a park even.

4. When you come to the point of direct dialogue with politicians or relevant stakeholders, make sure you have designed a proposal for change in advance, Does your proposal benefit most people or will most people support your perspective? Why should the local government adopt your proposal?
- Select the issue that everyone feels strongly about.
 - Propose a feasible change in the current system
 - Select an appropriate strategy and design a campaign to effect change in terms of this issue.
 - Test the strategy by carrying out an action/event/meeting/publicity.

Reflection

- What kind of difficulties did you encounter engaging with representatives of local governments?
- What youth issues are crucial for you to be mainstreamed in local government work?
- Which methods of interaction with (local) authorities did you employ?
- What kind of recommendations would you present to local government to create mechanisms for useful engagement of youth?

Instructions for Submission

Provide answers to the questions under Reflection and upload them in Moodle. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

The Alternative Community

Introduction

In different parts of the world, people are getting together in intentional communities to try to find answers to the many of the economic, socio-cultural and ecological issues we're facing today. These alternative communities can appear in diverse forms and are commonly referred to as [political/left/egalitarian communes](#) and [eco-communities/ecovillages](#). They carry the ambition of ushering in a new society and a new way of thinking and relating to life. They are mostly egalitarian, use consensus-based decision-making, oftentimes implement income-sharing or a similar type of solidarity economy, practice communal ownership of the land or other resources and try to live in harmony with nature. They are practical examples of 'practicing what you preach', experimenting with and implementing ideas rather than just talking. In the following activity, we will get acquainted with the concept of ecovillages and political communes. And why not, perhaps you might also have the chance of a real-life experience in the intriguing world of alternative communities!

Activity Type

Individual / Experiential

Duration

>4 h

Learning Outcomes

- To familiarise oneself with the concept of intentional communities
- To get introduced to alternative communities and communes

Instructions

Ecovillages

1. Enter GEN-Europe's webpage www.gen-europe.org. Under "members" find the Europe/world map. Check if there are any ecovillages near where you live or just look around and see if you find one that you find interesting. Remember that they are all different and have different things to offer.
2. Check if the ecovillage has a web page by searching for it with a search engine. If not, look for another ecovillage.
3. Explore the ecovillage webpage and see what it has to offer. Do you find anything interesting?
4. If you have the chance, visit the eco-community! Most of them are open for a visit, just make sure to contact them beforehand and agree on your visit. Sometimes you can exchange your work and support for food and lodging, sometimes you might have to pay

for your visit. Also check out for interesting events or courses, they might cost money but can offer a great introduction to what the ecovillage movement is all about.

Left/political communes

1. Access the website of the [Federation of Egalitarian Communities](#), [Longo Maï network](#), [Kommuja network](#), [Radical Routes network of radical co-ops](#), [Las Indias](#) etc. You will be able to find a list of the communities that are members of these networks, such as on the [Kommuja website](#), but normally not a map.
2. Please note that contrary to the European ecovillage network which gathers many eco-communities, the political communes' networks comprises much less communes, that is, many of them are not members of a given network but it is possible to explore them separately. It is therefore worthwhile checking out separate left communities such as [La Comune di Bagnaia](#), [Urupia commune](#), [Utopiaggia](#), [Riverside community](#) or the Austrian informal network of land communes which does not have an official website but comprises left communes as [Hofkollektiv Zwetschke](#) or [Hofkollektiv Wieserhois!](#).
3. Despite the fact that many do not have their websites translated into English, you will easily find their contact details listed on the website and if contacted, they certainly do speak English! Perhaps you could offer your language skills and help them translate some of their content in English, as well!
4. Feel free to read the political, social and ecological agenda of the given commune, there are many inspiring things that can be learnt, from communal ownership to egalitarian decision-making structures! If the things you read upon pique your interest, why not even opt for visiting a left commune and immersing yourself in it? Most are open to visitors, but it is advisable to contact them in advance to schedule the visit! Perhaps they also need volunteers and volunteering is always a great way to familiarise yourself better with the left values that political communes are living in practice!

Resources

- [Federation of Egalitarian Communities](#)
- [Kommuja Network](#)
- [Longo Maï](#)
- [Radical Routes Network of radical co-ops](#)
- [Las Indias](#)
- [Freetown Christiania](#)
- [Global Ecovillage Network International](#)
- [Global Ecovillage Network Africa](#)
- [Global Ecovillage Network Asia and Oceania](#)
- [Global Ecovillage Network Latin America](#)
- [Global Ecovillage Network North America youth branch](#)

Reflection

Write a reflective piece on one community of your choice. If you got the chance to visit it, share your experience with pictures and text. Please feel free to add anything else you want to share about your experience!

Instructions for Submission

Upload the reflective piece you wrote on the given community. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

The Movement



[flickr photo](#) shared by [garryknight](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY \) license](#)

Introduction

In almost every corner of Europe there are grassroots initiatives engaging in creating a more sustainable and socially just society. The continent is literally boiling with environmental and solidarity initiatives, reflecting the critical times that we're going through. Some of these grassroots initiatives are part of the transition town movement, which focuses on resilience of urban areas. It all started as a student exercise. The students were given the task to come up with guidelines on how the town could become more sustainable and less fossil fuel-dependent. The transition movement grew out of permaculture, which is another world-wide movement focusing on practical holistic solutions in all areas of life. All over the world there are also thousands of sustainable community initiatives, generally called ecovillages, developing models for sustainable living. Equally important, there are also the left communes, with more focus on outreach and political activism which represent invaluable models of socially just and ecological settlements.

In this exercise we'll explore the grassroots in our neighbouring area!

Activity Type

Individual / Experiential

Duration

Once you are in, you can't get out. Everlasting. :)

Learning Outcomes

- To get acquainted with the social and environmental initiatives in your area and beyond
- To experience the power of collective work for an egalitarian and socially just society

Instructions

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Investigate different grass roots movements:
 - a) [Transition towns network](#)
 - b) [Permaculture](#)
 - c) [Federation of Egalitarian Communities](#)
 - d) [Kommuja Network](#)
 - e) [Longo Mai](#)
 - f) [Radical Routes Network of radical co-ops](#)
 - g) [Las Indias](#)
 - h) [Freetown Christiania](#)
 - i) [Global Ecovillage Network Europe](#)
 - j) [Indignados Movement](#)
 - k) [Friends of the Earth Europe](#)
 - l) [Global Social Justice](#)
 - m) [Greenpeace](#)
 - n) [Incitement](#)
 - o) [Climate Justice and Network](#)
 - p) [Global Debout](#)
 - q) [Service Civil International](#)
 - r) We are sure you might know some more!
2. Find a grassroots group / initiative in your area that appeals to you.
3. Visit one of their events.
4. If impossible to physically connect with the movement/initiative, try contacting them online to check if there is a way you could get involved via the internet.

Resources

- [How to start a movement? Leadership lessons from the dancing guy](#)
- [Urban grassroots mobilization in central-east European cities](#)
- wikipedia.org

Reflection

- Is the work of this group/initiative important for creating a more sustainable and fair society? If so, why?
- What would help the group/initiative to grow and have more influence?

- How did it feel to attend the grassroots event? Was it empowering/inspiring? Do you see the value of connecting with a group of people that shares your values?
- If there is no such group/initiative in your area, why is that? What would be required for it to appear?
- Are grassroots initiatives important for changing society? Why? Why not?

Instructions for Submission

If possible, take a picture of the event that you visited/helped organise and upload it in Moodle. Write a reflection piece with around 200 words on the grassroots initiative of your choice, answering the reflection questions from the Reflection section above and submit it in Moodle. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here:

[Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Solidarity, Not Charity!



[flickr photo](#) shared by [dkantoro](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY-NC \) license](#)

Introduction

"It's not that people are bad, but if we make eye contact, or engage in conversation, then we have to admit they exist and that we might have a basic human need to care. But it's so much easier to simply close our eyes and shield our hearts to their existence."

Most of us has have encountered people in the streets at some point in our lives, whether homeless or simply a marginalised minority group such as Roma people. The "underclass", "the unwanted", "the dregs of society"...We see them, we pass by them, some of us toss a coin or two, while others simply avert their gaze.

But how many of us have actually dared talk to them? How many of us acknowledge them as human beings by greeting them in the morning or acknowledging their existence with a simple nod?

In this activity, we are reminded that these marginalised people are not "charity cases", but human beings equal to us. We will try to show solidarity with them by talking to them as friends.

Activity Type

Individual or group / Experiential

Activity Duration

1 hour / Unlimited

Learning Outcomes

- To connect with marginalised people as our equals
- To change our perceptions on marginalised people on the streets

Instructions

Preparatory work

Research nearby shelters for homeless people, offer to volunteer as a way to familiarise yourself with marginalised groups in your area. Alternatively, you can simply have a walk in your local area and observe if there are people in the streets. If possible, you can also bring chess, cards, a musical instrument or any other recreational activity that springs to mind that you could do with the people.

Step-by-Step Instructions

1. “Good Morning!” or “Hello/hi!” is a simple but great way to initiate a conversation. Make sure you look at the person in the eye. [“The non-homeless person almost never looks the homeless in the eye. If you just look a person in the eye and sort of nod, it’s the most respectful thing you can ever do.”](#)
2. It is advisable to have a cup of coffee or tea to offer. However, make sure you bring 2 cups, one for the person on the streets and one for yourself - you want to show solidarity and not end up in the “charity spiral”. Instead of simply offering the person a hot cup of coffee, you can show solidarity by saying: “Would you like to share a cup of coffee with me?” (please try to find fair-trade coffee if you opt for coffee). If the person accepts, make sure you sit down with them, do not stand and share the drink while standing. If uncomfortable with sitting, you could try to squat next to the person.
3. You can continue the conversation by asking: “How are you doing? What is your name?” If the person is responsive, you can slowly move on to commenting on random light topics, like how good the coffee is or how cold the weather is, on the building across you or anything that comes to mind. Once you manage to slowly break the ice, you can ask: “I see you sitting here every now and then, I wonder where you sleep at night?” Try to find out the story of this person, why is she/he in the streets, what happened to them, what was their life like in the past? Remember that if the person is on the streets often, it does not necessarily mean they are homeless.
4. Try to be empathetic as opposed to sympathetic, be fully present in every interaction and conversation, listen deeply to everything the person says, look at them in the eyes, be genuinely curious. And you do not have to offer solutions, empathy means showing understanding about what the person is feeling, so simply saying: “I hear you, it must be very difficult to have gone through that. Thank you for sharing that with me” can be much more powerful than coming up with magical solutions. Of course, it is good if you could ask how you could help or refer the person to nearby shelters (if there are any), but try not to jump into solutions.
5. Smile at the person. Don’t be afraid to touch them, even if it’s just a simple tap on the shoulder! (but be careful - not all people like this, so you need to be the judge). It is important to acknowledge the person as a human being, as your equal. And why not, when saying goodbye, offer them a hug!

OPTIONAL 1

If possible, try to write down the person's story and publish it in some magazine. It is a powerful way of giving marginalised/homeless people a voice. Writing is a good way to do indirect action when it comes to social activism.

OPTIONAL 2

There are many [solidarity initiatives](#) throughout the world that encourage homelessness sleepouts, where non-homeless people spend a night sleeping in the streets. If possible, try to stay out one night with a homeless person. If you feel uncomfortable doing it on your own, you could even invite your friends to join you! Or better yet, make an event online (for example on facebook) and organise a homelessness solidarity sleepout as a political statement! This is a powerful way to raise awareness about homelessness among the population but also among the participants as you will be directly experiencing at least a tiny part of the plight these people undergo - "a night in their shoes".

Resources

- [Trinity Homeless Project: The Big Sleep Out 2014](#)
- [Homeless PROTEST Sleepout](#)

Reflection

- What did you learn about the marginalised people on the streets?
- What was the story (if any) they shared with you?
- Did this experience somewhat change your perceptions on people staying/sleeping in the streets?
- Will you do something differently in the future when meeting these people after the activity you did?

Instructions for Submission

Provide answers to the questions under Reflection and upload them in Moodle. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

The Fire Circle

COMMUNICATION AND CONFLICT

*"Man ruins things much more with his words than with his silence."
-Mahatma Gandhi*

*"No one would talk much in society, if he knew how often he misunderstands others."
-Goethe*

*"The biggest problem with communication is the illusion that it has been accomplished."
-George Bernard Shaw*



Introduction

Muhammed, conflict-resolution specialist

Come over here, let me tell you the story of how we have been dealing with conflicts. It seemed like we all had good intentions and fought for the same or similar causes, but we couldn't manage to get it right. To get along! To really understand each other... well, we didn't know how to communicate... Laura, one of the first inhabitants in Bridgedale360 (she's no longer with us, but she really made a difference while she was here), came up with an idea: we would all meet regularly here at the fire circle, sit in the circle and and just try to communicate in a non-violent way. Easier said than done, right?

This is where Laura spoke about her idea; this very fire circle is where it all started. A fairly large group of people were sitting around a huge bonfire. A brave, young woman stood up and started speaking. Everyone was listening, and their eyes were lit up by the fire light.

"We've all had the experience of childhood. Most of us have experienced growing up with a mother and/or a father and one or more siblings. Most of us also have the experience that it's not always that easy, that it can be tumultuous and sometimes even chaotic. People are going nuts in families! They can't understand each other, can't tolerate each other. That's almost become the norm! That's not to say that there aren't a lot of beautiful things in families! Of course there are. But often the challenges can seem overwhelming, especially when the relationships are just too plagued by old grudges, irritations and judgements that it seems solutions are impossible. I remember growing up... Why were some things so difficult? For example, why did I feel such tremendous resistance doing something as simple as filling up the dishwasher while waiting for my dad to come home from work? And why was he always irritated and on the verge of an angry outburst while crossing the porch? Why was my mom always quiet and self contained? And my little brother Ludvig so apathetic, lazy and disengaged? Why did we start seeing the vices in each other without compassion? Why did we start blaming instead of trying to support each other? It's like we had stopped trying to really communicate with each other. And clearly, communication was what was missing.

If we're going to live together in any meaningful way, we need to communicate. A lot. But it isn't as easy as it might seem to really communicate, to understand each other on a deep level. Right there is where many families and relationships fail. Because to understand others we must first understand ourselves. At the same time, we must allow others to express themselves as they are, without our instant reaction or judgement. And in conflict it gets even harder. Because then we're usually starting from the vantage point that we are right while the other is wrong, which is a hopeless attitude for resolving anything. So what do we do?

What if my brother, my mother, my father and I would, for once, sit down at the kitchen table and really talk? And instead of going in with the attitude that someone is right or wrong or that there is a particular problem to be solved, to simply speak and to listen to each other. To listen without judgement, without projection, without trying to come up with a response or to answer anything. To appreciate everyone's experience as valid. To listen deeply with empathy. Would that change anything? Compared to any of the hundreds of quarrels and arguments about trivial matters we'd experienced in the past? Surely it would...

I guess that we could say that the kitchen table is a modern equivalent to the fire circle. At least it should be. For thousands of generations humans have been sitting around the fire in the dark, when the activity of the day is over, listening to each other, telling stories, singing, dancing, resolving conflicts within the group or discussing what to do the next day. The circle is a symbol for community, and the fire is what is holding the group together. The fire is connection, compassion, unity and love. For those virtues to blossom, truthful and sincere communication is necessary. If we learn how to really communicate, it will have a transformative effect on our relationships with others and on our relationship with ourselves. For instead of hiding ourselves from each other, we can use others to better see ourselves. And that's the real fruit! We'll begin here and now. Let the talking stick go around and let everyone speak. The rest listen, just listen. And when it's your turn to speak, ask yourself, what is real, what really wants to come out?"

These days we're meeting here as often as we can. To ensure everyone shares their feelings/thoughts, we use a talking stick; it is actually really helpful. After a long night here, deeply listening to each other, singing, I feel like new again! We found that listening is one of the keys we had been desperately missing! After all, Laura used to say these brainy quotes..uhmm..what was it again?: ["We have two ears and one mouth, so we should listen more than we say!"](#)

Learning Outcomes

- To understand conflict as a gift / evolution / possibility for growth
- To experience a variety of communication styles
- To sit in a circle
- To look at one's shadows
- To develop tools for relating authentically

Embracing Your Shadows

Group / Experiential

90 minutes

- To recognise our reactive patterns and that the parts of ourselves we reject, manifest themselves in others
- To gain awareness of how we relate to others and to practice conflict resolution methods
- To deepen an understanding that we are fundamentally interconnected

The Way of Council

Group / Experiential

1-2 hours

- To understand and experience, first-hand, the power of listening and speaking from the heart, in a held and safe space

Own Side / Other Side

Group / Experiential

20-30 minutes per "conflict"

- To learn to see the other side of a conflict
- To explore the meaning of compromising and to experience the relief that even temporary (rather than perfect) solutions can give
- To experience conflict as a gift for overcoming blockages and seeing things from different perspectives

Learning to Listen

Group / Experiential

1 - 2 hours

- To develop empathic communication and the courage to communicate from the heart
- To understand those around us
- To notice the language that we use when expressing ourselves

Deep Listening

Experiential / Group

5 - 10 minutes per round, more rounds are recommended

- To learn how to create deep sharing through small dialogues
- To practice [deep listening](#)
- To experience intimacy and friendship through deep sharing and listening

Embracing Your Shadows



[flickr photo](#) shared by [Michelle Brea](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY-NC-ND \) license](#)

Introduction

[The 3-2-1 process](#) was developed by Ken Wilber and his associates at Integral Institute as a simple and effective tool for working with the 'shadow'. The process helps to uncover our shadow (unconscious thoughts and emotions), so we are aware of and can then work with it. It takes an extraordinary amount of energy to keep aspects of ourselves hidden in this way. The energy it takes to repress or deny them could be re-directed to other, more nourishing practices. When we shine a light on our shadow, we are integrating disowned aspects of ourselves, we liberate the energy we were using to hide them.

This exercise involves participants using a process of journaling in order to explore how their shadow can manifest itself in their day-to-day life.

Activity Type

Group / Experiential *[Participants can choose to work individually or with a partner for each step if they wish to share].*

Duration

90 Minutes

Learning Outcomes

- To recognise our reactive patterns and that the parts of ourselves we reject, manifest themselves in others
- To gain awareness of how we relate to others and to practice conflict resolution methods
- To deepen an understanding that we are fundamentally interconnected

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

Book, pens

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. **Ask** participants to choose an emotional experience from their life connected to another person. It is often easier to begin with a person with whom there is difficulty (e.g. lover, relative, boss): this person may irritate, disturb, annoy, or upset them. Conversely, there may be feelings of attraction, obsession, infatuation, or jealousy toward this person. In any case, choose someone with whom there is a strong emotional charge, whether positive or negative. Ensure participants that they will not have to share the specific details at any point if they do not wish to. *[Give participants 3 minutes to decide on the person, participants will do this step individually.]*
2. **Face It.** Ask the participants to imagine this person. Using a journal, ask participants to write down the qualities that are most unsettling, or the characteristics that are most attractive using 3rd-person language (he, she, it). Invite the participants to take this opportunity to let it out, not trying to be skillful or to say the 'right' thing. Remind the participants that there is no need to sugar-coat the description as the person they are describing will never see this. *[Give the participants 10 minutes for "journaling" them and invite them to share their experience for 5 minutes each if they have chosen to work in pairs]*
3. **Talk to It.** Ask participants to begin an imaginary dialogue with this person in their journal. Ask participants to write directly to this person as if he or she were going to read the letter. Invite them to write what bothers them about that person/situation. Participants can ask them questions such as:
 - a) Why are you doing this to me?
 - b) What do you want from me?
 - c) What are you trying to show me?
 - d) What do you have to teach me?
4. Then ask participants to imagine the person's responses and write them down. *[Give participants 15 minutes for journaling and if they have chosen to work in pairs, invite them to share their experience for 5 minutes each.]*
5. **Be It.** Invite the participants to become this person, taking on the qualities that either annoy or fascinate them, embodying the traits they described in 'Face It'. While journaling, participants should use 1st-person language (I, me, mine). Mention that it is normal to feel awkward. The traits they are taking on are the exact traits that they have been denying in themselves. Invite them to use statements such as "I am angry", "I am jealous", I "am radiant". In their journal, ask them to fill in the blank with whatever

qualities they are working with: “I am_____.” *[Give participants 10 minutes for journaling and if they have chosen to work in pairs, invite them to share their experience for 5 minutes each.]*

6. To complete the process, ask participants if they notice these disowned qualities in themselves, experiencing the part of themselves that is this very trait. *[Give participants 5 minutes per person]*. Finally gather the whole group for 20 minutes sharing, use the reflection questions below.

Attached Support Files

[2 minute video introduction to the exercise.](#)

Reflection

- Did anything emerge from the exercise which gave you a fresh insight into yourself?
- Do you feel like you resolved/addressed any strong emotions that were consuming you?
- Have you noticed any shift in your feelings towards yourself and the person?

Instructions for Submission

Upload 1 picture of the group working together. Submit a short reflection on how the process went. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Related Topics

- Conflict resolution
- [Own Side / Other Side](#)
- Self-reflection

The Way of Council

“When Native people speak, they are not talking from the head, relating some theory, mentioning what they read in a book, or what someone else has told them. Rather, they speak from the heart, from the traditions of their people, and from the knowledge of their land: they speak of what they have seen and heard and touched, and what has been passed on to them by the traditions of their people. It is their inner silence that allows them to listen to the prompting of their hearts and to the subtle resonances that lie within each word of a language and which, when uttered, reverberate throughout the world.”

– David F Peat

Introduction

For thousands of years, human beings have sat together in circles to speak their truth and to better understand both one another and the world. Many cultures around the world have used some form of held space for sharing, enabling them to become closer, hear each other, work through challenges and resolve conflicts. ‘The Way of Council’ is a technique developed based on the core principles of this ancient practice of group sharing. Council is a powerful method of connecting a group, of getting to know each other, and of truly listening. Council is always held in a circle.

There are four basic intentions that make the space of a Council circle more safe and able to bring forth truth and trust within a group (plus one additional):

1. **Listening from the Heart** means really listening, not judging what is being said, looking to the future or using the mind to analyze and assess. It implies being fully present with another person, to hear what is true for them, and to try to understand and see that person through their words or silence. It requires using the heart to hear, rather than just the ears.
2. **Speaking from the Heart** is speaking what is true for someone in that moment. It is to really see what is alive in the heart, being present, and then offering it to the group as a personal truth. It can be a word, story, song, poem, or whatever comes out. Speaking from the Heart means not planning in advance what you want to say and acknowledging that silence can be just as powerful a statement as words.
3. **Leanness of Expression** is being succinct, clear and to the point. The intention is to get to the essence of what wishes to be expressed and shared. It does not mean to “hurry up”, but to say what is there, and not be repetitive. This aspect of Council is intended so that everyone in the circle has a chance to share, and so that the most important things can be spoken, clearly and directly. It also helps to keep the listener's attention.
4. **Spontaneity** reinforces the idea of not planning what one is going to say. It creates freedom not to fall into old patterns of thinking and speaking and allows for intuitive changes in what is being shared. There is no need to follow ‘normal’ conversation patterns and allows for the call of the moment to be followed.
5. **Confidentiality**. While not one of the four intentions held during Council, confidentiality is asked for the space outside of the Circle. This creates a deeper sense of trust and respect for what is spoken in the Circle.

This activity provides the opportunity to experience Council, to listen and speak from the heart or to be a silent part of it (www.ancienthealingways.co.uk).

Activity Type

Group / Experiential

Duration

Usually 1-2 hours

Learning Outcomes

- To understand and experience first-hand the power of listening and speaking from the heart, in a held and safe space.

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

- A talking piece: a stick, stone, or other natural object which is easy to hold. It can be an object of personal significance as well. During Council, only the person who holds the talking piece should speak. The talking piece represents a sign of respect for each individual's truth to be expressed in the group.
- Comfortable sitting positions: cushions, mats or chairs to be used to make the circle.
- A center piece if desired: flowers, a candle or something to beautify the space and create a sense of solemnity, calm and focus.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Set up the space. It should be comfortable, quiet, and private.
2. Gather the group: people should sit in a circle, so that each person can see all the other people in the circle easily from where they sit.
3. Open the space:
 - a) The Council holder introduces the intentions of Council, the talking piece, and makes sure that everyone understands and answers any questions.
 - b) Council is very broad and inclusive: the theme or topic of sharing can include a specific issue that needs to be spoken about, or more general, where people can share what they are thinking or feeling in a given moment. For the general Council circle, one idea is to invite people to speak about the high and low points of their day/week, something else important that they are thinking about or feeling, or to just check if there is anything that might immediately need to be shared. If there is a specific topic or theme that the Council should focus on, make sure to explain it clearly.
 - c) Decide how much time each person has to speak and agree on how to let people know their time is running out. A soft chime or bell is often used.
 - d) Place the talking piece in the middle of the circle and invite everyone to check and see if anyone wishes to start. You can offer this idea to the group: a good way to know if you are ready to speak first is if your heart is beating hard or fast.
4. The first person who feels they want to speak walks to the middle and takes the talking piece back to their place. The person then shares keeping in mind the Council intentions

(see above). Once finished, they choose a direction to pass the talking stick in, and it stays this way until it makes a full completion round of the circle.

5. The next person is advised to hold the piece for a moment to see if anything is ready to be shared. If nothing comes, they are welcome to sit in silence until they are ready to pass the piece on: there is no requirement to speak. In this way, each person in the circle receives the talking piece and is given the chance to share. After the talking piece completes the circle, the final person should return the talking piece to the middle.
6. If there is still time for the group, consider opening the space for people to share a second time, or for others who did not speak the first time around.
7. Once everything that is needed has been said, or the available time has elapsed, close the space, making sure to give thanks to all participants, and adding any appropriate final words.

Resources

- council-network.eu

Reflection

- Was this a useful experience for most of the group?
- Did it feel difficult or awkward?
- Did the Council allow people in the group to feel more connected?
- What things might be changed in the future Councils?
- Were there any conflicts or issues that were resolved just by holding the space of Council?
- Does the group seem interested in holding more councils?

Instructions for Submission

Upload a picture of the council group with someone holding the talking piece, this should not be done during the council itself and permission should be obtained from anyone whose face appears in the picture. Submit a brief, at least 200 word description of the Council and how it was for the group. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Own Side / Other Side

Introduction

While conflicts create points of tension, they are also creative opportunities to experience different perspectives and to find solutions that are satisfying for all those involved. However, to fully resolve a conflict and use it as an opportunity of learning, certain needs must be met:

- Both sides must (at least to some degree) be able to think from the other person's perspective;
- There must be a space of compassion and empathy;
- Ability to put personal attachments aside.

This exercise will allow participants to experience a conflict from both sides, enabling them to resolve it by considering all perspectives and understanding the others' view.

Activity Type

Group / Experiential

Duration

20-30 min per 1 "conflict" (two people)

Learning Outcomes

- To learn to see the other side of a conflict
- To explore the meaning of compromising and to experience the relief that even temporary (rather than perfect) solutions can give
- To experience conflict as a gift for overcoming blockages and seeing things from different perspectives

Instructions

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Participants are divided into groups of 3, two people will be on either side of the conflict (Self and Other Self) and one will serve as a facilitator.
2. The Self in each group is asked to think of a real conflict or difficulty that she/he is currently experiencing with an individual. They should describe/summarize it briefly to their partner (Other Self), putting effort into describing what they know of the other person's perspective.
3. For the first round, 'Self' plays themselves and 'Other Self' plays the part of the the other. They should do their best to actually become the other and not be afraid of arguing back and defending 'their' position. This is a conflict after all (ex: Where 'Other Self' is the mother to the 'Self': *"You are always so hard on me! I feel like nothing I accomplish is enough for you!" "I don't know where this is coming from... Everything I do is for you and I*

support you in everything!”). They should stick to and hold this position until the next round.

4. As soon as the facilitator witnesses the Self starting to repeat themselves or seem to go round in circles (disregarding what the Other Self says in response), they should end the round.
5. The Self and Other Self now switch roles (facilitator stays). This is the time to review any guidelines and make any necessary changes (such as the timeout rules etc).
6. This is where the real change can happen. The original Self now has the opportunity to really inherit and experience the views and ‘side’ of the Other Self, to experience what the other is feeling throughout their conflicts.
7. Once repetition has been perceived to be happening again by the facilitator, this round ends and this is the moment/opportunity to take a small break.
8. The original Self should now return to their role. The conflict should be started again, with the expressed intention of using what they just experienced to find a solution.

The facilitator's role throughout is to ‘hold the space’ and moderate. They may find themselves encouraging the Other Self to argue back more, or for the Self to get more angry, it is common and usual for either participant to feel strong emotions, they should be encouraged to follow them. Conflict is an emotional experience after all. To make sure they don't get caught up in the conflict themselves a ‘timeout’ clause can be introduced so the facilitator can have an opportunity to give this feedback/encouragement. (ex: when the facilitators raise their hands both participants should stop and listen before beginning again).

Participants and the facilitator are encouraged to follow these simple rules:

- Take responsibility for one's self. Notice when you feel uncomfortable, when it feels okay to push forwards, when it's better to step back.
- While it is always encouraged to see this activity through to the end and push through any uncomfortable moments, it is okay to stop at any time.

Reflection

- Did the original Self find that the process brought the conflict to a resolution by experiencing the other side?
- Does any participant think being a part of this exercise will help them in future conflicts?
- How has each person's understanding of the idea of conflict changed, if at all?
- What was the turning point of the conflict, if any? If not is there clarity as to why not?

Instructions for Submission

Submit a 200 word reflection on this exercise and impressions on doing it, including comments/quotes from members. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Learning to Listen

Introduction

Every day we find ourselves in situations where we have to listen and speak. While we often do not realise it, the art of true listening is hard for many people and puts a lot of stress on any dialogue.

When it is our turn to listen, it is often easy for our minds to drift: “how should I respond to this?”, “Did I lock my door this morning?” etc. What people say can trigger reactions or memories in ourselves, which can distract or make us want to contribute and disrupt the speaker. When someone suffers, we often feel the urge to help solve their problem or at least feel that we have to say something reassuring. But generally what is needed is just to listen, to understand without judgment or reaction, to listen with compassion. If we develop our abilities to listen without judgment, we deepen the connection to each other and can understand other people's perspectives. Listening this way is fundamental for peace creation.

In this exercise, participants work in pairs to develop [deep listening](#) by focusing wholeheartedly on the speaker, creating a safe space, without commenting or reacting. They also enter into a dialogue in order to ensure that they have understood what has been said.

Activity Type

Group/ Experiential

Duration

1 to 2 hours

Learning Outcomes

- To develop empathetic communication and the courage to communicate from the heart
- To understand the people around us
- To notice the language that we use when expressing ourselves

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

- A device to watch the video clip with participants
- A Timer
- Flip chart paper/ extra large sheet of paper
- Flip chart pens

Step-by-Step Instructions:

Organise the participants into pairs.

1. Establish who in the pair will be the first person to speak by asking arbitrary questions: *"Who in the pair has darker hair is the first to start" or "Who has more colorful clothes?"*.
2. Invite the participants to think of a memorable emotional experience from their life. It can be a current situation or a memory that comes from the heart. A question can be asked to provide context and help stimulate the group. *Be sure to have a good question which enables to speak for quite some time.*
3. Inform the participants of the format of the conversation in advance.
4. The first person shares [*Allow 10 minutes*].
 - a) If they run out of things to share before the time is up, they should hold the silence. They are always welcome to start speaking again during those 10 minutes.
 - b) Listeners should not speak during the 10 minutes, only paying close attention and focusing on the speaker, they should try not to internally or externally react, not letting their mind wander to themselves, the past, or future.
 - c) The facilitator lets the group know when 1 min is left, by ringing a quiet bell or chime.
5. Once the first speaker has finished, the listener should communicate back what they understood. If the speaker feels that the listener has misunderstood them in any way, the speaker should explain what they meant. This part of the process may need to be repeated until the speaker is satisfied that they have been understood. [*Allow 10 minutes*]
6. Ask the pairs to now swap the roles.
7. Finally, invite the whole group to gather into a circle and share about their experience based on the reflection questions (see below). Record the emerging key words/phrases on a flip chart in the centre. Allow 20 minutes for this step, adjusting to accommodate the size of the group.

Resources

- [Video on Empathy and sympathy](#) (you can watch it with the participants before the exercise)
- [PDF- 'Empathy, Listening Skills & Relationships'](#)
- ['Empathy Is Key to a Great Meeting'](#)

Reflection

- How did it feel to share?
- How did it feel to listen without the need to judge/comment/resolve?

Instructions for Submission

Upload 1 photo of some of the pairs working (get permission first). Submit a short written reflection. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Deep Listening



[flickr photo](#) shared by [onnola](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY-SA \) license](#)

Introduction

How many of us go to therapists in our modern world? Why have therapists come to occupy such an important place in our lives? If we reflect better - bottom line, isn't a therapist someone that we pay to simply lend a friendly ear to us? *To listen?* In this modern rat race where we live life at a crazy pace, we often have no time for friends and family - we are always in a hurry. We seem to be forgetting about friendship, community, trust and that special thing that is inherent in all of us - *empathy*. But how to build empathy, trust and community if we have forgotten to listen?

In the activity that follows, we will describe a listening method as a tool for community-building, thus as a tool that leads to deeper connection. This simple activity is also very powerful if we want to engage each individual in talking about a certain topic we wish to discuss or decide about.

Activity Type

Experiential / Group

Duration

5 to 10 minutes for one round. Different rounds are usually recommended.

Learning Outcomes

- To learn how to create deep sharing through small dialogues
- To practice deep listening
- To experience intimacy and friendship through deep sharing and listening

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

- A room with enough space so that people can freely move. Meditative music for the walking-part is fine, but not necessary.
- A Cymbal or a Singing bowl - if that's not available, any bell or wine glass and spoon will do.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Make sure that you have an even number of participants. If you have an uneven number, a co-leader needs to participate, or you as a leader need to participate.
2. Ask the group to walk around the space. First without contact with each other, after a few minutes ask them to make eye-contact with the people they are meeting. At some point ask them to stop in front of another person. Make sure everyone has found a partner.
3. Ask the pairs to start a small dialogue with the following instructions:
4. This dialogue is an exercise in deep sharing and deep listening. It follows clear rules, please follow these rules. The facilitator will tell you the question that you are asked to share with your partner. Speak from your heart, and share what is really important to you. There is always one person who asks the question and then only listens and one person that shares about herself/himself. The person listening shall just listen attentively, please don't give comments, interrupt, ask questions, just listen to what the person in front of you wants to share. Be attentive, show your interest, but don't give any comments. If the person has nothing else to say, just stay quiet and wait if there is anything else that should be said. To be silent together can as well be a very intense moment.
5. The facilitator will ring with the cymbal (singing bowl etc.) after 2 - 4 minutes. Then it's time for the first person to stop talking, and both thank each other for what has been shared and for what has been listened to.
6. This process is repeated with the roles swapped. The person that was speaking now asks the same question to the partner. And the people that listened before are now the ones answering. The same rules apply.
7. Examples of questions:
 - a) How do you feel at the moment? What is going well in your life? And what's not going well?
 - b) One experience that has disappointed me in these last weeks / in our group.
 - c) One great experience in these last weeks / in our group.
 - d) What has most moved you during the last week?
 - e) What are you most proud of?
 - f) Tell me something about our relationship that I didn't know yet.
 - g) Tell me something important about yourself that I didn't know yet and that could be interesting for me.

- h) Tell me something about yourself that you think I would have never thought about you.
 - i) What's standing between us? What's separating us and what's linking us?
8. The challenge is to ask a question that is not so intimate that the people just refuse to answer or are uncomfortable to answer, but that moves them to show something that they haven't shown before. Only ask questions that you would be willing to answer freely in a small dialogue with any of the group-members yourself. In the privacy of the dialogue, people will usually dare to show a little more than they usually do if they are asked in a big group. This is a very important ice-breaker to create deep communication.
 9. It's helpful to give a clear order as to who starts. For example: the older person asks the younger person; the person with the longer hair asks the one with shorter hair; the shorter one asks the taller one. Funny instructions ("The one with the brighter smile") can help break tension.
 10. Keep the time, and ring after 2 - 4 minutes. Tell the group: Now it's time to stop this wonderful sharing, finish your thought and then be silent. Give thanks to each other for creating this moment of sharing. Then switch roles and the other person speaks.
 11. After another 2 - 4 minutes, ring again and tell the group to end the conversation, thank one another, find a way to say "Goodbye", and to start walking through the room again or ask them to go to their chairs.
 12. If you do several rounds with different questions - make sure that you finish with a positive question.
 13. When back in a circle with the whole group, ask the participants: "How was that for you?" It's not necessary for everyone to share.

Reflection

- How did it feel to ask the people to ask intimate questions?
- What would have been your answers to the questions?
- Will you repeat this method?
- What questions will you will ask next time?

Instructions for Submission

Submit a written experience of the activity. Instructions on how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

The Woods

DEEP ECOLOGY, RECONNECTION WITH NATURE

*“Use nature as a teacher and as a classroom.”
- Naturakademin*



Introduction

Graham, 26 years old, forester and architect

When I was studying in school I was wondering why all subjects were taught separately from each other like if it was not about the same world. I always thought there is something more than they were teaching us in school, something that brings everything together. I lived on the edge of the town, close to the forest. While it was difficult to explain what was missing in school lessons, it was easy to feel it when I was going for long hikes in the forest on weekends. Being in the forest or by the river alone I could observe so much more than in a classroom, and moreover I could feel that I am a part of it, part of something larger where everything and everyone are interconnected. One cannot explain everything verbally, often to understand something, you need to really experience it. Think of relations, cycling or swimming. We cannot learn from the books how to do it, we need to dive in and practice it. The same is with the world and nature – to understand it you need to experience it.

We are all constantly exposed to so much learning, but our learning is often shallow and we do not get deep insights about why the things go as they do. What is that barrier that hinders us from deepening our understanding? When I was studying architecture, I realised how much our surrounding affects our way of thinking. Apparently, living in urban environments, we always think in the frames of the social identities imposed on us - what we should do, how we should

look and act, what people expect from us. Are my clothes good enough, is my smartphone modern enough? But going to nature we start to release ourselves from the social identities. Nature does not care about your social status, your school grades, how much money you earn, which relations you are in and what color your pants are. We are no longer bombarded with opinions and therefore we can see things more clearly; being outside of the social identities and all tasks of busy life, we are more free to explore other things. We finally get a chance to reflect on the information we receive daily. Reflecting and processing the information we start to discover understanding, the inner knowledge. We start to feel what is right and wrong, how everything is interconnected in the world, understand our own life situation, how to deal with a certain problem and what our real strengths are. Nature is a great teacher. Nature doesn't use language and therefore we start to listen with a "different pair of ears" – with our intuition and senses. Relaxing our intellectual part, we immediately open up to take in the wholeness of the situation rather than focusing on details. We start to feel that nature and us are one.

Expanding cities and agricultural fields over the last thousands years we, humans, started to become more and more disconnected from the natural environment and from one another. For a long time however we were still in tune with natural rhythms. Only with the industrial revolution did the humankind become convinced that we are the power of the world and we reign over nature. We have developed worldviews, religions, sciences, a way of life, that put humans in the centre and disregard nature and all other living beings. We're the pinnacle of life, right?

There is a great loss in all this. With the humanocentric worldview, we have decreased the number of other species and natural territories, treating nature as a resource bank; but above all, this assumed human supremacy has been a great loss for ourselves as human beings as well. We have forgotten that we are a part of a huge interconnected system, interdependent and living together. Losing this intuitive understanding we find ourselves in a state of alienation, lack of belonging, insecurity; which results in depression, psychological issues and purposeless consumption as an attempt to fill in the empty spaces.

This all would sound pretty depressive if we did not realise our alienation from nature on time. Luckily we did. There are so many studies on ecotherapy, green rehabilitation, the positive effects of biomimicry architecture, on well-being etc. that people have started to value their connection with nature more and more, resulting in a radical shift in our culture. We are still confronted with big individual and social crises, but we are learning how to avoid additional crises, by reconnecting with our roots.

Here in Bridgedale we tried to build everything in a way so we have the natural environment all around. You can see trees, small animals and water everywhere. Greenery and interwoven plants crawling up the building walls in fantasy shapes, intoxicating smells of vertical gardens hanging by the walls in recycled bottles, cats purring on our window shelves, flowers in vivid colours blossoming around the wooden window frames...It is part of what we call biomimicry - you see for example that the window frames are often resembling dancing, blue creeks! We also have big old forests all around so everyone can go for a walk to observe the life cycles, the unity of dead and newborn, the interconnection among all the parts.

Learning Outcomes

- To experience extended period of time in nature
- To begin to perceive yourself as a part of a larger story and a part of nature
- To get embodied experience in natural environment
- To develop empathy to nature and non-human beings
- To find artistic ways of expression of these concepts

Be With

Individual or group / Experiential

30-60 minutes

- To have a felt sense of experiencing a contact with another non-human being
- To observe the sensations in the body and mind during the interaction, and see what arises
- To see if there is a way of interaction with other beings that has not been experienced

Gaia Walk

Group / Experiential

3-hour walk, 5-hour preparation

- To understand the time scale of human civilization on the earth
- To get somatic experience of time
- To reconnect with nature

The Council of All Beings

Group / Experiential

1-3 hours

- To feel what it might be like to be another non-human being living on Earth with humans
- To allow for creativity and artistic expression around the ecological crisis on the planet
- To learn about the relationship of humans to all other species on the planet

The Hike

Group / Experiential

2-6-day walk, 2-4-day preparation

- To understand and appreciate other people and social diversity, to be socially engaged
- To learn about ecosystems and natural patterns
- To develop leadership skills and personal stamina

Back to Nature

Individual / Experiential

24 hours + planning

- To reflect on your lifestyle and the real value of it's perceived "necessities"
- To have the experience of staying quiet in nature, only with things that are really necessary for your survival

Be With



[flickr photo](#) shared by [Philippe Put](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY \) license](#)

Introduction

The world is amazingly diverse. We live on a planet with so many other types of beings, plants, animals, fungi, and more. There are many thousand species that we know of on this planet, and probably many thousand more that we are unfamiliar with. And yet humans spend most of their time communicating and interacting with other humans, or a very small selection of other beings: cats, dogs, and maybe a few fish in a tank. And even with those other species, our contact is limited. We are unfamiliar with how to connect when it's not with our spoken human language. Many people have studied the interaction between humans and other types of life, and learned that there is much more than meets the eye. The intention of this activity, the “be with”, is to encounter another being that is not human, and to spend time with it to see what one can observe and learn. Some people have found that a whole new world opens up when we stop to really “be with” another type of being with which we share this place on planet earth.

Activity Type

Individual or Group / Experiential

Duration

30 minutes to 1 hour

Learning Outcomes

- To have a felt sense of experiencing a contact with another non-human being
- To observe the sensations in the body and mind during the interaction, and see what arises
- To see if there is a way of interaction with other beings that has not been experienced

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

- A place outside where each participant can find a quiet space to connect to another being
- A pen or pencil, and a notebook or journal for writing down observations after the activity

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. If this is with a group, gather participants together and explain the activity. If it's individual, just walk outside and set the intention to keep an open mind and see what one observes.
2. Ask the participants to go and find another being, somewhere within earshot, and to make contact with it (possibly just by sitting or standing in front of it).
3. If participants want to, they can introduce themselves to the being and ask it if its OK to make contact. They can also try to detect if they feel a sense of 'yes' or 'no' on an intuitive level. If they feel a no, then find another being and try again. This step is only recommended if people want to.
4. The participants then spend 15 minutes sitting with the other being, just observing, and noticing what happens. They should notice any thoughts or feelings that come up, and also observe the other being with all of their senses (sight, sound, smell, and possibly touch, but probably not taste). They should also see if any type of interaction occurs.
5. If participants want to, they can also take the next step to mentally send a question to the other being, and see if they can detect a response. Some questions to ask could be "Who are you?" or "What can I learn from you?" Participants can just listen and feel if there is some sense of reply. Sometimes an image might come into the mind, or a feeling or sensation. Stay very aware and notice what comes.
6. After 15 minutes, participants can find a way to say thank you to the other being, either in their mind, or out loud, and then to come back together in a group.
7. Give 5 to 10 minutes for people to write about their experience in their journal.
8. Then break the participants into groups of two and have them share about what they experienced. Encourage people to share what they felt or sensed, even if it might seem silly. It's all just a game and an experiment with seeing the world in a different way.
9. After they each get a chance for 5 to 10 minutes, have them come back together and share any important learning with the larger group. Ask for any additional feedback or sharing about what the experience was like. After this the activity is over.

Resources

- [The work of Christopher Uhl](#)

Reflection

- What was this experience like for participants?
- Did you have any unexpected sensations, results or communications?
- What did you observe from the other being? What did you observe happening within yourself?
- Would you do this activity again with another being? Why or why not?
- Does this experience shift your perspective at all on communication with non-human beings? How?

Instructions for Submission

Upload 1 picture of the group that did the activity, and submit a written evaluation of the experience by the youth worker, and if possible, a sampling of participant writing about the activity. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Gaia Walk



[flickr photo](#) shared by [PRMF](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY \) license](#)

Introduction

How long had the earth existed and life unraveled before the appearance of human civilization? In this activity, the planet's history of life is represented as a [walk with milestones](#) that represent the turning points in the evolution. Starting from the first bacteria, we go through all the milestones of life's history: plants and dinosaurs, revolutions and extinctions, and we finish at human civilization.

Walking the path through nature is the body experience that allows us to feel the distance and in doing so, comprehend the time between the milestones. After 4,5 km of the whole life story we meet the first hominids, which are only 13 mm before the finish line. Only 2 mm before the present time first human civilization appear! This helps us realize how tiny share of the planet's history humankind takes and puts in perspective what role we as humans play and what is the scale of change we have caused on the planet since then.

Activity Type

Group / Experiential

Duration

3 hours of the walk
5 hours of preparation

Learning Outcomes

- To understand the time scale of human civilization on the earth
- To get somatic experience of time
- To reconnect with nature

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

Map, GPS optionally, something to calculate the distance, good walking shoes.
Materials for the milestones: cards, pens, threads or whatever that you invent. Get [creative!](#)

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Choose and prepare the path which will become the Gaia walk. The provided calculations are for 4,5 km but you can recalculate for another distance as you wish. Be aware that the path should be quite long.
2. Make milestones for each period of the earth's evolution, stated in the attached spreadsheet (see below). They can be made as cards, signs or anything you come up with. Use the attached spreadsheet of the milestones for further guidance.
3. Walk the path yourself first to check everything and place the milestones in the according distance next to the path so that participants will see them as they walk by. The milestones should preferably be placed on the road in advance (refer to the attached spreadsheet below to see where to place them according to the kilometres stated -4.5km or if you are doing a longer/shorter walk, calculate where you place the milestones according to the percentages given in the spreadsheet). If not possible to place them in advance, place the milestones as you walk on the road. Make sure that you know the way and will not be lost with the group.
4. Prepare yourself to speak about the milestones and what they mean. The information is in the attached file below.
5. Prepare the group, give clear instructions about shoes and clothing if needed, check the weather forecast. You can even organize a picnic in the middle of the walk!

Support Files

[Spreadsheet with the milestones](#)

Resources

- [Animated timeline](#)
- [Body-environment dialogue](#)

Reflection

- What were participants thinking during the exercise?
- What time period do humans take in the earth's evolution compared to other periods?
- What is the ratio between our time on the planet and the changes we bring?

Instructions for Submission

Upload 1 image from the Walk and submit a short summary about the most memorable discussions through the walk with the feedback on what was seen as the most interesting part of the exercise. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Related Topics

- Outdoor Experiential Learning

The Council of All Beings

Introduction

Humans have become a dominant animal presence on this planet, living in almost every ecosystem, and rapidly destroying natural habitats to make space for more humans and to gain resources needed to support a modern lifestyle. Yet humans are just one amongst thousands and thousands of species, and most of these other species have been harmed or threatened in some way by human action. However, we rarely stop to recognize this, or to hear the voices of beings that we share the world with. The Council refers to a way of communication, where people listen and speak from the heart.

By intuitively connecting with other life forms and sharing their message in a circle, this activity gives space to express the numerous voiceless inhabitants of the natural world. It allows humans to get a sense of what other non-human beings might have to tell us, enabling us to see our actions from their perspective.

Activity Type

Group / Experiential

Duration

1 to 3 hours

Learning Outcomes

- To feel what it might be like to be another non-human being living on Earth with humans
- To allow for creativity and artistic expression around the ecological crisis on the planet
- To learn about the relationship of humans to all other species on the plane

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

- A quiet place outdoors or in a room where you won't be disturbed. Avoid rooms with fluorescent lights, or bring a small lamp if you are doing this activity in a classroom. The mood really does matter in the Council.
- [Art supplies](#): construction paper, paints, crayons, stones, shells, or other found and recycled objects, scissors, glue, any other art supplies that you have.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Explain the entire process before the beginning, so that participants know what is going to happen.

2. Invite participants to sit or lie down so that they are comfortable. Ask them to close their eyes, and let the image of an animal, human or part of nature or landscape, come to them in their imaginations. Remind them not to force themselves to think about a certain animal or part of nature, but rather to let the being visit them in their thoughts.
3. Ask the participants to “become” the beings that have visited them in their imaginations. Ask that they feel themselves turning into this animal or part of nature (such as a cloud, a mountain, a tree, a wolf, a spider, or another human). Ask them: "What is happening to me as this being? How do I feel? What is my life like? My days? My nights? My interactions with other beings? With my environment? What do I want? What do I have to say? What would I like to tell people? What wisdom do I have as this being?" Remind them to listen inside for the answers.
4. After giving participants some time to really "become" their being, bring the art supplies into the center of the circle and invite participants to open their eyes and to silently make a mask to represent themselves as this being. The mask does not have to look like the being, as long as it feels like it is representative. Some participants will be tempted to spend a long time on their mask. Remind them that the mask is only a representation. Allow some time for this part and give a five-minute and one-minute warning for finishing the mask. It is also an option to introduce the idea, and then give participants a day to come up with their costumes. This works especially well when the Council is held in the evening. When everyone has finished their mask, or prepared their costume, form the Council by sitting in a circle.
5. Remind people that Council refers to a way of communication where we listen and speak from the heart. Invite people to speak spontaneously, without planning and thinking too much about what they will say. It is also important to express in clear and short statements. Emphasize that silence in between the spoken comments of Council members is an important part of the sanctity of the Council.
6. One by one, each being in the circle should introduce him-, her-, or itself and say what their life is like, who they are, and how they spend their time. After each being speaks, the Council should respond by saying, "We hear you ____ (name of being)."
7. Ask the beings to each speak again, this time telling the Council what is happening to them, including what people have done to them and what they would like to say to people. Once again, the rest of the group responds by saying "We hear you ____ (name of being)."
8. After each being has spoken again, ask them to talk once more, sharing whatever wisdom, knowledge, or gifts they have to offer and what they might teach people who are willing to listen. The group responds by saying "We thank you ____ (name of being)."
9. Finally, after each being has spoken for the last time, ask participants to remove their masks one by one. As each of them takes off the mask, invite them to turn their masks toward themselves and make a small promise to change one aspect of their life which hurts their being.
10. The Council ends when you say something like "These promises made shall not be broken. Many thanks to the beings who have come together today to share their feelings, dreams, hopes, and wisdom."
- 11.

Resources

- www.humaneeducation.org
- www.earthregenerative.org
- www.granadur.net

THE INSTITUTE FOR HUMANE EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 260
SURRY, MAINE 04684
207.667.1025
info@HumaneEducation.org
www.HumaneEducation.org

Reflection

- What was this experience like for you?
- Did you manage to gain insight into the way other non-human beings perceive the world?
- Do you feel closer to other forms now?

Instructions for Submission

Upload a photo in Moodle of the people with the masks and submit a short text with the answers to the questions from the Reflection section. Instructions on how to submit things or upload photos in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Author

Creative Commons - ySI4R Content Team (Instructions were taken directly from online activity provided by THE INSTITUTE FOR HUMANE EDUCATION and adapted to be a shorter activity)

The Hike



[flickr photo](#) shared by [lorenkerns](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY \) license](#)

Introduction

Nature is both a great teacher and the perfect classroom for learning. Observing the natural patterns we understand how the world functions and how much different elements are intertwined. Where else can we learn more about recycling and reusing if not in nature? Nothing goes wasted, each part of the living beings is eaten, digested and degraded. And as a new cycle starts, dead matter becomes a source of life.

What nature also does is that it frees our minds from social constraints and urban distractions. This activity provides the opportunity not only to explore the natural environment and reconnect with it but also to improve our social skills and understanding of ourselves.

Activity Type

Group / Experiential

Duration

From 2 to 6 days of hike based on the group's choice.
From 2 to 4 days of preparation depending on the route.

Learning Outcomes

- To understand and appreciate other people and social diversity, to be socially engaged
- To learn about ecosystems and natural patterns
- To develop leadership skills and personal stamina

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

- Detailed information on the chosen place: maps, hiking routes, GPS optionally, etc. information on weather conditions in the area. Information about individuals in the group (health issues, if any).

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. The hike can be in local nature or can be a trip to another area. All planning and discussions are included in the task and are a part of the social challenge. Ensure that the hike is feasible, but sufficiently tough to develop the qualities described above.
2. Organize the group for planning the hike. Prepare some options where the hike can be, which are affordable for the group but provide enough challenge and duration.
3. Together with the group, decide on the location, duration and general requirements.
4. Prepare different roles which can exist throughout the hike: path organizers, people responsible for food purchasing, cooks, pharmacists, sport activities organizers, game organizers, timekeeper, discussion facilitator, photographer, bloggers, etc. Tips: check if people in the group have special skills like video making or music players. Turn on the creativity! Also include a role which will support learning from observing the nature.
5. Disseminate the roles and create the roles rotation scheme as during the hike everybody will change their role. It can take from a few hours to a few days for people to organize the hike according to their roles (the path, food, activities and so on). Facilitate the process and keep an eye that the hike plan remains safe and joyful.
6. Consider which activities from other modules in this course can be implemented throughout the hike. Check the group planning and preparation.
7. Go for the hike! Remember to facilitate, but let the group dynamics emerge.
8. Observe and document what is happening during the hike, paying attention to the roles rotation processes.

Reflection

- What did you learn?
- What was the most challenging for you?
- What ecosystems services did you observe?
- What social activities played a big role for you?

Instructions for Submission

Upload 1 picture of the hike and submit a short overview of the trip in Moodle. Feel free to mention challenges and what made the biggest impressions on the group. Instructions on how to

upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Related Topics

- [Gaia walk](#)
- NVC
- Deep Ecology
- Pick any activities from other modules to have during the hike, for example in the evenings or at the breaks

Back to Nature

Introduction

Think of all your conveniences! Your TV, your dishwasher, your flushing toilet, your smartphone. Your electric heating, your comfortable furniture, your supermarket food always accessible! And think of your life. Your daily routines, your family, your relationships, your longings, your fears. Your money, your stuff, your future plans and your memories, colouring your perception and thoughts in every moment.

And while our human hectic lives move on with their ceaseless stream of important things, stories, events and dramas, the natural world stays there in the background, quiet, doing what it always has been doing without much concern for the human spectacle. Sometimes you might notice this stark contrast between your life and the natural world. And then you realise that you're also a part of it, somehow...

In this activity we will go out in nature to reflect on our modern lives and give ourselves some breathing space from it. We want to analyse our everyday behaviours and see them from a distance, especially focusing on the material stuff and conveniences we're taking for granted. Which of all those things are actually important for our well-being? Which might have a negative effect on our well-being? Nature is a great teacher and can have a dramatic effect on our perspective on how we view ourselves and our lives. So let's see what we can learn!

Activity Type

Individual / Experiential

Duration

24 h + planning

Learning Outcomes

- To reflect on your lifestyle and the real value of its perceived "necessities"
- To have the experience of staying quiet in nature, only with things that are really necessary for your survival

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

Prepare your equipment and food and while doing it keep in mind what is really necessary and what you could easily be without. Don't bring stuff that you don't need! On the other hand, bring stuff that you need! When considering your diet, think about what potentially could be found wild. Depending on the season, there could be a lot. Do some research before you go.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

Go to the woods! Spend 24 hours in nature. If not possible spend as much time as you can. Find a good spot where you can put up your camp. After some time, when you feel settled, reflect on the following questions:

- How does being alone in the woods change your way of thinking and feeling?
- Of your old habits and conveniences, what do you miss most?
- Of your old habits and conveniences, what do you feel good about being without?
- How does being in this natural surrounding change the perspective on your own life and the things in it that you value?

Stay calm, do the practical things you might need to do to, like cooking or setting up the fire, and come back to the questions when you want.

Reflection

When you come back to civilisation, reflect on the following questions:

- Was there anything that you wished that you had brought to the woods but didn't?
- Was there anything you brought to the woods that you wished you hadn't?
- Could you imagine living in the woods for a longer period? Why? Why not?
- What insight do you bring with you from the woods?
- Does the experience make you want to do any changes in your everyday life?

Instructions for Submission

Submit a word piece of up to 200 words of your experience, covering the previously asked questions that most resonate with you. What in the submission can you identify with? What can you not identify with? Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

The Dojo

MIND, BODY & SOUL

*“Doing for having, without enjoying being, is the sole cause of all our misery.”
-Ramana Maharshi*

*“Be the change you want to see in the world.”
-Gandhi*

*“As human beings, our greatness lies not so much in being able to remake the world - that is the myth of the atomic age - as in being able to remake ourselves.”
-Gandhi*



Introduction

Pilar, 46, mindfulness and movement mentor

Come in, friends, come into our Dojo, I will explain what it is. The Dojo is a very important place for Bridgedale360, although it took us a while to realize that to change our society, economy and politics we need more than a change in our system - we need a change in ourselves. When we understood how significant the body practices and mindfulness are for our well-being and how big of a role they play for change to happen, we built the Dojo. Now we come here to revitalize the dialogue with ourselves and others. Nothing external is produced in this place, instead, we turn our gaze inwards, towards our inner being, our health.

Traditionally, in the Japanese culture, “Dojo” meant a place for practicing inner work, ranging from martial arts to zen meditation which are the combination of physical, mental and emotional

sides of us. But in our Dojo, we use a lot of other methods developed throughout the millennia, for instance, yoga and tai chi or dancing, singing and even running! Everything that brings our attention to our body, mind and soul, making us feel present, can be used for cultivating inner space. New techniques are coming up all the time, such as 5rhythms or Biodanza.

Bodily practices are the basis for our physical and mental well-being, our “inner resilience” and “inner sustainability”, allowing us to handle failures and develop ourselves in changing conditions. Cultivating our inner space makes us less vulnerable, which is vital for being able to stand steady in a world where many things seem to be out of our control.

For centuries and centuries, humanity has been separating the mind, body and soul, forgetting that they are three inseparable sides of the one. Now we try to bring them back together and understand how they influence each other. Accepting and working with our emotions and feelings, with our thoughts and bodies, we make them beneficial for our actions instead of seeing them as constraints. Learning about ourselves, we understand the world around and we see what we can do to make it better.

Just remember, we’re not talking about religion here. People believe in all sorts of things and that’s fine! Different belief systems don’t necessarily divide us. Here in the Dojo we can meet people of different cultures and worldviews and understand that there is something uniting us all. It is interesting to see differences and analogies between cultures. Look at all the great religions, they all draw on similar ethics and in many cases similar theology. It’s up to us whether we choose to focus on our division or on our unity. With more self-awareness we’ll be less eager to judge others. The world is so diverse and we all have a lot to learn from each other.

You know, I used to be a very ordinary person, I had a well-paid job as a manager in a big company, I lived in the center of the city and used to spend my weekends in shopping malls. But when I came to Bridgedale360 I realised that I had been living my life unconsciously: I was working with what I had been taught to do, without understanding the bigger picture. I was a little element in a constant mechanical machine where people earn money to spend money only to earn more money. It was like some enlightenment for me when I entered the Dojo, it dawned upon me that all my life I was doing things automatically without thinking of other possibilities, without understanding what kind of a world I was creating. I was not living mindfully. This is why I think it is important that we have the Dojo in Bridgedale360, so people can come and reflect on their own life and choices.

As you see, the Dojo is the place of mindfulness and reflection. Mindfulness means being conscious about our thoughts and actions. Why we think the way we think, why we live the way we live, what are the consequences of our actions? How often are we driven by fears determining our choices? We need to be mindful in our lives and in our work instead of doing things habitually, repeating the same patterns because they were taught to us or because we are afraid of something. Then we start to see what and how we need to change to have a better world. To understand these things and the whole complexity of the world we need reflection which takes time, stillness and focus. And they can be found here, in the Dojo.

Learning Outcomes

- To become more aware of our thoughts and beliefs, where they come from and how they impact ourselves and the surrounding world
- To understand the interdependence between physical, emotional and mental well-being and our actions
- To get to know the body's potential and to practice activities improving our physical health
- To realize our emotions, to learn how to balance them and to see them as advantage rather than constraints
- To discover the diverse ways to look at the world, to realize that there is no one answer for all

Alternative Vision

Experiential / Group or Individual

1-2 hours

- To learn how to value cultural/religious diversity
- To experience and understand other religions, worldviews, and belief systems different from one's own
- To learn how to see things from a different perspective

SomaMove

Individual or group / Experiential

At least 3 weeks

- To get to know the body's potential
- To improve the physical, mental and emotional health
- To learn how to balance mind and body dynamics

The Art of Being

Group or Individual / Experiential

10 minutes

- To familiarise yourself with meditation
- To learn how to be the watcher of the content of mind (thoughts, feelings, sensations)

Work is Love in Action

Individual / Experiential

5-60 minutes every day for 7 days

- To increase motivation for certain tasks
- To develop higher level of productivity
- To enjoy routines and make the environment around better with your actions

Your Body as a Teacher

Individual / Experiential

1-2 hours

- To connect to the intelligence of our body and learn how the body can give us valuable knowledge about our own lives
- To practice deep listening of yourself

Alternative Vision

*“The beauty of the world lies in the diversity of its people”
- Unknown*

Introduction

Throughout history, humankind has witnessed the power of diversity when different cultures and religions came in contact – for instance, the increased contact with the Islamic world in the muslim-occupied regions of Spain and Sicily, the Crusades, the Reconquista, the increased contact with the Byzantine Empire, Venice’s trading with the Arab world etc – it all contributed to the ending of the Dark Ages and the flourishing of one of the most important periods for the human thought – the Renaissance.

In the whirling process of globalization - diversity of people, cultures, religions, races is inevitable. Embracing diversity enables us to experience new things and different perspectives, it enables us to learn, grow, become more tolerant and genuinely love all human beings. But in order to truly grow, we must be open to experiencing different people, cultures and viewpoints firsthand. For example, most of the major religions promote peace and love, yet there is so much sectarian violence portrayed in the media, resulting in stereotypes and bias. In this activity, we encourage you to talk to people with a belief system different from your own and experience things firsthand from another perspective!

Activity Type

Experiential/Group or Individual

Duration

1 - 2 hours

Learning Outcomes

- To learn how to value cultural diversity
- To experience and understand other religions, worldviews, and belief systems different from one’s own (including atheist belief systems)
- To learn how to see things from a different perspective

Instructions

OPTION 1:

1. Pick a different religion you would like to understand better and find a local house of worship that you can visit (the only requirement is that it is different from your own). Even if you are an atheist, try visiting a religious house as the purpose is not conversion, but simply to familiarize yourself with the beliefs and perspectives of others.
2. Research how that religion is practiced in such a religious house, what the appropriate behaviours for visiting are, as well as some level of historical background for the religion you intend to experience.

3. Try to fully immerse yourself in the experience once you make your visit. For example, in a mosque join others who are sitting on the floor and praying, or in a Catholic church, consider going to a confessional and talking to a priest, as well as participating in Mass.
4. Respect the rules the specific house of worship has. For example, in a Synagogue people are expected to cover their heads with a specific head cover and/or prayer shawl; outside a mosque people are expected to remove their shoes and perform ritual washing etc. Make sure you do some research in advance so as not to offend anyone by not complying with rules that you were unaware of.
5. Inspect religious writings on the walls of the house of worship, read printed material that may be available, and try to learn more about the religion through your visit. Begin to observe similarities with and differences from your own religion, beliefs, philosophy, worldview.
6. If it's appropriate and does not interrupt or interfere with people's practices, speak with local practitioners of the religion. In some institutions, people will be very eager to speak about their religion. Also if possible, talk to a local priest, rabbi, imam, or other religious leader to get an even better understanding of the religion.

OPTION 2:

If you are practicing a religion, instead of talking to a person from another religion, you can also try talking to an atheist/agnostic, to learn more about their worldview. Feel free to voice your religious views during the discussion, but try not to be condescending or "preach"; remember, the purpose is not to convert anyone, but gain more understanding about their views and become more accepting of diversity. [Deep listening](#) is advised.

Resources

- www.unesdoc.unesco.org

Reflection

- How did you feel about this experience?
- Did you learn something new about the given religion? Or about atheism?
- Do you feel closer to the friends you have of a different (a)religious background?
- What differences and similarities did you observe in the house of worship you visited from your own or other religions you are familiar with?
- Most religions have peace and love for all beings as their core essence. Consider how humans misinterpret these pure messages, leading to bias, separation, and even violence.

Instructions for Submission

Write a short description of approximately 200 words, reflecting on your experience and upload it. Instructions on how to upload a picture in Moodle or submit your written reflection can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

SomaMove



[flickr photo](#) shared by [DolphinDans](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY \) license](#)

Introduction

How much do we know about ourselves, other people and the world? What could be the best tool to explore these dimensions? Could we explore them with our bodies? Through movement and moments of stillness, through physical exercise, through contact with other creatures and all the senses that our bodies have, we explore the world. Rushing through life, we forget how much our bodies can give us.

Our bodies collect, process and store information, not separated from the mind but in an active and dynamic connection with it. All the things which we cannot put into words can be felt with our bodies, as long as we are able to focus on our senses.

“Soma” means “body” and [SomaMove](#) is dynamic learning through the movement of the body.

This activity brings focus to the body and its senses, allowing us to explore ourselves and the world around us. Especially for all who have not explored yet the magic of the body!

Dance. Run. Bike. Breathe. Touch. Sense. Feel. Feel!

Activity Type

Individual (it can be in a group also) / Experiential

Duration

At least 3 weeks

Learning Outcomes

- To get to know our body's potential
- To improve our physical, mental and emotional health
- To learn how to balance mind and body dynamics

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

Only your time and enthusiasm

Preparation:

We all are different. In this activity, all people should find a physical way to express themselves and feel the dynamics of the body movement. It can be dance, contact improvisation, 5 rhythms, biodanza, yoga, tai chi, acrobatics, capoeira or even just running or biking. The main idea is to make the body move, focus on the feeling and what happens to the thoughts.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. For starters, research the above-mentioned activities. Each activity has its strengths and specifics, each develops different sides of your personality.
2. Choose which activity will become your personal Somamove. Don't think too much about preferences but about fears. What have I been afraid of to try? What are the activities which could potentially open my horizons more? Check what contact improvisation, 5 rhythms, biodanza, yoga, tai chi, acrobatics and capoeira mean, also keep in mind running and biking. Do not be afraid of trying out new things but also be open to explore things that you have already tried out from a new point of view.
3. Check what opportunities are available in the place around: are there any classes on the above-mentioned activities that could be attended? Or maybe online courses which could be done personally or with a group of friends? Make a schedule of the activities and be ready for new exciting moments!
4. Right before the session starts, focus on the thoughts and feelings - what is alive in me? During the physical activity, whether it's dance or running or anything else, focus completely on the body -- what does my arm, my feet, my stomach feel? How do my bones move in the space? Be in close contact with your own body throughout the whole session, acknowledging how it flows with [the movement](#).
5. During the session, imagine the energy moving through the muscles, going from one part of the body to another or splitting over the whole organism.
6. Right after the end of the session, make notes of the thoughts and feelings alive at that moment. It can be related to the physical state but it can also bring awareness about other aspects of life.
7. Continue doing the activity for at least 3 weeks. Make notes whenever strong feelings or thoughts arise.

Resources

- [Contact Impro](#)
- [Goa Festival Contact Improvisation](#)

Reflection

After 3 weeks, read through the notes:

- What changed in relation to the activities comparing to the time before doing them?
- What did the practices and activities bring to your life?
- What changed in terms of the relations to yourself and other people around? What interesting ideas came to mind during the sessions?

Instructions for Submission

Submit a brief feedback on your experience. What activities were tried out and what they brought to life. Try to encompass answers to the reflection questions above or write freely on the impressions on the practices. Instructions on how to upload photos or how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

The Art of Being



[flickr photo](#) shared by [Moyan Brenn](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY \) license](#)

Introduction

One of the most fundamental question is almost never asked: “Who am I?” Yes, of course, I am a man, a woman, an architect, a student, a son, a mother, a human being... But beyond that? What is the true essence of my existence? Can that question ever be answered?

Philosophers throughout the ages have pondered this question with varying results. Many quickly found that on a deep existential level the only thing that can be known for certain is that “I am”. *What* “I am” will always remain a mystery to the rational mind, it cannot be grasped or conceptualised. But by aligning ourselves with that mystery, we could start unraveling it.

[Meditation](#) is a practice allowing you to explore the depth of your own being. At the same time it has plenty of positive effects on your everyday life. Improved mental and physical health, stress relief, expanded self-awareness, ability to concentrate, more self-confidence, are all results of meditation.

The idea of many types of meditation are to be still and to observe your own being. To watch your thoughts, without interaction or judgement, to watch your emotions, your physical sensations, your beliefs, without trying to change anything. That is being still, letting your thoughts, feelings and sensations come and go, as leaves on the river, with you being the river itself. The water is always moving, but the river stays the same.

In this exercise you are invited to try out one type of meditation of your choice.

Activity Type

Group or Individual / Experiential

www.bridgedale360.org

Duration

10 min

Learning Outcomes

- To familiarise yourself with meditation
- To learn how to be the watcher of the content of mind (thoughts, feelings, sensations)

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

- A quiet space. A comfortable way to sit, for example a chair, a meditation cushion, or any other firm cushion.
- A clock, an alarm, or a meditation app.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Find a guided meditation of your choice, in the resources provided below under section “Resources” or try to find one in your language. There is plenty to choose from on the web! Alternatively, please follow the instructions here.
2. Sit down comfortably.
3. Decide on how long you will sit, for instance 10 or 20 minutes.
4. Read through the instructions before you begin. If you’re leading a group meditation, either roughly memorise the instructions or read them. Start the meditation.
5. You can either close your eyes or keep them open. For most people it helps to close them. Notice your posture. Are you sitting comfortably? Can you feel the earth supporting your body? Are you relaxed, is there any tension in your body?
6. Focus on your breathing. Feel the breath going in through your nostrils. Relax your lower belly and let the air fill it. Inhale, exhale, inhale, exhale... Don’t try to control or interfere with your breathing. Just letting yourself be like this, you will notice how your nervous system starts to calm down. Every time you exhale, you can feel how the tension is leaving your body. Breathe in, breathe out...
7. Continue focusing on your breathing. Don’t try to change it, whether it’s tense, shallow, deep, relaxed, let it be just like it is, just observe.
8. Whenever you lose focus, just come back to your breathing. Thank yourself for noticing that you got lost. Even if it happens twenty times during the meditation, don’t judge yourself. Just continue to focus on your breathing.
9. Continue doing this until the bell/alarm rings.

Resources

- www.youtube.com
- www.exploremeditation.com
- www.project-meditation.org

Reflection

- How was your experience of doing meditation? Was it easy, difficult?
- Would you consider starting meditating? If yes, what are the motivating factors?
- Was it challenging to stay focused on your breathing?
- What was your reaction when you lost focus on breathing?

Instructions for Submission

Submit a short reflection piece. If you did another type of meditation, explain briefly what kind it was and what effects it had on you. Instructions on how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Work is Love in Action



[flickr photo](#) shared by [Daniel E Lee](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY-NC-ND \) license](#)

Introduction

Bringing the sentiment of 'Work is Love in Action' into your life, is about cultivating a sense of [mindfulness](#) and presence into the everyday activities and actions of your life. It can have the positive impact of turning what would normally be seen as boring, time wasting or negative activities into joyful and pleasant - or at the very least - meaningful and worthwhile moments of your day.

Whilst the most common activities associated with the words *mindfulness* and *presence* involve spending time sitting in silence or doing yoga etc., it can actually be a lot simpler than that. Work is Love in Action is less about the activity itself, and more about bringing your focus inwards, so that the activity fills your awareness.

For example, let's look at an activity we all do every day - doing the dishes. Doing the dishes can very often be a task completed in a rush; just before you run out the door or as your house guests are arriving. Sometimes the only time you can find the time to do this might be late at night when you just want to be in bed already. It's a task that when not done properly needs to be done again and can end up being a very annoying and possibly even stressful way to spend time. In the following exercise, we will choose a seemingly mundane activity and bring awareness to it. By specifically picking a time to do it, allowing and enjoying your focus being solely for instance on the dishes and being present all the way through till done, not only will you be saving time in the long run but you will find it a much more pleasant and possibly even an enjoyable experience!

Activity Type

Individual / Experiential activity

Duration

5-60 minutes every day for 7 days

Learning Outcomes

- To increase motivation for certain tasks
- To develop higher level of productivity
- To enjoy routines and make the environment around better with your actions

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

Notebook, Pen, Task-Specific Items

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Decide as early as possible in the day what task will be used to practice with and note this down in the notebook (e.g. *"Today I will practice while doing the evening washing up"*).
2. Create the appropriate space needed for the task (e.g. Inform anyone around that you need some space for the required time, turn technology into Airplane mode, turn TV/music off).
3. Immediately before starting the task, note down what needs to be accomplished for the task to be completed, any specific feelings or expectations that are being felt and an estimation of how long the task should take (e.g. *"I really don't feel like doing the washing up right now, I would much prefer to watch TV... I imagine this will take 20 minutes and I will feel very bored after 5 minutes. I'm not looking forward to doing this.."*).
4. Next, what has been written down should be read aloud, as an affirmation to what will be done. Leave out any negative comments (e.g. *"I am now starting to do the dishes, I need to do all the dishes in the waiting area and rinse them properly before putting them in the drying rack, I expect it to take 20 minutes"*).
5. Throughout the task pay attention to the breakdown of each part of the task, focusing on each bit individually, registering the change that is happening before you. (e.g. *Watch as the food is wiped off of the plate by the sponge, enjoy the satisfaction of being the integral part of the plate becoming clean again*).
6. To complete the task, affirm the ending out loud (e.g. *"I have now finished doing all of the dishes"*).
7. Now return to the notebook, note down how much time was actually spent on the task and anything you missed/extra stuff you did. Also reflect on how your expectations turned out, was it more enjoyable than expected? Harder? Note down any prominent thoughts or ideas that came to you while the task was being worked on, how do you feel now? How was it different than usually? (e.g. *"Washing up actually took 25 minutes, however*

this was mainly due to me drying all the dishes and clearing the draining board on top of washing them. I did get bored after 5 minutes as I missed having my music on, however this faded very quickly and I think I may actually have enjoyed it even more in the end! I also remember mum's birthday tomorrow, just in time.. I have written a note to remember to ring her in the morning, I'm feeling very satisfied.”)

8. Repeat.

Reflection

- Experiment with doing a different task on some days and then repeating the harder/easier ones on others. Which activity/activities did you choose?
- What kind of changes did you experience in relation to doing these activities?

Instructions for Submission

Submit a short summary and reflection of the week, noting in what activities you saw the highest change in how you now related to them. Reflect on which ones you found the hardest and easiest and your view on why this is the case. Instructions on how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Related Topics

- Daily Personal Practice
- Meditation
- Yoga

Your Body as a Teacher



[flickr photo](#) shared by [lauren rushing](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY-NC-ND \) license](#)
[“At school we were taught mathematics, reading, and the geography of the world, but few of us were taught much about the geographical mapping of the home we live in—our bodies”](#)

- Donna Farhi

Introduction

How often do we consider deeply the importance of our physical body, recognising how it impacts our thinking, learning and decision-making? In modern Western society we tend to think of ourselves as separate parts comprised of the physical, mental, and emotional. Many people fail to recognise the interconnectedness among these parts. This misconception has developed over the last 2000 years, shaping Western “body versus mind” worldview, which contradicts belief systems originating in Ancient Greece and traditional Eastern concepts of [body-mind-soul unity](#).

The concept of embodied cognition is a domain of cognitive science studying the physical side of thinking. It explains that thinking is interconnected with the somatic processes through perception and motion. To put it simply, our thoughts cause emotions, these emotions then manifest themselves in our physical bodies, though this is not a linear process.

In this exercise we will explore the intelligence of the body, the dynamic interplay between the physical and the cognitive. If we listen closely, it allows us to learn a lot about ourselves and the surrounding world. We can see the value of caring for our bodies and listening to the wisdom they can provide in caring for ourselves more holistically.

Activity Type

Individual / Experiential

Duration

1-2 h

Learning Outcomes

- To connect to the intelligence of our body and learn how the body can give us valuable knowledge about our own lives
- To practice [deep listening](#) of ourselves

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

- A room where you can relax and can be undisturbed for some time
- Paper and pens
- If you want put on some relaxing music and make sure that the lights are not too strong

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Find a way to feel comfortable in the room—do whatever you need to do in order to relax.
2. In the activity that follows, remember who the teacher is - *your body*. You are still a student, and it will take an honest effort, and patience with yourself, to begin to learn what only you can do.
3. We will explore how the body reacts to past, present and future events. Through each part you will be guided with a set of questions, so please write down the answers and note also any small or large revelation that you may discover.
4. Explore body sensations (tension, ache, lightness, headache, heat, cold...) regarding events and circumstances in the:
 - a) PAST
Search your body for a time or experience when you felt:
 - free
 - restricted, suffocated, under-appreciated
 - strong, vital
 - another emotion of your own choice: in love, in the midst of an athletic feat, etc.Take some time with this.
 - b) PRESENT
When you are ready, take a look within your body to see how you feel about (and not simply think of) different aspects of your life. For instance, what does your body tell you when you think about:
 - your roommate or neighbor?
 - your dinner plans for tonight, or some common but seemingly insignificant component of your life?

- your girlfriend or boyfriend or other close relationships?
- your life as you are living it?
- anything else that you might want to take this time to feel?

Again, take some time with this.

c) FUTURE

Now that you have felt your body as it was in the past and is in the present, how do you feel in the future? What can your body teach you of your relation to:

- the next summer?
- your future work?
- what you think it will be like to be thirty years older than you are now?
- anything else that you anticipate in the future?

5. When you are done take some time to reflect on the whole experience. Use the reflection questions below for guidance.

VARIATIONS

If you are in a group and you would like to ask participants to explore certain questions from a different point of view you can also put on some light music and invite them to let the body guide them into the answer by observing the sensations in the body, movement that emerges or images that they get while moving.

Reflection

- Did you arrive at any insights, surprises, big or small?
- What was your experience with this activity?
- Did it teach you anything that you didn't know? About yourself, about the body, about the world around?

Resources

- www.personal.psu.edu

Instructions for Submission

Write a feedback piece of around 200 words, summarising your experience of the exercise and upload it in Moodle. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#).

Author

Creative Commons - ySI4R Content Team (adapted material from Chris Uhl)

The Amphitheatre and the Studio

ART & CREATIVITY, SOCIALLY ENGAGED ART

"If I can't dance, I don't want your revolution!"
-Emma Goldman



Introduction

Antonij, (protest) artist and dance instructor

Art is creativity. Without creativity there is no art. And art also brings us *into* creativity. It's like there is a constant human struggle between creativity and routine, between life and monotonous sleep-walking. Art is life, it's being in alignment with life, the freedom of creating and manifesting. Art is about breaking out of the boxes in which we tend to live our lives. Imagine that right now you could do a little dance. Just let go of your thinking for a while, go into your body, your sensations, and freely express yourself. Maybe you prefer singing or screaming? Whatever comes out of you when it isn't driven by fear or the mental recipes stored in your head, it's in alignment with the life force, inner creativity, an authentic expression. Puff! And as simple as that, we're out of "the box".

But personally I got into art for other reasons. I wanted to change the world and I thought that the most effective way to do that is to reach people through art. Incessantly repeated messages of poverty, worldwide suffering, global warming and our never-assumed responsibility didn't seem to go through, there was no reaction. I was becoming increasingly anxious and apprehensive, I was angry at the world and everybody, it felt horrible to be part of a world that knows what is wrong but is paralyzed and unable to act. It seemed so irrational. In a society that always claims to be so rational. I could not get my head around it, I was perplexed.... But one day, a couple of friends were setting up a flash mob, a public, unexpected performance, and I

said ok, I'll join. We wanted to bring attention to the refugee (system) crisis and the many people that lost their lives at sea while trying to get to the EU. On the main square in town, we put on wet life vests and started pretending as if we are drowning. We were about fifty people and there was maybe hundred more on the square. Many of the random passersby started joining us. It was so powerful! Caught up in this moment of surprise, people were able to receive, to absorb with their hearts. I especially remember one middle aged man, stressing back home from work, with his suit and everything. He stood absolutely still for a while, then he started to cry. In the end I went to give him a hug.

For me this was the beginning. I understood that through artistic expression I could draw attention to social issues, I could make people feel and ultimately - *make them act*. Make them join the fight against social injustice. I was tired, I had been hammering my messages into the heads of my family, grandparents, my old friends, for years. But oftentimes with very little positive results, to say the least. I had become the source of negative energy for my surroundings. Thanks to art, I was able to channel that energy into something positive. Apart from continuing with flash mobs, protest art and different types of performances and socially engaged art, I started to work a lot with used and recycled materials. For me that was an obvious choice, since my main goal had always been to bring attention to what we labelled as "the sickness of our capitalist-driven consumer society". We were destroying everything as if it didn't matter. And it was driving me crazy. The used materials carried the message in themselves, without me needing to say anything, I thought. I remember one piece, a two meter tall peace symbol made out of used tin cans and pet bottles. It got a good response, went into the local newspaper, and then the city I lived in asked to buy the rights to show it in an exhibition. It was in relation to a peace summit, where UN and world leaders would be present. I thought, good golly, what are they thinking, the piece is after all an obvious critique of the establishment, of its hypocrisy and lies. That behind the sweet peace talk lies a malicious destructive force, woven into the very fabric of our culture. I thought that everyone saw that! But here I really learned a lesson. The piece was exhibited at the summit and I saw well-dressed men and women watching it, commenting. I never knew what they said, but at least they stopped for a brief moment. They stopped and stared, even if it was for a very brief moment. And all it took me to do that was...well, discarded tin cans and plastic bottles. In other words, garbage.

A piece of art always brings its observer into it. This is what makes art so complicated. But also so interesting! You can never really predict what effect it will have on other people. So making political art is a real challenge, since it wants to affect people in a certain way. Here in Bridgedale360, some people's social commentary can also be more peaceful. My art is about inspiring structural changes in society at a political level, but some other people's art is more about recreating relationships to the planet and to each other. Expressing our innermost feelings. Healing. And that is ok, as we all have different ways to go around things. But there is one thing that unites us in Bridgedale360 in terms of art - we view art of utmost importance for bringing positive change, both to our inner self and the world. It serves both purposes - after all, ["art should comfort the disturbed and disturb the comfortable"](#).

Learning Outcomes

- To share creative expressions
- To use art as a driver for resistance to the system and structural changes
- To understand the power of art in self- and group-actualisation
- To perceive (social) media as a tool for transformation

- To realise one's own creative potential

Community Art

Experiential / Group

2-3 hours + preparation

- To be more accepting of cultural differences
- To use the power of community-engaged art to foster togetherness and unity between people among whom there is friction

Dance Expression

Individual / Experiential

Minimum a few minutes, as long as it feels good

- To experience the power of self expression
- To discover new possibilities of improvisation
- To reconnect with your body

Flash Mob

Group / Experiential

1 day for preparation, 1 day for execution

- Acquire a sense of ownership of a local public space, realise culture is what you do
- Become aware of aesthetic and expressive qualities of otherwise everyday activities
- Get an experience of how to use flash mobs as a way to raise the awareness about a cause

Gender Role Reversal Exhibition

Experiential / Group

> 2 hours

- To experience what it is like to view the world from a different gender perspective
- To realise how arbitrary gender roles are, so that to change them is not a crime
- To learn why gender equality is important for a sustainable society

The Comics Journalist

Individual / Experiential or Theoretical

1 day

- To become aware of the influence of different media and perspectives
- To develop an impartial gaze
- To establish contact with people outside their normal peer

The Yaya Box

Group / Experiential

2-5 hours

- To express oneself artistically
- To build trust and intimacy within a group
- To practice acceptance towards yourself and others

Write and Perform a Punk Song

Individual or group of 3 maximum / Experiential

1 hour to write, a couple of minutes to perform

- To understand how low the threshold of artistic expression actually is and overstep it
- To become empowered on stage
- To understand how an artistic expression can create a response from the audience and society

Community Art



[flickr photo](#) shared by [B Darling](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY-NC-SA \) license](#)

Introduction

Europe is currently dealing with one of the [largest examples of human migration in modern times](#), after the Second World War. While there have been many inspiring and highly positive outcomes from the resulting human melting pot, with powerful messages of person-to-person unity, borderless solidarity and an embracing and warm welcoming of the blessing of cultural diversity this brings, all has not been smooth and happy. With increasing Islamophobic, anti-semitic and anti-migrant sentiment spreading across Europe, the far-right gaining popularity in many countries and an apparent snowball effect of vile and violent attacks on individual refugees and whole camps in various countries, there is a growing need to address this alarming growth of unhealthy tension across cultures.

It is clear that a lot of work is still needed to increase the much needed integration. How can we bring people together? Art being present in all cultures is a fantastic way to integrate our visions beyond words. [Co-creating art](#) (also known as community art, participatory art, new-genre public art etc) fosters tolerance and community between different cultures and creates a culture of collaboration, this then spreads out into all areas of life. Focusing the art on a social cause can be used as a powerful tool to open the scope of interaction. Engaging the artists in a creative process together acts as a catalyst for social change.

Activity Type

Experiential / Group

Duration

Preparation: a few hours depending on the available options

Duration: 2-3+ hours

Learning Outcomes

- To be more accepting of cultural differences
- To use the power of community-engaged art to foster togetherness and unity between people among whom there is friction

Instructions

1. Take a group of youth to a refugee camp in your region *[if there are no refugee camps, visit a Roma youth centre or any other organisation that works with people from a different culture]*
 - a) Make contact with a responsible person where you are going in advance, to get guidelines about what you need to bring, how you should prep the youth before arriving and to see if there are already pre-arranged meeting points.
 - b) Arrange the transportation but also feel free to ask the participants to take part in planning to make them feel as part of the project, not as guests, as well as to practice horizontal hierarchy.
 - c) Another option is to invite migrants or refugees to the place of the group's activity or find a common meeting place such as a park or town square.
2. Integrate people from the camp [or organisation] into the group. Have some ice-breaker games ready in advance, it is important that all the youth feel safe and excited.
3. Prepare the surface to create the art on, wall, a large canvas or paper etc may be used.
4. As an introduction tell a 'desert island story', where the entire group is stranded on a desert island, abducted and abandoned by aliens. It is now up to the group to design their ideal country/world, together.
5. Explain that there are no pre-conceived rules they have to follow, there are no borders in place, no countries or states, they may design whatever they want as long as it is together. However, remind all participants that when creating this new world, they must be attentive to the cultural needs of all participants. Everyone should be happy with the final art piece.
6. Begin!
7. After the art has been created, organise the space for discussions on the reflection question (see below).
8. Remember to take pictures! *[with consent from everyone in them]*.

Resources

- www.inspireart.org
- www.artheals.org

Reflection

- Did something change in your relation to the people around during the creative process?
- Have you learnt something new about the culture you came across today?

- How did they feel while creating something together – did they feel a sense of team working together?
- Was it difficult to be attentive to the cultural needs of the others?

Instructions for Submission

Upload 1 photo and submit a few written impressions of the participants from the discussions. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Dance Expression



[flickr photo](#) shared by [Chris Hunkeler](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY-SA \) license](#)

Introduction

Twist and shout, jazz out, rap on and rock out! Almost all of us have danced to some beat at a certain point in our life. It comes naturally, almost as if we have an innate ability to dance! [Well, according to some studies, we actually do! Babies are born to bounce to the beat, it would appear so!](#)

[Whilst dancing was used as a method to show off and attract a possible mate in prehistoric times, research suggests that it was also connected to our ability to survive, as it represented an important social bonding and communication tool for our ancestors, in particular during tough times.](#) Nowadays we use diverse forms of bonding and communication, but the practice of dancing remains indisputably one of the best ways to bond and connect with others.

In a whirling world of ever-changing demographics, we are increasingly in touch with people from different cultures - refugees, migrants, people on the move, tourists...Why not use dance to explore the other culture and create social bonds through it?

This activity invites you to dance and step out of your comfort zone.. Being absolutely free, authentic, yourself...Explore the beauty of other cultures and strike up new friendships! Enjoy!

Activity Type

Group/Experiential

Duration

A few minutes minimum, but can be done as long as it feels great

Learning Outcomes

- To step out of your comfort zone
- To build bridges and friendships with people from other cultures (especially refugees/migrants/people on the move)
- To discover new possibilities of self-expression and improvisation

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

Place to dance, music, comfortable clothes, a device on which to listen to music; people if you are doing it as a group activity.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Decide where you will dance. You may want to find a location where you can move freely, such as a square.
2. Think of who you could invite - do you know people from other countries/cultures? Try to include as many as possible, perhaps even create an event online using social networks, such as facebook.
3. Make sure you have your musical device with you - this can simply be your phone. You could think of preparing a playlist beforehand. The songs in the playlist must include as many songs from different cultures as possible, try to include all the cultural landscapes of the friends that will attend. For example, if you have Senegalese friends coming include Senegalese music; if you have Spanish coming, add some flamenco songs; if you have Syrians coming include Syrian/Arabic music etc. It is not important if the others don't know the exact traditional dances for these types of music, feel free to move your body to the beat, the music will take you where you need to be! But also, this could be a great opportunity to learn the exact traditional dances from the person coming from that country!
4. Get ready to dance. Choose your starting position, it may be standing, sitting or even lying down, this is the dancer's choice. You may start with a minute of silence with your eyes closed to get fully aware of your body if you choose. After a minute of silence, the floor is yours - rock out!
5. Once you have started, it is suggested you start by moving slowly, following the natural impulses of your body rather than your brain. It is okay to stand still and listen until you feel that the movement comes, your body should not be forced to start. The first few movements can be very difficult, but rest assured it can get very fun once it has started! The rest is just your free improvisation. Enjoy every second of it, just do it! You will probably find that this will end up being the first of many times you do this.

Some tips if stuck:

- Place your awareness to a specific body part (e.g. fingers of your left arm, neck, right ankle), dance only with that body part, after a short while shift to another part. Repeat.
- Scan your body for any tension. Start your movement in these places, enjoy and notice what movement helps to release it. As above, shift to another area after a short while. Repeat.
- Get your face dancing, too! There are so many facial muscles ready to move and express emotions, allow them to do so! Even your ears can dance!
- Open your eyes and try to connect with the environment you have chosen to dance in.
- Close your eyes as soon as you start to lose the impulsive connection with your body, bringing your awareness inwards again.
- Experiment dancing barefoot, this can help you feel more grounded and connected to the earth.

Got hooked? Get some inspiration and ideas for your next dance by taking a look into YouTube. Try out keywords like: contemporary dance/ballet, contact improvisation, fun dance etc.

Resources

- [Dance anywhere - the whole world dances once a year. Take a look and join the movement!](#)
- [Dance Anywhere website](#)
- [Integrating Refugees through Dance Into Mainstream Society](#)
- [People Dancing, The Foundation for Community Dance](#)
- [This YouTuber who has a lot of fun, just losing himself to dance!](#)
- [An insight into various dance forms](#)
- [10 tips for dance improvisation](#)
- [Different sources for improvisation](#)

Reflection

- Did you manage to connect with people from other cultures? Which cultures? Did you learn something new about these cultures?
- How do you imagine your next dance session? What will the atmosphere and music be like?
- What are the most inspiring dance videos that you would like to share with others? Why do you like them so much?

Instructions for Submission

Upload your written reflection, so that your peers can give you feedback. Instructions on how to upload a picture in Moodle or submit your written reflection can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Flash Mob



[flickr photo](#) shared by [lauragrafie](#). under a [Creative Commons \(BY-ND \) license](#)

Introduction

A flash mob is a seemingly pointless gathering of random people, doing a specific act, and then dispersing. Think of a train station in which people, who were waiting, start to dance to music that is being played by some other people, who have pulled out instruments. Together they create an unusual scene; once done, they all just go their own ways. Usually the flash mob is organised via the internet, open to anyone, or a certain group that agrees on a time, place, and of course what to do. Sometimes they have to meet up beforehand to practice and rehearse. Naturally, most people in the public space do not know about this.

There are many reasons why someone might organise a flashmob, it can be used as a form of protests, to draw attention to a social cause, sometimes it can even be a company that is advertising a product etc. Oftentimes, it is simply used to create and add a bit of fun to the lives of those who witness it.

When done well, a flash mob is almost guaranteed to bring a smile to people's faces, it sure breaks the normal rhythm of their week! If done really well, it can even make people think; in this regard, it can be considered as a form of participatory art.

Activity Type

Group / Experiential

Duration

2 hours (1 hour for preparation, 1 hour for execution, with some days in-between)

Learning Outcomes

- Acquire a sense of ownership of a local public space, realise culture is what you do
- Become aware of aesthetic and expressive qualities of otherwise everyday activities
- Get an experience of how to use flash mobs as a way to raise the awareness about a cause

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

Whatever you require to act out the desired activity, but not too much (consider such things as an umbrella, because all your 'guests' need to be able to bring the props, too). A camera or a phone to film the flashmob.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Gather a small group together to help you organise it
2. Decide on an activity your flash mob is going to centre on, consider these points as you do so:
 -) Bear in mind that in the group you have gathered, age, gender etc may all affect what you do, not everyone can do a headstand or breakdance!
 - a) It leaves no trace when dispersed, and certainly it does not destroy anything.
 - b) Make sure the act does not come across as aggressive in any way, you do not want to create alarm and have security/the police called on you!
 - c) Preferably it touches on something recognizable before the end, so perplexed spectators may enjoy the experience and not just be confused (a good advice is to start off with something funny and convey your message towards the end)
3. Advertise to draw a larger group together, you need to be careful with this as you do still want people to be surprised when you turn up! Social media is often used for this. Once you start doing the planned activity, try to get random onlookers to join in.
4. Appoint someone who will speak to officials if they show up, for instance police etc, if you are worried about this, perhaps check if you can still make it work while contacting someone who is responsible for where you will be doing it and checking with them.
5. Film it, but don't be too clear with your camera beforehand!

Resources

- [Antwerp train station flashmob](#)
- [Supermarket Flashmob](#)

Reflection

- How did it feel? Were you scared, embarrassed?

- How did the spectators react?
- What was the funniest moment?
- Was there a message you were trying to convey? A social/political cause that inspired you to do the flashmob?

Instructions for Submission

Upload 1 photo of the flash mob and a short written reflection. Optional: upload a video of the flash mob online (ex: YouTube) and submit the youtube link here. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Related Topics

If you liked this activity, you should certainly look into these other kinds of public actions:

[Creative protests](#)

[Invisible theatre](#)

[Protest Art](#)

Gender Role Reversal Exhibition

Introduction

It is not so easy to imagine being another person, for the simple reason that we are living our own life, and this takes most of our time, so we do not get a view of other people's lives too often. Oftentimes, it is very difficult to put ourselves in the shoes of another gender; if I am a man, am I able to see the world through the eyes of a woman or vice versa, as a woman, is it possible for me to put on my male lenses and have that look at the world?

Different international and grassroots organizations recognize gender equality as one of the key factors for developing a fair and sustainable society. Roughly [two thirds of women with young children in the EU are working](#), compared to four out of five men. In the EU, only [one third of scientists and engineers are women](#). In order to tackle the existing and more evident gender equality issues, as male-female income disparity, gender-based violence, significantly lower representation in decision-making positions and politics, we must first contemplate on the root causes of these issues, such as socially constructed roles and stereotypes/traditions as we will do in this activity.

Activity Type

Experiential / Group

Duration

Less than 2 hours

Learning outcomes

- To experience what it is like to view the world from a different gender perspective
- To realise how arbitrary gender roles are
- To learn why gender equality is important for a sustainable society

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

- each participant brings props to dress up and switch roles, participants need to know this in advance
- beauty magazines

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Discuss the different ways in which women and men are represented in society with the youth, provide the youth with some statistics on gender inequality.
2. Go through the beauty magazines to reflect on female representation in the media.

3. Ask the participants to switch roles so that boys would take on roles and jobs that are socially and predominantly taken on by girls and vice versa. To do this, ask them to dress up assuming an untraditional role for their gender or bring an object that is associated with socially constructed roles causing gender inequality and perform something with it (for example, some boys could take irons and iron, a vacuum cleaner and vacuum, a baby carrier with a doll in it, if bold enough ask the boys to experiment with make-up and high heels, some might dress up as doing professions where women are overwhelmingly represented, such as nurses, factory sewing workers and sew etc. The girls on the other hand are asked to dress up and take on roles socially constructed as male or jobs where men are predominant (such as a plumber, car mechanic, politician or a director with a suit and a tie, and especially a computer engineer which is a field largely occupied by men).
4. Ask them to “play the role”, while talking to other people during that meeting (e.g. the boy that is a sewer should be sewing etc.)
5. Take pictures of each student individually and organize an exhibition on gender role reversal to try to raise awareness about gender roles and gender equality in your local community.

Resources

- www.unwomen.org
- www.genderequality.gov.ky

Reflection

- Discuss the root causes of gender inequality today. Make sure to make links with how gender equality is beneficial for the workplace (better performance, increased productivity etc).
- Ask the students how performing this “male” or “female” role made them feel? Discuss why gender equality is important for both men and women and how men also benefit from it.

Instructions for Submission

Upload 1 picture of the reversed role game and the exhibition and upload them in Moodle. Submit a short written summary. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

The Comics Journalist



[flickr photo](#) shared by [Frits Ahlefeldt, Hiking.org](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY-NC-ND \) license](#)

Introduction

In the recent years, printed newspapers have been [increasingly losing readership](#). This is where experimenting with digital technology and alternative ways of storytelling enter into the equation. For example, imagine reading a disturbing news story, heavy with grim statistics and imagine watching a cartoon with characters in it? Which one would you prefer? That's right - most people would go for the cartoon, simply because it draws us in with its lightness, while at the same time presenting a serious topic. It also introduces real characters and it makes it easier for the receiver to identify with the story. Most people do not enjoy reading long reports about a grave issue, but what if there was a way to learn about grave issues in the world in a fun, light-hearted way? Indeed there is - it is called comics journalism and it is a rather flourishing branch!

[Comics journalism](#) is a new form of journalism. It empowers a person to report on an issue with the help of visual stories i.e. comics. As impartial as possible, showing the struggle, conflicts and happiness of people, but also sometimes showing journalist's own struggle with being there with these people, reporting on their lives. To become a Comics Journalist, one does not need to be both a journalist and a comic artist or even none of them. Two parts of the newspaper were effectively combined. In the next activity, we challenge you to try it out yourself.

Activity Type

Individual / Experiential

Duration

One day

Learning Outcomes

- To become aware of the influence of different media and perspectives
- To develop an impartial perspective

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

- Drawing tools. You can start with a pencil and an eraser, but you might want to make it a bit more fancy, get some colours, and ink your grey pencil lines. You can finish your drawings on the computer with effects (for which you would need a computer and a program like Photoshop), but always start with real paper.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Go through the local newspaper, or talk in the group about what should actually be in there and what you are willing to make research on and report on.
2. You are a comics journalist now and you want to convey a message through comics. Find something that interests you, it does not have to be serious, new or an exclusive story.
3. Train some drawing on the subject you are going to focus on, for instance if are you going to report about a farm, it would be good if you are able to draw a cow. And how would you draw yourself? Any style is good enough. Crappy artists have become comic book stars.
4. Go to your reporting assignment. Take both drawing and text notes. You can also film, and record with a camera. Be careful that you do not disappear behind it though. Neither should you later copy everything one on one from the video material. Just use it as a reminder of who was present and what the surroundings generally looked like. The whole point is you that you will document YOUR experience and paint this perspective.
5. Sit down, think of what you want to tell. You can start to sketch right away, but let the story come together at a slow pace.
6. Design your spread, the different boxes of the story and think of what will happen where.
7. Draw as much as possible. The things that are not clear can be explained in descriptions, or text balloons.

Resources

- [Joe Sacco](#)
- www.theguardian.com

Reflection

- Was it difficult to remain impartial while reporting?

- Was it difficult for you to present a serious topic through comics?
- Do you feel that comics journalism can convey the message easier than traditional journalism?

Instructions for Submission

Scan and upload your journalistic comic (1 photo). Submit a short summary of your answers to the questions from the Reflection section. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Related Topics

- New Journalism

The Yaya Box

Introduction

We all have a part of ourselves that we show to the world, and a part of ourselves that we don't show. One way to begin to create community and connection with others is when we start to show our inner lives to one another. [The Yaya Box activity](#) involves making an artistic representation of your inner and outer worlds, which you show to others. You will find a box and create a visual artistic piece which will be shared in your group. The outer world is how you think people see you, what you think people think about you, in other words, the impression you give to the world, of who you are. It is generally more of a visual representation of your ego. The inner one is more about your inner world, what you think about, dream about, wish for, feel, etc. Both parts of the box reveal more to others about who you are, and can create a deeper sense of understanding between people.

Activity Type

Group / Experiential

Duration

2 to 4 hours to make the Yaya box, 5 to 10 minutes per person to present, 30 minutes discussion after to hear about the experience from participants

Learning Outcomes

- To express oneself artistically
- To build trust and intimacy within a group
- To practice acceptance towards yourself and others

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

- Each participant should find a box to decorate, whatever shape, size and material they want (for example: plastic, cardboard etc).
- Old magazines that can be cut up.
- Crayons, markers, glue sticks, tape, and any other materials for creating the box.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Instruct each participant to find a box.
2. Ask each participant to decorate both the inside and outside in a way that they see fit, using the inside to show their inner world, and the outside to show their outer world. They

- can use magazine clippings, drawings, brief quotes, and other artistic expressions to show this. Participants should have several hours of time to complete their boxes.
3. After everyone has finished their boxes, have participants gather in a circle and ask who would like to be the first to show their box and describe it to the others.
 4. Have participants each share their box, and describe what the artistic representation means to them.
 5. Have a discussion at the end to see how the experience was for everyone.

Resources

- www.psychologytoday.com
- www.transformationalwriting.co.uk

Reflection

- Did you learn something new about yourself as you were creating the box?
- Was it easy or difficult to express yourself artistically? Why?
- Was it easy or difficult to share your creation with others? Why?
- Do you feel closer to the people from the group after you have shared your box and you have seen them share theirs?

Instructions for Submission

Upload 1 photo of participant's yaya box. Submit a brief review (up to 200 words) of the activity and how it was for the participants and for you. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Write and Perform a Punk Song



[flickr photo](#) shared by [Thomas Hawk](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY-NC \) license](#)

Introduction

You might associate [punk music](#) with loud guitars and pointy haircuts, but this is only one aspect since punk's first appearance long time ago. At that point in time, these were musical features that set this new genre apart from the mainstream industry that had a disproportionate focus on smooth looks and sounds (think The Beatles etc). It was not even that punks detested this superficiality, it was mostly the hypocrisy and glorification of 'genius' pop stars that they protested against. Even Punk cannot escape the claws of hypocrisy always - however when it stays true to its original inspiration, it is always: 1) simple, clear and honest 2) energetic 3) for everybody by everybody.

Punk's attempt at cutting through cultural dogma can be seen as very rough-edged, it can often be perceived to use insults and lyrical aggression to convey its message. However, it does not do this just for the sake of it. The playing field of cultural oppression that it has been trying to break down and level is so severe that this is seen to be the only way to create the initial shock needed, so as to have any chance at succeeding.

In this sense, Punk is more of an attitude than a music genre. This is important to remember. As time has passed, many people have tried to encapsulate and use many of the musical features described above, both in the mainstream and other 'sub-cultures' (to varying degrees of success). Sometimes it has even been used by those that Punk stands against, being turned into perverted hybrids. Have you ever heard of racist-punk? What an oxymoron, you'd think - using punk, which initially fought *against* cultural dogma, as a way to fight *for* cultural dogma! Because of this, some have claimed that punk is dead. This is not true!

So to grasp what punk *really* is, and what it can get across, we will write and perform a punk song. The good news is that you do not have to be musically talented or be able to write great lyrics. Hell, you do not have to perceive yourself as being musically talented at all! You do not have to play the music you create. But you have to DO it!

Activity Type

Individual or group of 3 maximum / Experiential

Duration

1 hour to write. All should perform, length depending on how many there are in the overall group, but a good punk song lasts no more than 3 minutes.

Learning Outcomes

- To understand how low the threshold of artistic expression actually is and overstep it
- To become empowered on stage
- To understand how artistic expression can create a response from the audience and society

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

- Pen and paper, but only one sheet of A4 paper, you're not going to write a novel.
- Musical instruments, in any state. Do not fix them, they are fine as they sound. Or no instruments at all.

Optional:

Punk rock bands can consist of any number and any kind of (non)musicians, but for the classical punk rock sense here follows a description how to build your own acoustic power trio, cheap and quick.

- Get a hold of a guitar. This should be easy. Every uncle has one dusting away in the attic. Or loot a flea market. Six strings is nice, but you really only need three.
- Get a bucket, a stick, a rope and an empty toilet roll to build your bass.
- Then you need a drum kit. Unfortunately these can be very expensive, even if you buy them second-hand. Unless you find one you can borrow, it is suggested you only buy the sticks, which are much cheaper, you can catch them for free at the end of concerts! Then collect anything that makes a sound when you hit it (please no younger siblings), a saucepan, bucket etc. Put in the effort to find something and don't just resort to using a computer generated Drum-Machine, this defeats the point of what you are trying to do!
- Start writing! The song should be so that it just drags you along in its energy. If it does not, rewrite it.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Write your lyrics. Punk lyrics usually flow from an anecdote, this is the verse, to some kind of creed, the chorus. This creed should sound like an anthem for either a frustration or some crazy glorious thing you would like to do to that would make your neighbourhood a better place to live. Or they're just plain nonsense. Write one chorus and two verses. Keep it short and simple. Rhyme makes it easier to remember, but screw that if you know something better. Use as many alternative spellings as you can think of.
2. Decide if you want music at all. You can just take to the stage and be your own band, a punk poet. Perhaps it sounds like hip hop, who cares? The Beastie boys might sue you, whooo.

Optional

1. Make your power chord scheme. Use power chords, not to lose time on that major/minor bullshit. Not more than 4 chords, preferably 3. You can change their order between verse and chorus, but you can also just play louder in the chorus. Also, if you're more than one, try to sing the chorus... in chorus.
2. Compose a melody for your lyrics... no, skip that one! Just make it up as you go along.

Must:

1. Think of a band name. Also when you're alone.
2. Get on stage, say who you are and which song you are performing, then start. Nothing will work out as you planned, but make sure the audience hears you anyway.
3. After the second chorus, play a solo including only two different notes. Sing the chorus again. End the freaking song.
4. Get off the stage before the applause ends.

Resources

- [DIY ethic Punk culture](#)
- [Try This At Home - Frank Turner](#)

Bands (selection)

- [Black Flag](#)
- [Skunk Anansie](#)
- [The Clash](#)
- [Sex Pistols](#)

Reflection

- Did it take a lot of time to write the song?
- Were you pleased with the song when it was finished?
- What was the cause you chose or the message you were trying to get across?
- How did it feel to be on stage?
- Were you pleased with the song after you performed it?
- How often does the youth engage in public cultural expressions? If little, is there a way of improving this?

Instructions for Submission

Submit the written lyrics of your song. Optional: upload an audio recording of the song to YouTube (or some other video-sharing website and submit the link in Moodle. Instructions on

how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

The Beehive

ONENESS, INTERCONNECTIVITY; SYSTEMS THINKING &
COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE

*"The whole is greater than the sum of its parts."
-Aristotle*

*"There is nothing in a caterpillar that tells you it's going to be a butterfly."
-R. Buckminster Fuller*



Introduction

Ana, beekeeper

There is one fundamental misunderstanding in our world today. Its consequences are immense. You can see them all around you - they spell *disaster*. This fundamental misunderstanding is that we as humans believe ourselves to be separate entities in a cold mechanic universe that doesn't care about us. That we are alone, basically, and as such, afraid. Being afraid we act defensively, egoistically, driven by primitive survival instincts. We care for ourselves, at least we think so. The millionaires' gated communities, the refugees stuck and imprisoned at the border controls, the wars in the Middle East, the rising sea levels, the death of hundreds of species every year... it can all be traced back to the same basic misunderstanding, misconception, misintuition and mis-experience. Because it's so deeply immersed in our culture that we can hardly imagine otherwise. But if we want a world that is whole and makes sense, we better look at it as a whole. And as making sense. Right?

When we were creating Bridgedale360, we had a lot of these discussions about feelings of being alone. Isolated and separated from other humans and all other living entities in the world. We wanted to leave these negative feelings behind and create something better, a place where we all live in harmony and cherish each other, knowing that we are all interconnected. This is how I actually became a beekeeper. If we look at the bees we'll understand how immensely and beautifully complex the natural world is. How everything works together. We understand that nothing, literally nothing, is separate from anything else. Being human "bee-ings" we are equally intertwined in the web of life. Without the air around us we would die within minutes. Is it then meaningful to see us as separate from the air? Why is the air outside my body *not* me when the air inside my lungs *is*? What about the thousands of organisms dwelling in my body? Are they *me*? When you go down this line of thought there can only be one conclusion, nothing is you, and at the same time *all* is you!

So we're moving towards what is often called a holistic worldview. It's a perspective where nothing is seen as isolated and separated, where everything is interlinked. The zen-master Thích Nhất Hạnh used to talk about inter-being, referring to the ultimate oneness and unity of all beings. Many people in Bridgedale360 are actually practicing zen meditation, inspired by this feeling of oneness and interconnectivity.

But also, we try to adopt this holistic perspective on a more practical level. When we're designing systems, whatever they are, we need to keep "the whole" in mind, otherwise we're destined to do the same mistakes that we've done so far, over and over again. Take the food-production system in the old society, for example. Does it produce food? Yes. Does it cater for the well-being of the whole? No! The consequences of the linear thinking monoculture food system is that it destroys the soil from excessive use of pesticides and fertilisers, in itself based on oil and other unsustainable resources, instead of slowly building up the soil and treating it as a living ecosystem. Moreover, when it comes to biodiversity, which is the basis of all ecosystems, the effects are horrendous. Just one crop, acre after acre, do you think that nature is happy like this? No! And how does it cater for the people? Maybe you recall the banana plantations where the cancer rates are booming due to airplane dumped pesticides. That's a big no! So when we're designing food systems and any other system in Bridgedale360 for that matter, we always remind ourselves that we think of the whole. A great holistic design tool that's been around for a while now, even though you've probably never heard about it in school in the old society - is permaculture.

To illustrate, if you look at a chicken, our industrial modern society would normally apply a linear system design. You bring in fodder from the outside, you breed the chicken, you slaughter them, and you produce meat. Instead, when looking from a holistic perspective, applying permaculture design, you would consider all the benefits the chicken bring, and even more, you would see the chicken as an integral part of the whole, with its intrinsic value. You then see that the chicken can help you prepare the soil for your garden and eat harmful snails and slugs, that they also produce eggs, feathers and valuable manure, as well as being fun fellows to have around. Then some will be eaten by the fox, which are needed to keep the rabbit population in balance. If you think about it - all is connected. And us humans are not the sole beneficiary of the system. No, we're an integral part of it and our duty is to cater to the whole. Because if nature is happy, we'll be happy. Because ultimately we *are* nature.

Learning Outcomes

- To see systems and understand that we are part of them
- To recognize patterns in nature and human society and see them as complex vs. linear
- To understand feedback loops and how to influence and restore them
- To learn tools to evoke collective intelligence
- To experience holistic thinking/systems

A Pattern Language

Individual / Theoretical

2 hours

- To become aware of the presence of patterns in your surroundings
- To be able to extract and interpret different patterns, both from the natural and the human world

How Wolves Change Rivers

Group / Theoretical

90 minutes

- To understand the ecosystem as a whole
- To understand the impact of environmental degradation
- To understand the importance and role of each part of the system

Playing With Systems

Group [at least 10 people] / Experiential

30 minutes each activity, 1 hour in total

- To get a sense of “collective mind” where no one is the leader
- To see the complexity of systems
- To notice how a complex system responds when the conditions change

The Mission

Group / Experiential

1.5 to 2.5 hours

- To get a sense of the building blocks needed for human survival and the complex systems that are needed to support life, both on the ship, but also on our planet
- To work together as a group to solve the problem presented by the activity (team-building skills)
- To creatively come up with possible ways of long-term (sustainable) human habitation

A Pattern Language



[flickr photo](#) shared by [Eva the Weaver](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY-NC-SA \) license](#)

Introduction

The human mind is specialised in extracting and interpreting patterns. The natural world presents an infinite source of patterns, ready there for the human mind to perceive and process. They can be found all around you. Imagine one day when you're looking at the clouds, how they form and merge into all sorts of creatures. And according to physics, nature is governed by universal laws and is thus behaving in patterns. From the macroscopic patterns of galaxies and planets to the tiniest particles known by modern science, nature operates systematically and predictably. At least most of the time.

Some patterns are non-self symmetric, meaning that they look differently when you zoom in and out on them. Think of your skin. It looks smooth, but when you zoom in, it has millions of pores and hairs on it. Other patterns are fractal or self symmetric, meaning that they have the same pattern characteristics when you zoom in and out. Think of a tree, where each of the branches are smaller versions of the main trunk of the tree. Or this amazing Romanesco broccoli above! But also human behaviour is up to a large extent systematic. While watching people walking on the street, passing the crosswalk, you can more or less predict how they are going to behave. There is a pattern, you could say. But even though we tend to act in patterns, or habits, we aren't always aware of them. By careful observation we might see patterns that we weren't previously aware of.

In this exercise we will [identify and explore different types of patterns](#), both in nature and in the human world. Bring on your best analytical gaze and observe!

Activity Type

Individual/Theoretical

Duration

2 hours

Learning Outcomes

- To become aware of the presence of patterns in your surroundings
- To be able to extract and interpret different patterns, both from the natural and the human world

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

- Pen and paper, or a computer program (there are downloadable open source programs). When applicable, you might even try to use camera and tracing software.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Draw a non-self symmetric pattern from nature. It should be a pattern that changes when you zoom in and out, meaning there will be two drawings.
2. Draw a fractal, or a self symmetric pattern from nature.
3. Analyse a pattern from the human world. The task is to translate an abstract pattern into a visual one. Most common would be a movement pattern. For example: It can be the paths people walk on the street and waiting for the traffic light. Try to determine what kind of pattern it is (non-self symmetric or fractal), be patient, observe a while before you start drawing. But it can also be a more abstract pattern for instance how a group of people that know each other sit down in a circle. You might even want to set up a small experimental arrangement and 'record' your pattern several times.
4. Compare the patterns you have made.

Resources

- www.en.wikipedia.org
- www.mcescher.com
- www.mnn.com

Reflection

- Did the exercise make you see any patterns, in nature and in the human world, that you hadn't seen before?
- Are there parallels between natural and human patterns?
- How are they similar and how do they differ?

- Does observing human patterns trigger any thoughts on human behaviour and psychology?

Instructions for Submission

Upload 1 photo of the pattern you prefer best. Submit your answers to the questions from the Reflection section. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

How Wolves Change Rivers



[flickr photo](#) shared by [Oregon State University](#) under a [Creative Commons \(BY-SA \) license](#)

Introduction

A perception of separation has emerged on a number of levels throughout our society; between humans and the natural environment, between species, cultures, each other and even within ourselves. Many people have lost the understanding that, if one part suffers, the whole suffers. By definition, elements of a system do not operate in isolation. But often, we seem to function as if they do. Of course perceptions vary widely depending on culture, politics and belief systems. Many societies which live in close proximity to the natural environment retain a sense of connection and sensitivity. However, in other countries much of the population has migrated to urban centres, subsequently losing the sense of connection to the natural environment. It is important that we all now remember that the universe as a whole is fundamentally interconnected - we are the universe and the universe is us.

The Yellowstone national park, USA gives us an [iconic example](#) for highlighting this. When the wolves that roamed the park were killed off by various 'predator control' programs in the 1920's, the knock on effect of this human interference in the ecosystem dramatically compromised the health of the entire Yellowstone area, the park started to fall apart. However with the recent re-introduction of a small number of wolves to the area, not only has the ecosystem started to stabilize but the entire geography has started to build resilience.

In this exercise participants will take the case of Yellowstone national park and apply it to their own scenario in which they will 'build an ecosystem' role-playing animals, plants, humans, trees' etc. Participants will gain an awareness of the interdependence and complexity of our planet's system.

Activity Type

Group / Theoretical

Duration

90 minutes

Learning Outcomes

- To understand the ecosystem as a whole
- To understand the impact of environmental degradation
- To understand the importance and role of each part of the system

Instructions

Required materials and tools:

- A device to watch the short video clip
- Ball of string

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Show participants the short ["How Wolves Change Rivers" video clip](#) on Yellowstone national park.
2. Open a discussion guided by the following questions, recording down key words or themes on a flip chart for everyone to see [Allow 20 minutes for this step];
 - a) What were some of the unpredicted impacts of the killing off of the wolves?
 - b) What happened with the reintroduction of the wolves?
 - c) What are the implications of this for other systems?
 - d) What is the overall message of this case study?
3. Play the game:
 - a) Get participants to stand in a circle with one person standing in the centre with the ball of string [Allow 20 minutes for the whole string exercise].
 - b) The person in the middle will name herself or himself as a particular animal, plant or other part of nature eg. rock, pond etc.
 - c) Each person then names what animal, plant or object they are, try to pick within the same bio-region.
 - d) The person in the centre hands the end of the ball of string to the person they are connected to. For example, if the person in the centre was a koala, they would hand the end of the ball of string to the person who is the eucalyptus tree.

- d) Continue along every person in the group. Each time they form a connection, they hold onto the string and pass on the end of the string to the person they're connected to. Some things will end up connected to more than one other thing.
 - e) Now go around the circle asking each person to tug on their string (this will represent this animal, plant, person, being taken out of the system), ask them to notice how many people feel it.
4. After each person has had a turn in being (taken out) of the ecosystem ask the group to share about what they learned from the string exercise, recording key words or themes on flip chart paper for everyone to see.

Support Files

['George Monbiot: For more wonder, rewild the world'](#) [More on the case of Yellow Stone Park]

Instructions for Submission

Upload 1 photos of the string exercise and/or used flip charts. Submit a written reflection of the process. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Playing with Systems

Introduction

Throughout the development of Western society, people have come to the viewpoint that the world is a mechanistic system where the components are separate with clear boundaries. We tend to divide things into small pieces and look closely at each piece, forgetting about how they impact each other. In such reductionist perspective, a system or object is generally understood by disassembling it into a collection of pieces, and trying to understand how those pieces fit together. This way of thinking has also been applied to living beings, ecosystems, and societies, also looking at historical events as a series of linear reactions. For example, the current migration of refugees in the world is seen only as a result of fleeing wars in far-off lands, without taking into account the combination of socio-economic and environmental factors that lead to human migration. Thus it becomes conveniently referred to as a “refugee crisis”, rather than looking at the present situation especially within the context of our Western socio-economic system of modern capitalism.

While the linear perspective certainly has its uses and has allowed significant advances in technology, science, and other fields, the challenge with this line of thinking is that it fails to take into account the true complexity of our reality. A collection of organs pieced together does not make a functional organism, and this line of logic is responsible for in the treatment of the planet and human social systems. However, societies and ecosystems do not function based solely on reactions, but as complex systems.

Complex systems have their own specific qualities and patterns. Looking at the amazing intricacy of a termite mound or beehive is an excellent example for understanding these type of systems. For example, termites regulate the temperature in their mound based on a series of chemical signals exchanged between individual termites, followed by water being strategically added to create cooling, or increased termite movement (by vibrating) to create heating. This complex biological and social structure could never be understood by simply examining one individual termite. For human beings to continue to exist on the planet, it is crucial that they gain a more sophisticated understanding of both the earth, and all the living beings on it. We need to begin to look at our own social and economic systems, as well as the core ecosystems that make life on this planet possible, through the lens of complexity. We then need to interact with these systems based on this understanding.

Activity Type

Group [at least 10 people are needed for this exercise] / Experiential

Duration

Each activity takes about 30 minutes.

Learning Outcomes

- Get a sense of “collective consciousness” where no one is the leader
- Observe the complexity of systems
- Notice how a system responds when the conditions change

- Learn games that demonstrate concepts of systems and complexity

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

- A large open space where people can move around easily

Step-by-Step Instructions:

People Moving in Systems

1. Invite the participants to secretly choose two other people in the group.
2. Ask all the participants to begin moving around the space while trying to keep equal distance between the two people they have chosen. The group will begin to move, as people re-arrange to maintain equal distance between their two chosen people.
3. Ask the participants to try and observe the patterns in how everyone moves as they continue to keep equal distance between their two chosen people.
4. Change the rules: Now ask participants to silently select two different people. This time they select one of the people as the “shield” who must always remain between them and the other person they have chosen. Again, make sure this is kept secret.
5. Again, ask the participants to try and observe the patterns in how everyone is moving in relation to one another. See if they can observe any differences between the patterns of the first exercise and the second.

Moving As One

1. Invite participants to walk slowly around the space in silence.
2. When a person feels like stopping, they can stop. As soon as someone stops, everyone else in the group must also stop.
3. When one person feels like walking again, the rest of the group starts walking again.
4. Part 2: Continue walking and instead of any individual deciding to stop, see if the whole group can start and stop without any one person deciding to do so.
5. Part 3: Repeat steps 1-3 again BUT participants must have their eyes closed, moving slowly, tuning into their other senses so that they are able to feel when one person has stopped.

Resources

- The Systems Thinking Playbook (Linda Sweeney and Dennis Meadows) 2010
- Thinking in Systems: A primer (Donella Meadows) 2008
- The Myth of Progress: Toward a sustainable future (Tom Wessels) 2006
- Gaian Democracies: Redefining globalization and people power (Roy Madron and John Jopling) 2003
- [Overview of Systems Thinking](#)
- [Theories, definitions and principles](#)

Reflection

- People Moving in Systems: Did you notice any patterns emerging as you were all moving together? If so, what were they?
- People Moving in Systems: What did you notice about moving together as a group?
- Moving As One: If you initiated the 'stop' or a 'start' how did it feel to impact others' actions?
- Moving As One: How did it feel to move with the whole group?
- Moving As One: When you closed your eyes: how did you sense when the group had stopped or started?
- Is there anything else you would like to share about the experience?

Instructions for Submission

Submit a reflection of the experience, based on the Reflection questions (up to 200 words). Upload a photo from the activity. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

The Mission

Introduction

“[The Mission](#)” is a group-building activity in which participants are tasked with “the Mission”, to design the inner system of a spaceship that will travel for 6,000 years. It creates a fun and exciting group creative process in which participants can collectively learn how to start building sustainable systems. It brings up issues of ecological and social sustainability, and challenges participants to think long-term and in the big picture of human survival and core needs.

Activity Type

Group/Experiential

Duration

1.5-2.5 hours

Learning Outcomes

- To get a sense of the building blocks needed for human survival and the complex systems that are needed to support life, both on the ship, but also on our planet
- To work together as a group to solve the problem presented by the activity (team-building skills)
- To creatively come up with possible ways of long-term (sustainable) human habitation

Instructions

Required Materials and Tools:

- Large paper sheets for drawing the spaceship
- Markers, colored pencils, crayons of different colors.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Break participants into groups of ideally 5-7 people
2. Give the participants the following directions: *“You have been appointed by the Planetarian Council to plan and partake in the greatest adventure in the history of humankind: You shall equip a giant spaceship to make a journey of a range previously unheard of. These are the conditions:*
 - a) The journey will last 6000 years
 - b) You don’t have to think about the ships propulsion or the external hull.
 - c) You have access to solar energy during the whole journey.
 - d) No more than 100 persons are allowed aboard the ship at the same time. What will you bring?”

3. Initially, ask each person to brainstorm individually for 10 minutes to list everything they can imagine they would bring.
4. Then have them take 20 minutes to discuss this with their group, not labeling anything as “wrong” but just giving the space to creatively share their ideas, and why they decided to bring each object. Spend some minutes listening to each group and make comments as necessary to help them start thinking collectively.
5. The next step is to give each group a large paper and let them select drawing supplies (markers, etc) and have them start creating the interior design for the space ship collectively. They need to find a way to work together, listen to one another, and make decisions on what they will include in the ship. They should have at least 45 minutes to do this, including drawing the ship.
6. Spend time with each group to ask supportive and critical questions to stimulate the thinking process. Avoid giving solutions and detailed answers. Be prepared that participants will go through specific stages of thinking - see the attached support file below. Give space to all these stages.
7. Ask groups to present their designs, approximately 10 minutes per group. Each group can present the directions with a poster, PowerPoint presentation or in another attractive way to create the story.

Support Files

[The stages of the thinking process in the Mission](#)

Reflection

- What are the main lessons that this game provided to you and the other players?
- What was it like to work together as a group to create the spaceship design? Easy? Fun? Hard?
- What did you learn from working together?
- What did you learn about sustainable design, systems and complexity?

Instructions for Submission

Submit a written reflection about the group process and upload 1 photo of the best design, so that your peers can give you feedback. Instructions on how to upload photos and how to submit things in Moodle can be found here: [Instructions on Submission&Uploading](#)

Instructions for Assessment

Provide feedback to at least one participant that has done this activity. Instructions on providing feedback can be found here: [Instructions on Feedback](#)

Author

Creative Commons - ySI4R Content Team (courtesy of Wolfgang Brunner)