

## NATURE'S CLASSROOM

### Workshop reflection



International ecoremediation centre,  
University of Maribor, Faculty of Arts



# OUTDOOR LEARNING

## Learning polygon for self-sufficiency in Dole



SELF-SUFFICIENCY  
(in the field of  
electricity, food  
production, water  
supply and natural  
resources)

BUILDING ON  
SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

SOCIAL  
RESPONSIBILITY

ECONOMIC  
INDEPENDANCE

ENVIRONMENTAL  
PROTECTION

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### Highlights:

During the workshop we presented information about **Learning polygon for self-sufficiency in Dole**, which offers a lot of different conditions for outdoor learning. The emphasis is on experiential learning about self-sufficiency in the field of renewable energy, healthy food production and utilization of rainwater, spring and ground water (using water retention systems and evaporation prevention).

Experiential education programs are dedicated to different age groups (from Kindergarten to University of the third age). Implementing programs are adapted to the requirements and needs of the users. Included are active workshops, educational tours, independent researches, analytical measurements, inventories and cooperation with the local environment, based on the level of prior knowledge and experience of the user. The orientation maps, schematics, models and worksheets are needed during the outdoor activities.

It is possible to choose different types of programs during all seasons: active tours polygon, thematic workshops, field measurements and laboratory analysis, individual counselling, family education, camps, international networking and system approaches of education.

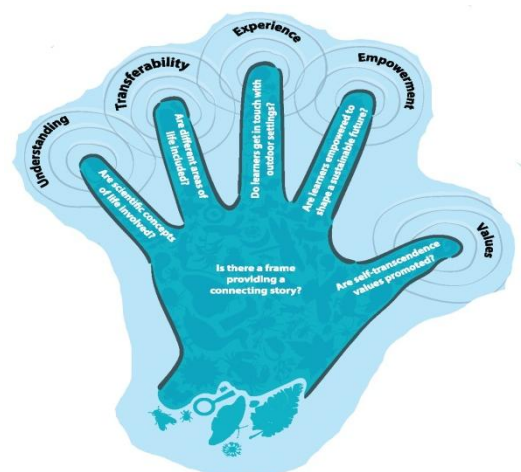
Experiential education motivates participants to develop their own responsibilities to respect the ecosystem services based on a comprehensive understanding of the fatal relationship between man and nature.

On the Learning polygon for self-sufficiency in Dole a problem based learning is offered; education for solving complex current environmental problems such as water supply, right treatment with the soil, erosion prevention, high quality food production by using permacultural methodology, encourages the development of green jobs, critical thinking, social responsibility and activates users to transfer theoretical knowledge into practice.

Provides support to formal school education and upgrades it. The general and specific goals written in the schooling curriculum pupils experience by themselves and create practical knowledge (learning by doing system).

### Working with a Hand model:

**Experience:** Overview of natural resources in the local environment: a comparison of two types of soil (natural Pseudo meadow soil and



anthropogenic Garden soil) and find out which one is appropriate for the cultivating land. In order to ensure the highest degree of self-sufficiency we must know the feature of the soils in the local area (colour, humidity, root system, scelet size, scelet proportion and soil structure, pH, presence of calcium carbonates) and natural ways to support its fertility according to the permacultural methodology.

☉**Understanding:** Based on the quantification of the soil we can understand the processes that take place in it and draw conclusions about the properties of certain soils. Knowledge of the specific type of soil is essential for understanding soil as a living system of landscape and show us the possibility of its use (what types of vegetation plant on specific area and how to deal with a certain type of soil in a field of cultivating it).

☉**Transferability:** With the help of permacultural farming and considering the natural processes we can transfer poorly fertile soil into a highly fertile soil in two years' time. The result of this process is also a higher level of self-sufficiency in food production, better crop quality, encouragement of the consumption of locally produced food and also encouraged development of service activities in rural areas (green tourism, learning tourism). In this way we also reduce the ecological footprint.

☉**Empowerment:** Based on experiential learning users acquired practical experiences and recognize the importance of protecting the natural environment. Users realize that the planet Earth has limited ability to produce food for all worlds' population and therefore each of us should be at least partially self-sufficient. In this way we reduce the pressure on the natural resources and ecosystem services.

☉**Values:** During the workshop we realize that by using simple methods of permaculture we also create understanding for a sustainable future and conscientious attitude to natural resources based on their own experience.

☉**Frame:** Being socially responsible, economically independent and generally educating for sustainable future.



ACTIVE METHODS OF RESEARCH WORK, OUTDOOR LEARNING, PRACTICAL EXPERIENCES



GOALS: UNDERSTANDING SUSTAINABLE FUTURE, NATURAL RESOURCES SAVING AND NATURE

