

COMPARATIVE RESEARCH NETWORK:

# Elements of Community Organising and Co-Design

How to implement a community making approach in education



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## *What we talk about when we talk about community organising*

When communities work together, the possibilities for positive change are endless. Community organising is the work of bringing people together to take action around their common concerns regarding social, economical, environment issues or just collective projects.

Community organisers reach out and listen, connect and motivate people to build their collective empowerment and facilitate the structuring of their ideas.

When people are organised, communities get heard and can create the necessary shift for creating real change.

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## *Community making as an educational approach*

In classic educational system, students are not used to work together as a team a lot. And often, when they do, they “split” tasks rather than fostering for a collective decision making approach.

The implementation of community organising methodologies in education can play a pivotal role in this sense, by empowering students in working as perceiving themselves as community and fostering collective good through active listening and engagement in activities and projects.



# *Community organising tools for education*

A community making approach can be foster by the implementation of different community organising tools in the school's activities and workshop. Some examples are:

- **Team Building Icebreakers**

Introduce before the working session icebreakers activities that can enable the group to know each other better through interaction and active listening of each other.

- **Capacity Building**

Getting to know the different competences inside the team, discover the motivation and commitment of each group member, creating a common vision on the project/community.

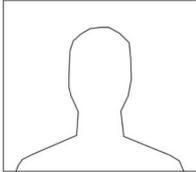
- **Community User Personas**

User Personas is a famous tool of Design Thinking that permits to understand better the needs and expectation of the real target you are designing for. In creating a community, a good self reflection exercise is the one of adapting the User Personas Canva to the community itself.

## Example of Capacity Building Tools :: Grassroot Capacity Building Workshop

1. Hand out a *Grassroot Capacity Building Card* (\*\*) to each participant.
2. Each participant fills out the card working in pairs, each participant interviews their partner to collect the information and writing it notes down on the Card.
3. Each participant presents the results of their card to the group, presenting to the others their partner.
4. Gather for a plenary final discussion.
5. (Optional) You can decide to create a visualisation (analogue or digital) of the results of the interview in order to have a more complex vision of all the group members.

(\*\*) *example of Grassroot Capacity Building Card*  
Tip: create your own with relevant information for your own project/community

	<i>Who?</i>	<input type="text"/>
	<b>HARD SKILLS</b>	<input type="text"/>
	<b>SOFT SKILLS</b>	<input type="text"/>
	<b>STRESS FACTORS / CRITICAL ISSUES</b>	<input type="text"/>
<b>WHAT I KNOW ABOUT GREEN EDUCATION / SUSTAINABILITY THEMES</b>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<b>WHAT I WANT TO LEARN ABOUT GREEN EDUCATION / SUSTAINABILITY THEMES</b>		
<b>THE CONTRIBUTE I WANT TO BRING IN THE PROJECT</b>	<input type="text"/>	

## Example of Team Building Icebreakers :: People Bingo

Give each participant a “people bingo card” and pen. Explain that the group has 30 minutes to mingle, introduce themselves, and find people who match the traits on the card. They must put the person’s name in the corresponding box or have the person sign the appropriate square.

The first person to fill five boxes across or down yells "Bingo!" and the game is over.

There are several online platform where to create personalised bingo card, in order to use traits that are aligned with the group of participant and the topic of the workshop

<https://myfreebingocards.com/bingo-card-generator/edit/i8jpi>

<b>ICEBREAKER BINGO</b>				
DRIVES A PRIUS	KNOWS SOMEONE THAT CLIMBED MT. EVEREST	DISLIKES TOMATOES	HAS A TWIN	IS WEARING RED
HAS GREEN EYES	KNOWS HOW TO SEW	DOESN'T DRINK COFFEE	HAS NEVER BEEN TO DISNEYLAND	HAS A TATTOO
LIKES SPICY FOOD	HAS A DOG	FREE SPACE	HAS FLOWN A PLANE	CAN SPEAK A FOREIGN LANGUAGE
KNOWS HOW TO SURF	CAN COUNTRY LINE DANCE	HAS NEVER BEEN ON A PLANE	SCUBA DIVES	HAS A BIRTHDAY THIS MONTH
WAS ON A SWIM TEAM	IS AN ONLY CHILD	HAS CHANGED A TIRE	CAN PLAY THE PIANO	IS A VEGETARIAN

## From User Personas to Community Personas

User Personas are used in Design Thinking Methodology to help the designer empathize with the final users, understand their needs and pain points, and design products or services that meet their expectations and goals.

The same thing can be done with the creation of a community, in order to better understand the collective need and goals and create a common vision based on real feelings and expectations of its members.

(\*\*) *example of User Personas Canva*

*Tip: create your own with relevant information for your own project/community*

<p>Stakeholder</p> 	<p>What does he/she like? 👍</p>	<p>What does he/she hate? 👎</p>
<p>Name Age Profession City Lifestyle Typical quote</p>	<p><b>Needs</b> What needs/challenges he/she has that we can address?</p>	<p><b>Competences</b> What skills and competences can he/she share to solve the challenge?</p>
<p>“ ”</p>	<p><b>Goals</b> What goals/scopes he/she has that we can support?</p>	<p><b>Resources</b> What material and immaterial resources can he/she share to solve the challenge?</p>

## *Co-design: a community process*

Community involvement is essential in co-design projects aimed at instigating change as it ensures that the resulting solutions are reflective of the diverse needs and perspectives of the individuals directly affected. In co-design, community members are not just passive recipients of change but active participants in its conception and implementation.

By engaging actors from different backgrounds, experiences, and expertise levels, co-design projects harness the collective wisdom and creativity of the community. This inclusive approach fosters a sense of ownership and commitment, leading to solutions that are more relevant, sustainable, and impactful. Moreover, community involvement promotes transparency, accountability, and trust, laying the foundation for successful change initiatives that address systemic challenges and improve the well-being of all involved.



## *How to create an inclusive community meeting*

- **Opening the meeting**
- + Start by welcoming the participants. Everybody should feel appreciated. Continue with a short presentation round or a warm-up (or energiser) so that participants get to know each other and feel comfortable in the group. Ask for preferred pronouns. Make sure you are able to pronounce every name correctly. For a bigger meeting use name tags.
- + Introduce and agree on the use of hand signals for specific contributions (agreement, disagreement, questions, etc.).
- + Establish rules for the conversation that help reminding everybody what is important and gives a frame to the meeting.
- + Ask participants to speak slowly and clearly and not to interrupt each other. Encourage them to voice their opinions and to join discussions with the aim of promoting alternative perspectives
- + Assign different roles, or tasks, to the participants, such as that of a moderator (this could be the person who prepared the meeting); note-taker for the protocol; time-keeper; or vision- keeper (who reminds participants of the meeting's rules and intervenes if necessary).
- + Present the agenda, explain who will be responsible for certain parts of the meeting and remind participants of the goals you have. Asking participants what they expect of the meeting helps steering the meeting.

*If several languages are spoken during the meeting, ask another participant to do a “whisper translation”, that is sitting next to the person and whisper into their ear.*

## *How to create an inclusive community meeting*

- **During the Meeting:**

- + As a moderator be aware of your own biases and pay attention to participants who tend to dominate the conversation or those who form closely knit subgroups.
- + Make sure that everyone can hear what is being said, is listened to when they speak and that even shy or quiet person are able to voice their opinion. Moderation methods help structuring the meeting and achieving your goals.
- + Disruptions should be addressed immediately because they are a learning and communication barrier. If not been dealt with, they are likely to prevent or falsify the problem-solving process.
- + Respect the time of all participants and end the meeting at the agreed hour.

- **Ending the meeting**

- + Summarise the results, decisions and tasks so that everybody is on the same level.
- + If a follow-up meeting is planned, organise a rotation of the different roles, thus offering an opportunity to experience the meeting from different points of view.
  - + End with a round of thanks and collect feedback!
- + +Share the protocol with everybody after the meeting.

## *Case Histories:: Community-based co-design projects*

- **Himmelbeet Garten :**

Das Himmelbeet is a community project in Berlin Wedding. As a collective, they design 2 gardens : The Himmelbeet Garten with raised beds and the ElisaBeet, a solidarity-based educational garden.

They garden socio-ecologically and work for more justice, more togetherness and more perspective. They offer workshops, seminars and team building in the field of environmental education and DIY, where participation and inclusion are very important to them.

- **Kiez(T)raum :**

Kiez(T)raum is a project carried out by the Comparative Research Network e.V. and financed by the Pankstraße neighborhood management from the Socially Integrative City project fund. Three methods are used to help make the neighborhood safe, clean and attractive : Community Mapping, Community Reporting and Urbanities Game Method.

- **School Garden Project in Berlin**

The school garden was revived to teach the kids about nature in an active and practical way. With the help of the school janitor, school support association and a grant from the neighborhood fund, new raised beds were restored and built. Now a group of school kids care for the plants. Their families help them with the germination and growth of young plants and many kids from the school come to help with the garden work.

# References (book/websites/resources)

[Inclusive Approaches To Community Gardening And Green Learning Spaces - Publication from the GARDENS project](#)

[Kiez\(T\)raum website](#)

[Report on Kiez\(T\)raum project](#)

[Community Mapping Method Article](#)

[Kiezraum Community Mapping - Tage der Städtebauförderung 2019 - YouTube](#)

[Himmelbeet website](#)

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