



GROW! **Green realities on their way**

**HANDOUT FOR WORKING WITH YOUNG
PEOPLE ON BIODIVERSITY AND
CLIMATE CHANGE**

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Youth, justice & the environment - your contribution counts!

Social justice means more than just fair opportunities - it also includes access to a healthy environment. But not all young people have the same opportunities: Air pollution, lack of green spaces or unhealthy diets are often part of their everyday lives. At the same time, young people are rarely involved in decisions that affect their own environment.

Yet everyone can make a difference! Whether at school, in the youth center or in your own neighborhood - small changes make a difference. With this curriculum, we want to illustrate how volunteers and full-time employees can be introduced to the topic and show how everyone can take action to protect nature and the environment and at the same time stand up for more justice and participation.

It's not about being perfect, but about working together. Let yourself be inspired and find out how you can bring biodiversity and sustainability into your own environment!



How can we promote nature protection and biodiversity in our work?



Simply imparting knowledge is not enough to create a deep understanding of biodiversity. The topic only becomes accessible in many different ways through personal experience. The aim is to bring about change through active participation. Pedagogical principles such as enabling didactics, process orientation, empowerment, self-efficacy, experiential education and education for sustainable development (ESD) are therefore of central importance.

Enabling didactics relies on learners themselves determining what and how they learn, while teachers support them in the process. Learning is understood as a dynamic, individual development process that builds on the resources and potential of the participants, particularly in the case of economically and socially disadvantaged groups. Empowerment and self-efficacy play a key role in helping participants to recognize their own strengths and take responsibility for contributing to the promotion of biodiversity.

Through participatory forms of learning, the participants experience their own abilities as effective. A sense of achievement boosts self-confidence and motivates them to tackle new challenges. This approach is embedded in nature education, which promotes direct experience of nature, as well as in education for sustainable development (ESD), which combines different specialist perspectives and supports active participation in shaping the environment, society, politics and the economy.

Sustainable education projects should therefore be based on the individual requirements of the participants. Through independent action and direct experience, they can actively engage with biodiversity and thus make an important contribution to the protection and promotion of natural diversity.



Which methods we use to achieve our goals?

From their own training, many professionals know good methods for designing projects and group processes. The trick is to combine them with the topic of biodiversity and environmental protection. Some examples from our project show ways to do this.

The aim is to convey an understanding of natural interrelationships and to promote skills that enable a harmonious life in and with nature so that it is preserved in the long term. At the same time, the connection between humans and nature is to be strengthened or newly created.



Make friends with a tree

Choose a tree that you think someone will like. Ask them to close their eyes (or use something to hand as a blindfold) and spin them round a few times. Guide them to their tree and get them to feel and smell it really carefully. Guide them away. Can they find their tree? Now they should choose a tree for you.



Sleeping fawn

This game is based on the fact that fawns remain completely motionless and are therefore not noticed. They are only noticed when they move.

All participants are fawns that are sleeping. They lie on their backs on the floor, face visible, and lie still and motionless. One person is the coyote/wolf sneaking through the forest looking for prey. It does silly, annoying unexpected things but without words or touching. If a fawn moves or makes a noise, it must get up quietly and go to the previously agreed place. When all the fawns have been caught, the experience is reflected on.



Literature

Jon Young, Ellen Haas, Evan McGown (2010): *Coyote's Guide to Connecting with Nature*

enabling didactics

As its name suggests, “enabling didactics” should enable learners to learn - independently and self-directed. Learners set their own learning goals, while the teacher should create the framework conditions for this form of learning.

Three chairs for different perspectives (Walt Disney method)

Three chairs are set up and each is assigned a position (dreamer, realist, critic). This can be done by simple labeling, but also by additional pictures or symbols that stand for the positions. The idea, question or topic to be dealt with must be precisely defined.

Then the person first puts themselves in the role of the dreamer. This can be done by remembering a situation in which you were particularly creative and visionary. You believe that everything is feasible and are fundamentally positive about new ideas.

In the realist chair, you remember situations in which you have found good, practicable or pragmatic solutions. You are a planner who thinks about the realization of the goal.

The critic chair should be associated with memories of critical questions. Here you are more of a critical advisor and friend and also identify risks and dangers.

It is also possible to divide the group into three small groups. You discuss the topic or problem and argue from your role. After a while, the roles are swapped. The aim is to really swap places.



A picture says more than a thousand words

The use of images and films creates particularly good access to topics. An emotional connection is created. This often makes it easier to report from a personal perspective and to engage with a topic.



Literature

Arnold, R. (2012). *Wie man lehrt, ohne zu belehren. 29 Regeln für eine kluge Lehre. Das LENA-Modell.* Heidelberg: Carl-Auer

Blaschke, L. M. (2012). *Heutagogy and Lifelong Learning: A Review of Heutagogical Practice and Self-Determined Learning.* Abgerufen von www.irrodl.org/index.php/irrodl/article/view/1076/2087

Experiential education

Experiential education is based on experience-oriented learning. Experiences and adventures are used to stimulate learning processes and promote personal development. Through various methods such as (outdoor) adventures, team games, reflection exercises or nature observation, experiences and adventures are used to achieve individual and group-related goals. It enables participants to get to know their strengths and weaknesses better, develop social skills, promote self-reflection and problem-solving skills, create an awareness of nature protection and environmental awareness and contribute to health promotion.

Literature

<https://elmenypedagogia.lap.hu/>

<https://www.aee.org/what-is-experiential-education>

Rita Yerkes, Denise Mitten, Karen Warren (2022): Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Field Guide: Stories of Lived Experience



Turning the carpet

All participants stand with both feet on the carpet (there should not be too much space). They are now given the task of turning the carpet over (turning it over, placing it on the other side). No foot may leave the carpet. If a participant steps outside the carpet, everyone has to start again.

Level of difficulty: depending on the group: there can be clear time limits (approx. 5 min.), talking is allowed or not, hands can be used or not.

It is a group task that can only be solved together. Afterwards, the exercise and the experience is reflected upon.



Forest ball track

When building a ball track in the field, not only is a task completed together, but its functionality should also be tested. The track is given a number of obstacles, such as curves, hills, seesaws or finish holes, which then have to be built and mastered by the ball (a golf ball works well). In the project, in addition to the construction, there are also the phases of testing and optimization before the task can be considered completed. From a nature education point of view, it shows that it is possible to play with simple means and that you don't necessarily need a kit from the toy department or a virtual play environment to experience the physical principle of the inclined plane in a fun way.

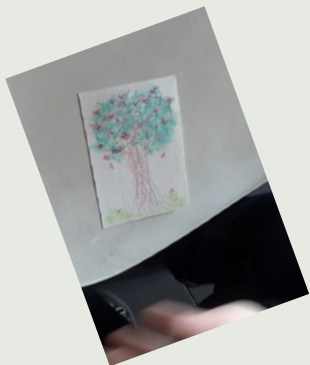
The task can be set as a team or as a challenge.



NATURE EXPERIENCE AND EDUCATION for people with disabilities

Involving people with disabilities in nature experiences is an important aspect of our thematic work. Good preparation and, ideally, previous experience with this target group can be helpful - but the decisive first step is the willingness to simply go for it.

The pedagogical concepts that have already been presented also form the basis here. Our aim is to find a pragmatic approach and create more opportunities than you might initially expect. Adapted methods not only facilitate participation, but also strengthen the team spirit of the entire group. In this way, nature can be experienced by everyone.



Photography/ The eye as camera

Participants divide into pairs. Each pair decides together who wants to be the photographer first and who wants to be the camera first. The camera first closes its eyes and the photographer carefully guides it around. When he*she discovers an interesting motif, the camera is brought into position and the shutter release is pressed. This can be done by tapping on the shoulder or carefully tugging on the earlobe. The camera then briefly opens its eyes (3 seconds; try out different "exposure times" if necessary) and captures the subject. The camera then gives feedback on the photos and the two exchange their experiences and look for the photo locations again. Then the roles are swapped. At the end, you can also put your own picture on paper.

Literature

<https://www.nature-without-barriers.eu/de/gef%C3%BChtes-naturerleben-f%C3%BCr-menschen-mit-behinderung.html>



Together for the environment & justice

To get young people interested in biodiversity, climate change and climate policy in the long term, projects are needed that focus on co-determination, experiential education and empowerment. It is crucial that they can design, try out and develop solutions themselves - with support, but without prefabricated answers.

This experience of self-efficacy increases their confidence in their own abilities. Nature education and education for sustainable development (ESD) help to combine environmental awareness with social commitment. In this way, biodiversity is not only understood, but actively integrated into one's own living environment.

A digital learning course was created in the project. You can register with us via this link and attend the course free of charge.
www.moodle-nbh.de



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