A Hands-on Toolkit

DESIGN LOCALLY

APPLY GLOBALLY

Framework for Working with Youth on Community Challenges

ZMAG
Zelena mreža aktivističkih grupa

Zeleno Doba
Centar za održivi rast i razvoj

DRUŠTVO ZA PERMAKULTURO SLOVENIJE

Co-funded by the European Union

Design Locally, Apply Globally
A Handbook for Working with Young People through Social Permaculture and Design Thinking

Author:
Ružica Janjić

Expert support and editorial review:
Eva Vitorović

Design, graphic elements and layout:
Marina Ristić, Petra Vrdoљak, Petra Pavleka

Contributors to the development and testing of the methodology:
Una Milić, Kajta Štemberger, Eva Vitorović, Marina Ristić, the Zeleno Doba team, as well as participants of the youth worker training within the project Design Locally, Apply it Globally (DLAG)

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INTRODUCTION

Every community holds both challenges and potential for change. **Young people are often the first to notice the problems in their surroundings** — in relationships, in the spaces where they live, and in the issues that shape the quality of life in their communities. However, turning these insights into meaningful action requires a process that helps ideas develop step by step.

This handbook presents one such approach. It combines the structure of the **Design Thinking process** with the systemic perspective of **social permaculture,** supporting young people and youth workers to explore challenges together and develop meaningful, sustainable solutions within their communities.

WHO IS THIS HANDBOOK FOR

This handbook is intended for youth workers, educators, teachers, facilitators, and **anyone working with groups of young people who wish to support their active participation in addressing community challenges.**

The methodology is designed to be accessible even to **those encountering Design Thinking or permaculture approaches for the first time.** The tools are practical and flexible and can be applied in different contexts — youth work, non-formal education, schools, local initiatives, and community-based projects.

Although primarily developed for working with young people, the handbook can also be useful for **anyone interested in developing initiatives based on collaboration, systems thinking, and regenerative approaches.**

WHY THIS HANDBOOK

Young people encounter many challenges in their communities — from feelings of exclusion and lack of support to social inequalities, limited opportunities for participation, and neglected public spaces. These challenges often appear complex, which can easily create the feeling that change is difficult to achieve.

This handbook was created to support youth workers, educators, and facilitators who want to help young people explore challenges in their communities and collaboratively design solutions that are meaningful and sustainable.

The handbook was developed within the **Erasmus+ project Design Locally, Apply it Globally (DLAG)**. As part of the project, a broader set of educational tools was created — including this methodology, a social board game, and an online platform — all designed to support learning, collaboration, and youth action toward more sustainable communities.

HOW THE METHODOLOGY WORKS

The methodology is organised into five interconnected phases that guide the group from the first insights to concrete action:

Observe & Feel – collecting signals from the environment, relationships, and the community
Understand & Define – deepening the understanding of causes, stakeholders, and people's experiences
Imagine & Connect – developing ideas and exploring possibilities
Test & Adapt – experimenting with ideas through simple prototypes
Share & Connect – sharing results and building connections with the community.

Although the phases are presented in sequence, **the process functions as a learning cycle**. Groups often return to earlier steps to refine their ideas based on what they have learned in practice.

WHAT THIS APPROACH IS BASED ON

This approach **combines two complementary frameworks.**

Design Thinking provides a clear learning process through exploration, idea generation, and testing small solutions in real-life contexts.

Social permaculture introduces a systemic perspective and an ethical framework based on care for people, care for the Earth, and fair distribution of resources.
The handbook also draws on a **regenerative approach** — the idea that the goal is not only to solve a problem, but to gradually strengthen relationships, resources, and the community.

These frameworks support the process, but it is **not necessary for readers to fully master them before using the tools**. The handbook is designed so that the methodology can be applied directly through practical work with groups.

Readers who wish to explore **the theoretical and methodological background** in more depth can find additional information in the section **Further Reading** at the end of the handbook.

HOW TO USE THIS HANDBOOK

Each tool in the handbook includes:

- purpose and short description
- facilitation steps
- required time and materials
- possible variations
- examples

Attachments within the tools are marked with the icon.

Clicking on the icon opens the corresponding attachment for that tool.

The tools are designed for groups of **approximately 4 to 20 participants**, but they can be adapted to different contexts, timeframes, and group sizes.

The methodology can be used in several ways:

- as an intensive programme (3–5 days)
- as a longer group process over several weeks or months
- as a set of individual tools integrated into existing programmes, workshops, or classes

The goal of this approach is not only to find a solution to a specific problem, but also to help young people gain the experience that they can **understand the systems around them and act as agents of positive change.**

PHASE 1

OBSERVE & FEEL

In the first phase, we learn to pause and take a closer look at where we are: the people around us, the relationships that shape us, and the spaces we share every day. We begin to notice what supports us, what weighs us down, and what in the community may often go unnoticed.

This is a time for careful listening — to ourselves, to others, and to the place where we live or work. Through attentive observation, we discover what people truly need, where a space functions well, and where it calls for more care and attention.

Before moving on to analysis and ideas, it is important to form a clear picture: what the community looks like from the inside, how we feel within it, and which small changes could make a meaningful difference.
This phase lays the foundation for all the steps that follow — understanding that grows out of presence and respect: for people, for space, and for what already exists.

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1

FRUSTRATIONS & JOYS WALL

4 - 20

45-75 min

Flipchart, sticky notes (2 colors), markers

This tool provides an initial picture of how the group experiences the system in which they live and act. Frustrations reveal where the system loses energy or fails to respond to people's needs, while joys highlight existing resources, relationships, and moments that already work well. It helps the group recognize patterns: what is personal and what is shared, where tensions lie, and where points of support exist. In this way, it lays the groundwork for regenerative design — frustrations become signals, and joys become starting points for further strengthening the community

STEPS

1. Introduction and framing (5 min)
Explain to participants that the goal is to collect personal observations and feelings that will serve as an initial map of the process. There is no analysis, discussion, or problem-solving at this stage. Divide an A1 sheet of paper into two areas using a marker: "Frustrations" and "Joys."

2. Individual silent reflection (5–10 min)
Participants work in silence, writing down frustrations and joys from their everyday life and community. Each thought is written on a separate sticky note. Remind them to start from concrete situations, relationships, routines, or feelings — without the need to beautify, explain, or frame them.

3. Creating the shared wall (10–15 min)
One by one, participants come forward, read their notes, and place them in the appropriate column. This can be done in silence. No discussion or explanations are introduced at this stage — it is important that the wall emerges spontaneously, without mutual influence. Pay attention to the rhythm so the group stays present as the overall picture gradually takes shape.

4. Silent observation (7–10 min)
Invite participants to spend a few minutes quietly observing the wall. If the group is large, allow them to move slowly so everyone can see the whole picture.
The focus is on what the wall reveals: repetitions, gaps, unexpected themes, the overall tone, and the feeling that emerges.

5. Synthesis and reflection (15–20 min)
Using short, focused questions, guide the group toward key insights. Ask one participant to write down the main points on a visible surface (a flipchart or a board). These notes serve as a bridge to the next tool and help the group identify themes for further exploration.

Questions for participants:

- What stands out to you first? (repetitions, surprises, overall tone)
- What do the frustrations tell us about what is missing? (needs, values, expectations)
- What do the joys reveal about what already gives us strength? (resources, supports, positive patterns)
- Who appears directly or indirectly? (hints of actors and relationships)
- Which themes feel important to explore further?

OUTCOMES

- Initial signals of what is troubling the group
- Signals of what is working and where the energy for action lies
- Clues pointing to needs, values, and feelings that will be explored more deeply later
- Early indications of key actors and relationships influencing the situations

ASK YOURSELF

- Did all participants have the opportunity to contribute?
- Are the frustrations connected to values the group deeply cares about?
- Do any patterns emerge that point to deeper challenges or potentials?
- How does the group respond to others' frustrations — with understanding, surprise, or support?

VARIATIONS

- Digital version (Miro, Padlet, Canva)
- Working in pairs before group work (useful for shy participants)
- Drawings instead of text (for younger age groups)
- A wall in a public space — as a way to open the process to the wider community

EXAMPLE: YOUTH GROUP

Frustrations: a feeling that their voice does not carry weight; limited space for self-expression

Joys: a strong sense of togetherness and freedom within the group

Insight: The wall reveals a contrast between the group's external invisibility and its internal strength, with clear traces of needs, values, and early indications of the relationships shaping their experience

NEXT STEP

This tool helps the group notice the first signals of what creates tension in the system and what already functions as a resource.

In the next step, the group deepens its observation through the tool:

→ Reading the Space

2

READING THE SPACE

4 - 20

60-75 min

paper, pens, markers, and blank space maps (optional)

This tool invites the group to see a space as a network of relationships, flows, and signals. Through silence and mindful presence, participants develop the ability to observe without interpreting or searching for solutions. They pay attention to who uses the space, how people move through it, where they stay, and what messages the space sends about belonging, visibility, and access.
The space is not seen only as a physical location, but as a place where people, norms, architecture, and invisible forces interact. Observations are recorded through maps, symbols, and short notes, and later integrated into shared insights that become the basis for further work.

STEPS

1. Introduction and framing the activity (5 min)
Invite participants to observe without commenting, interpreting, or trying to solve anything.

Briefly introduce the idea of flows in the space:
- physical flows (light, noise, wind, movement, access)
- social flows (information, norms, power, support)

2. Silent walk / observation (15–30 min)
Participants move through or stay in the space in silence, observing:
- Who uses the space? Who is absent?
- Where do people gather or spend time?
- Where do you sense safety? Where do you notice tension?
- What messages do the layout, boundaries, or signs communicate?

3. Individual mapping (10–15 min)
Each participant creates a personal observation map, using symbols, colours, arrows, or short notes to represent what they noticed.

4. Group integration (10–15 min)
Participants share their observations in small groups and create one shared map highlighting the main patterns they identified.

5. Sharing insights (15–20 min)
Groups present their maps to the wider group.
The facilitator helps connect recurring patterns and observations.

Invite participants to reflect:
- Which observations appear repeatedly?
- Where do participants experience the space differently?
- What patterns become visible when we combine our maps?
- What surprised us?
- Who is most visible in this space?
- Which parts of the space invite belonging?
- Where does the space seem to exclude someone?

OUTCOMES

- Individual observation maps of the space
- One shared map of key patterns per group
- Identified patterns of presence, movement, boundaries, and exclusion
- Clear insights into where the space invites people in and where it closes off
- A shared understanding of how space influences relationships and the sense of belonging

ASK YOURSELF

- Who is visible in the space, and who is invisible?
- Where do observations align, and where do they differ?
- Which patterns repeat?
- What does the space reveal about the values of the community?

VARIATIONS

- Mapping at different times of the day
- Comparing multiple locations
- “In someone else’s shoes” (perspective of a marginalised person)
- Including sounds and atmosphere

NEXT STEP

After the group has observed how space and behaviours shape people’s experiences, the next step is to capture these insights through visual stories.

→ Community Photovoice

EXAMPLE: YOUTH GROUP

The group notices that students tend to stay along the walls, while the centre of the space remains empty. The information board is placed high and written in very small text. Teachers stand near the entrance, while younger students move along the edges of the space.

→ The space formally belongs to everyone, but the layout, visibility, and body positions reveal unequal access and different levels of comfort and safety.

3

COMMUNITY PHOTOVOICE

4 - 20

90 min

mobile phones or cameras, projector

This tool allows participants to explore how they experience their community through photography, rather than only talking about challenges and values. Through selecting and interpreting images, the group uncovers patterns of presence, exclusion, potential, and informal spaces that shape community life.

STEPS

1. Introduction and framing the activity (15 min)
Explain that the goal is not the aesthetics of the photograph, but the meaning it carries.

Highlight ethical guidelines: do not photograph people without permission, respect privacy and avoid humiliating or sensationalist images.

Divide participants into smaller groups (4–7 people). Agree on the timeframe and the meeting point for returning. **Groups may choose to look for: a challenge, a value, potential, injustice, a place of belonging or an invisible boundary.**

2. Field work (30–45 min)
Groups go to the selected location and take several photographs.
Observation prompts:

- Where do people gather or spend time?
- Who is visible, and who is not?
- Where do we notice tension or emptiness?
- Where do we see potential that has not yet been recognised?
- What does this space encourage, and what does it limit?

Important: encourage groups to photograph seemingly ordinary scenes as well.

3. Selection and interpretation (20–30 min)
Each group selects 2–3 photographs that best express their experience of the community.
For each photograph, the group develops a short narrative:

- What do we see in the image?
- What is happening in the background (the invisible layer)?
- Why is this important to us?
- Who or what does this affect?
- Does this image show a challenge, a potential, or both?

Encourage the group to reach a shared interpretation, rather than only individual viewpoints.

4. Presentation and collective reflection (20–30 min)
Each group presents their photographs and story.
After each presentation, the facilitator may ask:

- What new perspective did this photo reveal?
- Does this theme resonate with others as well?
- Which messages appear repeatedly?
- Do we see both challenges and seeds of potential?

At the end, the group collectively identifies 3–5 key themes that emerged.

OUTCOMES

- 2–3 key photographs per group
- A shared narrative connecting the image and its meaning
- Identified themes that repeat across the community
- Visible patterns of values, challenges, and potential

AKS YOURSLEF

- Did different perspectives emerge within the group?
- Does any photograph reveal something that usually remains invisible?
- Which themes repeat across different groups?
- Were both challenges and potentials identified?

VARIATIONS

- Online version (sharing photos and stories on a shared platform)
- Combination with drawings or collage
- Public photo exhibition
- Working with archival or family photographs

EXAMPLE: YOUTH GROUP

A group photographs a place where parents wait for their children after school. In the photo, mothers are standing and talking while children run through the park. Across the street there is a fenced playground that is locked.

→ The photograph opens the theme of unequal access to play spaces and shows how informal spaces (sidewalks, parks) become places of gathering, while spaces formally intended for play remain inaccessible.

NEXT STEP

Photographs help the group notice patterns, potentials, and challenges within the community. The next step is to connect these insights with the themes the group wants to explore. → Launch Pad

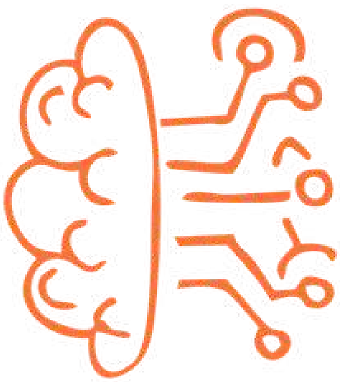
PHASE 2

UNDERSTAND & DEFINE

In this phase, we shape what we have previously observed. Young people identify what truly matters within many observations and turn it into a focused challenge. We look not only at what is happening, but also at why — exploring needs, relationships, patterns, and deeper causes.

This is where the picture of the community becomes clearer. Participants learn to distinguish symptoms from root causes, individual experiences from wider patterns, and personal stories from dynamics that affect many.
The goal of this phase is to formulate a challenge worth exploring further — specific enough to inspire action, yet open enough to allow learning and new insights.

By the end of the phase, each team stands on solid ground, understanding what drives them, who the challenge affects, and why it matters for the next steps.



4

LAUNCH PAD

4 - 20

45-75 min

Flipchart, sticky notes (2 colors), markers

This tool helps the group move from individual impressions toward a shared understanding, recognizing patterns across different experiences and turning them into a clearer focus. By clustering and naming challenges, personal stories become connected, tensions become visible, and key “nodes” in the community emerge as areas worth deeper exploration. The tool also helps the group identify where they want to invest their attention and care. By choosing the challenges that genuinely motivate them, participants take ownership of the process, and the project teams that form carry clear intention and strong internal motivation for the work ahead.

STEPS

1. Revisiting Phase 1 (10–15 min)
Bring the group back to the outcomes of the previous tools. Invite them to recall what appeared most often as obstacles, which situations or spaces pointed to challenges, and what they noticed in the environment that reflects community issues. Pay attention to recurring feelings, questions, or needs that surfaced throughout the process.

2. Identifying challenges (10–15 min)
Divide participants into groups of 4–7. Based on the insights gathered in Phase 1, ask them to write down all the challenges they recognize on sticky notes — one challenge per note.

3. Clustering and recognizing patterns (10–15 min)
All groups place their challenges on a flipchart (or a board or floor). Together, cluster the challenges by similarity and give each cluster a name. Examples: isolation and lack of belonging, neglected spaces and lack of care, invisibility of young people, unequal access, lack of trust in institutions.

4. Brief presentation of challenge clusters (5 min)
Invite volunteers to briefly present each cluster. Encourage participants to make connections between clusters in order to reveal the bigger picture.

5. Selecting the challenges (20–25 min)
Support participants in choosing the challenges they want to work on:

- Individually and in silence, each participant selects three challenges that matter most to them (existing, combined, or newly formulated challenges inspired by the clusters).
- Participants then pair up and narrow their six choices down to two shared challenges.
- Pairs join into groups of four and agree on one common challenge.
- Each group of four presents their chosen challenge.
- If the number of challenges exceeds the number of project teams to be formed in the next step, the group votes on which challenges to continue working on.

6. Forming project teams (5 min)
Participants physically move toward the challenge they want to develop further. In this way, stable project teams are formed (4–7 people per team). Each team gives their challenge a working title and, if they wish, a symbol or short metaphor.

OUTCOMES

- Clearly formulated challenges that the group recognizes as most important for further work
- Visible patterns and connections between different experiences
- Early indications of where to look for key actors and relationships within the system
- Formed project teams, each with its own challenge

ASK YOURSELF

- Did the challenges chosen by the groups genuinely emerge from the previous work?
- Do participants feel connected to the challenge they selected?
- Are the challenges specific enough to be workable, yet broad enough to leave room for exploration?

VARIATIONS

- Silent work – the process unfolds in silence and supports groups that need greater focus
- Symbolic objects – participants use objects as symbols of the challenge
- Online version – a digital board using tools such as Miro or Mural
- Parallel challenge – alongside the main challenge, the group may also choose a broader, supporting challenge

EXAMPLE: GROUP OF YOUNG PEOPLE

After clustering and selection, themes of lack of belonging, neglected spaces, and limited opportunities for participation stand out most strongly. Through team discussions, these themes merge into one focused challenge:

"Young people do not have a safe and accessible space to gather."

This challenge brings together a team that recognizes how needs for space, support, and visibility are interconnected.

NEXT STEP

This tool helps the group identify the themes they want to explore from a wide range of observations.The next step is to develop a deeper understanding of relationships within the system.

→ Circular Relationship Map

CIRCULAR RELATIONSHIP MAP

4 - 20

45-75 min

Flipchart, sticky notes (2 colors), markers

This tool makes visible the people, groups, and structures surrounding the person or group most affected by the challenge. Instead of looking at the challenge only through personal experience, the map helps reveal who is involved, who provides support, who creates obstacles, who remains invisible, and who could play an important role in the next steps of the process. The map reflects the ethic of care for people: every challenge exists within a web of relationships. The first step toward fairer and healthier solutions is to recognize who is present, how roles are distributed, and where there is potential for connection, support, or the restoration of trust.

STEPS

1. Revisiting the challenge (5 min)
Remind the teams of the selected challenges and key observations: who is most affected, what creates tension, where information is missing, and what patterns kept repeating in people's experiences. Invite them to reflect briefly on insights from previous phases as well.

2. Placing the center of the map (10 min)
Ask the teams to reflect and choose one social actor (a person or group) they consider to be most affected by the challenge.
If the team struggles to agree, suggest choosing a stakeholder that does not create strong resistance among team members. Explain that it is enough to select one stakeholder at this stage, that the choice is not final, and that it can be changed later. Emphasize that the current choice is good enough to begin.

3. Zoning the stakeholder (20–30 min)

Invite participants to draw five concentric circles around the central stakeholder, representing zones within the network of influence. In each zone, the team adds people, groups, services, or structures that play a role in the experience of the person or group at the center.
Encourage teams to notice people and groups who are rarely seen, those who could offer support if engaged, and relationships that are missing for the network to feel complete. Suggest marking relationships using colors or symbols to represent support, obstacles, unclear connections, and potential allies.

4. Collective reflection (10–15 min)
Invite teams to look at their maps of people, relationships, structures, and context.
Ask questions such as:

- Who has influence but no direct connection to the center / Zone 0?
- Who contributes but often remains invisible?
- Where are the gaps — who is missing?
- Which zone is the most crowded, and which is the emptiest — and why?
- Where could relationships be restored or strengthened?

OUTCOMES

- A clearly mapped network of stakeholders surrounding the selected challenge
- Identified patterns of support, obstacles, and invisible influences
- Recognized gaps and areas where relationships could be restored or strengthened
- Ground prepared for selecting a focal figure in the next tool

ASK YOURSELF

- Does the map include stakeholders who truly influence Zone 0, not only those who are most visible?
- Where do gaps appear — who is missing for the network picture to be complete?
- Which relationships appear supportive, and which create obstacles or tension?
- Does the map reveal potential areas for strengthening relationships in the next steps of the process?

VARIATIONS

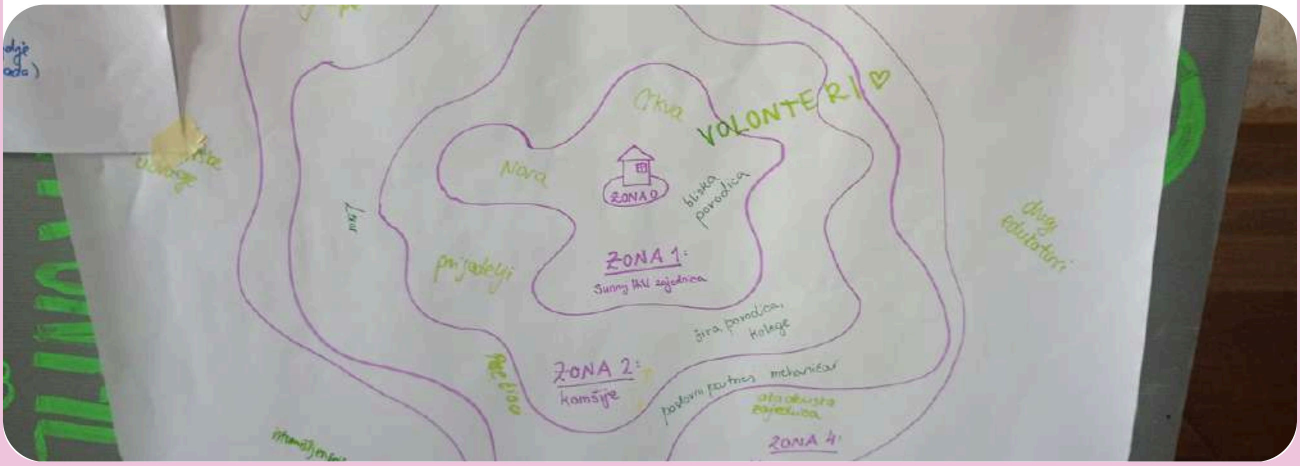
- Symbolic objects – stakeholders and relationships are represented using simple objects (figures, stones, branches, leaves, etc.)
- Online version – the map is created using digital tools such as Miro or Mural
- More-than-human stakeholders – the team may include actors from the non-human world (animals, plants, mountains, rivers, etc.)

EXAMPLE: YOUTH GROUP

A team working on the challenge **"Young people do not have a safe place to gather"** places a group of young people in **Zone 0.** Closer zones include parents, peers, and a school counselor, while outer zones include neighbors, local clubs, and municipal services responsible for public spaces. Through mapping, the team realizes that young people have the least influence over the stakeholders who make decisions about public spaces.

NEXT STEP

Once the group has mapped the actors and relationships in the system, the next step is to look at the challenge from different perspectives.



PERSPECTIVE SHIFT

4 - 20 | 20-30 min | relationship map, papers, markers

After creating the Circular Relationship Map, the team begins to see that the challenge exists within a network of people, groups, and structures. Instead of rushing toward a solution, the team chooses one perspective through which it continues exploring the challenge. By selecting one person or group, regardless of the zone they occupy on the map, the team "zooms in" on their perspective. This helps deepen the understanding of relationships, tensions, and influences that shape the system. This choice does not mean that others are less important, nor that future solutions will be designed "only for them." It simply serves as a temporary point of focus — helping the team move beyond general impressions and stay grounded in a concrete experience.

STEPS

1. Returning to the Relationship Map (5 min)

Invite teams to look again at the Circular Map of Relationships and notice:

- who is most affected by the challenge
- who has influence but remains distant or invisible
- where tensions, gaps, or broken connections appear

2. Proposing Perspectives (10 min)

Based on the map, teams identify several people or groups whose perspective could help better understand the challenge.

These might include:

- those directly affected
- potential allies
- people who should be involved
- those whose role maintains tension or blockage
- a broader or symbolic group

Remind the team that the choice does not need to be "correct" or located at the center of the map.

3. Short Group Check-in (10–15 min)

For each proposal, the team briefly reflects:

- what becomes clearer if we start from this perspective
- how this person or group is connected to the challenge
- how realistic it is to access this experience or insight

Emphasize that different opinions are welcome and that the choice does not need to be perfect.

4. Choosing the Perspective (5 min)

The team selects one person or group and formulates a sentence explaining why:

"We choose this perspective because it helps us better understand what is important in this situation."

This sentence serves as a guide for the next steps.

OUTCOMES

- a selected person or group whose perspective will guide the next steps of the work
- a shared understanding of why this perspective was chosen
- a clearer and deeper insight into the challenge and the relationships within the system

ASK YOURSELF

- Did this choice help the team align rather than further divide?
- Does this perspective open space for a new understanding of the challenge, rather than simply confirming existing assumptions?
- Is the team aware this choice is temporary and that the picture will later expand again?
- Is the chosen perspective concrete enough to support meaningful next steps?

VARIATIONS

- Silent voting – each participant chooses the perspective they find most meaningful.
- Invisible perspective – one option must represent someone whose voice is rarely heard.
- Indirect perspective – if direct access is not possible, the team chooses the closest perspective that can represent that experience.

EXAMPLE: YOUTH GROUP

The team identifies several possible perspectives within the network of relationships. After a short exchange, they decide to "zoom in" on the perspective of young people from the neighborhood to better understand their experience of the space and community relationships.
This choice helps the team stay focused and deepen its understanding of the challenge before widening the picture again.

NEXT STEP

This tool helps the group view the challenge from multiple perspectives. The next step is to speak with people who are directly part of the system.

→ Interview as a Mirror of the System

SYSTEM REFLECTION INTERVIEW

4 - 20 | 90 min | relationship map, papers, markers

This tool helps the team practice listening and understanding experience before taking action. Through a guided mock interview and role-playing, participants explore how the challenge is actually lived: where pressures arise, what emotions appear, and which constraints shape everyday experience.
The focus is not on analysis or solutions, but on the flow of experience itself — what is said, felt, and left unspoken. The tool helps the team slow down, notice their own assumptions, and prepare for conversations with real people. When such conversations are not possible, the insights can serve as a temporary basis for further work.

STEPS

1. Preparing for the Interview Exercise (10–15 min)
Remind the team that this is an exercise in listening, not acting or solving problems.
Emphasize that:

- roles should be approached with respect, without exaggeration or caricature
- participants speak from the perspective of experience, not from a position of "expert knowledge"
- the goal is understanding, not drawing conclusions

The team selects one role based on the perspective chosen in the previous tool and the relationship map.

2. Assigning Roles in the Team (5 min)
Before the conversation begins, the team agrees on roles so that listening can be shared and attentive. Suggested roles:

- **Interviewer** – asks questions and ensures the conversation remains in a space of understanding, without advising or proposing solutions.
- **Note-taker** – records key words, recurring themes, and important sentences.
- **Atmosphere observer** – pays attention to tone, pauses, and non-verbal reactions.
- Roles can be combined or shared among several people.

3. Mock Interview (30–40 min)
The team conducts one practice interview within the group.
The conversation focuses on:

- everyday experience
- feelings and challenges
- relationships with others in the system
- experiences of rules, spaces, and the surrounding environment

Questions should be simple and open-ended. The goal is not to give correct answers, but to understand the perspective.

4. Collective Reflection (15–20 min)
After the interview, the team steps out of their roles and reflects together on what they observed.
Each role briefly contributes:

- where the conversation flowed easily and where it became difficult
- which themes or ideas repeated
- where tension, discomfort, or relief appeared
- what could be noticed through body language

OUTCOMES

- practiced active listening and questioning within the team
- clearer insights into the emotions, needs, and pressures connected to one role
- identified systemic patterns shaping the challenge
- a prepared foundation for real interviews

ASK YOURSELF

- Did the team stay in a space of listening and understanding, rather than searching for solutions?
- Was the focus on the system and relationships, rather than on the character or behaviour of an individual?
- Did the team roles help the conversation be seen from multiple angles?
- Was a safe space created for entering and leaving the roles?

VARIATIONS

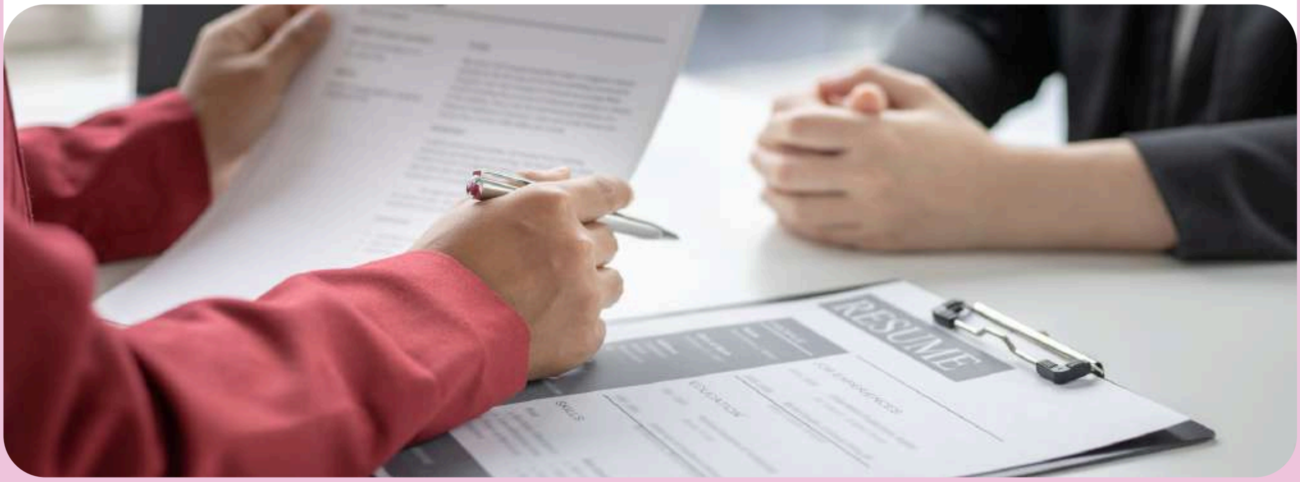
- Multiple mock interviews – conduct several practice interviews within the team to build confidence before real interviews.
- For younger participants – the person playing the role can use a drawing or object to express how they feel and respond to a few short questions.
- Role rotation – roles change so participants can experience different perspectives.

EXAMPLE: YOTUH GROUP

One team member takes on the role of a neighbour who often complains about noise. The other team members conduct a mock interview while observing the conversation from different roles. During the discussion, themes of fear of disorder, loss of control, and mistrust emerge.
The team realizes that the resistance is not driven by bad intentions, but by a need for safety and clear agreements. This changes how they understand the challenge.

NEXT STEP

Conversations with people bring real experiences and new insights about the system.
The next step is to structure and deepen these insights.
→ Empathy Map



EMPATHY MAP

4 - 7

90 min

relationship map, post-its, markers

An Empathy Map is a tool used to organise and connect insights about the experience of a person or group. While interviews reveal experience through dialogue, the empathy map structures it into fields such as thoughts, feelings, needs, pressures, and strengths.
This tool helps the team distinguish insights from assumptions and see people more holistically — not only through problems, but also through existing resources and potential. In this way, it creates a foundation for designing solutions grounded in real experience and capable of supporting sustainable change.

STEPS

1. Introduction to the Process (5–10 min)
Explain to the teams that an empathy map can represent one specific person, but also a typical position or role within the system. The goal is not to "guess the truth" about how someone exactly feels, but to create a working picture of the experience based on available insights, with the understanding that it can later be refined or changed.
Remind participants that the goal is understanding, not analysis or solutions. Uncertainty and different interpretations are a natural part of the process.

2. Filling in the Map (30–40 min)
Using insights from interviews and previous tools, teams collaboratively fill in the map and build a picture of one person's experience. Encourage participants to use concrete examples and keep different interpretations visible. Invite the team to first complete the fields that describe the experience, and only later those related to needs and potential, to avoid jumping too quickly to solutions.

Fields of the map:
- **Sees** – spaces, situations, and recurring patterns around them
- **Hears** – voices, comments, rules, expectations, and silences
- **Thinks and feels** – internal dilemmas, fears, hopes, and emotions
- **Says and does** – what they express outwardly and how they adapt
- **Needs –** emotional, practical, and systemic needs
- **Invisible contributions** – what they give to others or the community but is rarely recognised
- **Potential** – what they could develop or initiate with support

The fields are interconnected — the value of the map lies in the relationships between them, not in isolated items.

3. Collective Reflection (10 min)
Ask teams:
- What on this map felt most striking or surprising?
- Where do we see the strongest tensions, and where the greatest strengths?
- Which elements point to the wider system (space, rules, relationships)?
- What from this map should we not lose sight of in the next steps?
- Where are we confident we have insights, and where might assumptions still remain?

OUTCOMES

- a clear map of the experience of a person affected by the challenge
- identified emotional and systemic patterns
- recognised invisible contributions and strengths
- a strong foundation for further defining the problem and generating ideas

ASK YOURSELF

- Did the team truly step outside their own perspective and enter the world of another person?
- Does the map include invisible aspects — the unspoken and quiet contributions?
- Is the person represented holistically, not only through difficulties but also through their potential?
- Does the map reveal clear signals of the system (rules, relationships, space) shaping this experience?

VARIATIONS

- For younger participants — use drawings, symbols, or collage instead of text.
- Group + individual maps — the team first creates a shared map and then briefly compares individual insights.
- Pair mapping — team members work in pairs, each creating their own version before combining them into a shared map.

EXAMPLE: YOUTH GROUP

The person **sees** a dark park with broken playground equipment and **hears** that "no one takes care of it." They **feel** fear and withdrawal and **speak** little so as not to burden others. They **need** safety and light.

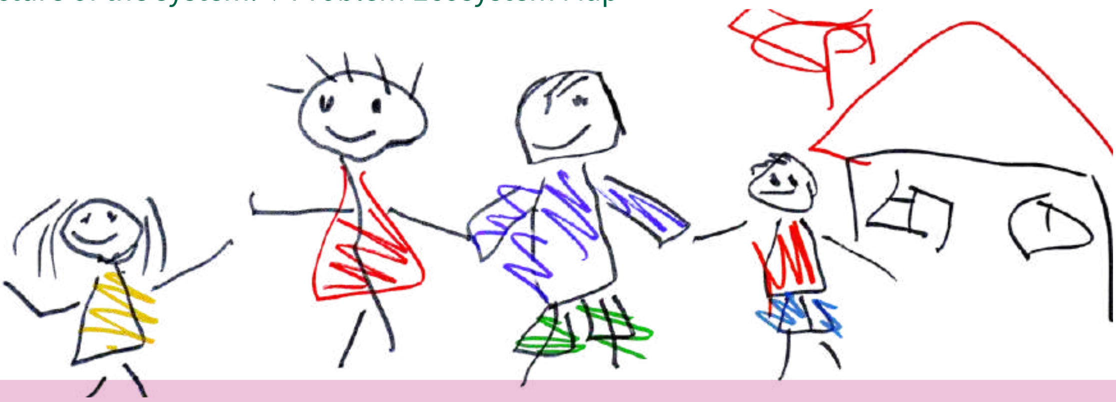
Invisible contribution: they quietly care for the building entrance and neighbours.

Potential: they could initiate community action.

Insight: the issue is not only the space, but also a loss of care and community.

NEXT STEP

The empathy map helps the group better understand the experiences of people affected by the challenge. The next step is to connect these insights into a broader picture of the system. → Problem Ecosystem Map



PROBLEM ECOSYSTEM MAP

4 - 7

90 min

relationship map, post-its, markers

This tool helps the team view a challenge as a dynamic part of a wider, interconnected system. Instead of reducing the problem to a single cause or actor, attention is directed toward the relationships, patterns, rules, and flows that shape the situation together. The team explores how the problem functions: what triggers it, what sustains it, what consequences it creates, and where tensions, feedback loops, or turning points appear within the system. The goal is to understand the whole picture so that later interventions can strengthen relationships, trust, resources, and the space for change.
The map does not aim for perfect logic, but for shared learning and insight into the living system in which the challenge unfolds.

STEPS

1. Introduction to the Tool (5–10 min)
Briefly explain that mapping helps the team see the challenge within a broader context. Invite participants to briefly recall what they have already explored and observed through the previous tools.
You may ask questions such as:

- What influences this challenge, even when we do not immediately see it?
- What changes if we look at the problem as part of a system rather than as an isolated event?

Emphasize that the goal is not analysis for its own sake, but shared understanding.

2. Placing the Challenge in the Center (5 min)
The team writes their challenge in the center of the paper.
The challenge can also be represented symbolically, in a way that makes sense to the group.

3. Collaborative System Mapping (45–60 min)
Through discussion and exchange, team members add elements around the central challenge and connect them using lines, colours, or symbols.
Encourage the team to explore:

- **Drivers and causes** – norms, rules, beliefs, and recurring behavioural patterns
- **Consequences** – emotional, social, spatial, or long-term effects
- **Actors** – present and absent, formal and informal, individuals and groups
- **Barriers** – bureaucracy, habits, fears, taboos, and invisible pressures
- **Resources** – people, knowledge, relationships, spaces, and initiatives that already exist
- **Key tensions in the system** – points where needs, rules, or relationships collide

Remind participants that how the elements are connected is more important than how many there are.

4. Collective Reflection (15–20 min)
Invite the teams to step back and look at the whole map.
Ask:

- Where do we see clusters or areas of greatest complexity?
- Which patterns repeat?
- Who holds the most influence, and who carries the greatest consequences?
- Do we see feedback loops, and where might they be interrupted?
- Are both visible and invisible dimensions of the system present?

OUTCOMES

- a visual map of the challenge as part of a wider system
- identified causes, consequences, and recurring patterns
- recognised resources and potential points of change
- a shared language for further work and design

ASK YOURSELF

- Does the map show relationships, not only individual elements?
- Are invisible influences and resources also recognised?
- Did all team members have space to contribute?
- Does the team see the map as a tool for continued work, rather than a finished picture?

VARIATIONS

- Problem Tree – roots (causes), trunk (challenge), branches (consequences).
- Living Map – elements connected with strings or participants' bodies in space.
- Multiple Maps – exploring the same challenge from different perspectives (school, family, institutions).

EXAMPLE: YOUTH GROUP

The team places the challenge "feeling of not belonging at school" in the center of the map. Around it, they identify causes such as pressure to succeed and rigid rules, as well as consequences like withdrawal and insecurity.
Students, teachers, and school culture appear as key actors, alongside resources such as peer support.
Key tension: need for belonging ↔ a system that rewards only the "successful".

NEXT STEP

Once the group sees how causes, actors, and relationships are connected, the next step is a shift in perspective.
→ Problem as a Seed of the Solution

PHASE 3

IMAGINE & CONNECT

In this phase, we open space for ideas. Teams explore different possibilities, connect and combine them, looking not for one "right" solution, but for multiple ways to respond to the challenge they have chosen. The focus is on imagination, curiosity, and the willingness to try something new.

Permaculture principles help ensure that ideas are not only creative, but also aligned with people, place, and natural flows within the community. Participants learn to value diversity, small steps, and solutions that serve multiple purposes at the same time.

Throughout this phase, a clearer picture gradually emerges: what a solution might look like, how its elements support one another, and where natural connections exist between people, needs, and resources.

By the end of the phase, a first draft of a coherent approach takes shape — a design that makes sense, sees the bigger picture, and leaves room for further development.

PROBLEM AS A SEED OF THE SOLUTION

4 - 7

45 min

Flipchart, or whiteboard, post-its, markers

This tool helps the team see the challenge as a signal from the system, rather than a mistake to remove. Instead of focusing on symptoms, participants explore what function the problem serves and which needs or values it protects.

The team identifies the qualities they want to cultivate instead of the current strategy and formulates a design intention for further work.
In this way, the problem becomes a source of insight — and the challenge a seed of regenerative change already present in the system.

STEPS

1. Introduction to the Tool (5–10 min)
Remind the team of the challenge they formulated in the previous phase. Explain that every problem can be seen as a strategy of the system — a way the system protects or adapts itself.
Ask the question:
"*What is the system currently doing through this problem?*"
The goal is to understand the function, not to search for solutions.

2. From Strategy to Need (7–10 min)
When the team identifies behaviours (e.g. withdrawal, passivity, avoidance, pressure, control), ask deeper questions:

- What is this strategy trying to preserve?
- What is it protecting us from?
- Which need lies behind it?

Responses should be formulated as values or qualities (e.g. safety, belonging, dignity, visibility, support). Key words are written down and grouped together.

3. Recognising Potential (5–7 min)
The team looks at the identified values and asks:

- Which quality do we want to develop instead of the current strategy?
- What would the opposite experience look like?

At this point, the process shifts from analysis toward intention.

4. Formulating the "Seed" (8–10 min)
Based on the identified values, the team formulates 1–3 statements such as:
Within the problem of [X], there is a potential for [Y].

or

If the problem is a message from the system, it tells us that we need to design more ______ and less ______.

Encourage the team to remain at the level of qualities they want to cultivate, rather than jumping to concrete actions.

OUTCOMES

- clearly formulated design intention (1–3 statements)
- identified values and needs that the challenge is trying to protect
- the challenge understood as a signal of how the community currently functions, rather than as an isolated problem
- a starting point for exploring concrete possibilities in the next step

ASK YOURSELF

- Did the team move from "fixing" the problem toward understanding its function?
- Were needs and values identified, not only symptoms?
- Does the formulated seed open space for multiple possible solutions?
- Is it grounded in insights from the previous tools?

VARIATIONS

- Symbolic seed drawing – draw the "seed" and the conditions needed for it to grow.
- Pair work – participants formulate seeds in pairs and then combine them.
- Collective selection – the group chooses one seed to further develop.

EXAMPLE: YOUTH GROUP

The team recognises that students' withdrawal appears as a strategy to protect themselves from rejection.
Through discussion, they identify needs for safety, recognition, and a space where every student's voice matters. They formulate the seed:
Within the feeling of not belonging lies the potential to build a community where every voice is visible and supported.

NEXT STEP

This tool helps the group recognise the potential for new possibilities within the problem.
The next step is to formulate questions that open space for ideas.

→ How Might We - questions (HMW)

HOW MIGHT WE- QUESTIONS (HMW)

4 - 7

45 min

Flipchart, or whiteboard, post-its, markers

This tool helps the team translate their design intention into questions that open a field of possibilities. Starting from the values and needs identified in the challenge, participants explore how the desired quality could gradually emerge in the system.
Instead of searching for quick solutions, the team learns to ask questions that support a shift in patterns — not only isolated situations. The focus moves from “What should we do?” to “What do we want to grow?”
Well-formulated How Might We questions create a space where the regenerative potential of the challenge can be explored through different possible directions for action.

STEPS

1. Introduction to the tool (5–10 min)
Remind the team that in the previous step they formulated an intention in the form of:
“More ___, less ___” or “Within the problem lies the potential for ___.”
Explain that the next step is to transform this intention into questions that open possibilities for action. Emphasise that the goal is not to find answers yet, but to generate strong questions.

2. Connecting with the seed (5–10 min)
The team revisits their formulated intention and identifies key words (values, needs, qualities).
Based on these, they formulate initial questions beginning with:
How might we…?
Questions should emerge from the values, not from a pre-imagined solution.

3. Developing questions (15–20 min)
Teams generate 5–10 different questions.
They can use prompts such as:
- How might we strengthen…?
- How might we create conditions for…?
- How might we enable…?
- How might we use existing resources to…?

Remind the team that:
- the question should not be too broad (“How might we fix the school?”)
- it should not be too narrow (“How might we design a poster?”)
- a good question keeps the value at the centre and opens multiple possible paths.

4. Selecting key questions (5–10 min)
The team reads all questions and selects 2–3 that spark the most curiosity, meaning, and energy.
These questions become the starting point for the next step: idea generation.

OUTCOMES

- 5–10 formulated "How Might We" questions
- 2–3 selected questions for further work
- a clearly opened space of possibilities grounded in the previously defined intention

ASK YOURSELF

- Do the questions emerge from values and needs, rather than from a pre-imagined solution?
- Do they open multiple possible directions?
- Do they stay connected to the real context of the group?
- Does the team feel curiosity when reading them?

VARIATIONS

- Each team member writes three questions individually, then the group combines them.
- Exchange questions between teams for fresh perspectives.
- Select the "most unusual" question as a creative challenge.

EXAMPPLE: YOUTH GROUP

Challenge: Feeling of not belonging in school. **Intention:** More space for expression, less withdrawal

Questions:

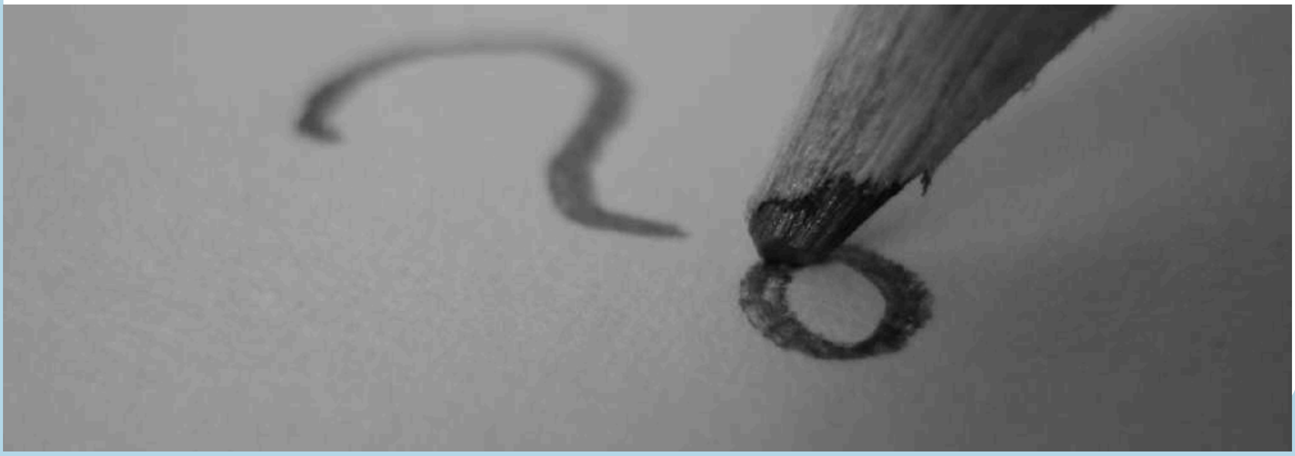
- How might we create conditions for quiet students to express themselves?
- How might we help every student feel seen?
- How might we use existing school activities to connect different students?

NEXT STEP

Through these questions, the group transforms challenges into an invitation to create solutions.

The next step is to generate as many ideas as possible.

→ Brainstorming with ethics and principles



BRAINSTORMING WITH ETHICS AND PRINCIPLES

4 - 7

90 min

Flipchat, post-its, markers, overview of ethics and principles

This tool helps the team move from exploratory questions into the field of ideas, and then deepen those ideas using permaculture ethics and principles.
The process unfolds in two phases: first, ideas are generated freely and without evaluation to open the widest possible space of possibilities. Then the ideas are observed through the three ethical pillars and selected principles to strengthen them and make them more sustainable.
Ethics provides the value framework, while principles help ideas become feasible, gradual, and multifunctional. In this way, ideas evolve from isolated solutions into part of a wider system of relationships and resources.

STEPS

1. Idea generation - free style (30 min)
The team selects 1–2 key “How might we?” questions. Each person writes ideas individually (one idea per note).Ideas are placed on the board without commenting.
Goal: 30–50 diverse ideas.

2. First level of deepening – ETHICS (20–25 min)
The facilitator briefly reminds the group of the three ethical pillars: Care for People, Care for Earth Fair Share
For each idea the team asks:
- Whose needs does this idea respond to?
- Does it leave anyone aside?
- How does it affect the space, nature, or common goods?
- Does it encourage sharing, access, and inclusion?

Ideas are expanded so they align more closely with the ethics.

3. Second level of deepening – PRINCIPLES (20–25 min
The facilitator explains that principles help make ideas feasible and connected.
The team selects 3–5 relevant principles.
For each idea they ask:
- Does it use existing resources?
- Does it connect different actors?
- Can it be implemented through small steps?
- Does it have multiple functions?
- Is it resilient to change?

Ideas are combined, simplified, or made multifunctional.
Note: Since the team chooses the principles they work with, it is important to emphasize that ideas should not conflict with the remaining principles.

4. Selection of ideas (10–15 min)
Each team member chooses 2 ideas they see as the most mature.
The team discusses and selects 1–3 ideas that have:
- value grounding
- real feasibility
- systemic potential

OUTCOMES

- A large number of initial ideas
- Ideas strengthened through ethics and principles
- 1–3 selected ideas with clear regenerative potential
- Understanding of how ethics and principles influence design

ASK YOURSELF

- Was space created for free expression without criticism?
- Is ethics used for deepening ideas rather than eliminating them?
- Are the ideas connected with real resources and relationships?

Do the solutions have multifunctional and long-term potential?

VARIATIONS

- “Silent storm” – the first phase takes place in complete silence without conversation
- Using permaculture principle cards as prompts for deepening ideas
- Each member “chooses” three ideas they would like to further develop, then overlaps are explored

Combining ideas from different teams into a shared mosaic of solutions

EXAMPPLE: YOUTH GROUP

Challenge: Feeling of not belonging in school

Idea: “Meet-and-greet event”

Through ethics: include shy students, ensure no one is left out.

Through principles: connect students and teachers, start with small steps, allow multiple functions.

Upgraded: “Regular student support circles with support from the school.”

NEXT STEP

TThe group generates a large number of ideas and then observes them through the ethics and principles of permaculture. The next step is to observe the selected ideas as a system.

→ Designing Ideas as Living Systems

DESIGNING IDEAS AS LIVING SYSTEMS

4 - 7

90 min

Flipchart or whiteboard, idea cards, template

This tool helps the team shape the selected ideas into a connected and meaningful solution that functions as a whole. Instead of creating a list of activities, the team explores how the elements build on one another, who participates in the process, and how change develops over time. Ideas are observed as parts of a living structure — where each element has **multiple roles and influences others.** Through mapping relationships, flows, and feedback, the team gradually moves from the level of "what we do" to the level of **"how this works."** The goal is to shape a solution that is not a short-term intervention, but a pattern of action that can grow, adapt, and simultaneously bring multiple benefits to the community.

STEPS

1.Returning to the intention (10 min)
The team returns to the seed of the solution, the key HMW questions, and the selected ideas.
Focus question:
"What change in the system do we want to initiate — not only what activity?"

***2.*Selection and arrangement of elements (15–20 min)**
The team selects 3–5 ideas that:
- respond to different needs,
- can function together,
- have the potential for multifunctionality.

Ideas are arranged on paper and connections are explored:
- where they build on each other,
- where they support one another,
- where there are gaps.

3. Building the living system (30–40 min)
The team maps:
- the purpose / intention of the system,
- key actors and their roles,
- functions (what does this idea do?),
- resources it uses,
- the flow over time (phases or steps),
- inputs and outputs,
- feedback loops (what influences what?).

Elements are connected with lines, arrows, and symbols.
The design should show how the system functions over time, not only as a static image.

4. Checking through ethics and principles (10–15 min)
The team uses questions from the attachment and checks:
- Does the system care for people and nature?
- Is it fair and inclusive?
- Does it use and strengthen existing resources?
- Is it multifunctional and adaptable?

If needed, the design is expanded and adjusted.

OUTCOMES

- A visually shaped systemic design of the idea
- Clearly defined actors, functions, flows, and phases
- Identified feedback loops and potential weaknesses
- A stable foundation for prototyping in Phase 4

ASK YOURSELF

- Does the team see the solution as a process rather than an event?
- Are the elements interconnected rather than simply arranged?
- Does the system have multiple functions and benefits?

Is there space for adaptation and learning?

VARIATIONS

- Template “input – process – output – feedback loop”
- Mapping the system through a timeline
- Test “what if one element disappears?”

Short presentation to another group followed by reflection

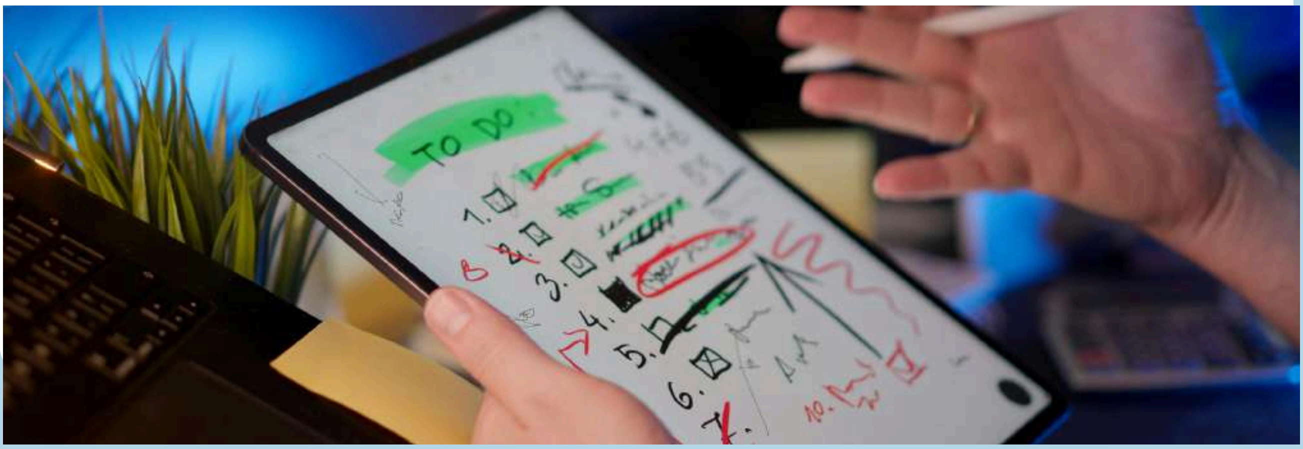
EXAMPPLE: YOUTH GROUP

Challenge: Feeling of not belonging in school. A group of young people designs a system that connects peer mentors, a quiet corner, a creative wall, and a monthly reflection circle. The elements build on one another: students share feelings (anonymously or in person), mentors initiate conversations, and the monthly reflection serves as a feedback loop. **Functions:** emotional safety, visibility of quiet students, building trust, and continuity of support.

NEXT STEP

This tool helps the group see how the idea functions within a wider system of relationships and resources. The next step is to turn the idea into the first concrete attempt.

→ Prototype in Zone 1



PHASE 4

TEST & ADAPT

In this phase, ideas become tangible. Teams create simple prototypes and test them in their Zone 1 — within their immediate community, with people who matter to them, and in spaces they already know well. The goal of the first step is not perfection, but understanding: what happens when our idea meets reality?

Through conversation, observation, and feedback, the solution evolves, adapts, and gradually matures. Learning happens through testing, mistakes, small adjustments, and the willingness to listen to what people and places are telling us.

This is the phase where the idea reveals its true shape. We see what works, what still needs to grow, and where more care and attention are needed — toward the people who will use it and the place that will hold it.

PROTOTYPE IN ZONE 1

4 - 7

90 min

paper, cardboard, tape, old magazines, various objects

This tool helps the team turn an idea into a small, tangible first step in their closest environment — Zone 1. Instead of waiting for perfect conditions, the group tests a simple experiment that allows learning through experience.
A prototype can be a conversation, a spatial setup, a message, a micro-event, or another small intervention — anything that can be tested and observed.
Working in Zone 1 creates safety and quick feedback, helping the team see what works, where resistance appears, and how the idea can evolve.

STEPS

1. Reconnect with the purpose (5–10 min)
Explain that the goal is not to build a perfect solution, but the first version of an idea that helps the team learn.
Emphasize that the prototype is an experiment, and mistakes are part of the process.
Remind participants that a prototype can be an experience, conversation, space, or message — not only a physical object.

2. Select one part of the idea (10 min)
The team chooses one key element of the idea that is most important to bring to life.
The focus is not the whole solution, but the moment that most influences people's experience.
Questions for the team:

- What part of our idea can people see, feel, or experience?
- Which element most affects relationships or people's experience?
- What can we create so we can say: "This is what it could look like."

3. Prototype in Zone 1 (10 min)
Teams think about where they can run their first small experiment.
Zone 1 means the closest environment available to them, for example: classroom, school hallway, local park, family environment, online space they already use
Ask teams: Where could we test this idea most easily and quickly?

4. Prototype creation (30–60 min)
Teams create simple prototypes that can be shown, acted out, placed in a space, or shared with others. Available materials are used: paper, cardboard, markers, old objects, phones, chairs, tape, or other simple props. The goal is for the prototype to be clear enough to "tell" the idea, and simple enough to be easily modified.

5. Quick ethical check (5–10 min)
Before testing the prototype, the team reflects briefly:
People Care

- Does the prototype invite connection, support, and inclusion?

Earth Care

- Are we using materials and resources responsibly?
- Can we build the prototype using what we already have?

Fair Share

- Is everyone in the team contributing?
- Who will benefit from this idea?

OUTCOMES

- One or more simple prototypes per team
- The first tangible version of the idea
- New insights about how the idea works in practice
- Clearer preparation for testing with others

ASK YOURSELF

- Does the team clearly know what they want to test?
- Is the prototype simple enough to build quickly?
- Can people understand the idea through the prototype?
- Is there space for changes and new versions?

VARIATIONS

- Combine multiple prototyping techniques
- Test prototypes briefly with other teams during the workshop
- Prototype in online spaces (post, survey, message)
- Prototype in the community (park, school, street)

EXAMPLE: YOUTH GROUP

Challenge: Feeling of not belonging in school.
The team creates a prototype called **"Support Corner."** They place cushions and messages such as *"You are welcome here"* and "*It's okay to stay quiet."*
During the school break they observe:

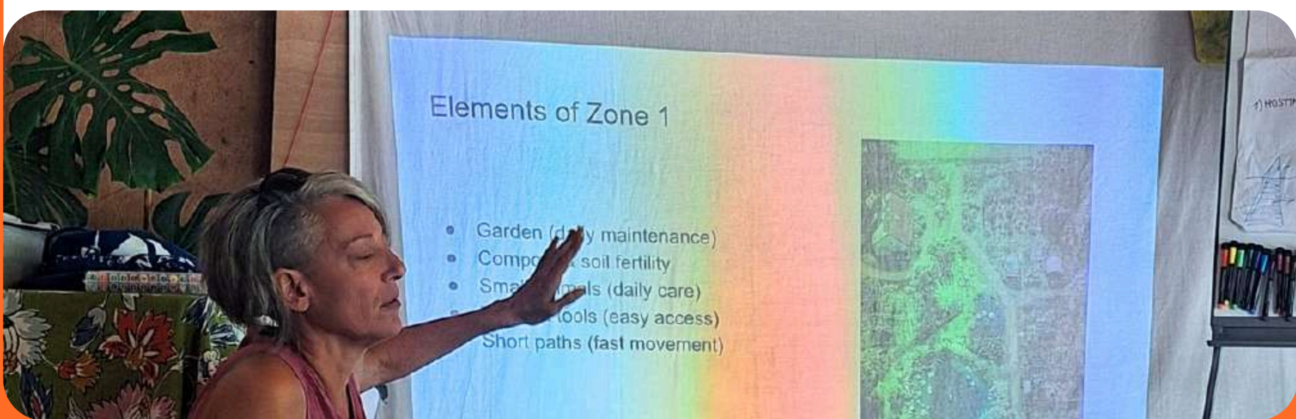
- Do students approach the space?
- Do they stay for a while?
- How do others react?

The prototype helps the team see how people respond and what could be improved.

NEXT STEP

The idea is now transformed into a simple prototype that can be tested in a familiar environment.The group then reflects on its regenerative potential.

→ Impact Check



IMPACT CHECK

4 - 7

30 - 45 min

Team prototype, paper, markers, poster with ethics and principles (optional)

This tool helps the team pause before going into the community and look at their idea from a broader perspective. Instead of asking only "does this work," the group reflects on how the prototype affects people, relationships, and the community. Through guided reflection, the team checks whether the idea truly contributes to the system in which it operates and whether it has the potential to develop in a responsible and sustainable way.

STEPS

1.Reminder of intention (5 min)
Remind the team that the prototype is not a final solution but the first step in learning. Explain that this is a moment to slow down before going into the community — an opportunity to look at the idea from several angles. Emphasize that the goal is not criticism, but deepening and strengthening the idea.

2.Individual reflection (10 min)
Each team member quietly reflects on the prototype through the following questions and writes down their thoughts:

- Does this idea strengthen people and relationships?
- Does it address the root cause or only the symptom?
- Who does it include, and who is still missing?
- Does it contribute to the space and community in the long term?
- Can it adapt without losing its essence?

3.Sharing within the team (10–15 min)
Each member shares their key insight.
The facilitator encourages the group to pay particular attention to:

- repeating signals
- places where uncertainty appears
- new perspectives that had not been noticed before

The idea may be expanded or refined during the conversation.

4.Mapping the impact (5 min)
Ask the team to briefly identify:

- who the idea directly affects
- who it affects indirectly
- which relationships might change

5.Decision about the next step (5–10 min)
The team collectively decides:

- We are ready for testing
- Minor improvements are needed
- We return one step back

The decision is clearly written down with one sentence of explanation: *Why did we choose this direction?*

OUTCOMES

- clearer awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the prototype
- recognized regenerative potential of the idea
- identified “blind spots” and possible improvements
- a conscious decision about the next step

ASK YOURSELF

- Is the team truly questioning the idea, or defending it?
- Have long-term effects been considered, not only quick results?
- Have relationships been considered, not only activities?
- Is there a clear and shared decision about the next step?

VARIATIONS

- Working with principles — each member draws one permaculture principle and observes the idea through it.
- Working in pairs — members pair up and ask each other questions before the group sharing.
- Quick version — the team selects only three key questions for a short check.

EXAMPLE: YOUTH GROUP

A team working on the challenge of a neglected park designs a one-day clean-up action. Through the Impact Check they realize that the action solves the immediate problem but does not involve residents or create long-term care for the space. They decide to add conversations with neighbors and the creation of a small group that will monitor the condition of the park so that the intervention can have a more lasting effect.

NEXT STEP

This tool helps the group check whether the solution contributes to people, space, and the community. The next step is to test the prototype with people.

→ Testing with the community

TESTING WITH THE COMMUNITY

4 - 7

90-240 min

prototype, note paper, question set (in attachment)

This tool opens space for a real encounter. After the idea has taken its first form, it is time for it to leave the safety of the team and enter into dialogue with the community. Through conversation, reactions, and silence, the prototype begins to live within a real context. The goal is not to receive confirmation, but to hear how the idea resonates with others. Testing is the moment when the solution stops being "ours" and becomes part of relationships, trust, and a shared space of learning.

STEPS

1.Preparing the encounter (15–20 min)
The team agrees on:
- who are 1–3 people from Zone 1 who can give an honest reaction
- how they will present the prototype (demonstration, scene, mini-intervention, post…)
- which 3–4 questions they want to ask

Remind the team not to "defend" the idea, but to present it simply and openly.2

2.Agreement on roles (5 min)
Roles are distributed within the team:
- the person who presents
- the person who asks questions
- the person who records key words and reactions
- the person who observes non-verbal signals
- (Roles can be combined if the team is smaller.)

3.Presenting the prototype (10–20 min per person)
The prototype is presented briefly and clearly — without persuasion or prior explanation.
The goal is to see how people understand and experience the idea on their own.

4.Questions and recording impressions (15–20 min)
Selected questions from the set are asked.
The team records:
- what the person said (key words)
- tone of voice and emotions
- pauses, hesitation, surprise
- additional questions that appear spontaneously

5.Team reflection (20–30 min)
After the encounter, the team reflects together in a circle:
- What surprised us the most?
- What felt most alive for the participants?
- What was not clear?
- What do we keep, and what do we change?

After adapting the solution based on real reactions, the idea is no longer only an internal concept, it becomes an initiative tested through experience.
At that moment a new question opens: who else do we want to share it with?

OUTCOMES

- authentic voices of the community
- deeper understanding of how the idea works in reality
- concrete directions for adaptation
- strengthened relationships with the people the idea touches
- a finalized solution based on real community feedback

ASK YOURSELF

- Was the encounter honest and balanced?
- Were both words and feelings recorded?
- Is the team truly making changes based on what was heard?
- Does the testing process build trust with the community?

VARIATIONS

- Working with principles — each member draws one permaculture principle and observes the idea through it.
- Working in pairs — members pair up and ask each other questions before group sharing.
- Quick version — the team selects only three key questions for a short check.

EXAMPLE: YOUTH GROUP

The team working on the challenge of a neglected park presents their prototype to neighbours who regularly use the space. People like the idea but are unsure how to get involved.

This helps the team realise they need to present the idea more clearly and suggest a simple way for neighbours to participate, so they adjust their plan.

NEXT STEP

Through testing, the group receives feedback from the real context.
The next step is to adapt and improve the solution based on this experience.

→ Solutions that connect

PHASE 5

SHARE & NETWORK

In the final phase, teams share their story — what they observed, what they understood, what they designed, and what happened when they tested the idea in real life. This is the moment when the whole journey becomes visible and the outcomes of the work, relationships, and shared exploration can be recognized.

Teams map who can be part of their next steps: who might support the idea, who could benefit from it, and where natural connections invite collaboration. The solution does not “end” here — it continues to grow organically through relationships, trust, and the spaces that welcome it.

This phase also closes one cycle and opens the possibility for a new one. Feedback, people’s responses, and insights from the network become the seeds of the next iteration of the idea. As in nature, the process is iterative — learning leads to a new beginning, not to an endpoint.

SOLUTIONS THAT CONNECT

4 - 7

75–100 min

Space for a circle, paper, markers, or materials for visual presentation.

This tool allows teams to share their solutions through the story of their process — from understanding the challenge to the ideas they want to develop further.
Instead of a traditional presentation, the focus is on experiences, relationships, and learning that emerged during the work. Sharing stories reveals patterns across different experiences and helps the group better understand the system they are part of.
In this way, the presentation becomes a space for collective learning, attentive listening, and connection between teams.

STEPS

1. Introduction to the format (5–10 min)
Explain the purpose of the session:
- the goal is to share process and learning
- we are not presenting perfect projects, but the journey we went through
- we listen to each other with attention and respect

Teams can choose any presentation format that helps them express their story.

2. Preparing the presentation (20–30 min)
Teams receive time to decide how they want to present their solution.
Encourage them to include elements of the process:
- Which challenge did we choose and why?
- How did the idea develop during the process?
- What did we test or change?
- What did we learn along the way?
- Which values guided us?
- Who did we involve or connect with?
- What are the possible next steps?

Possible formats:
- a short story or dialogue
- a visual process map
- symbolic objects representing phases of the project
- a short scene or performance
- a combination of images, text, and speech

3. Presenting the solutions (35–50 min)
Teams present their solutions one by one in the circle.
Each team has 5–7 minutes to present.
Afterwards, participants may ask 1–2 questions or share a short reflection.
Maintain the rhythm of the session and encourage attentive listening.

4. Collective reflection (10 min)
At the end, reflect together with the whole group:
- What touched you most in the stories you heard?
- Which values or ideas appeared repeatedly?
- Where do you see connections between the different solutions?
- What have we learned as a community through this process?

OUTCOMES

- teams articulate their solution and the path that led to it
- participants recognise shared values and motivations
- mutual trust and a sense of shared process are strengthened
- new ideas for collaboration between teams emerge

ASK YOURSELF

- Did participants speak from personal experience, not only from their project role?
- Did the presentations include the learning process, not only the result?
- Was the diversity of approaches visible and appreciated?
- Did new connections between ideas and teams emerge?

VARIATIONS

- Project gallery – teams display their maps and materials around the room
- Short video or audio documenting the process
- Poster session – teams stand by their work while others move through the space

EXAMPLE: YOUTH GROUP

One team presents their project through a visual process map. On a large sheet of paper, they draw the journey of the idea — from the first neighbourhood conversation to a small action in the local park. Each team member explains one phase and what they learned from it.

NEXT STEP

In this step, the group integrates what they have learned and shapes a solution that can continue to grow in the community.

→ Celebration

CELEBRATION

4 - 7

75–100 min

Space for a circle, paper, markers, or materials for visual presentation.

This tool allows the group to mark the completion of a shared process and recognise the effort, learning, and relationships that emerged along the way. Celebration is not only a moment of relaxation, but a space for participants to feel the meaning of what they created together. Through a shared ritual, conversation, and joy, the group integrates the experiences that appeared during the process. Not only the outcomes become visible, but also the path that led there — the attempts, collaborations, challenges, and new connections.

Celebration helps close the journey in a way that strengthens a sense of belonging and meaning, while opening space for future collaboration and continued action in the community.

STEPS

1. Introduction and reflection on the process (5–10 min)

Invite participants to recall the journey they went through during the process.
You may ask questions such as:

- What stayed with you the most?
- Which moment surprised or inspired you the most?
- What did you learn from each other?

2. Symbolic closing gesture (10–15 min)

Choose one shared gesture that marks the end of the process.
This can be:

- a gratitude circle where each person says one word or name
- writing short messages on a shared paper or wall
- exchanging cards with supportive messages
- a short ritual, song, or collective movement

3. Sharing joy (15–25 min)

The group celebrates the end of the process in a relaxed and creative way.
For example:

- a shared meal or snack
- music or a short performance by participants
- viewing photos from the process
- drawing, collage, or a collective mural

4. Looking forward (5–10 min)

Invite participants to reflect on what comes next.
You may ask:

- What do you want to take with you from this process?
- Where do you see opportunities for further collaboration?
- How can we stay connected after this gathering?

OUTCOMES

- participants recognise and value the shared effort and learning
- a stronger sense of connection and belonging within the group
- the process is closed in a positive and supportive way
- new possibilities for future collaboration and action emerge

ASK YOURSELF

- Is the celebration aligned with the rhythm and culture of the group?
- Do all participants have space to express themselves or simply to be present?
- Is there a sense of closure for the process?
- Are new ideas for future collaboration emerging?

VARIATIONS

- Gratitude map – participants write who or what they are grateful for
- Planting a seed or plant together as a symbol of a new beginning
- Light ritual – lighting candles or decorating the space
- Memory wall – photos, messages, and drawings from the process

EXAMPLE: YOUTH GROUP

At the end of the programme, participants write short messages of gratitude on small notes and exchange them randomly. Afterwards they share snacks and listen to music, while a wall filled with messages remains as a reminder of the journey they shared.

NEXT STEP

Celebration marks the closing of one cycle of learning. It allows the group to recognise what they have learned, what has changed, and how the experience can inspire new initiatives. In the spirit of an iterative process, every ending is also an invitation to begin a new cycle of observation, learning, and action.

ATTACHMENT TO TOOL 2

SECTORS IN THE SPACE

In permaculture, sectors represent influences that come from outside a space but strongly affect what happens within it.
These can be natural influences, but also social flows — people, information, rules, or energies that enter the space.
When we observe a space through the lens of sectors, we begin to notice where influences come from and how they shape behaviour within the space.

EXAMPLES OF SECTORS

Natural sectors:

- sun and shade
- wind
- noise
- smells
- rain and water

Social sectors:

- movement of people
- information and rules
- gathering places
- visibility and surveillance
- feelings of safety or pressure

HOW TO IDENTIFY SECTORS

While observing the space, pay attention to:

- Where does the movement of people come from?
- Where do noise, light, or calm appear?
- Where do you feel support, and where do you feel pressure?
- What forces shape behaviour in this space?

WHY THIS MATTERS

Sectors help us see the broader system.
Instead of changing only the space itself, we begin to understand the influences shaping it — and where small changes might create significant effects.

SECTORS WE OFTEN DISCOVER IN A SPACE

- the flow of students leaving school
- a place where street noise enters the area
- the spot where teachers usually stand
- a space that no one uses
- a place where people feel safe

ATTACHMENT TO TOOL 5

RELATIONSHIP ZONING

In permaculture, zones help us understand what is close to us, what is farther away, and how we move through our everyday lives. They are not only a map of physical space, but also a map of attention, relationships, and energy.

The same applies to social permaculture. Zones help us see who touches the life of a person or group at the center of a challenge — on a daily basis, occasionally, or from a distance — and how all these layers together shape reality. Zones are a simple reminder that no one lives in isolation, and that every relationship carries its own weight, warmth, and rhythm.

Zone 0 — Central stakeholder (starting point)
Here we simply name who we are mapping — the person or group most affected by the challenge. This is our starting circle, the place where understanding of the system of relationships begins.
(e.g. young people without a place to gather, families using a park, students from one class)

Zone 1 — Closest relationships
People with whom the central stakeholder is in constant contact: family members, peers, close friends, colleagues. These relationships shape everyday life most directly — both support and tension are felt most strongly here.

Zone 2 — Occasional but meaningful relationships
Teachers, neighbors, local groups, volunteers, sports clubs — people who are not present all the time, but who influence how people live, learn, and participate. This is a space of encounters, reactions, and impressions that can gradually form important patterns.

Zone 3 — Institutions and structures
Schools, municipalities, services, organizations, space managers — stakeholders who set frameworks and rules. They may not be personally present, but their decisions determine what is possible, what is not, and what needs to be opened up or changed.

Zone 4 — Social and cultural context
Cultural patterns, parental expectations, media, local narratives. These are the “voices of the environment” — often subtle, but constant. They shape the atmosphere in which people act and make decisions.

Zone 5 — The wider system
National policies, urban planning, economic trends, global movements, climate processes. This zone reminds us that local challenges are not separate from wider flows — just as a tree is not separate from the forest it belongs to.

WHY DOES ZONING HELP US?

Because it:

- shows that a challenge does not happen only “at the center,” but within a network of relationships,
- reveals stakeholders we may not have noticed at first,
- highlights where connections or support are missing,
- helps us work in ways that are gentler, fairer, and more thoughtful,
- opens space to see not only who is involved — but also who could be involved if invited.

Zones do not need to be perfect. They are simply an invitation to look wider, connect the dots, and understand that every change — small or large — is always part of a bigger picture.

ATTACHMENT FOR TOOL 7

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

This set of questions helps the team guide a conversation that is concrete, clear, and rooted in the interviewee's real experience.
Not all questions need to be asked. For one conversation, 5–7 questions are enough. Basic principle: always return to a specific event, place, or recent experience.

STARTING THE CONVERSATION (begin with something real)

- Can you remember the last time you encountered this situation?
- Where were you, and what exactly was happening?
- Who else was present?

If the interviewee begins speaking in general terms, gently bring them back by saying: *"Let's return to that specific moment."*

WHAT WAS HAPPENING (without interpretation)

- What happened first, and what happened after that?
- What did you have to pay attention to at that moment?
- What felt most important to you then?

HOW IT WAS EXPERIENCED (emotions in that specific moment)

- How did you feel at that moment?
- What was the most difficult part for you then?
- Was there a moment when things felt easier or safer?

RELATIONSHIPS AND ENVIRONMENT (who influenced the situation, who was absent)

- Who had the biggest influence on how the situation unfolded?
- Who helped you, even if it was a small thing?
- Who could have helped but was not present or involved?

CONSTRAINTS AND RULES (where the system creates pressure)

- What were you not allowed or able to do at that moment?
- What limited your options in that situation?
- Were there rules or decisions that influenced the outcome?

NEEDS IN THAT MOMENT (not abstract, but in that specific situation)

- What did you miss the most at that moment?
- What would have truly helped you then?
- Was there something you wanted to say but couldn't?

FOR PEOPLE WITH A SPECIFIC ROLE IN THE SYSTEM (when the interviewee holds responsibility or influence)

- When a situation like this happens, what is the first thing you need to think about?
- Where do you have room to act, and where do you not?
- What most often prevents you from doing more?

FOR THOSE WHO CONTRIBUTE "QUIETLY"

- What did you personally do to help keep the situation under control?
- Did anyone notice that effort?
- What would help you not carry this alone?

CLOSING THE CONVERSATION

- If we were to remember one moment from what you shared, which would it be?
- Is there something important we didn't touch on?
- How was it for you to talk about this?

IMPORTANT FACILITATIN NOTES

- Always start from a concrete event or the most recent situation.
- If the conversation becomes too general, return to "what happened then?"
- Do not search for solutions.
- Listen for what repeats.
- Write down the exact words the person uses.

ATTACHMENT TO TOOL 9

QUESTIONS FOR THE PROBLEM ECOSYSTEM MAP

This attachment serves as practical support for teams during the mapping process. The questions are not a checklist — teams should select those that are most helpful at a given moment for understanding the challenge as part of a system.

1. QUESTIONS ABOUT CAUSES
(what in the system allows the challenge to exist and persist)

- What in this system leads to the emergence of this challenge?
- Which rules, norms, or habits shape this situation?
- What is considered “normal,” even though it creates problems for people?
- Which beliefs, fears, or expectations influence people’s behaviour?
- What is rarely questioned, yet has a strong influence?
- What would likely continue even if individual people changed?

2. QUESTIONS ABOUT CONSEQUENCES
(what this system produces)

- How does this challenge affect people in their daily lives?
- What are the emotional consequences, and what are the social or spatial ones?
- What happens if nothing changes?
- Who carries the greatest consequences of the current situation?
- How does this challenge influence relationships between people?

3. QUESTIONS ABOUT ACTORS AND RELATIONSHIPS
(who is involved, and who remains outside the visible picture)

- Who is directly present in the system?
- Who influences the situation even if they are not always present?
- Who makes decisions, and who lives with the consequences?
- Who is often invisible in conversations about this challenge?
- Where do relationships function well, and where do they weaken or break?

4. QUESTIONS ABOUT BARRIERS
(what prevents change within the system)

- What makes it difficult for things to shift, even when there is willingness?
- Which habits, procedures, or fears act as barriers?
- Where do silence, avoidance, or resistance appear?
- What remains “unsaid,” yet strongly influences the situation?
- What do people feel they are not allowed to do or say?

5. QUESTIONS ABOUT RESOURCES

(what already exists in the system)

- Who or what already contributes but is rarely recognised?
- Where do knowledge, relationships, or practices already exist that work well?
- Who provides support even though it is not their formal role?
- Which spaces, people, or initiatives bring hope?
- What already “lives” in the system but is not sufficiently supported?

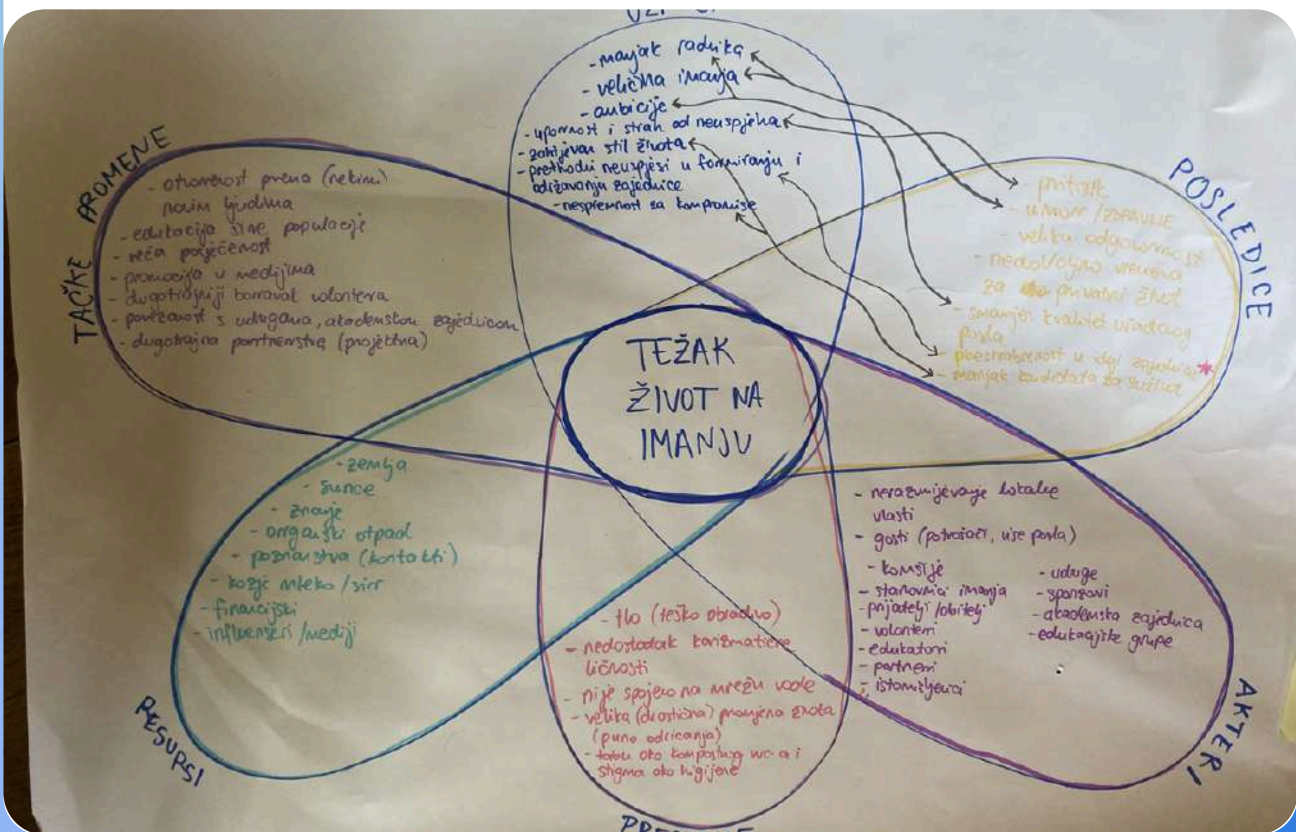
6. QUESTIONS ABOUT KEY TENSIONS IN THE SYSTEM

(places where the system “gets stuck”)

- Where do different needs or expectations collide?
- Where does the system send contradictory messages?
- What is expected from people while being denied to them at the same time?
- Where is the biggest gap between rules and real life?
- Which tension appears most often?

IMPORTANT FACILITATION NOTES

If the team starts moving toward solutions, gently bring them back with a question:
“What does this idea tell us about the system? Where would you place it on the map?”



ATTACHMENT TO TOOL 11

RECOGNISING A GOOD "HMW" QUESTION

A good HMW question:

- Begins with "How might we…"
- Builds on the needs, values, and insights from the previous phases
- Is open-ended and invites multiple approaches
- Is focused enough to guide idea generation
- Does not contain a predefined solution
- Sparks curiosity and a sense of meaning

EXAMPLES

How might we…

- …empower young people to express their opinions in school?
- …create a space of trust between different groups?
- …use local knowledge to support the regeneration of the park?
- …include quiet voices in decision-making?

PITFALLS TO AVOID

Too broad:
How might we improve the school?

Too narrow:
How might we paint a mural in the hallway?

Too technical:
How might we organise a survey in the park?

QUICK CHECK FOR THE TEAM

- Does the question explore potential, rather than only describing the problem?
- Does it open multiple possible directions?
- Is it rooted in real insights and values?

ATTACHMENT TO TOOL 12

BRAINSTORMING GUIDELINES

No judging or commenting
All proposals are welcome. In this phase we do not comment on, criticise, or analyse ideas.

Quantity over quality
The more ideas, the better. Ideas do not need to be realistic, feasible, or immediately clear.

Build on each other's ideas
Feel free to expand on what others say. Use phrases like: "What if we added…?" or "Or maybe we could…"

Wild ideas are welcome
Unusual and unexpected ideas often open new possibilities. Give space to imagination and intuition.

Write everything down
Every idea should be recorded clearly and visibly — on paper, a board, or post-it notes.

One idea at a time
Respect the flow. Do not interrupt each other. Listen and build together.

Move quickly, without overthinking
If you don't know what to say, share the first idea that comes to mind. There are no wrong answers.

Use the HMW questions as a guide
If the discussion loses focus, return to the How Might We questions. They provide the framework for brainstorming.

Don't explain — just propose
This phase is not for developing ideas. Ideas are generated, not debated.

In the end just stop the flow, don't conclude
Brainstorming ends when the energy drops or time runs out. Ideas are left to "rest" before selection.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS: ETHIC & PRINCIPLES

Permaculture Ethics – Reflection Questions

People Care

- Which human needs are at the centre of our idea?
- How does the idea contribute to physical, emotional, and social wellbeing?
- Do people have a voice, a role, and a sense of safety?

Earth Care

- How does the solution affect the land, water, space, and living beings?
- Does it respect natural rhythms and limits?
- What are we learning from nature in this process?

Fair Share

- Who has access to the solution — and who does not?
- Are we sharing resources, knowledge, and visibility?
- How does the idea contribute to solidarity and the common good?

Future Care

- What kind of trace are we leaving behind?
- Can the solution evolve and adapt over time?
- Are we building foundations, or only reacting to urgency?

12 Permaculture Principles – Questions for Deepening Ideas

1. Observe and interact

- How did we come to understand the challenge?
- Are the people most affected actively involved?
- What did we learn through direct observation?
- How can we strengthen participation throughout the process?

2. Catch and store energy

- What forms of energy already exist (human, emotional, material)?
- How can we avoid wasting them?
- Does the idea build reserves of knowledge, support, and capacity?
- Are we building on what already exists rather than starting from zero?

3. Obtain a yield

- What concrete benefits does the idea bring, and to whom?
- How do we recognise both material and intangible contributions?
- Do we value small improvements?
- Does the invested energy create a visible result?

4. Apply self-regulation and accept feedback

- How do we know when something is not working?
- Do we have space to hear quiet or unclear signals?
- How do we learn from mistakes?
- Are there simple mechanisms for adaptation?

5. Use and value renewable resources and services

- Are we using what can be renewed — relationships, time, local resources?
- Are we relying on local strengths rather than external ones?
- Do we recognise invisible resources (trust, culture, community)?
- Can the idea support regeneration, not only maintenance?

6. Produce no waste

- Where is something left unused?
- Are we losing attention, time, or knowledge?
- What could be turned into a resource?
- How can the idea connect "surplus" with need?

7. Design from patterns to details

- Do we see the whole before focusing on details?
- How does the idea fit into the wider context?
- Can we recognise patterns of behaviour or relationships?
- Are we connecting vision with concrete steps?

8. Integrate rather than segregate

- Where is there space for connection?
- How can we link people, functions, or spaces?
- Does the solution encourage cooperation rather than competition?
- What synergies could emerge?

9. Use small and slow solutions

- Can the idea be implemented step by step?
- Is it understandable and accessible?
- How do we avoid exhaustion and overload?
- Does it build rhythm and long-term continuity?

10. Use and value diversity

- Who is included — and who could be included?
- Does the idea draw on different kinds of knowledge and approaches?
- How does diversity contribute to resilience?
- Do we encourage plurality rather than uniformity?

11. Use edges and value the marginal

- Are we hearing voices that are rarely heard?
- Where are the transitions between formal and informal spaces?
- How can we design with the margins, not just for them?
- Are there people or spaces at the "edge" that see more?

12. Creatively use and respond to change

- How do we deal with uncertainty?
- Can the idea evolve over time?
- Which parts remain open to adaptation?
- How do we support the community to respond to change, rather than only endure it?

ATTACHMENT TO TOOL 13

TEMPLATE STRUCTURE – VISUAL DIAGRAM

At the centre:
The Idea (the solution the team is developing)

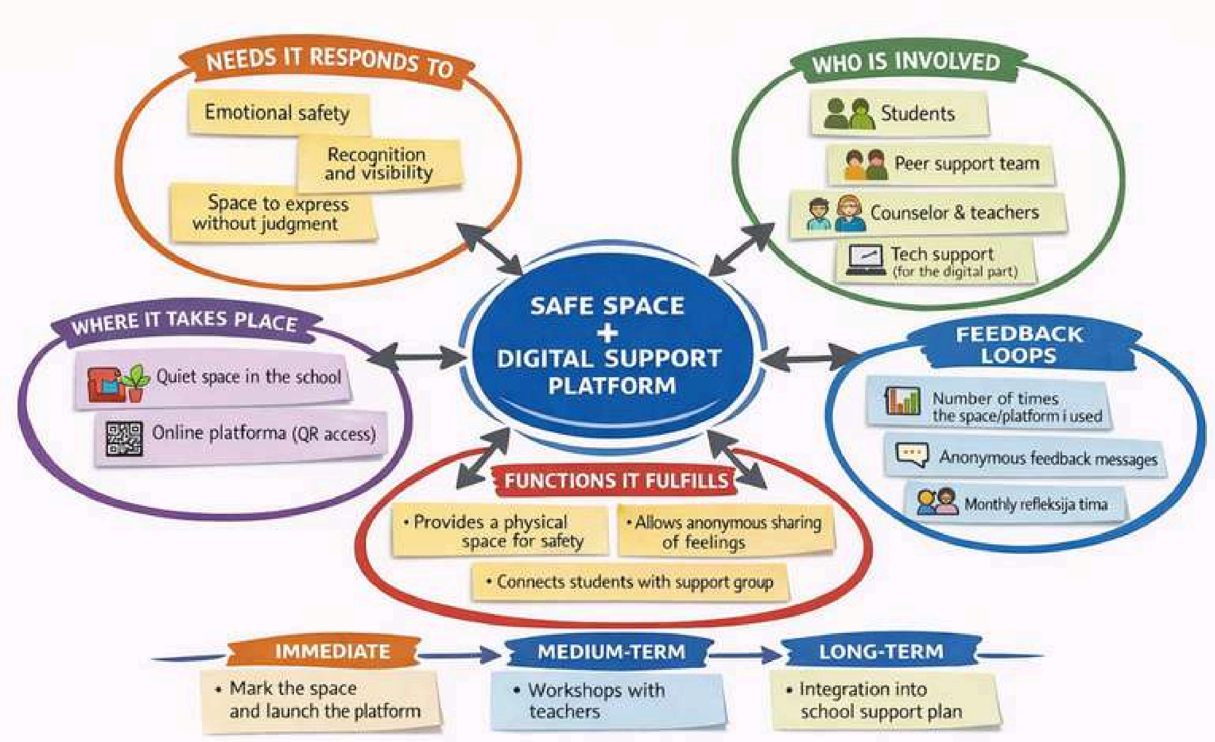
Around the centre – five areas for development:

- Needs it responds to
- Who is involved (actors and roles)
- Functions it performs
- Where it takes place (space / context)
- Feedback (how we learn and adapt)

Below the diagram – timeline:

- Immediate
- Mid-term
- Long-term

The template is filled out on A3 paper or a flipchart.
Each area can be completed using post-it notes, symbols, drawings, or short sentences. The goal is not to create a "beautiful diagram," but to clearly understand how the idea functions as an interconnected whole.



ATTACHMENT TO TOOL 14

FORMS OF PROTOTYPING IN ZONE 1

A prototype is not a final solution. It is the first, simple form of an idea that allows us to learn.
In Zone 1 (the closest environment), prototypes are small, quick, and flexible. Their purpose is not perfection, but learning through experience.
Below are the most common forms a team can use.

1. Small-scale experience: Simulation of a situation or activity.

Examples:
- a trial workshop with 3 participants
- testing a new way of facilitating a meeting
- organising a mini-event

Used when the idea involves interaction between people.

2. Conversation as a test: Testing the idea through dialogue.

Examples:
- a guided conversation with a community member
- presenting the idea to potential participants
- a short interview with the target group

Used when we want to explore understanding, interest, or reactions.

3. Temporary spatial change: A temporary intervention in the physical environment.

Examples:
- rearranging part of a classroom
- placing a board, poster, or signs
- symbolically marking a future intervention

Used when the idea relates to space or environment.

4. Visible sketch of the idea: A visual representation of the solution.

Examples:
- drawing, map, or sketch
- storyboard (a story in images)
- poster or infographic

Used when the idea needs to become clear and tangible.

5. Message test: Testing how the idea is communicated.

Examples:

- a social media post
- a flyer
- a short presentation

Used when the key question is how the idea is framed and presented.

6. Minimal version of the solution: The simplest functional form of the idea.

Examples:

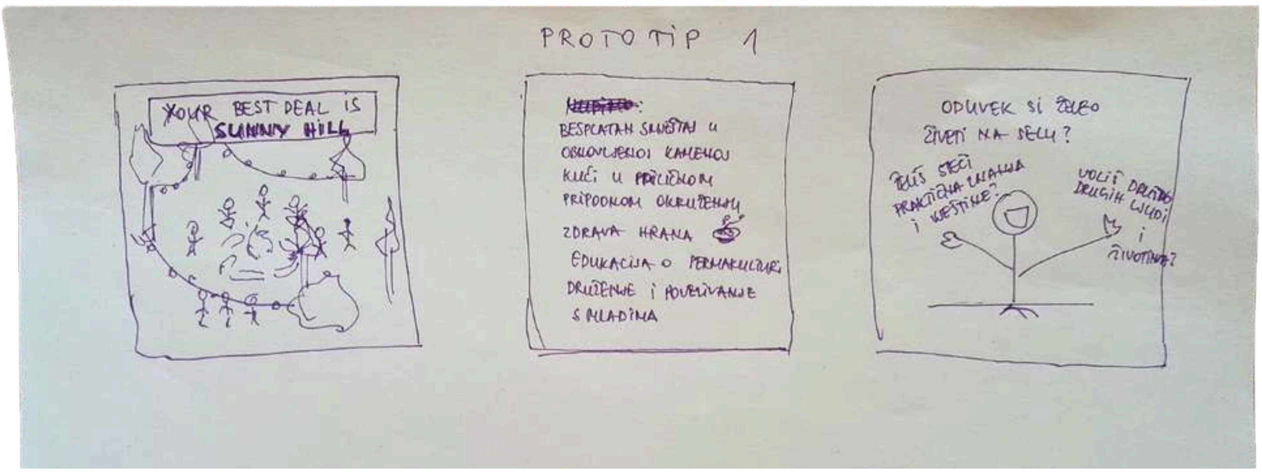
- one activity instead of a full programme
- one workshop instead of a series
- a trial version of a tool with limited content

Used when we want to test functionality before wider implementation.

Key principles of working in Zone 1

- Start with a small step.
- Test with people you already know.
- Observe reactions, don't assume.
- Record feedback.
- Be ready to adapt and change.

A prototype is meant for learning. If it does not generate new insight, it has not fulfilled its purpose.



ATTACHMENT TO TOOL 16

QUESTIONS FOR TESTING A PROTOTYPE

These questions help the team gather useful feedback from people who are seeing or trying the prototype for the first time. The goal is not to confirm that the idea is "good," but to understand how others experience it, what is clear to them, what resonates, and what could be improved.

Note for the team:
You do not need to ask all the questions. Choose 3–4 that are most relevant for your prototype and testing context.

UNDERSTANDING AND CLARITY
- What was the clearest part of this idea for you?
- Do you understand what we are trying to achieve?
- Was anything unclear or confusing?

EMOTIONAL RESPONSE
- How did you feel while seeing, reading, or trying this?
- Did anything particularly move, surprise, or interest you?

PERSONAL CONNECTION
- Do you see yourself in this idea — as someone it is meant for or who could participate?
- Do you know someone who might find this useful or meaningful?
- How could you contribute to making this idea happen?

FEEDBACK AND IMPROVEMENT
- Would you change or add anything?
- What does this idea need to become clearer or stronger?
- Was anything unnecessary or confusing?

IMAGINING THE FUTURE
- How do you imagine this idea in six months or a year?
- Do you think it could last? What would help it grow?

TEAM NOTES AFTER TESTING
After the conversations, the team can take a few minutes to record key insights.

Reflect together:
- What surprised us the most in the responses?
- What feedback appeared repeatedly?
- What seems to work well?
- What would we like to change or simplify?

AFTER THE PROCESS: WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

The process described in this handbook does not end with the last tool. In fact, this is often where new steps in the community begin.

As groups move through the phases of observing, understanding, designing, testing, and sharing, they gain more than a single solution to a specific challenge. **Participants develop the experience and confidence to understand the systems around them, collaborate with others, and initiate change.**

Some solutions that emerge from the process remain small and local, yet they can have a meaningful impact on relationships within the community. Others may continue to grow — through new initiatives, partnerships, projects, or the involvement of more people.

One of the key values of this approach is that the process does not depend on a single idea or activity. Instead, it builds the capacity of the group to continue observing, learning, and acting.

In this way, every cycle of work becomes the foundation for the next one. The group can return to the beginning of the process with a new question, a new challenge, or a deeper understanding of the same issue.

With each new learning cycle, the community gains more experience, trust, and ability to create sustainable and regenerative change together.
For this reason, this handbook is not only a guide for one project or one workshop. It is an invitation to a continuous process of learning and action, one that can be repeated again and again in different communities and contexts.

Think systemically. Act regeneratively. Start locally.

Learn More
The methodology, the educational game CONNECTED, and additional materials are available at:
www.designlocally.org

This handbook was developed within the project Design Locally, Apply it Globally (DLAG), which supports the development of tools for youth work in the field of social permaculture, collaboration, and regenerative action in communities, with the support of Erasmus+.

DESIGN LOCALLY APPLY GLOBALLY
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FURTHER READING

METHODOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter offers a brief insight into the approaches and experiences that inspired the development of the methodology presented in this handbook. Its purpose is not to provide a comprehensive theoretical overview, but to offer readers who wish to deepen their understanding additional context and starting points for further exploration.

The methodology presented in this handbook was developed through a combination of **practical experience in working with young people, facilitation of group processes, and inspiration from various educational and design approaches that encourage learning through action.**

SOCIAL PERMACULTURE AS A SYSTEM FRAMEWORK

One important source of inspiration for this approach is **social permaculture**, which helps us see challenges in communities as part of a broader system of relationships, resources, and processes.

Permaculture is a system design approach that originally emerged in the field of sustainable agriculture, but over time has expanded to include social systems, organisations, and communities.

At the core of permaculture thinking are **three ethics:**
- People Care
- Earth Care
- Fair Share (of resources)

These ethics encourage community initiatives to consider not only the immediate solution to a problem, but also the relationships, resources, and long-term consequences of action.

In addition to its ethical framework, permaculture also uses **design principles** that help us understand how systems function. These principles encourage us to:

- observe before acting
- connect people and resources
- apply small and slow solutions
- learn from feedback
- value diversity of perspectives

In this handbook, permaculture principles are used as a **practical framework for reflection,** rather than as a theory that must be fully mastered before beginning the work.

FURTHER READING

REGENERATIVE APPROACH

In this handbook we also use the concept of a regenerative approach. While sustainability focuses on maintaining the current state, **a regenerative approach seeks to gradually strengthen and improve systems.**

In the context of working with young people and communities, this means that initiatives aim to:

- strengthen relationships and trust among people
- support more equitable access to resources
- contribute to the care of spaces and the environment
- leave the community in a better condition than before the intervention.

In this way, community **challenges are seen** not only as problems, but as starting points for **understanding, collaboration, and change.**

DESIGN THINKING AS A LEARNING PROCESS

Alongside the systemic framework offered by permaculture, the structure of the process in this handbook is also inspired by the **Design Thinking approach.**

This approach originated in the field of design and innovation, but today it is widely used in **education, social initiatives, and organisational development.** Similar process logic is used in programmes such as **Design for Change** and **UNICEF UPSHIFT**, which encourage young people to explore challenges and develop their own initiatives.

Design Thinking helps groups address complex challenges through a process that includes:

- understanding the experiences of the people affected by the problem
- formulating a clearer challenge
- generating diverse ideas
- developing simple prototypes
- testing and learning from feedback.

A key feature of this approach is **iteration** — ideas evolve gradually through cycles of trying, learning, and adapting, rather than searching immediately for a "perfect solution."

COMBINIMNG APPROACHES

Combining the **Design Thinking process** with **social permaculture** enables groups to develop solutions that are simultaneously:

- creative and practical
- rooted in real contexts
- socially responsible
- sustainable in the long term.

This approach does not see challenges only as problems to be solved, but also as **opportunities for learning, connection, and the gradual strengthening of community.**

PROJECT

Design Locally, Apply it Globally (DLAG)

Project number:

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WWW.DESIGNLOCALLY.ORG

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