

Report: Teaching Permaculture for Refugees Training Course, Bulgaria

Reflections on the Teacher Training Course in Bulgaria

Teaching Permaculture for Refugees Teacher Training in Gorno Draglishte Village, Bulgaria

dates: 18-25 of November 2019

venue: slow-food movement guest house at the foot of Rila Mountain.

The **Teaching Permaculture for Refugees** course was designed by the Green School Village to complement the Permaculture Design Course (PDC) and invited those willing participants that work with refugees and young people to transfer the knowledge they have as designers. The project was planned around the course “Training Permaculture Teachers” (TPT), developed by Rosemary Morrow with an emphasis on refugees. It was an occasion to connect with Permaculture for Refugees (P4R), a collective of Permaculture designers working with refugees. P4R teamed up with ECONtACT, who acted as the sending organization for participants from Italy. This Erasmus course makes the start of a collaboration between P4R and ECONtACT.

It is clear that a number of permaculture teachers and practitioners are interested in offering courses focused on the needs of asylum seekers and disadvantaged people and are looking for ways to make the content of these courses more accessible, relevant and responsive. The TPT course developed by Rosemary Morrow offers a rich overview of methods and techniques in general and in particular for organizing and teaching the PDC (Permaculture Design Course). The overall context, location, selection of participants and choice of course content proved to be valuable for the participants.

funding project was co-funded by the Erasmus+ program of the European Union and gathered 28 people from Bulgaria, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Spain, and Norway. Each country invited to send up to 4 PDC holders to this training course, intended for Permaculture teachers and refugees.



Ruth's class with villagers in Cox's Bazaar

Reflections and suggestions from the Italian team:

Marguerite Kahrl, Enrico Marulli, Andrea Minchio, Marco Pirani and Francesco Quondam

Marguerite Kahrl is an artist, permaculture designer and educator. She is a cofounder of Permaculture for Refugees (P4R), an international collective of experienced Permaculture consultants with experience working with refugees, camp managers and people displaced by natural and human disasters in widely diverse physical, climatic and cultural situations. Marguerite is experienced in strengthening social and human bonds through participatory workshops and activities. Using models, tools and relational objects she stimulates creative responses to cultural change.

Building a learning community by networking and learning together with other organizations working with refugees, allows us to better respond to the particular challenges we face in Europe. Further developing and strengthening our connections with these organizations not only helps to build capacities for teachers but also provides a shared resource of teaching tools, methods, and factors impacting learners and experiences.

Enrico Marulli is an international development worker with 10 years of experience in various continents and with passion for ecological design. He has worked in various countries and in contact with refugees. He is passionate about permaculture design and studies, teaches and designs since 2013.

I expected to meet other permaculture teachers, expand my network, know more about Bulgaria and to gain insight on teaching permaculture to or with refugees. My expectations were met. It is important to include refugees in permaculture training and to use permaculture to design solutions for resettlements and of integration in receiving countries

Andrea Minchio has always been passionate about nature and the environment. He graduated in Environmental Sciences in 2002 at the University of Bologna where he continued to work as an environmental researcher, gaining great experiences in the field of geographic information systems (G.I.S.), mapping, topography, hydrology and in team working and teaching. He collaborated with Organizations, Institutions, NGO and Private Societies in environmental projects both nationally and internationally. His innate curiosity introduced him to more natural way of gardening, the regenerative agriculture and permaculture. Andrea works as a Permaculture designer and lives in Ravenna with his wife Paola and two sons: Pietro and Luca. They have recently bought a small house with four hectares of land on the Romagna hills to create a peaceful place for living.

I suggest having an experienced teacher or tutor in teaching permaculture to migrants or refugees and to show some examples of PDC structure and/or syllabus designed in real situation. I expected to receive indications on how to transfer permaculture topics to migrants and to improve my teaching skills. I received a lot of useful information on teaching in general and from the collaboration and the exchange with other students some important approach solutions about teaching permaculture to migrants.

Marco Pirani met Bill Mollison in 2012, and since then he fell in love with permaculture and nature in all aspects. He has spent many years traveling, visiting ecovillages and projects to learn and find another way to live. He has participated in many Italian permaculture meetings and in some projects. Marco wants to get his permaculture diploma and start teaching. Now he is taking care of a farm near Livorno, developing a project and creating contacts with a larger network.

I really loved having the possibility to participate at this course. Meet different people from all Europe, build up the crew, and learn teaching methods and style. It was very useful. I appreciated learning about the teaching methods and different way of learning. It was also nice to make contact

with different permaculture designers and teachers. The course met my expectations, but I thought the trainers would have had more experience working with refugees.

Francesco Quondam natural farmer for almost 20 years...

My main motivation for taking the course was to improve my teaching skills, and to find a more effective way of working with refugees. The most important improvement to the course would be to involve trained refugees in the project, as both teachers and collaborators. The training goals have been met. Good organization, logistics, didactic and participation. A success to be repeated with more involvement of refugees.

Summary TPT course was an important experience providing useful information on teaching in general and from the collaboration and exchange with other students around teaching permaculture to migrants. The course was also useful for networking and developing future projects. It would be better to provide more practical examples and projects that are related to the teaching of permaculture principles to migrants and refugees. Unfortunately, due to the requirements of the course and situation of refugees, few participated in the course.

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Jed leading a practical exercise



Participatory and practical exercises on course held for Syrian refugee women in Turkey