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# The Future of the Landscape Education for Democracy Programme

## Il futuro del Programma Landscape Education for Democracy

**Keywords:** YOUTH ENGAGEMENT, GAME-BASED PARTICIPATION, BUILT ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION, COMMUNITY-BASED DESIGN, CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE

**Parole chiave:** IMPEGNO GIOVANILE, PARTECIPAZIONE BASATA SUI GIOCHI, FORMAZIONE SULL'AMBIENTE COSTRUITO, PROGETTAZIONE BASATA SULLA COMUNITÀ, DIALOGO COSTRUTTIVO

This chapter reflects how the LED project has achieved systemic change, institutional learning and sustainability. The introduction of the LED course into the educational systems of five universities in four European countries has been challenging because it required capacity building at various levels: building a joint body of knowledge; testing, evaluating and revising teaching and learning methods; learning ICT skills; adapting to virtual team work; becoming a reflective educator - to name only the most relevant ones. In parallel, this new capacity had to be validated, ideally by full curricular integration of the new course, which required systemic change. The LED team therefore had to be in constant dialogue with its institutional environments and work hard to disseminate its outcomes from the beginning of the project. This process was very similar to the aims of the LED course itself: it enabled a community to work together, to create something which they cannot create alone and to consider this outcome as an added value that needs to be maintained. The sustainability concept of the LED programme therefore builds on three mutually reinforcing pillars: the LED course, the LED resources and the LED certificate. Each is explained in more detail in this chapter. We conclude with an emerging participatory and transdisciplinary methodology for landscape democracy, the landscape biography.

Questo capitolo riflette il modo in cui il progetto LED ha raggiunto un cambiamento sistemico, l'apprendimento istituzionale e la sostenibilità. L'introduzione del corso LED nei sistemi educativi di cinque università di quattro paesi europei è stata impegnativa perché richiedeva lo sviluppo di capacità a vari livelli: la costruzione di un corpo comune di conoscenze; sperimentare, valutare e rivedere i metodi di insegnamento e di apprendimento; apprendimento delle competenze in materia di TIC; adattamento al lavoro di squadra virtuale; diventare un educatore riflessivo - per citare solo i più importanti. Parallelamente, questa nuova capacità ha dovuto essere convalidata, idealmente mediante una piena integrazione curricolare del nuovo corso, che richiedeva un cambiamento sistemico. Il team LED ha dovuto quindi dialogare in modo costante con gli ambienti istituzionali e lavorare sodo per diffondere i suoi risultati fin dall'inizio del progetto. Questo processo è molto simile agli obiettivi del corso LED: essa ha permesso a una comunità di lavorare insieme, di creare qualcosa che non può creare da sola e di considerare questo risultato come un valore aggiunto che va mantenuto. Il concetto di sostenibilità del programma LED si basa pertanto su tre pilastri che si rafforzano reciprocamente: il corso LED, le risorse LED e il certificato LED. Ognuno di essi è illustrato più dettagliatamente in questo capitolo. Concludiamo con una metodologia partecipativa e transdisciplinare emergente per la democrazia del paesaggio, la biografia del paesaggio.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

During the implementation of the LED project, it has become obvious that democratic planning and design is becoming a crucial competence for sustainable development. Next to the European Landscape Convention (Council of Europe, 2000), which has been inspiring people-centered landscape development since the year 2000, another document has appeared following the UN Habitat III conference in Quito in October 2016: the New Urban Agenda (United Nations, 2016).

The New Urban Agenda calls for participatory urban policies that mainstream sustainable urban and territorial development as part of integrated development strategies and plans. For the next 20 years, this document will guide urban development policies and practices worldwide. The New Urban Agenda is especially designed for supporting the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal number 11: making cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Goal 11 in return has prompted a strong global advocacy for participatory planning and design.

Therefore, the LED project has appeared in the right moment to discuss how academia needs to react to this new agenda. Most recently, the European Union has adopted new long term strategies for bridging a gap that has historically existed between academia and civil society (citation?). Now more than ever, it is crucial that the institutions involved are able to sustain the course and to upscale the model to a wider audience in order to increase the impact of the LED approach. The LED has already started to reach out to a worldwide audience during the implementation of the project and will continue to do so even beyond the project lifetime. The LED programme builds on three mutually reinforcing pillars: the LED course, the LED resources and the LED certificate. In the following, we will explain each pillar in more detail.

We want to conclude with an outlook on landscape biography as an emerging participatory and transdisciplinary methodology for landscape democracy.

### PILLAR 1: THE LED ONLINE COURSE AND INTENSIVE STUDY PROGRAMME

The funding of the LED project by the ERASMUS+ Programme of the European Union as a Strategic Partnership in Higher Education called for universities to be the key actors--faculty and students as key target audience--in filling a gap in the way landscape planning and design policies are envisioned and implemented.. At the same time, the Renewed EU Agenda for Higher Education states that: 'Countering the growing polarisation of our societies and distrust of democratic institutions calls on everyone - including higher education staff and students - to engage more actively with the communities around' (European Commission, 2017). In order to achieve this goal, the LED programme has been embedded by various project partners into their compulsory and/or elective curriculum. After the end of August 2018, the LED online course will continue to be offered by the partnership from spring 2019 onwards. Both the University of Bologna, Italy, and Szent Istvan University Budapest, Hungary, offer the LED programme as an elective course to their architecture and landscape architecture students.

Nürtingen-Geislingen University has even managed to make the course a compulsory element of the module 'Planning and Design Methods 1' which is part of the international master programme in landscape architecture (IMLA). On that basis, the university partners have created a stable foundation within their regular teaching programmes. The delivery of the course in an online setting makes it possible to extend the target audience to learners outside the university partnership. This happens primarily through the involvement of the LE:NOTRE Institute (LNI). The LE:NOTRE Institute aims to focus not just on further developing an international and interdisciplinary approach, but to act as a common platform for those involved in teaching, research and practice in the landscape field, whether they work in the

public, private or not for profit sectors (LE:NOTRE Institute, 2018).

The LNI therefore acts as a communication and dissemination platform for the LED programme and opens it up to a cross-sectoral international audience.

The LED project has also developed a pedagogical model for the implementation of participatory intensive study programmes with eight working days that are implemented in close collaboration with a local community. During the project lifetime the staff members have used the intensive programmes as opportunities to teste, train, evaluate and document various design pedagogical methods such as visioning chairs, nominal group technique for collective goal setting, photovoice, go-along walks and many others. Staff members are now knowledgeable of these methods , and these methods have already been able to transform their studio-based teaching and learning. LED methods are constantly being implemented in other, comparable study activities of this kind. One example are the intensive programmes implemented in another ERASMUS+ strategic partnership in which NGU is a partner: COLAND - Inclusive Coastal Landscapes (COLAND, 2018). It has certainly become difficult to conduct LED Intensive Programmes without the funding for learning activities provided by the ERASMUS+ Strategic Partnership. However, staff members are using bilateral ERASMUS staff mobility to attend LED-related teaching events at partner universities and continue the activities developed by the partnership at a smaller scale.

#### PILLAR 2: LED RESOURCES

Various LED resources have been built up during the lifetime of the project, which will serve as resources and assetts for future activities by the LED team and beyond. The resources are open to university teachers, students,

NGO members citizens interested in promoting landscape democracy. We distinguish three types of LED resources: Open Educational Resources such as lecture recordings, readings, case studies and documentation of the Intensive Study Programmes. These materials have been compiled, revised and extended during the three years of the LED project. All resources are available with open access via the LED wiki (LED Project, 2018). The consortium maintains a page with literature references which is constantly being updated for every new online course. The literature references are partly not open access because of copyright restrictions from third parties. But they can easily be accessed through any university library. Next to the learning resources generated by staff members and experts there is also a lot of user generated content available on the seminar wiki. Due to the international provenience of the seminar audience these contents have become a rich resource for studying different cultural viewpoints on landscape challenges, landscape symbols and approaches towards democratic transformation.

All these resources have become an important basis for offering the course in the future without additional EU funding. The LED 'network of thinkers' is formed by the core project team, the invited lecturers and the group of experts that got involved in reviewing the project activities and outcomes. This network is constantly expanding as the LED team continues disseminating its findings at major conferences and meetings such as the EDRA annual conference, the LE:NOTRE Landscape Forum, and the upcoming Council of Europe's workshop on the implementation of the European Landscape Convention. Through the LED network of thinkers there is continuous discourse on landscape democracy which helps keeping the course contents up to date and close to topical themes in research and practice.

The third LED resource is the community of learners that has participated in LED

online courses and intensive study programmes. The courses have included around 200 learners within the lifetime of the project. Due to the design of the course activities that involved intensive international and cross-institutional teamwork the participants got to know each other very well, they build up trust and social capital. This community of LED alumni currently gets together on the project's facebook page. In addition, the consortium has started to collaborate more closely with the educational initiatives of IFLA, the International Federation for Landscape Architecture. IFLA has interest in capacity building for sustainable landscape development at a global scale. By this collaboration it has become possible to involve many more learners from the Middle East, Africa and Latin America regions of IFLA.

#### PILLAR 3: THE LED CERTIFICATE

The LED project has actively worked on a methodology for recognising LED competences for participants from outside the university sector. This has been documented in detail as one of the project results (add ref). This document includes amongst others a competence matrix for evaluating landscape democracy activities by planners, designers and citizens as a basis for maintaining LED recognition. Again, the LE:NOTRE Institute plays an important role here as an open platform for informal and non-university learners. The annual Landscape Forum of the LE:NOTRE Institute has been developed as a new kind of academic meeting, aimed at bringing together landscape specialists from a wide range of backgrounds and providing a 'hands-on' opportunity for them to collaborate in the form of a direct encounter with a specific landscape. The LED team has developed a special landscape democracy track for the landscape forum which is now part of the standard forum format.

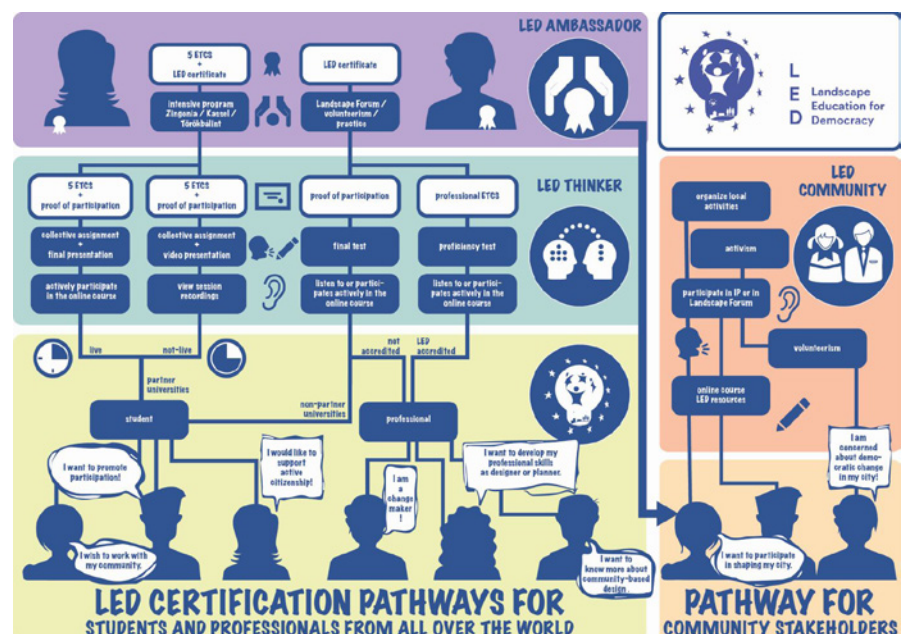
This way, also practitioners, staff members and civil society members can

obtain hands-on training and recognition for democratic planning and design practice. All of this comes together in the following graphical overview of the LED community:

In order to allow for flexible recognition the LE:NOTRE Institute has implemented a so-called badge system through its community learning platform ILIAS. "Open Badges are visual tokens of achievement, affiliation, authorization, or other trust relationship shareable across the web. They can be used to recognize any kind of achievement in any setting, across the different stages of an individual's life. Open badges are new way to identify talent based on competency and attitude, helping employers and educators better match individuals with non-traditional experiences to relevant opportunities."(openbadges.org, 2018).

Participants of LED learning activities are able to obtain badges from the LE:NOTRE learning platform. The badges represent different areas of LED core competences and require either successful completion of course assignments or recognition of achievements in professional or academic practice. In any case, there are flexible and varied pathways in order to involve many different target audiences. This also includes certificates for citizens that have supported LED workshops and intensive study programmes by providing information in the form of interviews, lectures or joint walks.

Figure 6.1: Graphical overview of the cooperation structure for establishing the LED qualification pathway. Concept and graphic by Anna Szilagyí-Nagy



## 2. LANDSCAPE BIOGRAPHY – AN EMERGING APPROACH FOR DEMOCRATIC PLANNING AND DESIGN

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Recognizing that we should treat landscapes as individuals having their specific character and history of change, the idea of Landscape Biography (LB) developed, during the 1990s, into the LB-Approach that it is today (Kolen et al. 2015). Considering people and place together, the LBA integrates information on physical objects and on perception, on processes and aspects of landscape transformation, on issues of power and inequality, and how social justice play out in the landscape.

For purposes of landscape planning and design, LBA fuses landscape architecture methods with methods from archaeology, historical geography, landscape ecology, sociology, anthropology, and other fields. LBA then synthesises a wide spectrum of different kinds of knowledge:

Knowledge about regional and local heritage (Taylor 2017), and about landscape character (Fairclough et al. 2018);

Knowledge about historical and current narratives of landscape and place (Schama 1995);

Knowledge about external and internal forces that influence landscape change, including policy (Eiter & Potthoff, 2007), and knowledge about interest groups including key players, people and institutions (Taylor 2017:219,220);

Knowledge about local and regional experience with landscape and landscape transformation, and about competence in responding to change (resilience).

When reconstructing history in a chronological and linear way, landscape biographers use a periodical frame to systematically describe and analyse change processes. They conceptualise historic periods as time layers, synthesize landscape information into series of such layers, each, for example, as written descriptions and annotated maps and images, and present all layers synoptically. They use overlay techniques to carry out multi-temporal analysis.

Multi-temporal correlations must go beyond mere historical analysis in cases where biographers aim to analyse human-land, people-place and power relationships, and when the aim is to uncover changes in landscape perception and values. Complex LBA also offer glimpses into visions that people have about the future.

Expanded further and incorporating participatory methods, the LBA provides the basis for inter- and trans-disciplinary reflections on landscape change, and it synthesizes information needed for learning for the future from the past (Samuels 1979; Pollard & Reynolds 2002). According to the European Landscape Convention, ELC, governments, administrations and members of the public need to foster public participation and to engage and take part in the following specific measures (Dower 2008):

- Identifying landscape character,
- Analysing landscapes,
- Taking note of landscape changes (landscape history),
- Setting landscape quality goals,
- Assessing landscape quality, and taking action for
- Protecting, planning, and developing and managing landscapes (including enhancing, restoring and creating landscapes).

Telling the history of landscape has, since 1990s, become 'democratic' with the extent to which popular narratives, place-bound social memories and academic interpretations of past landscapes combined and include public debates about the values of space and place (Kolen et al. 2017). By including the views of people, the LBA makes landscape planning and designing richer, and it is useful in supporting democratic forms of managing, planning and designing landscapes.

## 3. CONCLUSIONS AND OUTLOOK

The LED project has been successful in bringing a landscape democracy dimension into various European higher education classrooms. We designed our classroom in an open and inclusive way by digital means which allowed us to expand our audience across the globe. The team involved went through an intensive and formative learning process which has been documented in this publication in order to inspire others. What has been presented here is the reflection of one possible way of practicing landscape education for democracy. As convinced democrats we are of course open for discussing alternative approaches, additional methods and new ideas for enriching learning activities.

We therefore want to keep our resources, our network of thinkers and our community alive in order to practice, test and learn more so that our teaching and learning culture can further evolve. The focus of the coming years will be to practice and to grow the LED recognition and certification pathways by involving as many different target audiences as possible. Landscape democracy is about collaboratively understanding the past for envisioning a common future. The landscape biography methodology provides us with an holistic framework for shaping local landscape democracy processes. The LED programme introduces this approach together with many other useful techniques and methods for community-based planning. All of these are seeds of a democracy which is not understood as an abstract political system done by 'them' to 'us' but as a living culture that starts in front of your doorstep.

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