

07. European Permaculture Teachers

A co-created community of practice



Permaculture teachers meet in Slovenia

Context

Context

The European Permaculture Teachers' Partnership (EPT) is a community of professional practice that was co-created by the community itself.

I played a role in identifying the need for it, facilitating its emergence and supporting its ongoing management & development, but it was absolutely a collective effort. Here I will try to describe the process, how we used permaculture design, and highlight my own contribution to the process.

Klara opens the meeting in Spain

Approach

Approach

The approach for this project was somewhat more *ad hoc* than is typical for a diploma design project: it did not follow a traditional design cycle such as SADIMET or OBREDIM.

While different stages of the project could probably be mapped onto one of these recognised design processes, they were not consciously applied from the outset. For me, such a retrospective mapping would miss the opportunity to learn from the process that did emerge.

What is more, the experience could form the basis for a useful social permaculture design process, toolkit or pattern book for future community-building projects.

EPT's Emergent Process

Investigation	Identification of a need; Further definition & clarification of needs; Identify potential resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allies/partners• Useful ideas, models, patterns & tools• Financial resources
Vision	Collectively define vision
Co-design	Define parameters & project outline; Shared goal setting: aims, objectives, outcomes etc.; Creating & agreeing work plans; Agreeing allocation of tasks; Setting budgets; Agreeing governance structures;
Action	Implementing proposed activities; Detailed/nested design process e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Detailed Budget for specific activities/events• Event logistics (scheduling, venue, food, transport...)• Event programme; facilitation processes• Monitoring, evaluation & feedback
Evaluation	Project evaluation; Dissemination; Reporting; Celebration & Gratitude.
Reflection	Reflection & learning

Apply
permaculture
ethics
principles &
tools

Investigation

Identification of need

I attended a Permaculture Educators' Course in Friland, Denmark in June 2010. During the course, discussions with other attendees revealed that many permaculture in teachers in Europe were working with very limited support networks.

They expressed a need to exchange on best practice by spending much of their free time sharing teaching methods, tools, techniques and stories of success and failure.

Pascal, Antoine & Tora play "Living Landscapes", Friland, Denmark

Investigation

Further definition & clarification of needs

During the Friland Course, we visited a local organic farm & garden. During the trip I discussed ideas about continuing the benefits of the course with another course participant, Sandra Campe from the German Permakultur Akademie.

Having recently hosted a UK teachers' meeting, I suggested a European teachers' meeting or convergence might be useful to provide a support network for the comparatively isolated European teachers. Sandra agreed that this would be useful and was keen to explore the idea further.



Visit to Den Økologiske Have i Odder

Investigation



Further definition & clarification of needs

At the end of the Friland course, the facilitator, Lars Keller, offered an open space session to explore next steps. I offered to host the discussion about a “European Permaculture Teachers’ Convergence or Gathering” to continue the learning & exchange.

Sandra offered to host the meeting at Sieben Linden ecovillage the following year; I offered to perform a survey of needs at the forthcoming European Permaculture Convergence in Nethen, Belgium in August 2010.

Lars introduces Open Space Technology at the Friland course

Investigation



Further definition & clarification of needs

In August 2010 I attended the European Permaculture Convergence in Nethen, Belgium. The programme had a significant open space element, so I offered a session asking the question “what topics should be discussed at a permaculture teachers’ convergence?”

Attendees at the 2010 EUPC, Belgium

Investigation

Further definition & clarification of needs: Output from EUPC

1. Diploma

- * Tutor exchange
- * Continue harmonization discussion from EUPC10
- * Quality Assurance

2. Promoting/communicating your course

3. Harmonisation of education admin/system across Europe

- * Invite an A.P.T. Teacher from Australia

4. Pedagogy of Permaculture – holistic teaching

5. Other kinds of teaching:

- * Not PDCs & Intro courses
- * Informal learning

6. Integrating Higher Education & Permaculture

7. Outreach:

- * Professions / Business
- * Government

8. Integrating Specialists into the PDC

9. Permaculture for children

10. Transition training apprentice model

11. Quality Assurance of PDC

12. Training vs teaching

13. A European teachers network

14. Exchange techniques

- * Practical sessions
- * Swap materials, e.g. Permaculture Teachers' Guide
- * Session ideas & demonstration of "my best session"

15. What teachers are teaching

- * curriculum/syllabus/content

16. How to get to essence of permaculture

17. Integrating with N.G.O.s and Agenda 21

Attendees at the 2010 EUPC, Belgium

Investigation

TOPIC		VOTES	TOPIC		VOTES
1	DIPLOMA		13	EUROPEAN TEACHERS' NETWORK	...
2	PROMOTING COURSES		14	EXCHANGE TECHNIQUES	...
3	HARMONISING SYSTEMS ACROSS EUROPE	•	15	CURRICULUM / CONTENT	...
4	PEDAGOGY OF PERMACULTURE	•		HOW TO GET TO ESSENCE OF P/C	...
5	'OTHER' KINDS OF TEACHING (E.G. INFORMAL)	•		INTEGRATING N.G.O's + AGENDA 21	...
6	INTEGRATING HIGHER EDUCATION	•			...
	SPECIALISTS INTO PDC	•			...
	FOR CHILDREN	•			...
		•			...

Q. ANY
DUPLICATES?
Q. ANY
ADDITIONS?

Further definition & clarification of needs

In June 2011, a small group of teachers from around Europe gathered for the first European Teachers' Convergence at Sieben Linden ecovillage, Germany.

Attendees used dot-voting to prioritise which topics to discuss at the meeting. A consensus emerged to prioritise the formation of a European Network, and use that as the forum to discuss many of the other topics identified at the EUPC.

Irma dot-votes at 2011 ETC, Sieben Linden

Investigation

Identification of potential resources

Discussion about forming the Network centred on the possibility of using funding from the European Union's Lifelong Learning Programme to finance the project. Kipper, a German permaculture activist, had been involved in a similar partnership with Global Ecovillage Network & the Transition Network and suggested this as a potential avenue for the Permaculture Teachers' Network.

We established some of the key parameters – deadlines, available budget, limits to the scope/allowable themes/duration of the funding etc.

Identification of potential allies & partners

We drew up a list of partners that we already had contacts with (see page 13).

Identify useful ideas, models, patterns, tools

At this point we hadn't decided on a governance structure, but we did identify some useful models and supporting systems (see "how?" in the photograph on page 11).

EUROPEAN TEACHER'S NETWORK

LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

- ONLY ORGANISATIONS, no individuals
- 3 partners from 3 countries – at least!
- project lasts at least 2 years
- Deadline: ^{f. Application} February 2012 – Start: June 2012 (?)
- funding: lump sum, based on number of visits
you make to partners => "mobilities"

Britain: 4 mobilities - 10.000 €
8 mobilities - 15.000 €
12 mobilities - 20.000 €
24 mobilities - 25.000 €

- ADULT Education!!
- organisations need to be able to receive funding in €

→ Who writes main application?

→ What do we want to develop?

→ how often do we want to meet?

→ What information do we need to proceed?

Output of information-gathering exercise

Vision

A Vision for the European Teachers' Network

Our vision for the project was to establish a thriving network of permaculture teachers that would accelerate succession in the European permaculture education ecosystem.

An initial injection of EU funding would enable an intense 2 year period of cross-pollination: ideas, experience, tools, teaching practice and organisational know-how could be shared between national (and sub- and supra-national) networks.

In the near- and medium-term, beneficial relationships would form to support future collaboration at various scales (e.g. between individual teachers & course conveners; between national permaculture organisations etc).

Countries with no national permaculture network would gain inspiration and knowledge to help them establish organisations.

In the longer term, building capacity in less developed national permaculture networks will give them more autonomy, and they will be better able to reduce their reliance on visiting foreign teachers.

EUROPEAN TEACHER'S NETWORK

- WHO ?
 - NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS
 - TEACHERS
 - BLANK SPOTS
- WHAT ?
 - PLATFORM ^{VEHICLE} TO CONNECT PEOPLE
 - DATABASE FOR JOINED COURSES (INTL. TEACHING TEAMS)
- WHERE ?
 - ALL OF EUROPE (LOOK AT G.E.N EUROPE)
- WHY ?
 - SUPPORT
 - EXCHANGE = KNOWLEDGE + EXPERIENCE
 - ACCESS TO INFORMATION
 - TRANSPARENCY
 - CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT
 - PDC DELIVERY
 - NATIONAL DIPLOMA SYSTEMS
 - HOST / MENTOR NATIONS
 - E.G. POLISH PEOPLE GO TO IRELAND TO LEARN ABOUT HOW TO DEVELOP AN ASSOCIATION
- HOW ?
 - ELECTRONIC
 - MAILING LISTS / GROUPS
 - FORUM
 - PERMACULTURE GLOBAL WEBSITE
 - " " MASTER PLAN
 - CONFERENCES + FESTIVALS
 - WHICH ONES?
 - WHERE ?
 - EUROPEAN TEACHERS' CONVERGENCE
 - LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS

Output of brainstorm at Sieben Linden

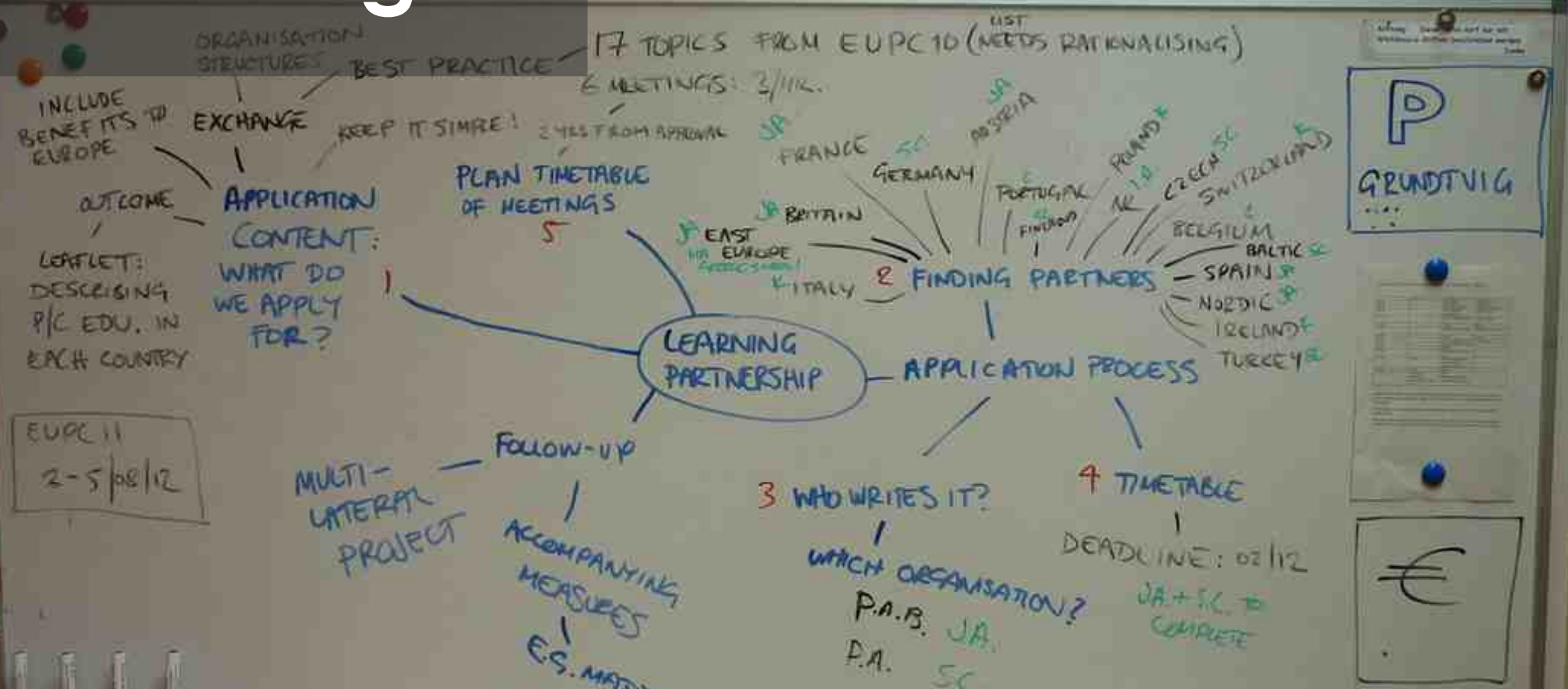
Co-design

The design stages occurred during several activities:

1. Initial brainstorming of a small, focused group at Sieben Linden ecovillage in summer 2011
2. Preparatory visit (Sandra came to Leeds) to work on the design for a draft proposal in Autumn 2011; Submitting the draft proposal for feedback from the funder
3. Inviting partners to join the project, review and input on aims & objectives of the final application; coordinating, writing and Submitting the final application
4. More detailed planning at the first meeting to establish detailed time line, organisational structure etc.
5. Iterative design: ongoing tweaks to the overall partnership; detailed designs for each meeting, subgroups working practices etc.



Co-design



This photo captures the transition from Investigation to Co-design

Investigation:
 Red pen: 1 & 2: Identification of potential financial resources & allies.

Co-design:
 Red pen 1, 4 & 5: Define parameters & project outline
 Red pen 1: Shared goal setting
 Red pen 3 & 5: Creating & agreeing work plans;
 Green pen: Agreeing allocation of tasks

Co-design

2. Preparatory visit & Initial Outline

Shared Goal Setting

We had originally intended to apply for funding under the *Grundtvig* stream of the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP). Sandra came to the UK and we prepared and submitted an outline proposal to get feedback from the UK national agency (administrators of the LLP in the UK).

I attended an advice session in Manchester in late 2011, where the feedback was that we should submit it as an application to the *Leonardo* funding stream, as it appeared to be more like a vocational project. This clarified our goals somewhat, but also represented a shift in the way we saw the project and the eventual aims and outcomes.

The B of the Bang, Manchester

Co-design

3. Invite partners' input

Shared Goal Setting

We now began an intense period of online collaboration with our potential partners to coordinate the application, which included clarifying and agreeing our collective aims and objectives (see overleaf) and setting out the overall work plan.

Agreeing Allocation of Tasks

I volunteered to write/polish the wording for the application. Sandra offered to take on the role of overall project coordinator.

Budget Setting

Partners set their own budgets at this point. Budgets were largely dictated by the funder's rules.

Ethical dilemmas...

Concerns were raised about the use of corporate-owned online collaboration tools. However, open source alternatives were either not available, robust enough or sufficiently popular to use alternatives.



Co-design

Aims & Objectives

Below are the final set of aims and objectives we set ourselves for (the funded phase of) the project, as they appear in the funding application. (see appendix A for full application)

Aims

The Learning Partnership aims to support the professional development of permaculture teachers. It relates to the Leonardo Programme in 3 ways:

1. Increasing teachers' own skills for employability;
2. Improving the quality of vocational education and training that those teachers deliver;
3. Developing the capacity of organisations to deliver courses, and thereby employ permaculture teachers.

Objectives

1. To support teachers in practising teaching methods and in enhancing their teaching quality; thus to improve the professionalism of permaculture education across Europe.
2. To exchange about different curricula and course formats.
3. To learn from other organisations' experience and to mutually support young organisations to form strong national networks and to set up or improve their educational processes, systems and structures.
4. To enable teachers to visit permaculture projects and see practical solutions in other countries and climatic conditions that they can share with their peers and students at home.
5. To promote cultural exchange, diversity and inclusion within the permaculture network and to exchange about how to widen participation in permaculture training.
6. To create a teacher's handbook with methods & curricula, a pdf-brochure about organisational structures, a booklet about best practices and a website which displays results.
7. To form a network of European teachers.

Co-design

4. Detailed Planning at 1st Meeting

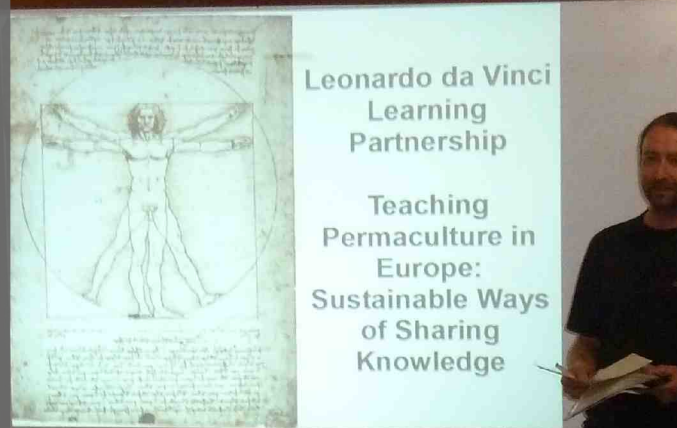
At our first meeting, we started to flesh out the detail of the project. There were some 40–50 attendees at this meeting; most had not been directly involved in writing the application.

Sandra and I opened the meeting by presenting the project rationale, aims and objectives so that the 'newcomers' could contribute meaningfully & usefully to the detailed design.

Stacking/Relative Location...

When planning the meeting we didn't know if the bid would be successful (and therefore cover people's travel costs). So we deliberately chose the dates & location of this meeting to immediately follow the 2012 EUPC in Escherode, Germany.

If the bid failed, we'd hold a teachers' meeting and people would at least get 2 events for the travel costs of one. If successful, we'd hold an EPT planning meeting and attendees would get their travel to EUPC covered by the funding.



Presenting project rationale, aims & objectives at Escherode

Co-design

Creating & Agreeing Work plans

While writing the application, Sandra put a lot of effort into defining the overall work plan. However, this was only an indicative outline at the application stage. Also, we had set meetings to be in Italy & Latvia, neither of which received the funding, so – under the rules of the EU LLP – could not now host the meetings.

This meant that the programme had to be re-shuffled and additional detail added. Sandra facilitated much of the process to add the finer detail to the work plans; which topics would get discussed at which meetings, when and where key deliverables would be produced etc.

Design dilemmas...

Some partners expressed concern that we were establishing a system that would be dependent on EU funding, and therefore would not be sustainable in the long-term. As a permaculture project I had always seen it more as a large injection of capital and energy at the beginning to establish a system that would become more sustainable over time. The reality is not yet clear; phase 2 has very little funding; some self-financing activities are occurring.



Sandra facilitates detailed work plan design, Escherode

Co-design

Applying Permaculture tools

Discussion around timetabling of meetings got bogged down in detail quite quickly as we tried to set the timetables for all 6 future meetings.

At this point I intervened and suggested the use of patterns to define the overall timetable (i.e. patterns of combinations of travel days, meeting days and visit days). The details could be decided later by the teams organising the specific meetings.

This worked well and allowed us to move forward.

Ethical dilemmas...

An ongoing discussion theme throughout the partnership was the environmental impact of all the travel. In particular, should we take a partnership-wide stance on flying? We decided that it was up to each individual to make their own choices. As one of the project initiators, I tried to model good behaviour by using overland travel wherever possible (e.g. coach to Barcelona, trains to Slovenia). However, living at the north western extreme of Europe meant that flying to the extreme south east for the Bulgaria meeting was the only practical and affordable option.



Suggesting pattern application to timetable design, Escherode

Co-design

Agreeing Governance & Decision-making structure

At the Escherode meeting, Davie Philip from Ireland proposed using the Viable Systems Model as the organising principle for the partnership. He facilitated a process whereby we mapped out the primary activities and meta-systems of the organisation, allocated tasks to them and established teams. See over.

VSM: A Permaculture Organisation Pattern?

The Viable Systems Model is based on the functioning of the human nervous system. It seeks to map all the functions that organisations need in order to be viable. Organisations can use it as a model to map their organisational structure so that it meets its objectives and is dynamic and adaptable; central monitoring & control is minimised and local autonomy maximised.

While “Learning about the VSM” was not a stated outcome of the project, several participants were interested in trying it out and exploring the value it could deliver to the permaculture network. Others became frustrated by the amount of focus on it.



Davie makes the case for VSM as EPT's organisational model

Co-design

Initial EPT Structure Design

VSM System*	Team Name	Function	Focus Meeting
1	Educational Structures	Objective 3: learn from other organisations' experience	Slovenia
1	Content & Curricula	Objective 2: exchange about different curricula and course formats	Portugal
1	Cultivating Learning	Objective 1: support teachers in practising teaching methods	UK
1	Editing & Publishing	Objective 6: create a teacher's handbook... pdf brochure... and website	Spain
1	Widening Participation	Objective 5: promote cultural exchange, diversity and inclusion	Denmark
1	Good Practice	Objective 5: enable teachers to visit permaculture projects	All
2	Process	Design meetings' programmes & lead on facilitation	All
3	Coordination	Ensure that all parts of the system have the resources they need, monitor progress against outcomes, identify synergies between teams; evaluation	All
4	Navigation	Manage communication systems	All
5	Identity & Values	Hold the values of the partnership	All

Co-design

Ethics: Redistributing Surplus

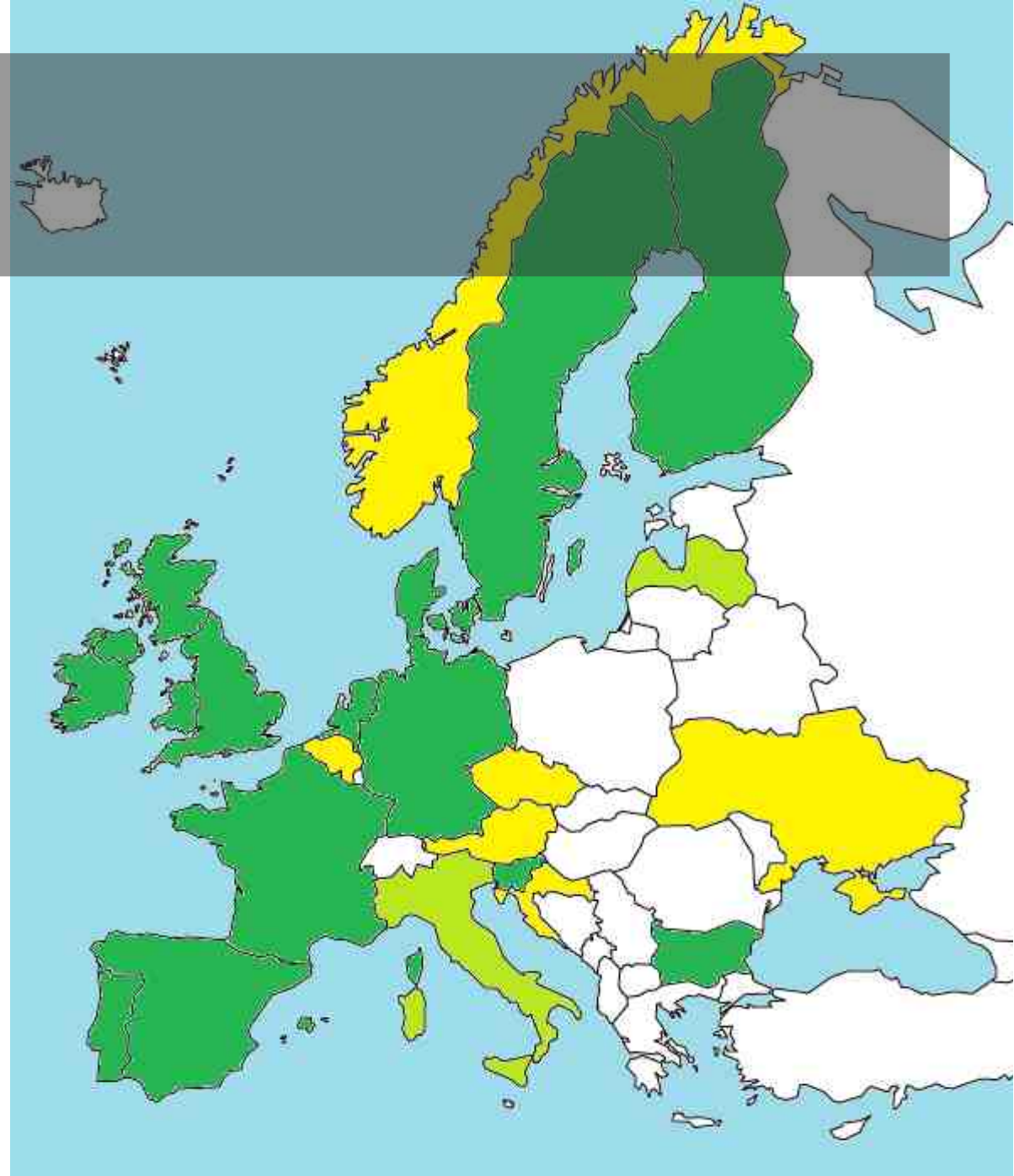
Organisations from 14 European countries submitted the joint application (dark & light green on the map, right). 12 of them received the funding. Italy & Latvia were placed on waiting lists.

Some other countries had initially been interested but were unable to input into the application in time (Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic), or were outside the EU (Norway, Ukraine).

At the Escherode meeting we decided to support attendees from unfunded countries by subsidising them. Countries hosting subsequent meetings would charge the funded partners more and offer a heavily discounted price for participants from unfunded countries.

In this way we were able to include people from 20 European countries over the life of the project.

Even so, as the map shows, participation remained heavily skewed towards richer, western European countries.



Dark green: funded partners; Light green & yellow: unfunded.

Action

Sharing Educational Structures

The Slovenia meeting's main focus was on objective 3: *"To learn from other organisations' experience and to mutually support young organisations to form strong national networks and to set up or improve their educational processes, systems and structures"*.

Meetings as Multifunctional Elements

The objectives of the project can be seen as functions and the meetings as elements.

The Slovenia meeting's main focus was objective 3, but it also directly addressed objectives 4: *visits to projects* and 5: *cultural exchange*: we had an "inter-cultural evening", sharing food, drink and songs from each others' countries.

Objectives 1: *sharing teaching practice* and 7: *establishing a teachers' network* were supported indirectly, almost as by-products of the activities. The Primary Activity & meta-system teams also met and worked on their tasks in smaller groups. This pattern – a main focus topic plus time for each Primary Activity & meta-system was repeated at subsequent meetings.



Jan explains the UK diploma system. Slovenia, Oct. 2012

Action

COUNSELLING
WITH
NODDY...

TELL NODDY ALL
ABOUT IT...
SHARE YOUR TROUBLES...

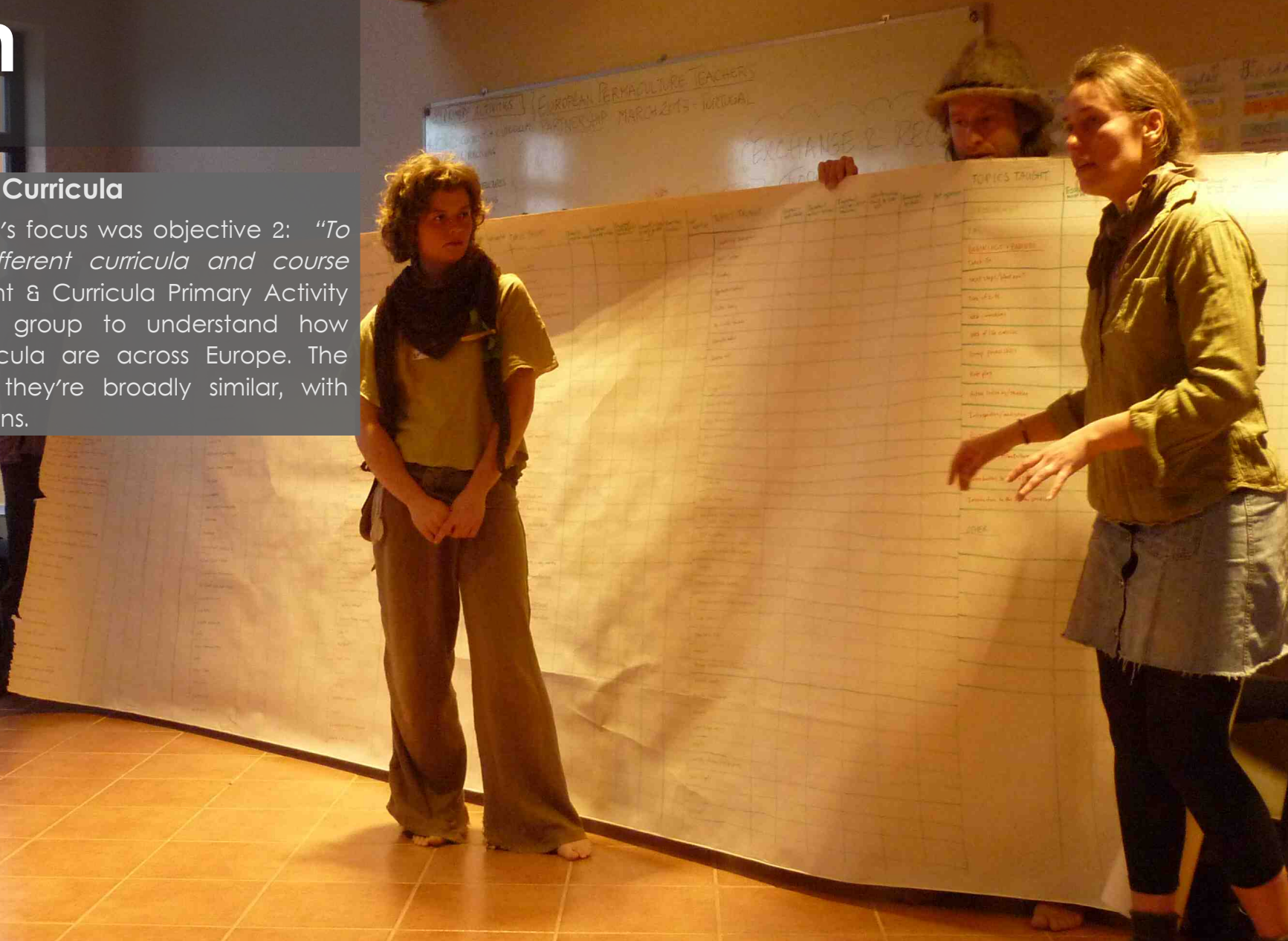


Portugal: the difficult 3rd meeting...

Action

Sharing Content & Curricula

The Portugal meeting's focus was objective 2: *"To exchange about different curricula and course formats."* The Content & Curricula Primary Activity Team surveyed the group to understand how consistent PDC curricula are across Europe. The results suggest that they're broadly similar, with small regional variations.



Karoline, Tycho, Cat & the curriculum survey. Portugal, Feb. 2013

Action

Feedback, Tweaks and Learning Opportunities

At the Portugal meeting, feedback began to emerge about various aspects of the project and our implementation of the VSM in particular. The Content & Curricula team had felt unclear about the scope of their remit and unsupported by Coordination when seeking clarity; Editing & Publishing had a confusing overlap with the Communications team (who was responsible for the website?); the Identity & Values and Coordination teams were failing to communicate: mistrust arose between them.

As the coordination team tried to digest this feedback and apply self-regulation, the consequent focus on our organisational structure alienated & frustrated those newcomers who had never heard of the VSM, and just wanted to learn some teaching methods and talk about PDC curricula. Fault lines began to emerge and it led to some core members of the project feeling unappreciated and hurt. We were learning that, while we strive to use and value diversity, it can bring its own challenges when it represents diverse wants, needs, expectations and varying levels of commitment to – and investment in – a project.

Since the Slovenia meeting, the UK Permaculture Association had implemented VSM: I now had a good understanding of it and could see points in the EPT system where it needed to change. I persuaded the rest of the coordination team that I knew how to fix it and – despite others' reservations – pressed hard for a timetable slot to present my ideas to the whole group. I proposed that we should disband the Identity & Values team and move its members into the Process team (from where they could facilitate the entire group to explore our identity & values together) and merge Communications and Editing and Publishing.

What I failed to understand was that, as one of the project initiators (and possibly due to my privilege as a white middle class, native English speaking man), I was perceived as having more power than most others in the group. My suggestions were received as dictatorial and undemocratic. Several people who identified quite strongly with their roles in certain teams were hurt. I had failed to consult, include and empower others: I had seen the problem in purely systemic terms and overlooked the humanistic aspects. It took many long conversations late into the night and numerous follow-up emails for months to work through the conflict and rebuild trust. A lesson that brought me back to earth, and one that will stay with me.

I also learned about Tuckman's group life-cycle theory from Jan Mulreany. Perhaps this was the group's *storming* phase...

Action

UK Meeting: Sharing Pedagogy & Methods

The main focus of the UK meeting was Cultivating Learning and objective 1: *"To support teachers in practising teaching methods..."* This was achieved with a lot of fun, games & laughter: a timely antidote to the conflict in Portugal. Also, progress was made towards objective 3: *"To learn from other organisations' experience"* by visiting the Permaculture Association office.

Viable Systems Model

We invited VSM expert Jon Walker to explain its theory in depth. This was to allow attendees to hear more about it from an external, independent voice; an attempt to move the dynamic on after the difficulty around the VSM in Portugal.

Where next?

The UK meeting also saw the first exploratory discussions about what we might do after the EPT.

Methods from the Theatre of the Oppressed, Leeds May 2013

Action

Meeting designs

Each meeting was a design in its own right. Here is a snapshot of some ethics, principles & tools I used to design the UK meeting.

Designing with Observed Patterns

By this point in the project a pronounced pulse pattern was clearly apparent. Each meeting was an intense burst of energy & progress; the periods in between saw a lack of communication and little progress on actions. As a member of the Cultivating Learning team (who were holding the main topic for the UK meeting), I was concerned that little progress would be made on the meeting's programme until everyone's arrival. So I invited the CL team to meet a day early and plan the programme for the week.

Stacking

For the UK meeting I also added an optional extra: a creative teaching methods masterclass with Looby Macnamara on the weekend before the meeting. This provided new stimulus, tools, techniques and confidence for the members of the Cultivating Learning team who would be leading numerous sessions during the week.

The Problem is The Solution & Maximising Edge

Leeds has very little cheap accommodation; there are no hostels or cheap hotels that can accommodate 50 permaculture teachers on a tight budget. So, I decided to host the attendees with local families instead. This had the benefit of expanding the permaculture edge: teachers could share some permaculture ideas with their hosts; attendees would get to see inside typical UK homes, so inter-cultural exchange would be maximised. Several teachers stayed at Lilac; this also helped my long-term aim of promoting permaculture within the Lilac community (see design 3).



Julie's delicious vegan food: earth & people care in action

Action

Spain Meeting:

The Spain meeting focused on collecting materials for the teachers' handbook. This was done largely by teachers delivering micro-teaches that were recorded and put online. See Appendix A.

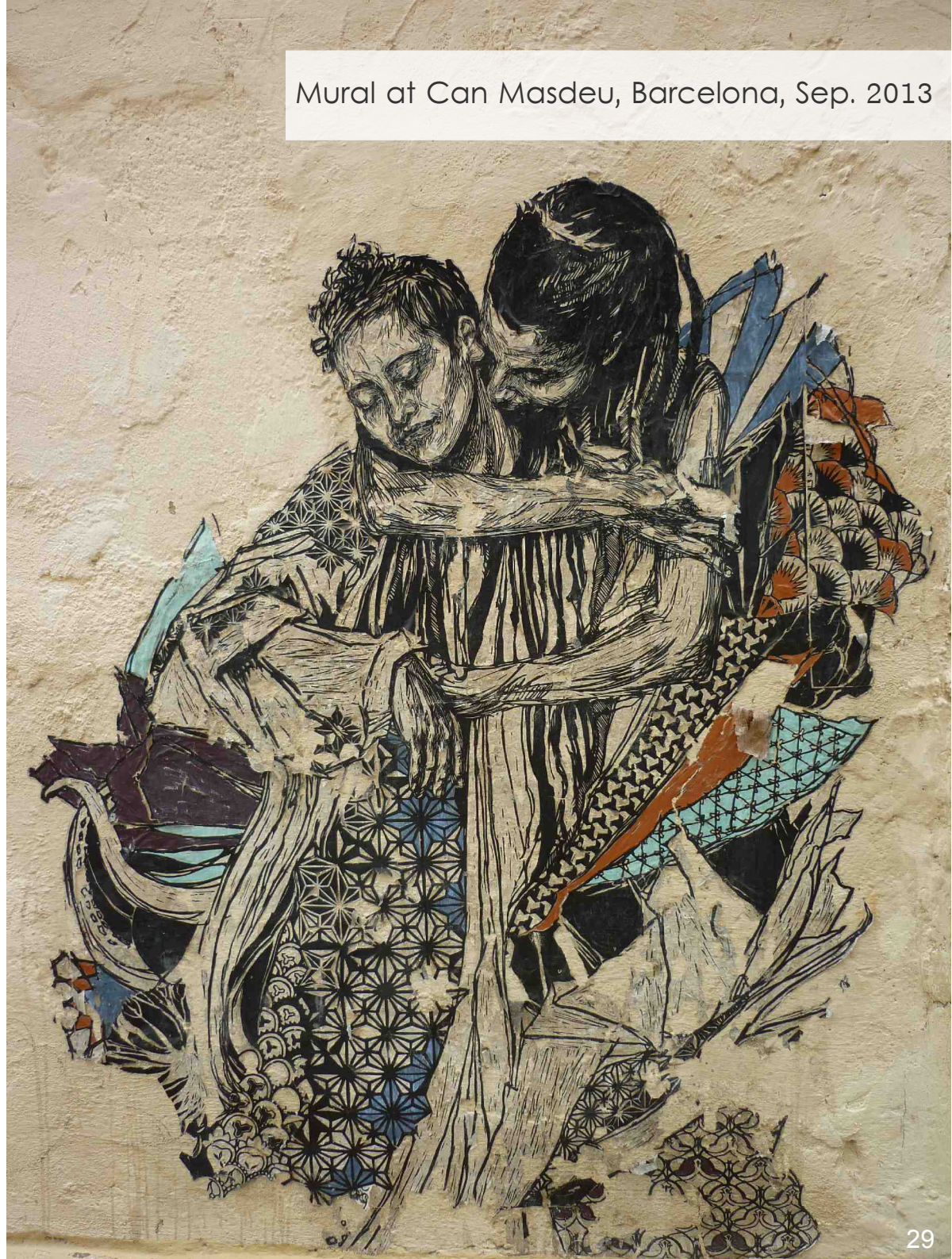
The Spain meeting also had a teacher training course added to the start. This time delivered by Rosemary Morrow.

Also, at the Spanish meeting we further explored the question of what to do after the EPT. Perhaps the most active group coalesced around the Good Practice team, who were exploring the question of replicating/scaling up the UK LAND Network across the rest of Europe.

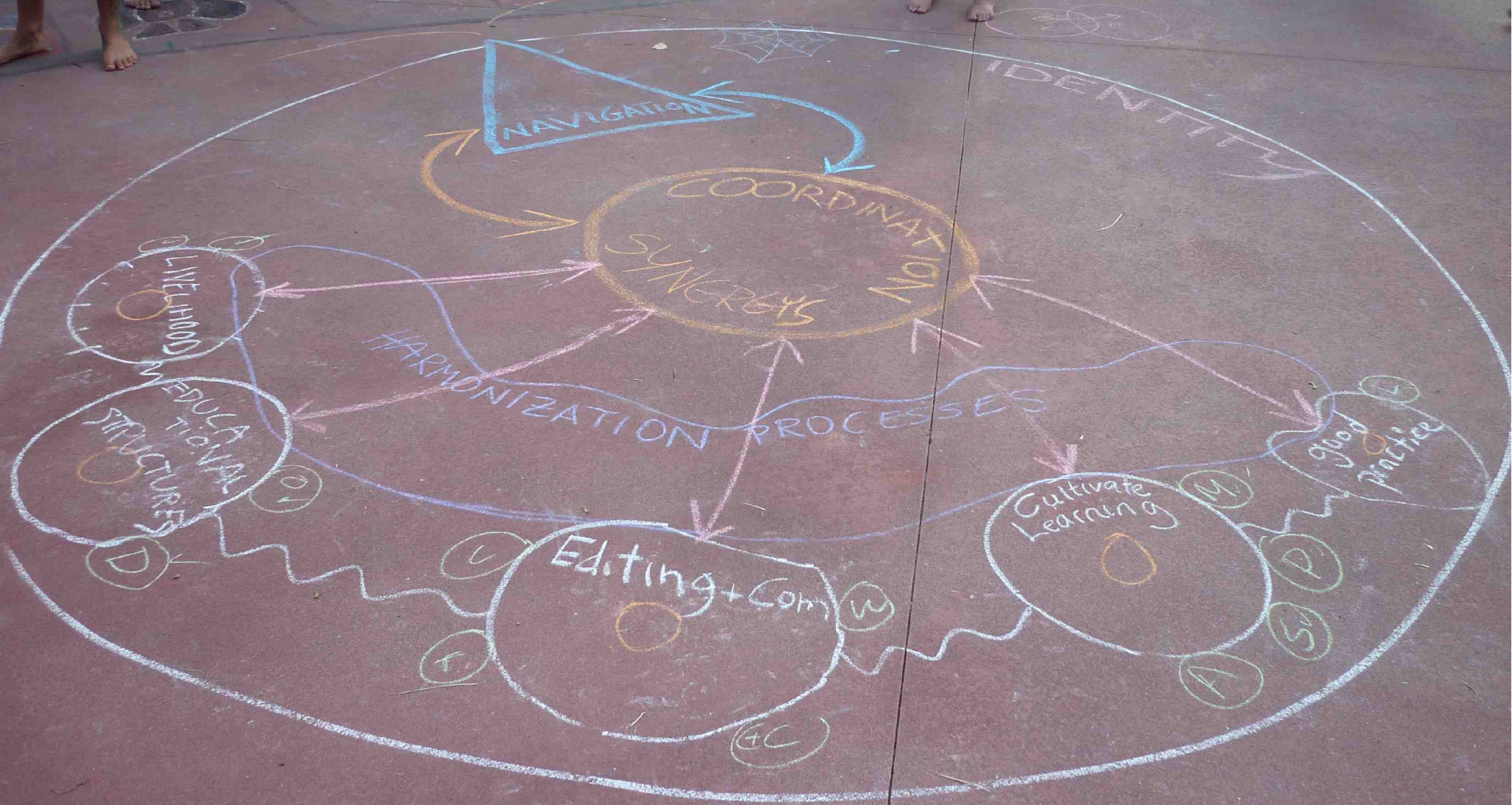
Viable Systems Model

I invited Jon Walker to attend the Spanish meeting to conduct an interactive review/consultation on our implementation of the VSM. This was in response to a request from some attendees at the UK meeting to understand more, and to embed this meta-level learning into the network to prepare us for future projects. (See over)

Mural at Can Masdeu, Barcelona, Sep. 2013



Action



Action

Denmark Meeting: Widening Participation

I didn't attend this meeting as I had teaching commitments at home. This clash was semi-deliberate: Sandra had missed the Spanish meeting and I wanted to reinforce the notion that the partnership was capable of managing without both "mummy and daddy" being present: it was an attempt to step back from the project and see how it went.

The Denmark Meeting focused on widening participation; several presentations were filmed and shared via the project website, as the microteaches had been in Barcelona.

Discussions about how to follow the EPT continued; the idea of a Permaculture College of Europe emerged at this meeting.

Friland, Denmark, May 2014

Action

Bulgaria: Celebration, Evaluation & Future

Taking some cues from Dragon Dreaming (25% of the time allocated to dreaming, 25% planning, 25% doing, 25% celebrating), we designed the project so that all the key tasks would be finished by the Bulgaria meeting, and we would spend most of the time celebrating our achievements.

It didn't quite work out like that, but it arguably gave us enough time to cope with slippage. We were also able to evaluate the project and start writing the final report. We also had time for some detailed planning of what we would do next. Plans were drawn up, organisational structures defined, volunteers for various roles came forward.

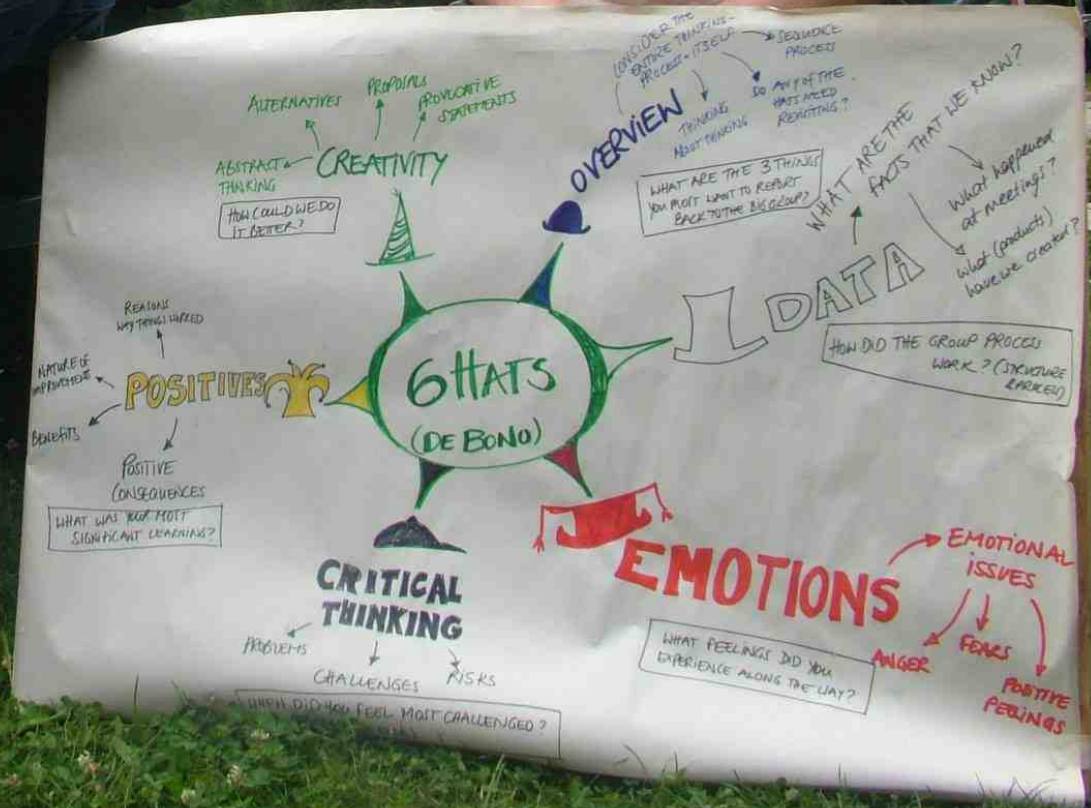
Competing visions of the next phase also emerged. This, the pattern of little communication outside of meetings, and possibly a culture of dependence on Sandra and me, mean that the energy in the partnership has dissipated somewhat.

The fact that the EPT meeting came to Bulgaria led to the EUPC also being hosted there, which acted as a catalyst for the first Bulgarian PDC and the emergence of a national permaculture network.



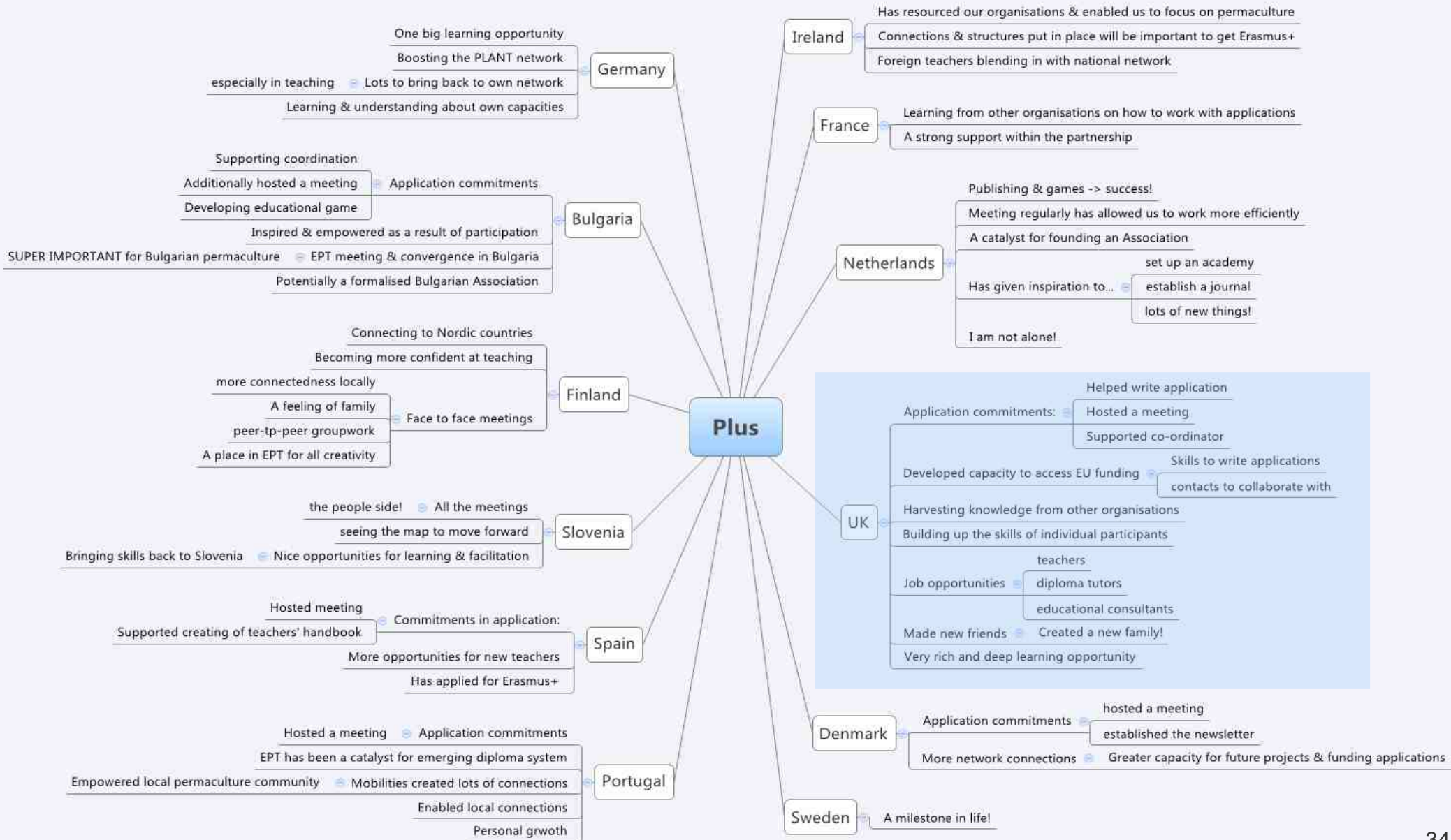
EPT integration into EUPC 2014, Bulgaria

evaluation



Sandra & I facilitate the final evaluation

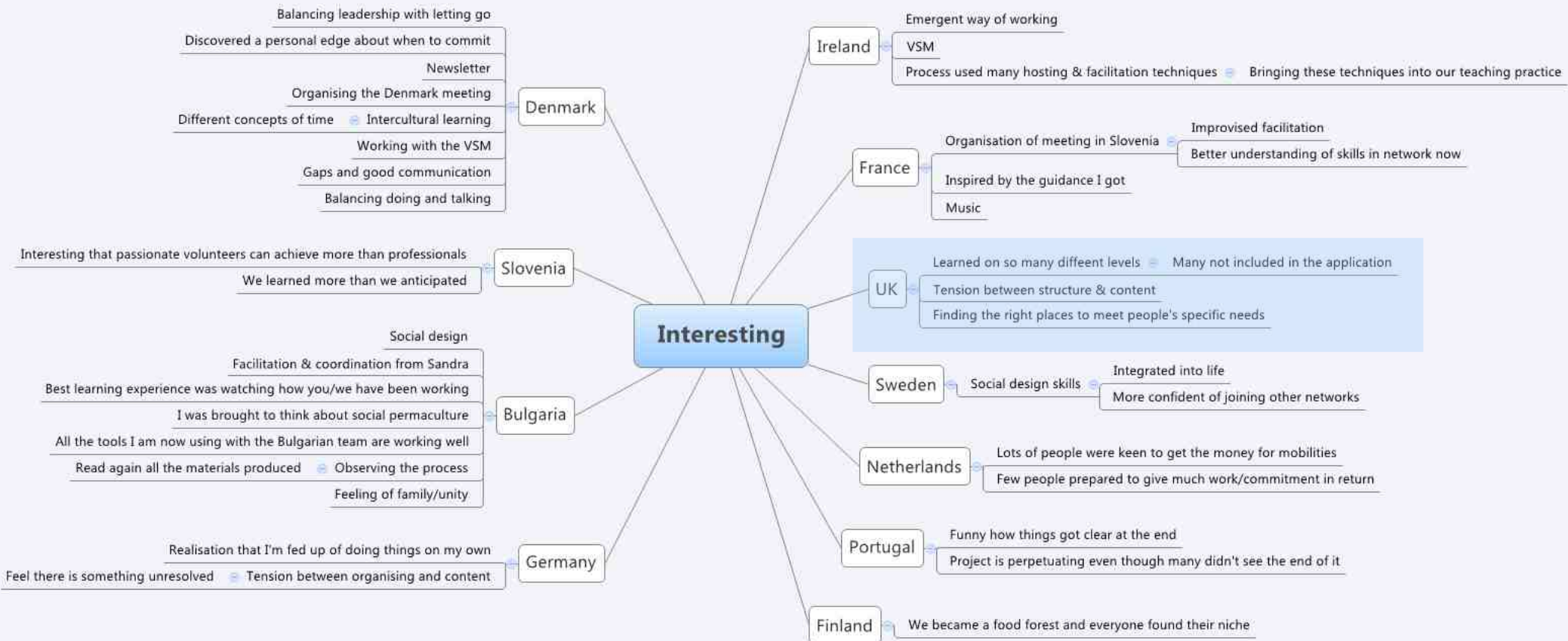
evaluation



evaluation



evaluation



evaluation

PROCESS

STRONGLY
AGREE

Application of permaculture ethics

As the project sought to develop teachers and build educational organisations' capacity, it aimed to promote all 3 ethics through behaviour change of the ultimate beneficiaries: future course attendees. However, the project also reflected the 3 permaculture ethics more directly in the following ways...

People Care

- Creating a support network for otherwise isolated teachers
- Enabling teachers to develop themselves & their professional skills
- Creating livelihood & collaboration opportunities for teachers
- Supporting traditional cultural groups & learning about cultural practices in local areas that the project visited

Earth Care

- Long term reduction in emissions from transport:
In the short term these may be higher, as the project encourages permaculture teachers to travel across Europe to meet, exchange & learn. In the longer term, the development of the European permaculture network should reduce the dependency on foreign teachers, lowering the transport-related emissions.
- Participants were encouraged to use overland travel options where possible
- Use of local, organic food and ethical caterers wherever possible throughout the project
- Some practical activities at some of the permaculture projects

Setting Limits to Consumption & Redistributing Surplus

- This project shares the 'surplus' of knowledge/experience/methods in the relatively well-established permaculture organisations with their counterparts across Europe
- Funded partners subsidised un-funded partner organisations to participate at a lower cost
- Patronising permaculture projects and ecovillages wherever possible keeps money circulating in the green economy

3. EVERYBODY ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE WERE

evaluation

Application of permaculture principles

Observe & Interact	Observations on European Permaculture scene pre-2010; designed a response.
Catch & Store Energy	Recording session plans, teaching methods
Obtain a Yield	Learning outcomes; project artifacts; new friendships;
Apply Self-regulation & Accept Feedback	Reflecting on failures, e.g. conflict within the group that arose due to my own interventions
Use & Value Renewable Resources & Services	Promoted use of eco buildings with renewable energy for meetings.
Produce no Waste	Composting & recycling at events.
Design from Patterns to Details	Expressed need → project aims & outcomes → pattern of project → overall work plan → budget → detailed work plans
Integrate Rather than Segregate	Integrating EPT meetings into EUPCs.. Fluid membership allowed many to participate.
Use Small & Slow Solutions	Used land-based transport wherever possible
Use & Value Diversity	Honour and respect the diversity of perspectives within the group, diversity of working styles, diversity of commitment to & involvement with the project
Use Edges & Value the Marginal	Financial support/subsidies for those participants that weren't funded; Attendees staying with local families for (perma)cultural exchange (Leeds meeting)
Creatively Use & Respond to Change	Took advantage of the opportunity presented by the partnership funding (i.e. opportunity to develop project beyond just a teachers' convergence); switch from Grundtvig to Leonardo

Celebration & gratitude

The EPT was a wonderful project, and continues to be a wonderful community. Special thanks go to Sandra who worked so hard with me to make it happen, and even harder to keep it all running. But I'm also eternally grateful to each and every one of the amazing people that were involved in the project. I learned so much from them as they, inspired me, challenged me, frustrated me, shared their ideas, hopes and dreams with me, made me sing, made me play silly games, got me drunk, made me laugh and, by writing the following messages, made me cry...

To Joe and Sandra, you are pure inspiration. Thank you for all the work, the good spirits, the getting things done, and the never ending support. Looking forward to more! Ana

Joe, for all your funny face collection, grounded presence almost all the time, for that group hum at Mas Franch, for being open to change, THANK YOU. For Sandra, for your songs, for your honesty & quest for clarity, for talking about the less easy topics, THANK YOU. Both, with so much love, Kirsty.

Sandra, Joe, thanks for managing this great project. Now that you have created this family, the outcomes are huge. And what's coming next is wonderful. This community made some of my dreams come true. Looking forward to the next one :) Huge Hug, Ben.

Joe & Sandra, Thank you for creating the opportunity for me to develop myself massively over the past 2 years. Without the EPT I... I'm gonna stop now. Because I'm filled with so much love & joy for you that expressing it on this paper would be meaningless. OK, really stopping now. LOVE YOU, Mihael.

Thank you for being such a good inspiration for us. Ana.

Thanks for your clarity, transparency, and for finding the strength to keep on even if some ideas or ways are not what you expected sometimes. You are an inspiration! Maria.

Sandra and Joe, the both of you have done so much to make it possible to grow a European permaculture family. I am very grateful for that. Without this possibility I could not have met all these fantastic people and grow in my pathway to become a better permanaut. So thank you very much, Leo.

Celebration & gratitude

HA HA! Beautiful people!! It was a real pleasure and honour to meet you two!! Hope to see you soon! Thanks for organising the start of this cool journey!! Why aye man ye cunning lass and lad!! Enrico

Dear Joe and Sandra, You know this African saying: if you go alone you go fast, if you go together you go far. Thanks for all your work and presence! Monique

Being here, in this gathering and magical space has created in us an enormous desire to see this project go far and unite people and communities, living simply and using resources efficiently. I hope to feel the world change for you both, for your courage to move so many beautiful people. Hugs & Kisses, Henrique.

You are the Spine of EPT. With hard fitness on many meetings and also between. Bulgaria showed us that your baby is healthy and in good condition. You know that we will support you on your next steps. Thanks for your dedication! Tomislav

Dear guys! Thank you for the opportunity to be part of this magic that EPT was! I love you!!! From Anna, Italy

Thank you! Sandra & Joe for the generous, inclusive & proficuous initiative. I love you! Luis

Seeing you guys sanding on stage/in the circles/during presentations just brought smiles, joy, empowerment and inspiration. Want to see more of it – thank you for just being!! Love hugs & kisses, Gaye

Dear Joe & Sandra, for personal experience we know how ungrateful, hard and frustrating it can be to be in the backstage and/or being the “engine wagon” that has been able to move the rest of the whole train in this beautiful voyage, hopefully to a brighter future for all! Keep up the energy, the word definitely needs more “engine wagons” like you. THANK YOU. Namaste. Carla & Henrique

Gratidao Pura. I'm grateful for your dedication and for your will to open new paths, roads that as time passes by become clear for the whole tribe. I don't feel like a newcomer any more. Love and respect, Filipa.

Celebration & gratitude

Guys, you did a wonder. Are you realising what you have done? You have created a connection that no-one ever did before, you opened up the hearts and minds of so many people... I wish you to keep that energy growing within you and keep sharing and receiving it from the world around you! With all my love and gratitude, Misha.

Hi Joe and Sandra, I'm very glad I came here and that I met you and all the other inspiring people. I think you did great job bringing all those cultures with their own ways of working, thinking and communicating. People who are used to exploring new ways and cutting their way through the jungle on their own are not always the easiest to form a group with that truly listening to each other and work in one direction. Well, I hope I will see you again and wish you all the best! Warm hug! Arjan

It has been a pleasure to get to know you both and work together. Congrats on launching an amazing network! Alfred.

Dear Sandra, Dear Joe. From what feels like having caught a glimpse only I can barely imagine the scope of what you two put in to hold together all of that magical EPT. Seriously, beauty and intensity beyond measure in both work and community. Thanks for letting me jump aboard last second – I feel all in nonetheless. KEEP IT UP AND LET IT FLY. Sebastian

Dear Sandra & Joe, thank you so much for making all of this possible. You have created an amazing family! I've never felt so welcome. Now let's keep all of us together & moving forward. Love, Irene.

S & J, much appreciation for pushing permaculture forward and the "learning edge". All of us meeting at Friland 2010 really turned into something great thanks to you two. Cheers! Tycho.

So grateful for having met you at the PEC in 2010. It kicked off so much good stuff! I cherish your work, laughter and encouragement in getting the permaculture scene growing in Europe. Thank you SO much. Looking forward to celebrate and create more with you. Karoline

No words really! I guess I was in it by some chance! Thank you for allowing us to flourish as individuals and grow as a family! Keep it up! Andre.

Celebration & gratitude

My life changed thanks to you. I love you and I hope it's not goodbye. Be well on your journey. Aljaz

A real inspiration. Your professional attitude but most of all the beauty of your souls. Gratitude, lots of gratitude for being such wonderful people. Julia

Thank you so much for opening doors now and in the future! I hope to have the privilege to work and spend more time with you both... LOVE YOU. Bernardo

This partnership was a great learning journey for me. Many thanks to both of you for having created this opportunity for me and the Spanish participants. Lots of love, Antonio

Dear Sandra & Joe, hard to express how much we as a family are grateful to the two of you connecting us and our wonderful family. Thank you for providing us with this wonderful opportunity and the fact we could be part of the EPT journey although not in our absolute 100% best ourselves. You did an amazing job of connecting the family of permaculture trainers & keep on your endless energy. Much love & many thanks, Martina, Steve, Lucy & Rosie

You are superstars! Love, Jillian.

Dear Sandra & Joe, it was a pleasure to work with you. THANKS, Kipper.

Dear Sandra & Joe, I admire your wonderfully structured minds with the ability to put great applications and work together. Thank you for shining and letting this partnership unfold to the benefit of us all. I'm impressed! You are both beautiful people with so much good to share with us and the world. Keep up the brilliant work! Lots of love and smiles, Cat. P.S. shine on you crazy diamonds :)

Dear Sandra & Joe, The EPT enriched me so much I don't even know where to start. I might thank you for the work you did. I might thank you for giving me the opportunity to meet you and all of these wonderful people. This family. I might thank you for giving me the opportunity to visit all these beautiful places. For the beautiful moments we shared. But I'll thank you, simply, for the beautiful people you are, for being part of my life. Thank you!!! Alessandro

Reflection

Collective reflections

I wrote the following for the final report. It's an attempted to synthesise my own experiences & reflections with those of the other partners.

*"1. The Partnership was very ambitious. The project was complex and lacked a (paid) project manager. Our coordinating partner took on a huge amount of voluntary work to keep the partnership on track.. **Lessons learned:** be less ambitious, keep the outcomes more modest, put explicit support mechanisms in place to provide greater support for coordinator, or pay the coordinator to run the project.*

*2. It was a challenge to find the right balance between discussing the "how" (the organising principles of the partnership) & content (sharing teaching methods, education structures etc). **Lessons Learned:** In hindsight, it would be good to separate more of the "how" discussions and create more space for the majority of participants to concentrate on the "what"*

*3. Managing diversity was challenging. The participants were diverse along multiple axes: age; gender; cultural expectations; contextual understanding of the project (i.e. people who initiated the project vs. people who arrived at the last meeting as newcomers to the project); teaching experience/ability to contribute; level of interest/type of desired individual outcomes (i.e. people wanting to learn a few teaching techniques vs. people who want to gain experience of running international partnership projects); Task focus vs. relationship focus.. **Lesson learned:** in order to keep misunderstandings and conflict to a minimum, staying mindful of this diversity requires it to be named, and to build a culture of accepting, celebrating and acknowledging the challenges of such diversity: However, this is difficult and requires patience, empathy, self awareness & self-esteem.*

4. Pattern of work/motivation.

Participants were incredibly motivated and hard-working during meetings, but in the time in between them, few people engaged meaningfully for sustained periods. Tasks & actions taken on by participants at meetings would often not be achieved by the following meeting. This could lead to some more committed individuals feeling let down and others feeling guilty about their level of achievement.

Lesson Learned: *anticipate this pattern, design meetings & set expectations accordingly.*

*5. Lack of clarity around remits of task teams (AKA "Primary Activities"). This led to some Primary Activity teams being unclear on their responsibilities, creating anxiety, frustration and confusion. **Lesson Learned:** be absolutely clear about roles, responsibilities & remits of operational units."*

Reflection

Personal reflections

- I wrote a personal reflection piece on my blog about the culture that arose from the partnership, and how I felt that it could have been more inclusive
- An enduring lesson for me has been the power and influence of the pulse pattern: so much work gets done when people are face to face, yet the energy almost completely dissipates in between meetings unless a small, dedicated group of people continue to push the project forward. I found myself becoming cynical of some of the ambitious ideas for the future that were bandied around because so many people so consistently failed to do any work in between meetings. I came to the conclusion that the best approach beyond the EPT is to take a more laissez faire approach: The network now has a lot more experience, skills and tools to make permaculture teacher development projects happen. If people also have the motivation, they can make them happen. At the same time, I remain committed to creating opportunities for the EPT family to get together in future, albeit on a less regular basis.



Drawing by Andre Carvalho

reflection

Action Learning Questions

What went well?

- The project has met or exceeded all of its aims and objectives
- A much more connected and visible European permaculture network
- Additional outcomes include the establishment of Finnish and Bulgarian national permaculture organisations
- A new family: new friendships, relationships, even children have emerged from the project!
- The learning has been broad and profound for many participants
- New work opportunities have arisen; more permaculture courses, teacher training & diploma tutor training & consultation happening across Europe since the partnership.

What was challenging?

- Working with diversity:
 - Diverse working cultures led to disagreements about how best to proceed in given situations
 - Diverse needs & expectations of the project led to frustration at times
 - Diverse levels of involvement & commitment among attendees led to some hurt feelings
- Managing complexity
 - Lack of transparent & democratic decision-making process
 - Objectives were complex and ambitious
 - The Viable Systems Model alienated and frustrated some participants
- Pulse pattern of activity: loads of energy & progress during meetings, very little in between
- Too much burden on the overall coordinator (Sandra)
- My lack of awareness of my own privilege and power meant that I disempowered others.

reflection

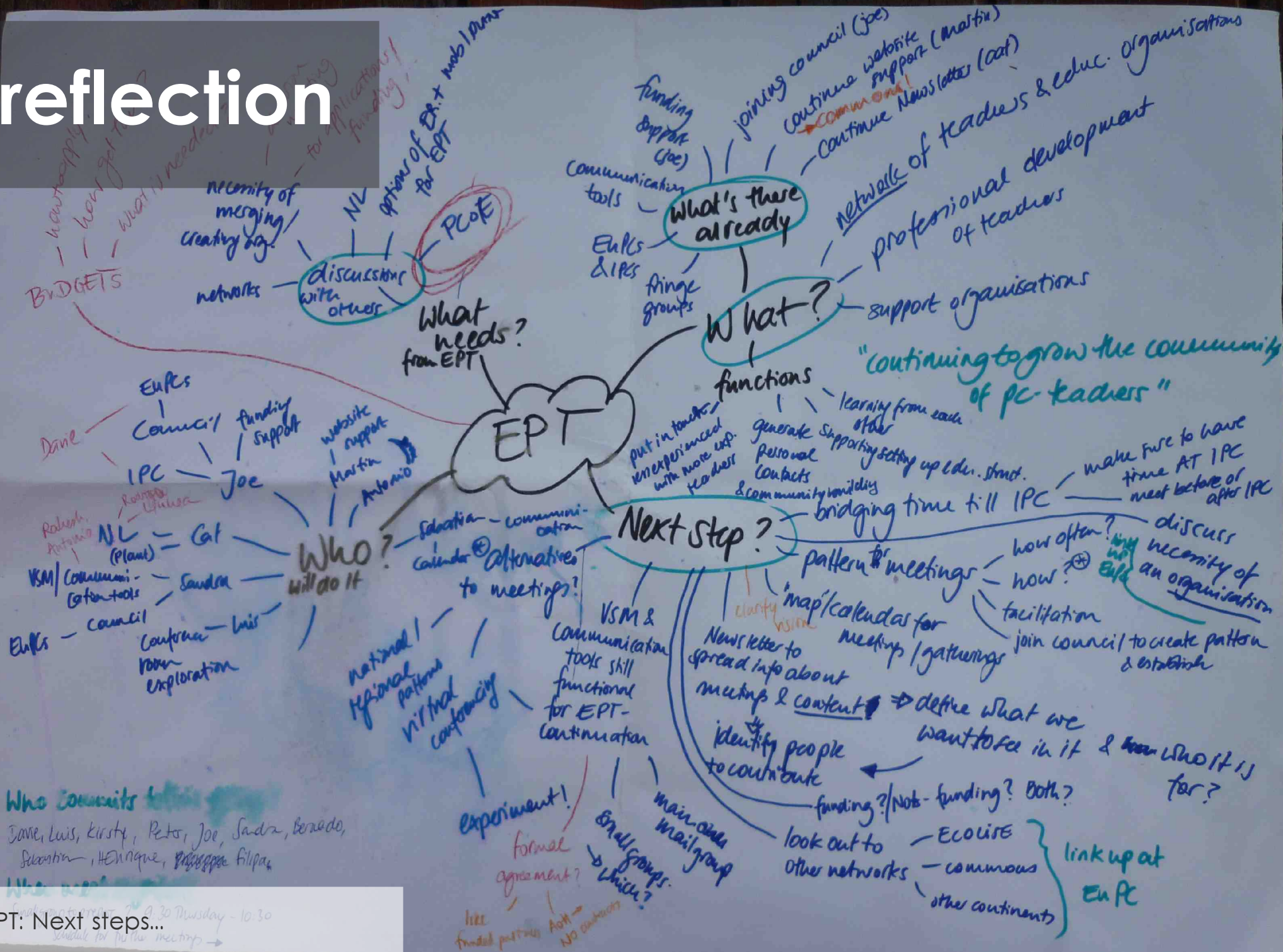
Long term visions & goals

- Continuing the network in a less intensive way
- Biannual gatherings stacked into future EUPCs: (and the IPC in 2015) I have joined the Permaculture Council of Europe to promote this agenda
- Ongoing collaboration on unilateral funding application efforts
 - In 2014 I successfully secured funding for British trainee teachers to attend courses in Denmark and Spain, for UK-based teachers to deliver courses in Denmark and Croatia, and for Association Staff to conduct a job-shadowing visit to the German Permakultur Institut/Akademie.
 - The Spanish team also secured some funding the same year, as did a new Dutch organisation.
- Possibly an informal gathering in years when there is no EUPC
- Creation of a design process/pattern book/toolkit for permaculture designers working in community development settings.

Next achievable steps

- Continue to administer the UK's follow-up project funded by Erasmus+
- Hold skype meetings to discuss possibility of coordinating funding applications to get European teachers to the IPCUK
- Create some space in the IPCUK programme for an EPT gathering/reunion/networking session
- Work with Hannah Thorogood (who is hosting a teachers' sharing event as part of IPCUK) to ensure that there is space for European teachers to network there; coordinate with some of the EPT facilitators to see who's interested in running sessions etc.
- Meet with Petra Krubeck in Cologne to design an EPT event into the 2016 EUPC

reflection



Who commits
 Jane, Luis, Kirsty, Peter, Joe, Sandra, Bernardo, Sebastian, Henrique, Philippa Filipa

EPT: Next steps...
 Schedule for future meetings →