



The Charta for Democratic Landscape Transformation

This living document enunciates the mission, vision, and values of the Open Landscape Academy community of learners and practitioners.

Definition of the Charta's key terms:

Landscape: The territory we share, shape and steward as a community of humans and non-human beings. In line with the European Landscape Convention, landscape includes urban, peri-urban and rural areas.

Landscape Democracy: The right to landscape of humans and non-human beings, and the responsibility to act towards equality, inclusion, healing, reparation, and justice.

Democratic Landscape Transformation: A process and an approach towards community-based, inclusive and co-creative landscape change for sustainability.

Living Labs: Long-term local community partnerships between education, research, practice and civil society for democratic landscape transformation. Living Labs further involve local authorities, civil servants, local activist groups and NGOs.

Mission and vision of the Open Landscape Academy

Our **mission** is to build capacity for democratic landscape transformation in the global community.

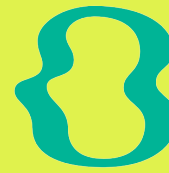
Our **vision** is a more just and sustainable world in which how we use and shape our landscapes is driven by the common good and a collaborative process.

What is OLA?

OLA stands for Open Landscape Academy. We are a transnational community of people who work to make landscapes more resilient and inclusive for all. We do this through academic and non-academic methods. Our work involves education, research, practice, and community participation, all related to landscapes. We see ourselves as agents of democratic change in landscapes.

We follow the definition of landscape laid out in the 2000 Council of Europe Landscape Convention. According to this convention, a landscape is not just what you see; it's how people perceive it, and it is shaped by both environmental and human factors. The convention also highlights the crucial role landscapes play in our well-being and emphasizes that everyone has a role to play in caring for them.

We see landscape as a key element in individual and social well-being, and this important role entails rights and responsibilities for everyone.



OLA

Values

We embrace and work in the spirit of landscape democracy's core values:

- openness
- inclusiveness
- participation
- empathy
- sustainability
- resilience

These core values guide our educational programming, which consists mainly of online seminars and onsite intensive programs. We realize these values through tools such as collective creativity and visioning, storytelling, and regenerative design.

We believe that designing with, rather than for, our partners is a mutually transformative process. We believe in empowerment, empathy, connectivity, justice, equity, and respect for all members of an ecosystem so it may enhance richness and diversity for humans and ecology. We understand the power of place, believing that we are all born into natural and cultural environments that shape what we become, individually and collectively. We celebrate diversity and differences and are committed to non-violence. These values inform all we do as advocates for democratic landscape transformation.

We value an approach to landscape change as an iterative, dialogic process, not only a physical product. We are inspired by a belief in the right to urban and rural landscapes that everyone should have access to support fulfilling, healthful lives, a right that requires that we all participate in caring for it. Future visions should emerge within the creative space of Living Labs, in partnership and with the direct engagement of the communities in a spirit of collective creativity and co-creation.

The work we do

With students and communities, we reflect critically on power structures and ecologies of inequalities and are committed to community, democratic life, sustainable mobility, and environmental justice.

We act upon this commitment by thinking creatively and systemically, fostering the genius of the place through community engagement and participation, landscape storytelling, and mapmaking. We act locally with a global agenda that reflects the ideals of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

We work to set in motion a series of landscape democratic processes, developing and supporting a network of living labs in diverse communities, and bottom-up initiatives for sustainable landscape transformation.

The future we envision

We realize that designing democratic landscape transformations is a 'wicked' problem, challenging to define due to the systemic, incomplete, contradictory, and constantly changing nature of human and ecological relationships.

The wicked problems of our times, from climate change to biodiversity, from food security to affordable housing to environmental injustice, are even more wicked for the most vulnerable among us. OLA believes that democratic landscape practitioners are responsible for empowering the voice of the fragile, the marginalized, and the underserved and that wicked problems are positively addressed through collaboration in research and design co-creation. We demonstrate this belief through our Living Labs and Participatory Action Research projects that we co-create in tandem with local institutions and communities.

OLA partners envision a future world where expertise is shared and everyone can express their future visions and ambitions for cities, villages, countryside, or wilderness areas, and the ecological and human communities they house.

We envision a world in which all have a voice and agency in shaping what happens to our landscapes. A world in which participation and democracy are understood to be processes intrinsic to how our landscapes are shaped, accessed, protected, and used. A world in which those in power engage in dialogue with their communities so that changes to the landscape benefit the common good of people and nature.

An invitation to join us

OLA partners with communities of diverse ages, backgrounds, abilities, and life experiences. We invite you to be a part of our work today.

Join us for our online seminars. Explore our website to discover stories about democratic landscape transformation in communities around the world. Participate as a student, activist, or design practitioner in one of our globally accessible online seminars, onsite living labs or intensive design projects.

Visit us on

openlandscapeacademy.org

or email us via **info@openlandscapeacademy.org**

to find out more.

