

Democratic Landscape Transformatio

n

Welcome to this international classroom of the **Open Landscape Academy** - we call it **OLA**.

This educational space is for everyone wanting to gain and share knowledge and experiences.

We discuss landscape democracy, visioning, co-creation and community partnerships.

Join us on our shared transition pathway towards a deeper and more systemic sustainability.

Kristin Faurest
Ellen Fetzer
Deni Ruggeri
Anna Szilagyi-Nagy

April 1, 2026



OLA



Funded by
the European Union

Our programme for today

18 00 **Welcome + Intro**

18 05 **Round of Introductions in breakouts**

'Your landscape democracy challenges' (from Padlet)

<https://padlet.com/ellenfetzer/open-landscape-academy-mapping-landscape-democracy-challenge-4rfvrlruxvzoke76>

18 20 **The rationale behind the OLA Project**

Why are we doing this? Where do we come from?

Welcome from our Living Labs!

19 10 **Seminar process and how we are working**

19 30 **Seminar finish**



Where we come from


 Funded by

LED - 2015 – 2018
Landscape Education for Democracy
 Three Transnational Online Seminars
 Publication on the core concepts
 Three workshops: Zingonia (IT), Kassel (DE) and Törökbalint (HU)

LED2LEAP - 2019 – 2022
Learning, Empowerment, Agency, Partnership
 Three Transnational Online Seminars
 Four local Living Labs
 Documentation of the Living Lab Process
 Three workshops: Lucca (IT), Nürtingen (DE) and Miskolc (HU)

OLA Dec 2022 – Nov 2025
 Towards Democratic Landscape Transformation: The Open Landscape Academy – OLA
 Living Labs and Intensive Workshops in Hungary, Italy and Greece
 Establishing the Open Landscape Academy
 Inclusive learning materials



LED2LEAP
 Learning Empowerment Agency Partnership



Reports from our past activities:

LED Project: https://ledwiki.hfwu.de/index.php?title=Output_3_-_The_LED_Process_Report
 LED2LEAP Project: https://ledwiki.hfwu.de/index.php?title=Project_Reports_and_Outputs

Core elements of OLA



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.

Mission and vision of the Open Landscape Academy

We build capacity for democratic landscape transformation.

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

What is OLA? 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.

A Charta for Democratic Landscape Transformation

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www.openlandscapeacademy.org/vision



Vision

Landscapes

Learning

Community

Contact



**OPEN
LANDSCAPE
ACADEMY**

Visit us: <https://www.openlandscapeacademy.org>

Meet us online or onsite. Discover learning resources.

Methods from the Athens Living Lab



**Collective
Comic**



**Socio-Spatial
Exploration**



**Sculpture and
Fine Art**



**Landscape
Flaneurs**

Methods from the Nürtingen Living Lab



Icebreaker



**Mapping
the Way**



**Tiny
Protest**



**Playmobil
Walk**



**Tandem
Walk**

Stories of Democratic Landscape Transformation

OLA shares stories of local landscape transformation. These are your stories and our stories. They all tell us about a specific landscape and the unique communities shaping it.



The Ravenna - Cento Living Lab explores landscape resilience and fair energy transition.

Ravenna Story



The Athens Living Lab explores democracy in the landscape of Eleonas.

Athens Story



The Vac Living Lab in Hungary explores how to reconnect children and youth to urban nature.

Vac Story

Landscape Democracy Barometer

Please participate in the survey that was sent out today.

It helps you getting into the key themes of the seminar - and it helps us to better understand the overall learning effect of the course - **THANKS!**

Getting to know each other

We will now group you in randomized breakout
3-persons groups

Introduce yourself to each other, using the image you
uploaded on the Padlet of the landscape democracy
challenge you identified

If you have not uploaded one, just do it now or simply
introduce yourself.

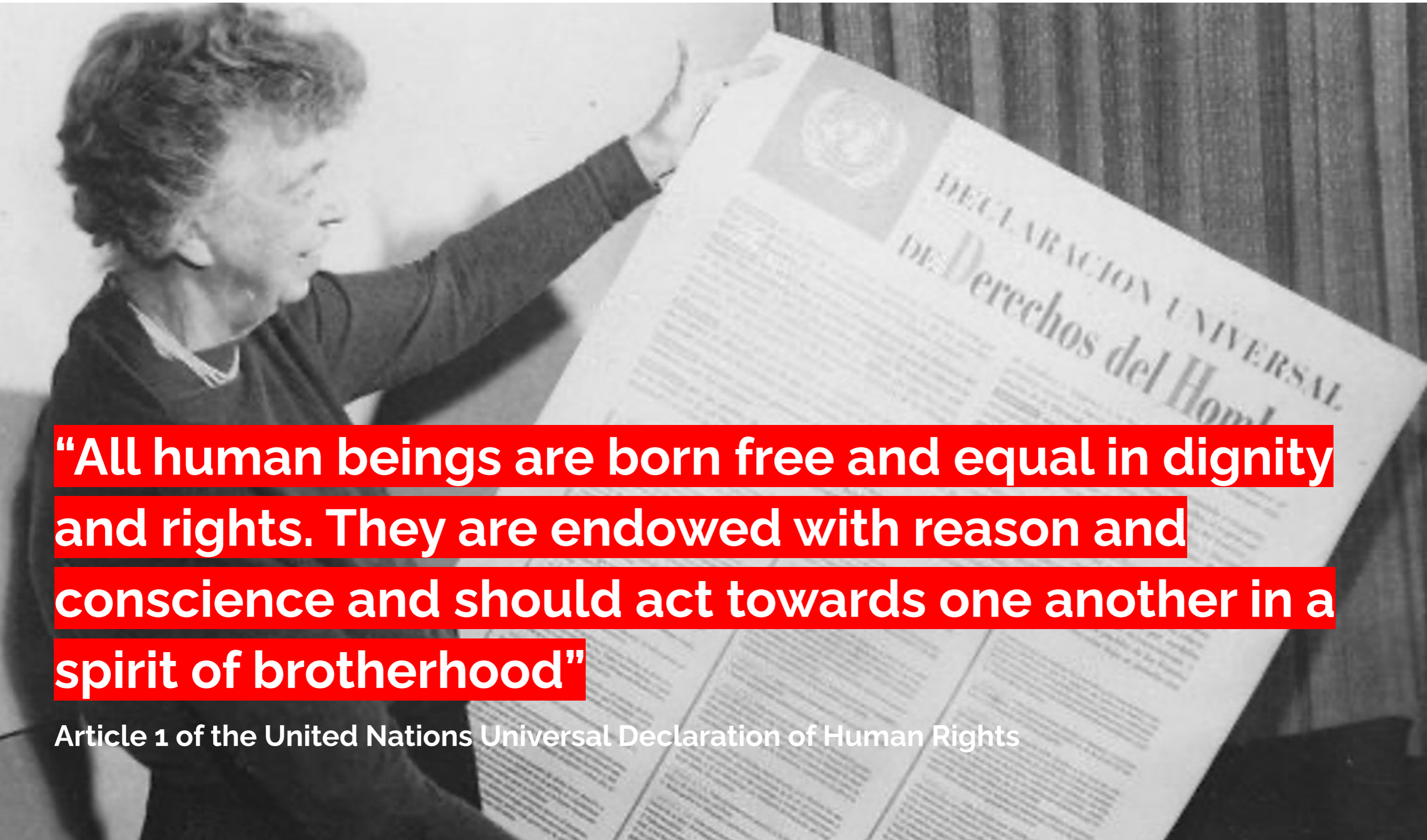
Breakouts close after 15 minutes!



**The values and theories
behind the
OLA Project**

***why are we doing this?
where do we come from?***

Universal Declaration of Human Rights



“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood”

Article 1 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The Right to Landscape



Tahrir Square, Cairo, Egypt 2011/2020



'no kings' protest in the Boston Commons (3/28/2026)

The Right to Landscape



Chicano Park, San Diego, California

The Right to Landscape



Times Square, New York, USA

The Right to Landscape



Informal settlement

The Right to Landscape



Drawings by children in Gaza who attended Save the Children's Child Friendly Space for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) and educational activities.

Landscape democracy wicked problems

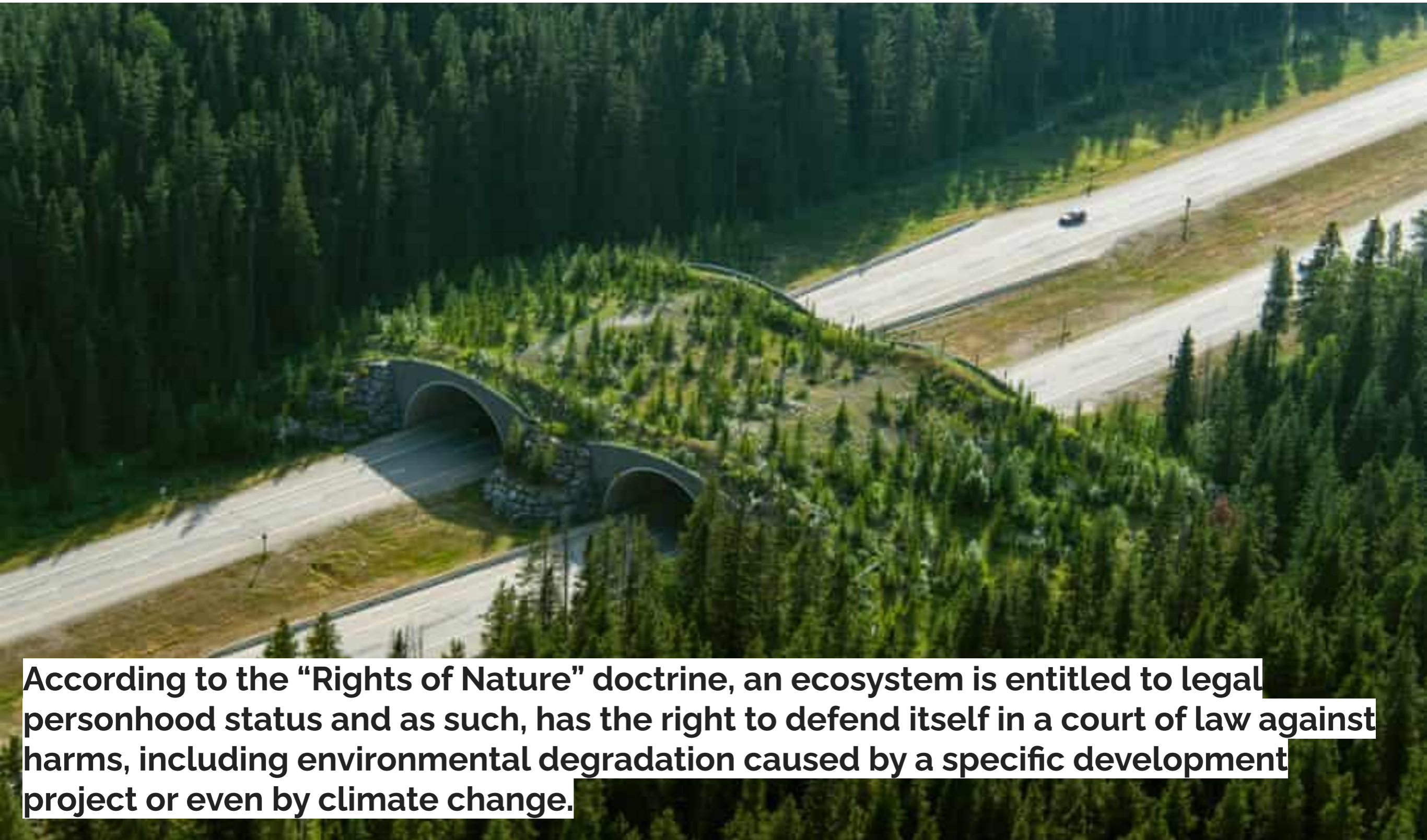
- No definitive formulation
- No exit strategies: every attempt counts
- No true/false solutions, only good/bad
- More than one admissible operation
- No definitive test of success
- Unique, symptomatic of higher-level problems (system thinking)
- Demand that designers act/are responsible for improving status quo

Global Sustainable Development Goals



Source: Stockholm Resilience Centre (2016), Contributions to Agenda 2030 – How Stockholm Resilience Centre (SRC) contributed to the 2016 Swedish Agenda 2030 HLPF report, <https://www.stockholmresilience.org/SDG2016>.

Rights of nature



According to the “Rights of Nature” doctrine, an ecosystem is entitled to legal personhood status and as such, has the right to defend itself in a court of law against harms, including environmental degradation caused by a specific development project or even by climate change.

Council of Europe Landscape Convention

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

"Landscape" is an area as perceived by local people or visitors, whose visual features and character are the result of the action of natural and human factors.

The landscape is a key element of individual and social well-being and..., its management, design and protection entail rights and responsibilities for

Council of Europe (2000), European Landscape Convention all.

Landscape Democracy

A photograph of two women standing in a garden. The woman on the left is wearing a patterned headwrap and a patterned top, holding a bunch of purple leafy vegetables. The woman on the right is wearing a blue headwrap and a yellow and orange patterned top. They are standing in front of a garden with various plants and a wooden trellis structure. The background shows green trees and a brick building.

Landscape **D**emocracy as **RIGHT TO LANDSCAPE**

+

Landscape **d**emocracy as **RESPONSIBILITY**
practices of participation towards equality, inclusion,
healing, reparation, and justice

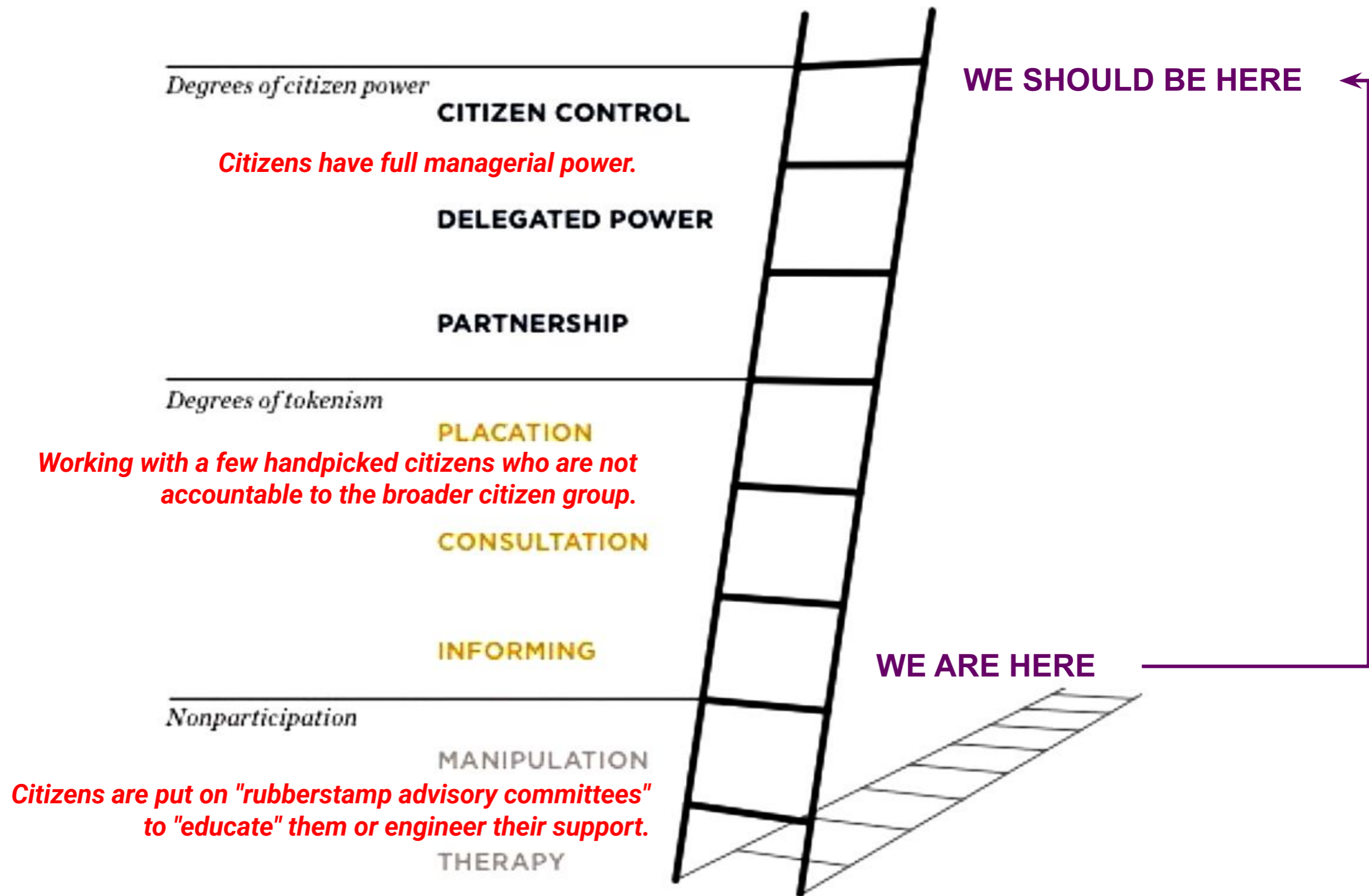
Short Poll



Please open this menti poll under:
<https://www.menti.com/alenjmd4c2ur>

Or via code on menti.com
4282 7513

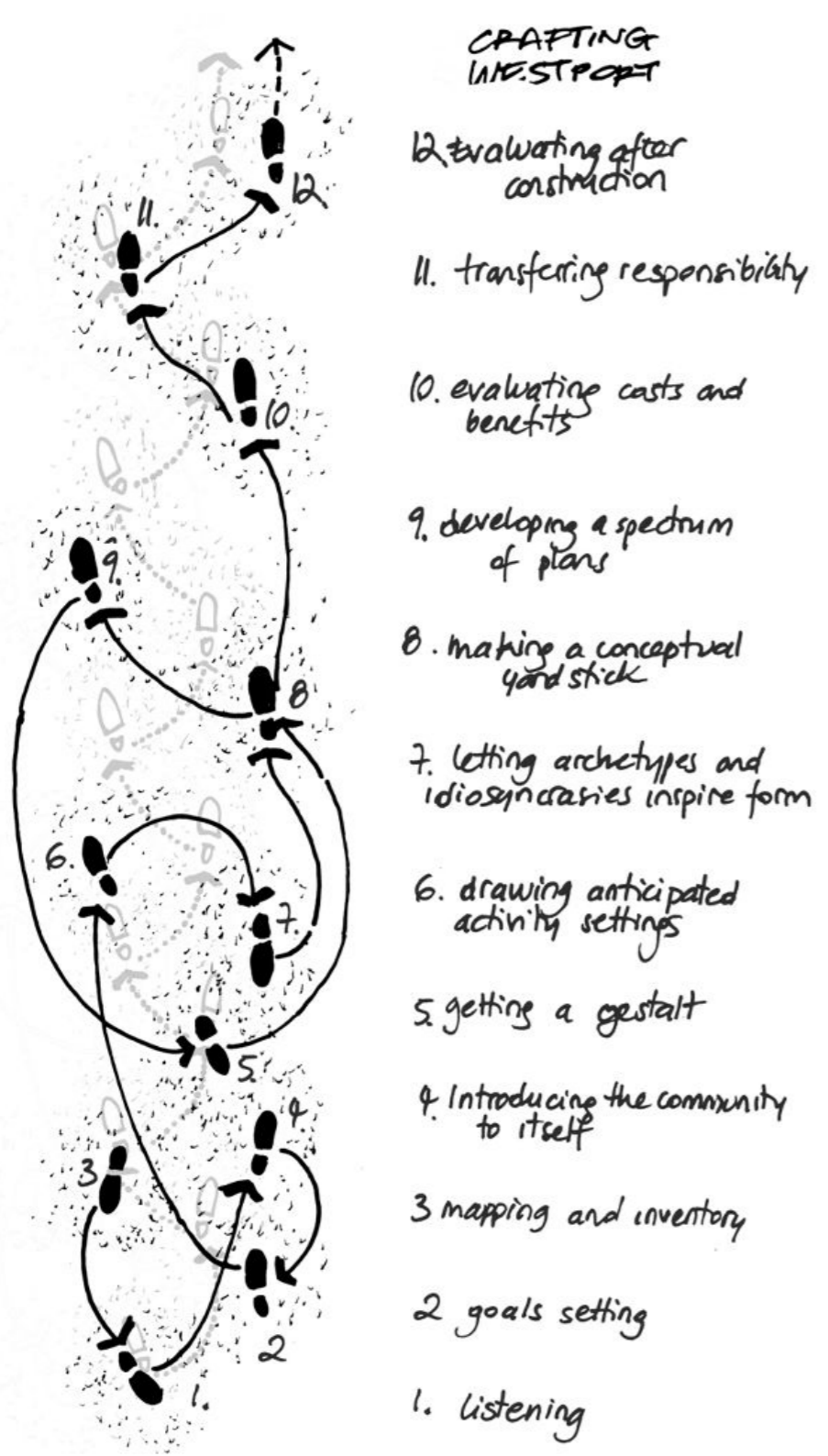
Participation



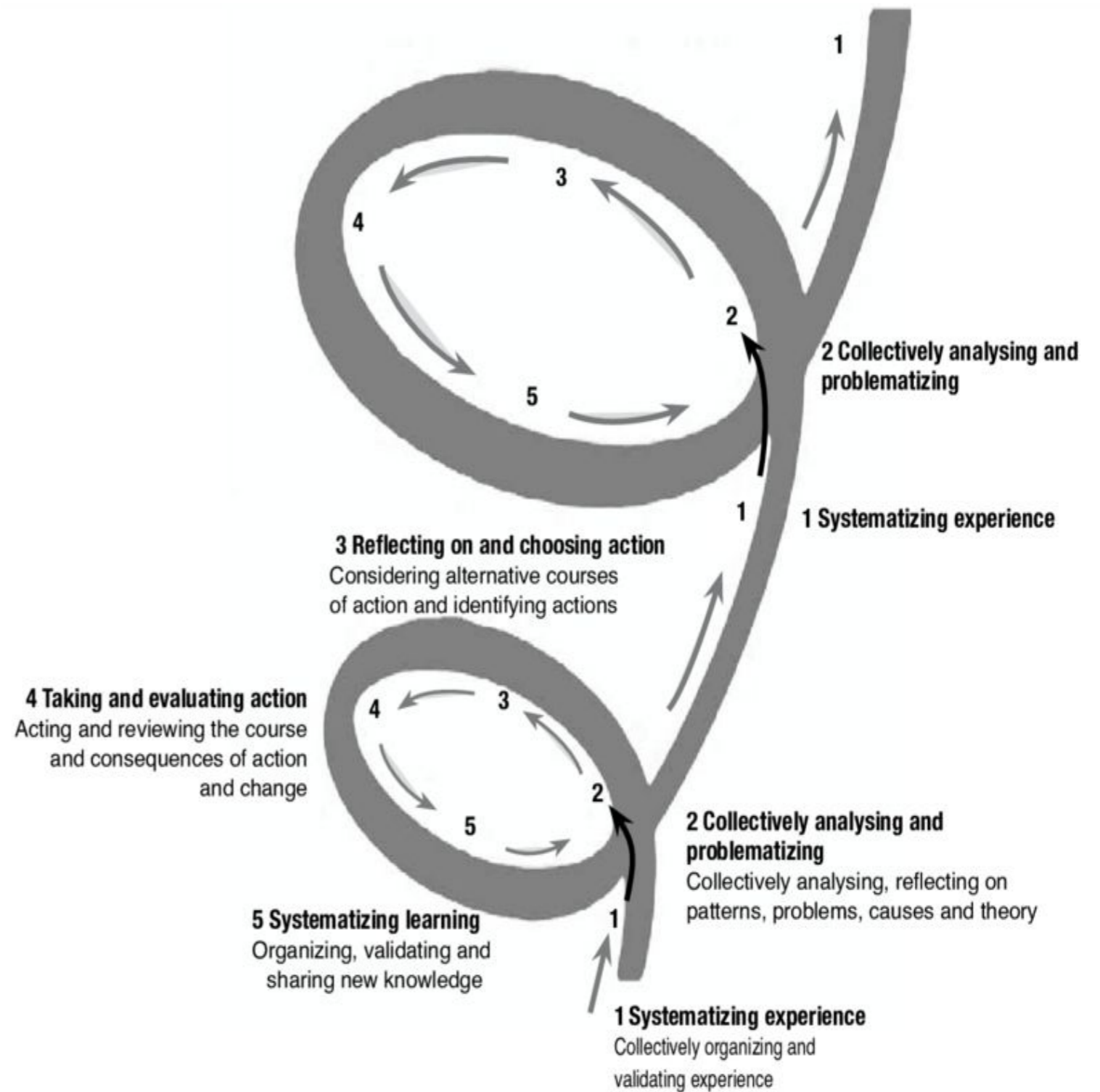
P.A.R. Participatory Action Research

- P** **Partnership**.....*a collaboration as equal partners*
Emergent.....*processes and goals unfold*
Inclusive.....*seeks to engage a multitude of perspectives*
Native-wisdom driven.....*there are no experts*
Transdisciplinary.....*working together on complex solutions*
- A** **Dialogic**.....*from top-down to bottom up*
Action driven..... *projected toward change, not status quo*
Adaptable.....*it has the capacity to evolve with the context*
Strategic.....*it is creative in achieving the most with the least*
- R** **Reflective**.....*it seeks to build on experience (successes/failures)*
Rigorous.....*carefully documented and conceptualized*
Communicative..... *shared knowledge and education*

The P.A.R. Iterative design process



Kot, D., & Ruggeri, D. (2005). CRAFTING WESTPORT. communities constructing, 29(2), 107.



Loewenson, Rene & AC, Laurell & C, Hogstedt & D'Ambruoso, Lucia & Shroff, Zubin. (2014). Participatory Action Research in Health Systems: A Methods Reader.

narratives to ‘storied knowledge’

Narrative from the Latin word “*gnarus*” (knowing)
how we experience/represent the world

Story a description, either true or imagined, of a connected series of events. **Stories integrate meaning.** Not every narrative becomes a story.

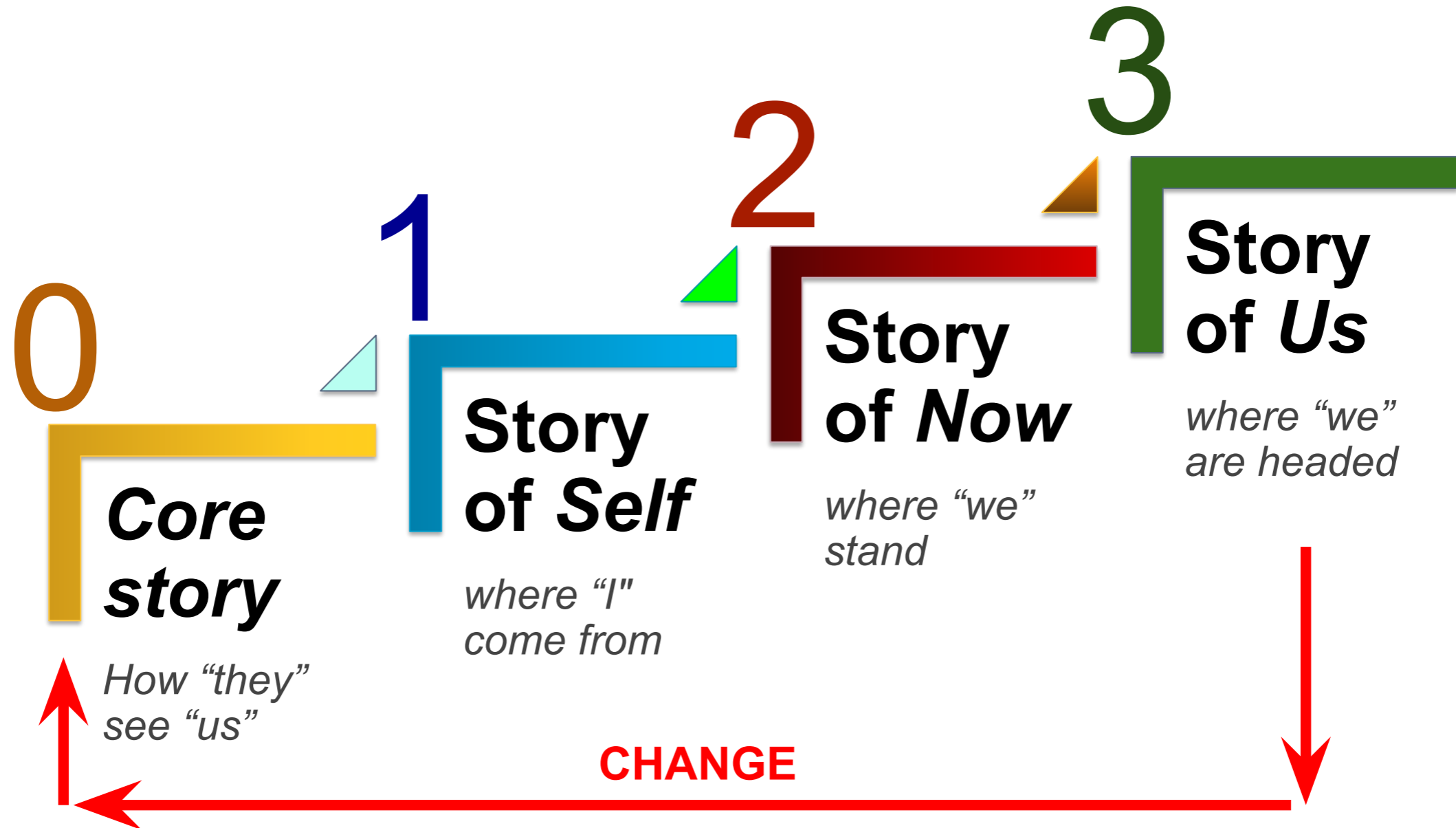
Storied Knowledge

give us a better understanding of “how, why and for what (people) transform themselves during their lives” (Finger, 1989, p. 1), and how landscape contributes to these transformations

Stories of democratic landscape change

STORIES AS
INHIBITORS

STORIES AS
MOTIVATORS



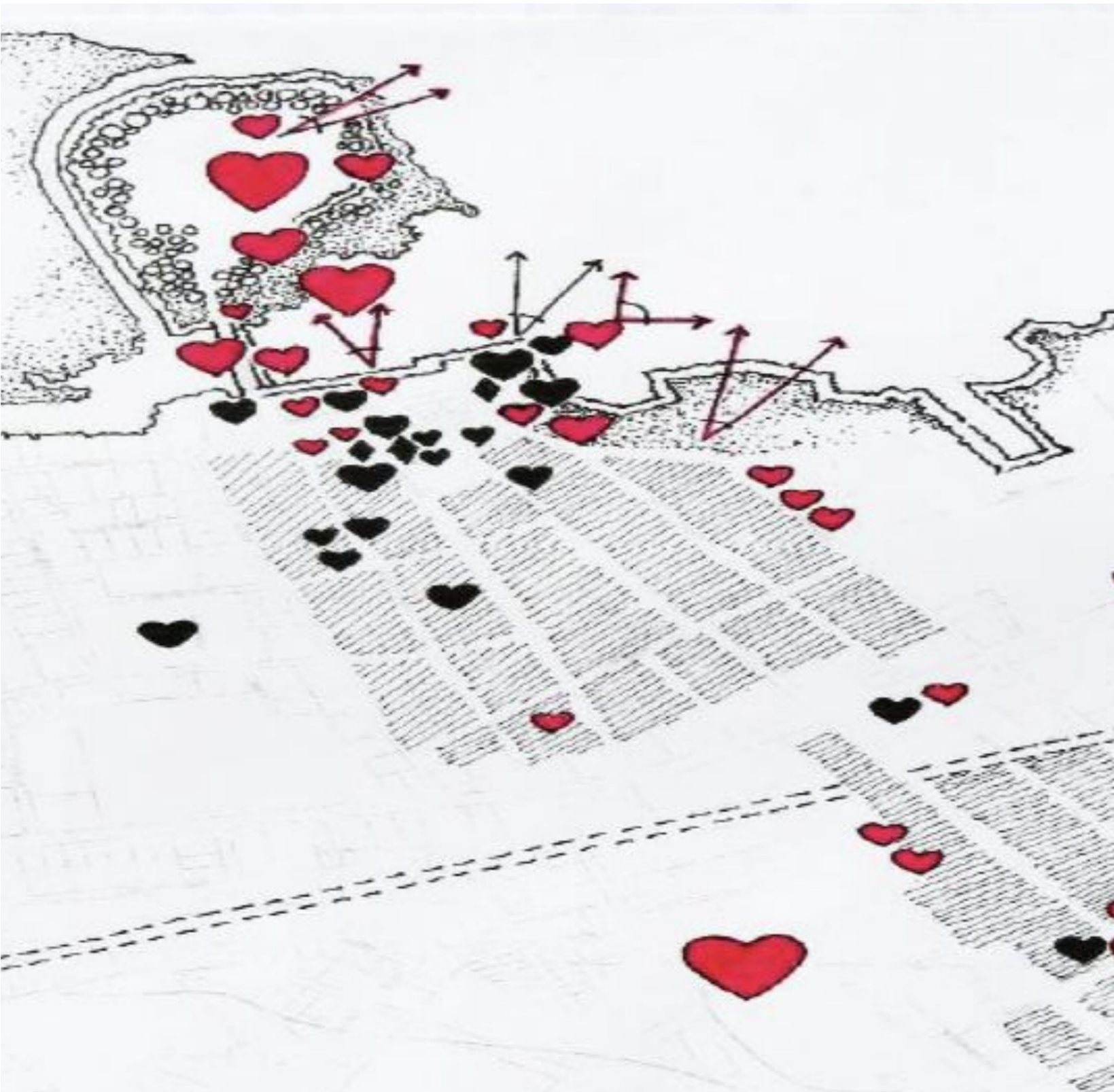
Cultivating civic identity and ‘sacredness’

The 4 Wishes

Thomas, W. I. (1994). The Regulation of the Wishes. *Symbolic Interaction: An Introduction to Social Psychology*, 156.

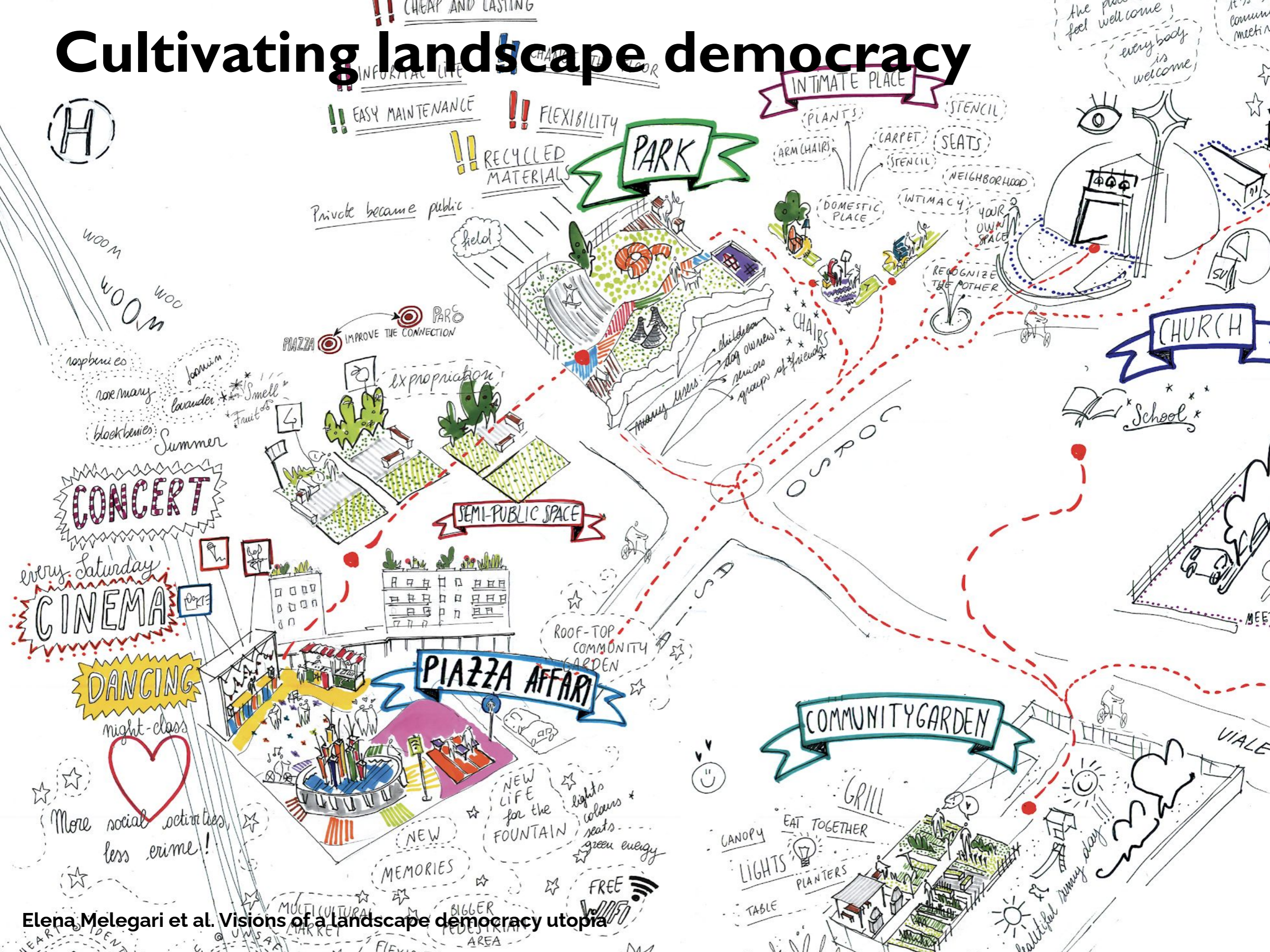
- **Places of Certainty**
 - Home
- **Places of New Experience**
 - Summer Camp
- **Places of Reciprocal Response**
 - Veggie Garden
- **Places of Belonging**
 - Best friends’ hangout

The **theory of the four wishes** posited that all human beings are driven by a set of **connected wishes** mediated by the social and physical landscape. **Socially meaningful landscapes** that fulfil these four wishes become part of a community’s **sacred structure/civic identity**.

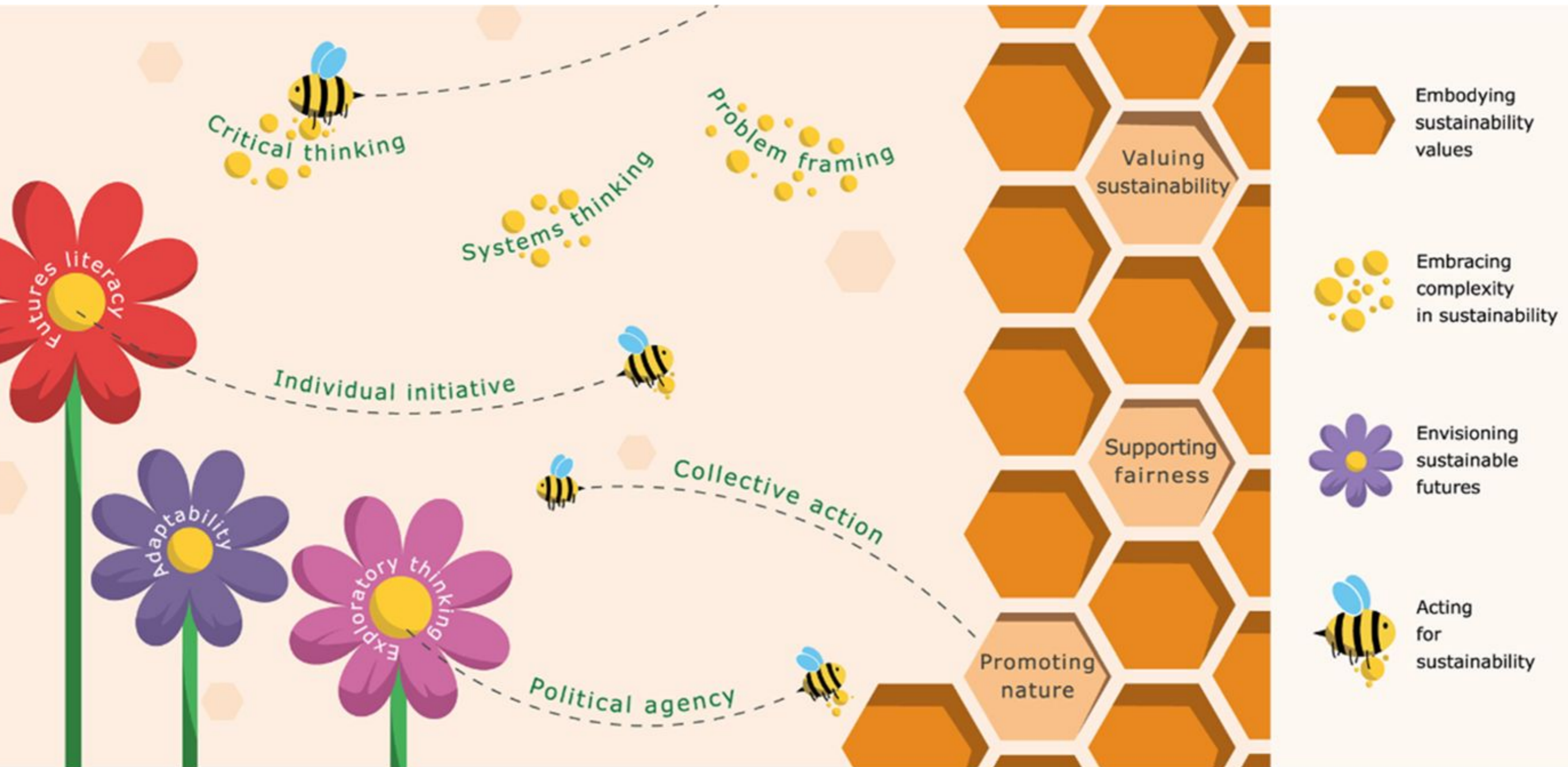


Randy Hester’s “sacred structure mapping” in Manteo, NC (2024). In black, the community’s favorite landscapes in the 1980s, and, in red, the sacred places they have created since.

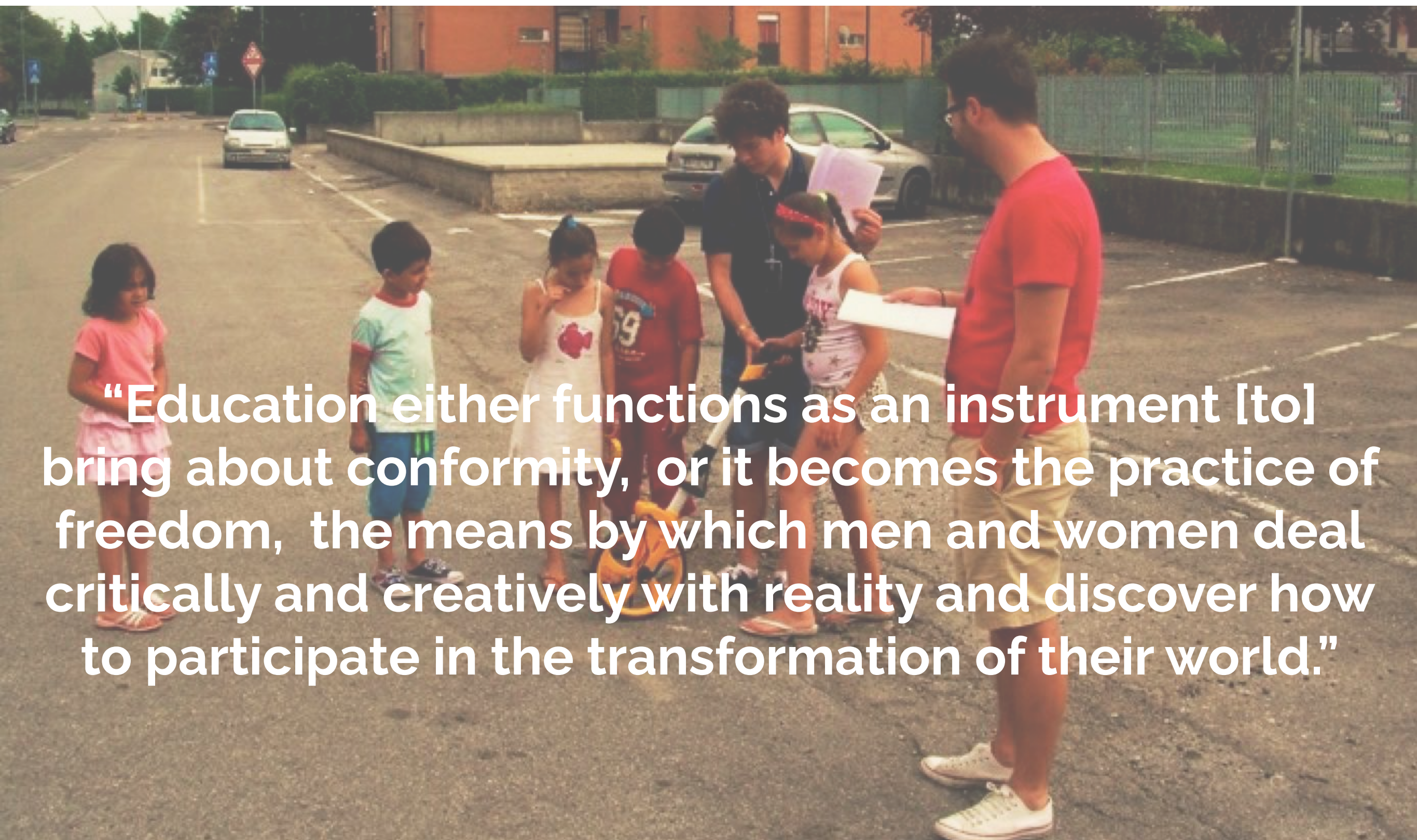
Cultivating landscape democracy



Designers' competences for sustainability

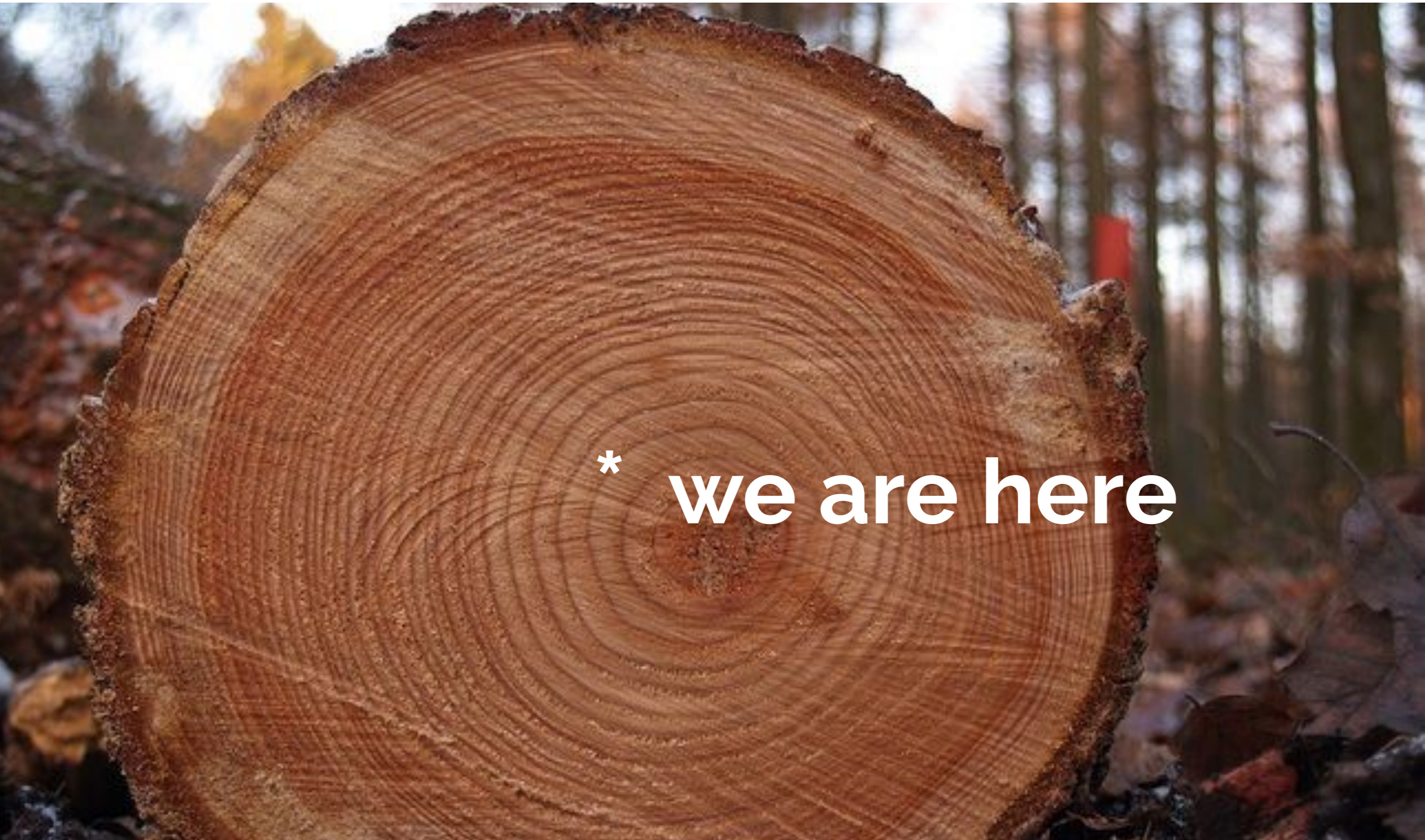


A pedagogy of freedom



“Education either functions as an instrument [to] bring about conformity, or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.”

Landscape democracy requires time



* we are here



OLA

Our Living Labs

Freising Living Lab

Over this summer, IMLA students explore a road segment in Freising, Bavaria



Guimarães Living Lab

For everyone doing the CABULAND & Forum programme

Landscape Forum Guimarães, Portugal

Join us for the forum from May 6 -9, 2026

Advancing landscape knowledge, visioning,
ideation and collaboration



LE:NOTRE Institute
Linking landscape education, research and innovative practice

ECLAS
EUROPEAN COUNCIL OF
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
SCHOOLS

utad UNIVERSIDADE
DE TRÁS-OS-MONTES
E ALTO DOURO

**Laboratório
da Paisagem**



MUNICÍPIO DE
GUIMARÃES

[26] Guimarães 26
European Green Capital

Solidarity Landscape Living Lab

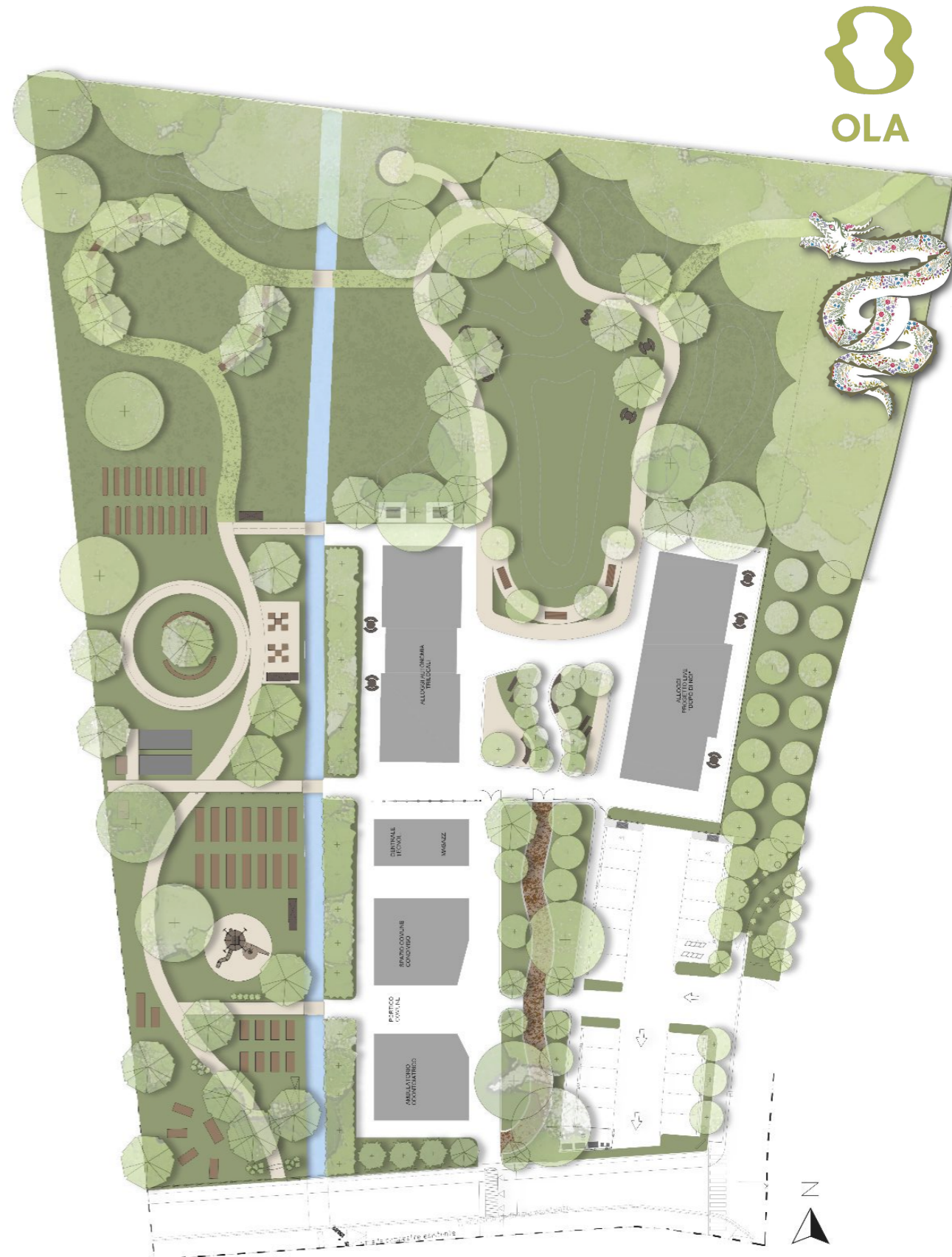
3-10 June, 2026

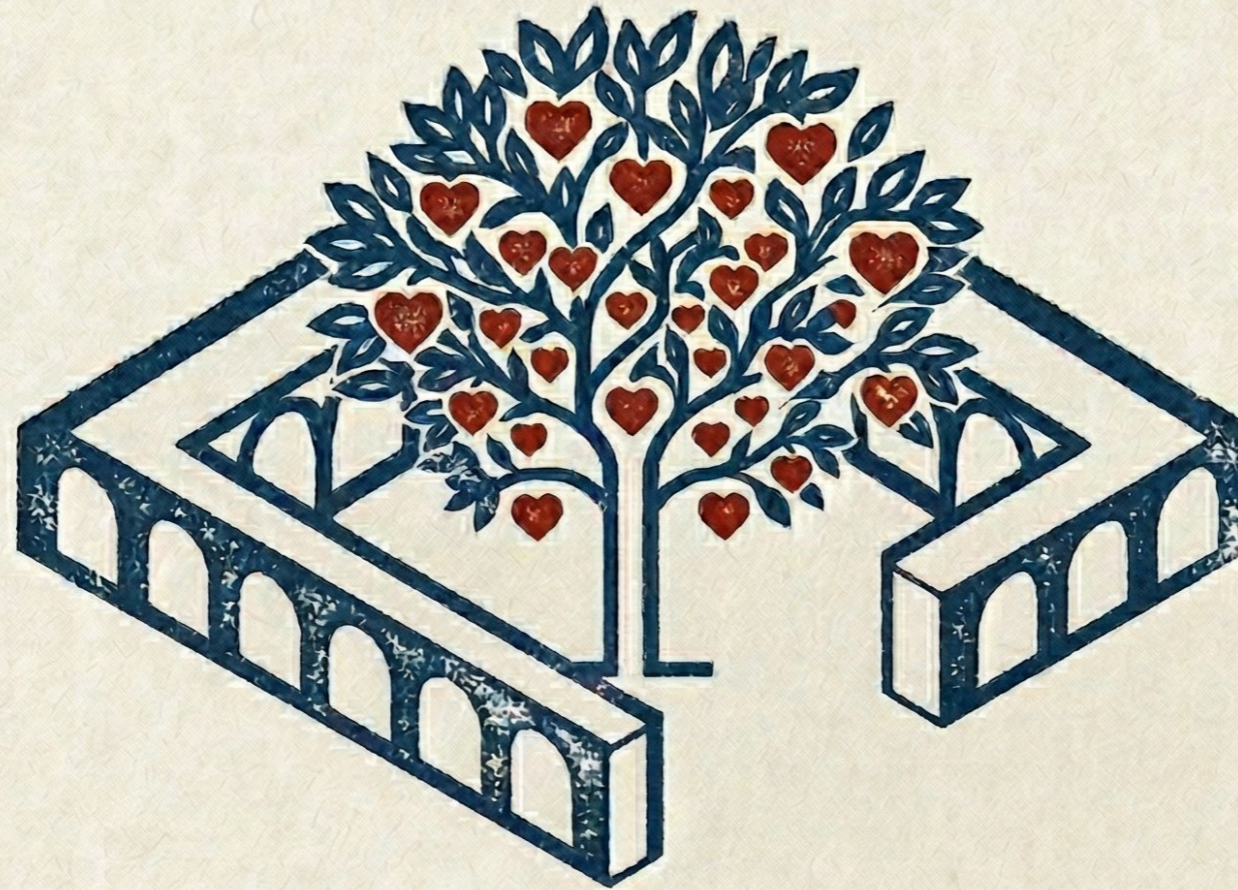
Villaggio Solidale - Consorzio Fa

A social housing project occupying a 1.8 acre (0.7 ha) area for the frail and differently-abled.

Currently our Living Lab is designing a 3 acre (1.2 ha) village expansion and associated landscape experiences.

This summer, we will begin building it!





VICOPELAGO 2.0

International Summer School

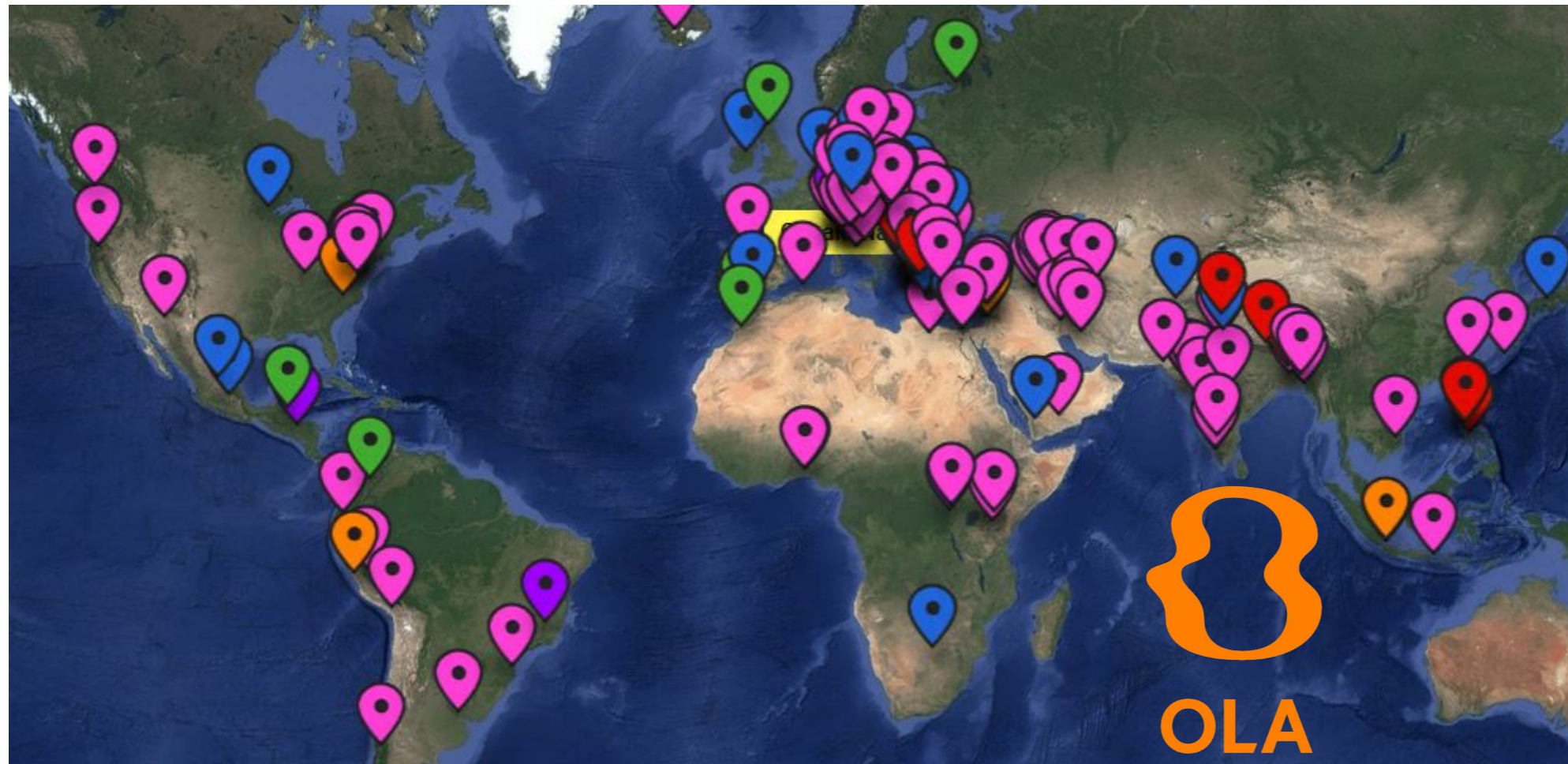
WORKSHOP + SYMPOSIUM

Participatory Processes, social innovation and adaptive reuse for Cultural Heritage of Religious Communities

Lucca (IT), August 30th - September 6th, 2026

And: Your Local Living Labs

Whereever you are, turn your landscape democracy challenges into processes of democratic landscape transformation....



Short Poll



Please open this menti poll under:
<https://www.menti.com/alenjmd4c2ur>

Or via code on menti.com
7397 1988



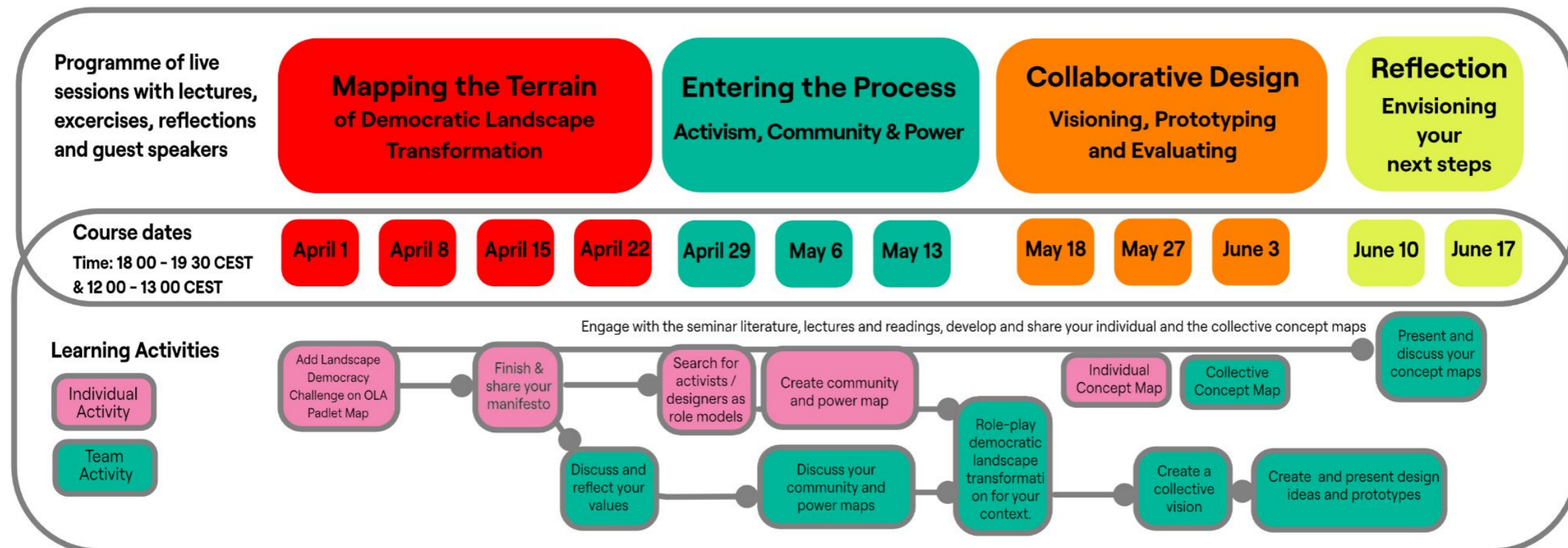
Overview of Course Activities

Weekly Online Meeting with lectures, discussions and learning activities

Course period: April 1 - June 17, 2026, Wednesdays, 18 00 - 19 30 pm CEST

Reflection hour

Wednesdays from 12 00 - 13 00 CEST, live participation from Asia-Pacific possible



One cross-cutting assignment. Each block follows a set of reflections, classroom activities and readings.

OLA Workshops in Villaggio Solidale (June), Guimaraes (May) and possibly Lucca (end of August)

Learning Goals of Unit I

- To understand the concept of democracy based on a dialectical approach to this meta-topic. To know how **public participation and democracy** are related. To become aware of contemporary challenges to democracy in the context of landscape architecture and urban design in relation to a **'right to landscape'** approach.
- To develop an understanding of the **multiple concepts of landscape** and to relate this to the contemporary context of a pluralistic society. Become sensitive to the different attitudes towards open space and also the disparities in access to landscape that exist among different ethnic or socioeconomic groups in community.
- Get introduced to the concept of **Participatory Action Research** as a research strategy relevant for transformative science



What are your next steps?

Assignment from part A:

Building your conceptual understanding of democratic landscape transformation. This is a cross-cutting, two-part assignment.

- Part 1: **Landscape manifesto.** In your manifesto, you will express your very personal and individual beliefs and understanding of landscape democracy. You can use any medium you like. Your manifesto should include visual evidence (photography, graphics, etc) of landscape democracy challenges in your context and/or home country. You are encouraged to refer to your everyday environment. We will share the manifestoes on the seminar wiki. **Due date: 22.04.26**
- Part 2: Working in transnational trios, express your personal understanding of the **relation of landscape and democracy** in the form of a **concept map with linking words** or any other diagrammatic representation. Please make your maps very visual and not just verbal.

Think critically about why one map differs from another.

Due date: 17.06.26 (last session of seminar).



How will the teams work?

Collaboration in groups of three

- You will be mixed in transnational trios.
- In that constellation, you will gradually build up your concept map of democratic landscape transformation.
- You will also share and discuss your individual manifestos.
- Everyone who has submitted a manifesto will be linked to a team of three.
- Within the teams, you decide on one challenge to explore further for the visioning, ideation and prototyping phases.



Readings for phase “A”

Required readings for this unit:

- Faurest, Kristin. ["Listening to Nature - and Each Other."](#)
- Schneidewind, Uwe et al (2016): [Pledge for a Transformative Science - A conceptual framework](#)
- Council of Europe (2000): [The European Landscape Convention](#)
- Shelley Egoz, Karsten Jørgensen, Deni Ruggeri (2018): [Defining Landscape Democracy](#) (Intro + chapters 1-2)
- LED Team (2019): [Landscape Education for Democracy](#) (Chapters 1-3, InBo Special Issue)
- Kühne, Olaf (2015): [Landscape Concepts](#)

Please refer to the course syllabus for links!



Our OLA seminar wiki



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ACADEMY

Online Seminar 2026
OLA Seminar 2026
Learning Objectives
Seminar Assignments
Working Groups
Reading List
Concepts
Editing Help

The OLA Project
(2022-2025)

About OLA
OLA Team
Monitoring

OLA Living Labs
Romagna Living Lab
Athens Living Lab
Budapest-Vác Living Lab
Villaggio Solidale Living Lab

Past seminars

OLA Seminar 2025
OLA Seminar 2024
OLA Seminar 2023

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Seminar Democratic Landscape Transformation 2026

Dear landscape democracy enthusiasts,

We invite you to another journey across landscape, democracy, co-creation and collective visioning!

- Are you a planning or design student interested in learning how to create more inclusive, open and democratic landscapes?
- Are you educating planners and designers and interested in meeting peers with similar interests?
- Do you want to make your own local landscape a more inclusive, socially productive and resilient space?

Then participate in the [Open Landscape Academy](#) seminars: an exciting way to earn credits and strengthen important professional skills.

[Register now](#)

Upcoming online seminar:

- Our next open online seminar will start on **Wednesday, April 1, 2026** and finishes on **June 16, 2026**
- Live sessions will be on Wednesdays from 18 00 - 19 30 CEST
- In addition, we will meet weekly from 12 00 - 13 00 CEST for discussion and recap, and involvement of participants from other time zones
- [Meet our team](#)
- The 2026 onsite programme (optional) will take place in Guimarães Portugal, from May 4 - 9, 2026 as part of the [Landscape Forum](#) and the CABULAND project.
- We invite interested universities to join our annual platform together with their students and local communities.
- For any further information please email us under [info\(at\)openlandscapeacademy.org](mailto:info(at)openlandscapeacademy.org)
- For more details and an overview of the program, see another section of this Wiki: [Towards the Open Landscape Academy](#)

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1 [Collaborating for Democratic Landscape Transformation](#)

Online Seminar & Guimarães Workshop

Democratic Landscape Transformation

Online from April 1 - June 16, 2026
Wednesdays 18 00 - 19 30 CET
Reflection time for other time zones: 12 00 - 13 00 CET
Onsite during the Landscape Forum in Guimarães from May 4 - 9

Democratic Landscape Transformation is a semester-long international online seminar. It is part of the emerging Open Landscape Academy (OLA).
This online course is open for a wide and global audience.

openlandscapeacademy.org

Funded by the European Union CABULAND OPEN LANDSCAPE ACADEMY

Course announcement 2026

Programme of five sessions with lectures, exercises, reflections and guest speakers

- Mapping the Terrain of Democratic Landscape Transformation
- Entering the Process Activism, Community & Power
- Collaborative Design Visioning, Prototyping and Evaluating
- Reflection Envisioning your next steps

Course dates: 18:00 - 19:30 CEST & 12:00 - 13:00 CEST

Learning Activities

A digital resource with a lot of heritage. Do not get confused :-)
The wiki supports the course activities.
Every team will have its own page. Editing access will be shared soon.

https://ledwiki.hfwu.de/index.php?title=Seminar_Democratic_Landscape_Transformation_2026

When we meet next

April 8, 2026 @18:00 CEST

**Introduction to democracy,
landscape and related concepts**

