



The aftermath of NPA's PTT

Ragna Dagbjört Davíðsdóttir & Anita Rübberdt 15.-25.2.2024

What was the best thing?

The Icelandic two women's crew - Ragna Dagbjört Davíðsdóttir & Anita Rübberdt - was absolutely thrilled about NPA's PTT held in Feb. 2024 - both in regard to the course' content, the teachers' teaching methods and the time schedule during the course. The teachers were professionals that with their playful joy for life knew how to push an intrapersonal human being - with humbleness! - out of their box.

Joining the course with different goals in mind, Ragna and Anita quickly found out that they were in for a surprise: The diversity of participants alone, thrown together in a tight space, some of us trying to take some space whilst leaving some for others to share and exchange, was deeply instructive. Together with the teachers' enormous backpack full of methods and tools, we are today equipped for a wide range of teaching - whether it be permaculture or in other fields.



Something that threw us off guard in the beginning, was the 2h lunch break: Why are we throwing away precious time in the middle of the day? But we learned quickly that a good "lunch break" means not only to fill our bellies with delicious locally grown and homemade food á la Kerstin. It also contained the possibility for a rest for body and mind, to mingle with other participants and last but not least a nice walk outside at the best time of the day and to recharge our batteries for the afternoon and evening sessions.

What did we learn?

We joined the course with different backgrounds; Ragna, an Earthcare enthusiast with both knowledge and experience in that field and Anita, a through and through Peoplecare person but only just grasping the understanding of how important that phenomena in permaculture really is.

To start with, we learned how to understand our physical needs when learning and what helps us take in knowledge in the first place (where and how is the teaching taking place and how do we individually get the best learning outcome (intelligence test)).

The River of Life exercise not only helped us understand ourselves better, it made us realize (and remember!) why we were at the course in the first place, and who the other participants were.



There is neither space nor need to list down all the new teaching methods and tools gained during the course. The teachers' backpacks were fully loaded to give us all we could possibly need for our future teaching experiments. Some should nevertheless be mentioned since they took more space during the course and stuck with us the most:

- To increase the learner's well-being during the course, it is important to make sure that they know the course' structure (breaks, class code, physical needs, space for input, what's on today).
- What are your learning expectations? Setting goals helps us reach them!
- Beginning the day with a morning circle, a song, stretches and/or a quick evaluation of the last day gives us a positive start into the day 😊
- The 30% rule helps us keep our audience engaged and not take up too much space from the learner. Ask open questions, involve the learner and let them find the answers themselves!
- Use the location, teach outside when possible, involve the surroundings!
- Body language helps us read into the learner group and express ourselves.
- The Mango Tree helps us stay on track while gathering topics for later. Remember to pick the mangos at the end of the course/session!
- Do typos and spelling really matter when learning about a completely different topic?
- Debriefing and appraising helps us evaluate ourselves and think forward. Observational and constructive feedback! The Dirty Sandwich is a somewhat delicious way of remembering how to

positively wrap in things that need working on (positive-negative-positive).

- If the learner doesn't understand the teacher, the teacher lacks the method: Find a way to teach so the learner understands!
- Things that make people remember: telling stories, games, using sounds/pictures/drawings/movement, involving the learners by letting them answer questions.
- Minimizing personal opinions helps us stay on track and get to the point!
- Conflicts or issues can be used as learning opportunities.



Ragna's big eye-opener during the course was Peoplecare and the fact that to reach success for environmental issues we need to take care of each other first because:

“Social problems make environmental problems.”



Anita's big learning outcome was: I don't have to know it all! While thinking pre-course that I would deepen my permaculture knowledge, I realized it was rather a desire of mine than a possible learning outcome. As a person without access to land my knowledge about soil and food production was rather experimental. But as we were taught during the course: Permaculture is not about individuals creating food forests in every corner of the world but about working together, with each other and with nature and striving for the harmonious integration of humans and other beings.

How will we use it in the future?

Just like Ragna and Anita went into the course with different learning expectations, we both come out with different future goals of what we have learned:

Ragna will be able to use the knowledge both in daily life, at the job and, if dreams come true, to teach different courses about our environment, gardening and food production for children and adults. Already 2 weeks after the course I have used some of the learned material in my work as a school director of an educational institution in the East of Iceland. My position means to communicate with both teachers and students and even teach both. Some of the tools already used during that time are The Dirty Sandwich and to offer more flexibility towards the students and their learning intelligence. With the beautiful surroundings of the school, I will indeed use them even more in my future teaching sessions.

As a board member of the Icelandic Permaculture Association, Anita's main goal with the PTT was to gain more courage and understanding on how to communicate permaculture. The course gave me just that! During the daily discussions in class about new methods and tools my horizon about teaching was widened. In addition, the micro-teachings gave me a place to practice and try out those methods, designing my own teaching sessions. For the future, I will have the courage to explain permaculture to people who show interest (or not), lead info meetings for the permaculture association and maybe even teach an introduction course to permaculture. In my current life, in a leading position at a private Kindergarten in Reykjavik, I am currently preparing a staff meeting where I will implement some of the newly learned tools - because they are not only tools useful for teaching permaculture but for all kinds of teaching and meetings where positive communication is the goal.



There is something we, Ragna and Anita, have in common: We were both teachers going into the PTT and we are even bigger ones after the course, with more calm and more confidence!

Thank you, Cathrine & Andreas & Alfred!

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