

## ***GreenHaus: A radical pedagogical model for HEIs***

### ***What is your field of activity / competence?***

Eco-pedagogies, eco-literacy, creative arts education, teaching and learning practices, design thinking, design for change, art practice, entrepreneurship, psychology

### **Introduction**

We are now living in a world where our exploitation of the natural world is reaping unforeseen consequences: from our diminishing biodiversity, to soil erosion, to the overheating of our planet. The past 18 months have illustrated how our abuse of the delicate structures of our ecosystem has unleashed mutating viruses, illness and created social and economic disorder. What can we do as educators, artists and designers to address the after-effects of COVID and to contribute, urgently and meaningfully to the catastrophe of climate change? Our learning community has been fragmented and dispersed over the past 18 months, our on-site activities and socialising relegated to isolated and distant places, distant from each other physically and emotionally. We need to regroup, to be restored, not as we were, but in radically different, ethical, configurations.

The emergence of B (Benefit) Corporations within the last decade has introduced ideas of accountability, sustainability and ethics to businesses and corporate institutions. Certified B corporations have had to commit to ambitious environmental targets, meet higher accountability standards, and be able to demonstrate the social value of their business activities and therefore not only answerable to shareholders. B Corporations have had an increasingly influential role in the development of business practices (although most markedly in the United States) and are leading change in business development but also in the teaching of business.

Our central question is: what would a B Corporation model look like for education? What difficulties are there with the B Corporation model and how might we interrogate, adapt and radicalise this model within an eco-pedagogy? We are proposing to work with similar partners across the EU to explore and develop a governance, ethical and accountable framework organised around pedagogy, environmentalism and climate change at higher education institutions (HEIs). We envisage an award or accreditation model (similar to Athena Swan for diversity and equality) with goals and standards that HEIs would need to meet and that are informed by the UN's goals for sustainability.

Working across the EU with educational partners we would like to devise a GreenHaus Award that addresses a HEI's commitment to sustainability across a number of different areas. This is not just about recycling or retrofitting buildings but a radical pedagogical rethink about how we embed sustainability into our teaching and learning practices. How do we take ownership of our campus green spaces? How do we use our grounds to promote outdoor learning? How do we redesign current programmes to embed green philosophies and green thinking? What new pedagogical methods and frameworks must we anticipate in order to meet future needs and challenges? How do we benchmark different disciplinary approaches and methodologies within GreenHaus ethics and commitments?

What are some of the ways in which we would like the idea of a GreenHaus Award to develop? We are interested in ideas of bio-regionalism as a growing recognition of the importance of ecosystem resilience and also to human-material engagements. How do we design future practices that are relational, ethical and nourishing? What do we mean by eco-literacy and its attendant philosophies of eco-connectedness, eco-literate design thinking, and eco-literate pedagogical practices? We are committed to principles of collaboration, transparency, ethics, fiscal responsibility and seek to develop pedagogical models of excellence that are inclusive, socially just and intergenerational

At IADT we are proposing that we run a small prototype for the GreenHaus framework that would pilot our rethinking of creative pedagogies as sustainable, ethical, and community practices, and as a way of testing and trialling what it means to centre our teaching and learning practices around environmental philosophies and practices. In all philosophical traditions, natural spaces play an important role in mental and emotional wellbeing. From ancient times, ideas of co-living with nature, have influenced religious practice and ritual, as well as artistic and literary expression. The paradigms of the Enlightenment are countered with the significance

of the natural world – both the impulse to conquer and name but also to delight in and be inspired by nature. Within Western thinking we have held within us these two oppositional impulses: to exploit and to preserve.

We are an institute of learning specialising in creative arts education alongside programmes in psychology, the humanities and entrepreneurship. We are unique in the way in which we think about the adjacencies and connections between our programmes. We are informed by the urgency of embedding environmental aspects to our teaching, not only to offset our carbon footprint and to think more sustainably but also because eco-anxiety is real and experienced by our staff and students, many of whom feel powerless and impotent about the catastrophe of climate change.

Nestled between a church and a primary school we are situated in a settled, older part of the city but yet our campus has often been cut off from the local neighbourhood. Once an industrial, correctional school, our older buildings were once used to house children who were also uprooted from their own communities. We still have the vestiges of their orchard and gardens. Our pilot project aligns with thinking with local and metropolitan planning agencies and local and national biodiversity and ecology goals. The concept of the decolonised curriculum of the

This pilot pedagogical project is centered on developing three interlinking spaces on our campus to rewrite and rethink a green pedagogy, in other words, to build an actual vibrant GreenHaus. Our thinking is informed by ancient practices but also sits within more recent Irish history in the existence of the Hedge School. In ancient cultures, outdoor spaces were often constructed around three distinct but interlinking areas each with a particular significance: for crops and sustenance, for meditation and teaching, and for regeneration and ecological resilience. Within Irish history the emergence of the Hedge School in the C18th and C19th was a pedagogical response to the outlawing of certain types of teaching within the colonial curriculum. Subjects forbidden in the official schools were instead taught, quite literally, under hedges and trees. These subjects included the Irish language, local history and folklore, topography, literature and subject-matter deemed 'incendiary' within a colonised and centralised curriculum. The example of the Hedge School resonates with the ancient use of outdoor spaces for regeneration, resilience and teaching and is central to our plans for radical green pedagogies.

### ***Key Activities: Our GreenHaus Project as a Pilot***

Our plan is to create three interlinking green spaces on campus.

- **Wild Pedagogy and Creative Arts Education:** A Pocket Forest as a teaching and learning glade for creative practitioners, and to deliver modules in our MA Design for Change modules as well as embedding ecological thinking within all of our programmes. The philosophy of wild pedagogy is informed by the work of Bob Jickling, Sean Blenkinsop, Nora Timmerman and M. Dannann Sitka-Sage (eds) *Wild Pedagogies: Touchstones for Renegotiating Education and the Environment in the Anthropocene*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018. In collaboration with the social enterprise group Reforest Nation, the proposal is to plant trees native to Ireland: willow, oak, hawthorn, rúan, hazel, cherry, and alder. The Miyawaki method, pioneered by the Japanese botanist 40 years ago is recognised as the most effective means of restoring biodiversity in urban dwellings.
- **Community and Sustainability:** A Community/Kitchen Garden tended by our staff and students with benefits to our canteen, local community, adjacent primary school, teacher education centre, and social entrepreneurs, in addition to nourishing our thinking around sustainability, food cultures, and mental health.
- **Biodiversity:** A Biodiverse Space: To enhance the existing landscaping, with an emphasis on biodiversity and rewilding, for relaxation, mediation, and play, for example the cultivation and harvesting of sustainable materials for practitioners, experiment and showcasing of art practices, temporal sculptures, installations, and art trail.

***Intended reach:***

Local/national/European/Global

***Describe the types of activity your organisation intends***

To prototype and trial the introduction of eco-literacy models and eco-pedagogy frameworks through the repurposing, redesign and use of our green spaces on campus. We wish to develop a model that can be used within a proposed GreenHaus award for educational institutions that takes account of an institution's commitment to stewardship (of land), connections to communities, and a radical rethinking of creative arts pedagogies that may be utilised within other disciplinary frameworks and methodologies, and potentially at all levels of the curriculum from primary school to life-long learning.

***Indicate key subjects you may be focusing on***

Eco-Pedagogies, Eco-Literacy; Educational Excellence and Ethics, Design for Outdoor Spaces, Technology and Sustainability; Sustainability and Creative Arts Practice, Re-Greening the City, Creating Inclusive Communities

***Proposed timing and scale of activities***

2021-2023

***How many people do you expect to reach?***

Local (campus, community), Metropolitan (to influence the larger city of Dublin), national (to lead in this space in Irish HEIs), European (to build meaningful collaborations with partners); Global (to develop a model that can be adapted by any HEI).

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