



Group Assembly Process (GAP) - Stirring Paper

Subsistence and Sufficiency – Which skills support these attributes of a post-growth culture and how do we have to encourage and embed them further in the sector of education?

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Claim:

There is no lack of insight and knowledge, it is the lack of determination and skill. We need the space for people to learn to experience head, heart and hand as a union again.

At the beginning of the 21st century we are confronted not only with an explosion in available knowledge, but at the same time we are at a loss of concrete skills of acting and creating on a practical level of experience and production of sustenance like food, clothes, shelter and community.

The way of life that relies entirely on material supplies by strangers in today's growth culture distances the people more and more from its natural foundations, and also from the normal way of learning, namely through experience, that is a result of action and imitation. Our systems of education, information, and consumption are characterized by apparent perfection, precise answers, clear structure, universal properties and finished products. This culture spreads globally with breath-taking speed. Processes connected to this culture lead us to believe that we can do everything without having to. All you need is to acquire necessary funds. Consumption is a ritual and underlying qualities and needs are not necessarily conscious.

In order to meet concrete needs in a globalized world supplied by strangers no locally cultivated skills and no experience based knowledge and abilities are necessary.

Therefore self-organization, self-creation, do-it-yourself, and try-it-yourself are experienced by fewer and fewer people, and hence respective potentials and skills go untapped. Society's realities of "everything always" and supposedly unlimited global mobility are ever expanding in our culture and more and more they are being taken for granted. As a consequence we witness a strong tendency towards escapism and discontinuity. Lacking the experience of slow cycles and processes, continuity, local connectedness, living life-cycles and embeddedness is a normality for large parts of society.

The long lasting trend of urban gardening that developed a few years ago illustrates a growing countermovement, which is especially characterized by the mixed experience of meaningful work, empowering, social interaction and community. Often an inner

resistance motivates the people to submit themselves to the dependency and enforced conformity in the existing system of growth. Especially this motivates an increasing number of people to engage with self-sufficiency again.

According to modern brain research, the development of our potential depends on the way in which we use our brain. Particular importance is put on our motor and fine motor experiences and areas of practice. Already the carpenter Hugo Kükelhaus realized more than 50 years ago the necessity for the use of all of our senses for holistic learning.

A degrowth culture will be a culture of locality and self organization, a culture of self-limitation out of intelligence, as well as a richness of diversity. There will be a much greater diversity, as it will be designed to last at much more places, by much more people at the same time. This culture will be designed by confident people, who rely on their own experiences, are diversely educated, creative, reflective, self-organized and solidary. Less available energy will lead to an increase in local interaction and innovation in order to balance the less easily available resources through joined-up thinking, feeling and intelligently designed actions.

In order to achieve these competences for action, design competences and participation competences need to be increasingly supported and encouraged. These competences need to be accompanied by general ethics of concern about people and the planet, as well as a lived culture of sharing and simple beauty.

Subsistence also entails that we perform by our own hands a large part of what is necessary to maintain and reproduce life. Necessary skills need experience and proficiency more than information. Proficiency comes from practice, i.e. repeated performance. Craft and art, working with matter, playing with different material will have a central role. Subsistence is not only farming. The term will be extended to all aspects of life - economic (food, clothing, housing, mobility, exchange), ecological (soil, water, regrowing raw materials, energy) and social (family, community, politics, law), including the ordinary, such as food preparation.

Sufficiency is the ability to assess how much one really needs to lead a happy life among equal peers and free of deprivation. It is about the reasonable amount in the context of the insight that we borrowed the earth from our descendants. This requires that we can experience to be embedded in a natural system and to be dependent on it, to create, and thereby to enlarge, through our own acts, our well-being and our freedom to act.

We need a culture of experimentation, of do-it-yourself, of the physical, a kind of a culture of deeds, where life becomes art. A culture of continuous shaping, in which humans are not only empowered, but also enabled to experience and integrate their own ability to create.

Which are questions to work with?

What is involved in experience based learning in the context of post-growth?

Which fields of learning can be named?

How would we shape spaces necessary for such experiences?

Which content is particularly relevant for the transition between growth and post-growth culture?

How would we differentiate between competence to act, to shape and to participate?

Which demands can be derived for educational policy?

Which scientific emphasis can be derived and what are adequate methods?

How can we leave behind our thinking about growth and contraction and transition to concrete acts and how can we come to let go?