

Independent Resource Centre Govan

Sheet ⑧ Invitation to Trainers and Educators

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Common Good Awareness Project –Farmhouse Resource Centre

We are looking for partners, trainers, learners in our farmhouse project in discovering the many disciplines and critical connections that will help set up our project learning environment. From the social sciences to the hard sciences. How the garden connects with science, physics, chemistry, geography, biology and so on. We want to include as much community participation in the planning, building and documentation of the project as is possible.

How do we make economics interesting by connecting it to real situations. How do we connect and transfer the organising and skills learned in our garden to other areas of our lives. Renewable energy, off-grid technology, IT, are fast becoming the new community staples, yet like architecture we generally know little about them. This work will help to establish an education policy for planning and developing our building and its eventual use.

The first project of 2014 will be to perform the Participatory Action Research consultation with the community to broaden interest in the wider community.

We are inviting ideas from and offering fieldwork for students, tradespeople, members of the community with different skills and possibilities of mentoring young folk, in teaching them new skills, through the process of a real working idea. If you are a philosopher, poet, writer, journalist, lawyer, broadcaster, interested in the development of learning spaces within the community experience – Think you can help. Please get in touch. We are happy to meet up with your group, department and individually, to answer questions, do a presentation and talk to you about our project, for your general interest. Please pass to any other folk, communities, groups you think may be interested.

Rethinking Education

As business more and more influences what is taught in schools, universities and further education. Part of the educational process is to transfer mutual aid that was part of working class culture, particularly in poorer places to “social enterprise” and other jargonised titles which collectively mean converting community solidarity into business models.

For some, the two basic principle instruments for control of working class communities are education and the police. What education fails to instill in the pupil, in complying to economic systems that relate little to peoples lives or needs – the police will take care of.

PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

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Where: Place Based Learning

- Learning takes place on-site in the local community and environment.
- Learning focuses on local themes, systems and content.
- Learning is personally relevant to the learner.
- Learning experiences contribute to the community's vitality and environmental quality.
- Learning is supported by strong and varied partnerships with local organisations, groups and stakeholders.
- Learning is interdisciplinary.
- Learning experiences are tailored to the local audience.
- Learning is grounded in and supports the development of a love for one's place.
- Local learning serves as the foundation for understanding and participating appropriately in regional and global issues.

Intellectual life

"We rented a garret, for which we paid (I think) 25s. A year, bought a few second-hand forms and desks, borrowed a few chairs from the people in the house, bought a shillings worth of coals, had the gas (which was already in the house) laid on at the cost of a few shillings, and started our College. We did not advertise it in the newspapers or on the streets, for we could not afford to do that, but we invited all our friends and acquaintances to join us, and in a few days we had about twenty members.... We had no men of position or education connected with us, and I believe we were better without them, but several of the students who had made special study of some particular subject were appointed teachers, so that the teacher of one class might be a pupil in another."

Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes (Rose)

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As Mark Twain reminds us – we should never let school get in the way of our education. Most of what we learn doesn't happen in school. If a pupil took the day off to read a book that made a profound impact on her, she would more than likely be disciplined than congratulated on her initiative. This is not the teachers fault. School today is designed for mass learning in classes that are too big to give individual students the support that they need to explore potential that doesn't fit the pre-set curriculum. This kind of learning is best suited to apprenticeships, mentoring and communications with others in a basis of mutual respect, love and the search of knowledge.

Open Learning

Education for life is that, which is accrued at the nearest point to the experience we are learning from. The difference between Participatory Action Research and Consultation, is, in one, you actually participate in what is actually happening, in the other you are asked to choose from a series of pre-set ideas. In the case of planners consultations. Consulting, only to find consensus in a plan already hatched. The same can be true of learning and formal education.

Open learning works like the "Free university" and will bring together those who want to learn, with those who want to teach and the places the teaching will be carried out. The subjects will be open to the pupils and the educators and the educators in one class can also be the pupils in another. Learning will be based on useful practical skills and the venues could be in the open, some ones house, community centre, local library or wherever space can be found.

These ideas will start small in order that some kind of structure can be formed in how they can be organised. The idea will be to encourage community learning and activities that will strengthen the social base and open opportunities for involvement in community life and organisation.

Open learning hopes to draw from teachers, artists, activists, scholars, writers, and students dedicated to the idea of education for the sake of education. We will invite new students, those already involved in such ideas and the community, to join us in forming a free and open learning environment around camaraderie and critical thinking. The educational strategy will be around the commons and the common good fund. About enriching the human commons and understanding how important it is to maintain our commons and make it grow. Our emphasis will be around learning for life. One-to-one mentoring and small group projects and with an emphasis to include those academically isolated through formal education.

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How we will go about it:

As a free project working to uphold values of education for the sake of education, we will be operating on a totally volunteer basis and we need rent-free spaces to carry out workshops and classes. This will also offer the opportunity for involvement and collaboration by groups and venues operating in different parts of the community of being engaged and spreading inclusion.

Proposals for topics and ideas can be arranged by a submissions group who will be responsible for times venues and networking information to outlying supporters for distribution. Workshop structure would be built around folks interests, experiences and what they could offer. We will encourage multi skilling and task swapping.

Workshops could accommodate different age groups. This work will form the basis of creating a pool of folk young and old with a handle on ideas of how the city works and how communities can be part of forming the questions of what community life should be about.

There are so many ideas, resources, groups and opportunities for learning open to us and that people could benefit from knowing about. The “City User Manual”, a sub project, is about finding out where they are and how they can be used. For instance.

“Learning The City” workshops and training

How to use available resources. Visits to government buildings, libraries, university departments, local groups, history walks, writing, oral history, interviewing, researching, organising workshops, media training and making a radio program. A typical workshop could be any one or a selection of these things.

The purpose of these workshops is to as well as learning, is to produce educators who can teach skills to others. Learning, has a lot to do with relationships of people as well as thought and things. If we understand these relationships we can place value on them – which in turn is what forms in us the urge to learn more about them.