

REST_ART
ZELENA AKCIJA



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Overview

In an era where environmental challenges, particularly plastic pollution, demand urgent action, innovative approaches are essential to galvanize public interest and drive systemic change. This educational material draws upon the successful strategies employed by Zelena Akcija (Green Action/Friends of the Earth Croatia), offering a comprehensive guide to integrating advocacy, art and community engagement for environmental organizations. By using the power of activism—where art meets activism—this guide aims to inspire activists, educators, and community leaders to foster environmental awareness and drive the fight against plastic pollution towards effective solutions through the medium of art.

Introduction

The escalating crisis of plastic pollution poses a significant threat to our planet, affecting marine life, ecosystems, and human health. Addressing this issue requires more than traditional environmental campaigns; it calls for a creative and multifaceted approach that can captivate and educate the public, encouraging them to act. This is where the concept of activism comes into play, offering an innovative pathway to communicate the urgency of the environmental crisis while promoting sustainable practices and policy changes.

Zelena Akcija/Friends of the Earth Croatia, with its rich history of environmental advocacy and community mobilization, exemplifies the potential of activism. Through its engagement in non-violent direct actions, educational projects, and participation in global networks, Zelena Akcija has been at the forefront of promoting environmental sustainability and justice. This material incorporates their methodologies, aiming to equip youth workers and other stakeholders with the tools to inspire and implement change in their communities and beyond.

By focusing on art and performance as mediums to highlight the issues of plastic pollution, we can reach a wider audience, eliciting emotional responses and a deeper understanding of the impact of our consumption habits. This guide encourages the adoption of an interdisciplinary approach that combines art, science, and activism to not only raise awareness but also pressure local governments and international bodies to adopt more sustainable policies and practices.

As the exploration of Zelena Akcija's strategies and successes unfolds, this material will delve into the effective engagement of communities, utilization of volunteer networks and fostering partnerships aimed at amplifying the collective voice against plastic pollution. Through activism, a powerful movement for environmental protection and systemic change can be created, guiding society towards a socially just future.

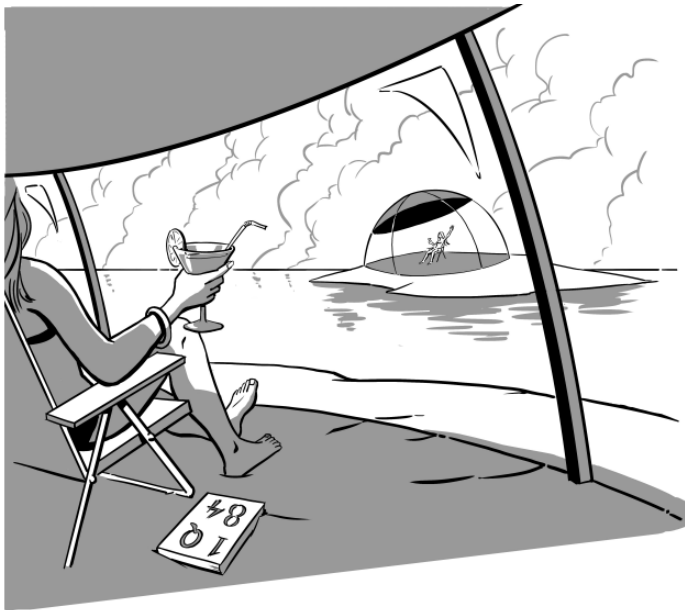
Good Practices and Interdisciplinary Approaches

Integrating Climate Fiction for Empathy and Understanding

"Homo Climaticum" intentionally selecting "homo"—Latin for "human"—to embody a gender-neutral characteristic, diverging from its traditionally masculine connotation. This concept emerges the urgent need to embed climate change awareness, combat, and adaptation into the very fabric of our societies and civilization. The stark reality we face is that without a concerted effort in these areas, our society, perhaps our entire civilization, risks extinction. To navigate and communicate these critical issues, we've turned to "climate fiction" or "cli-fi" as a medium. This collection features stories and poems from a diverse group of contributors, ranging from amateur writers to professional authors, activists to scientists, and laypeople, all offering their unique perspectives on climate change and its multifaceted implications for our society (*Homo Climaticum*, 2017).

Incorporating climate fiction, such as stories and poems from works like "Homo Climaticum," into educational and activism programs significantly deepen participants' understanding of the complexities and impacts of climate change. By transporting readers to futures altered by climate change or portraying characters grappling with environmental catastrophes, cli-fi makes the vast issue of climate change tangible and relatable, stirring empathy for affected lives. Simultaneously, it challenges readers to contemplate ethical dilemmas and the moral weight of decisions surrounding climate action.

Integrating the storytelling and diverse narratives of "Homo Climaticum" into educational and activism initiatives presents a powerful method to enrich participants' comprehension of climate change and its intricate effects.



Two

Nada Topić

the two never touch by accident
they live on opposite sides of the world
and splash their feet in their own tepid oceans
if thirsty, they carve away at the pointy tip of an
iceberg
and toast each other from afar
the sea level then rises and drowns a couple of tiny
islands
which they used to rest their white elbows on
when a slice of the Amazon jungle or the Russian tundra
disappears
nobody suspects their acid hunger
humanity takes a plane to Japan
sits around the table in Kyoto
and solemnly swears to reduce gas emissions
meanwhile
the two tour the Japanese temples
they chat with Murakami and drink rice wine
lying on the shore on a Sunday evening
they whisper in both of his ears
Haruki, do not be afraid of global warming
the Earth is a woman in love
and no one can stop the rotating fiery ball
at the centre of her body¹

¹ 'photo and poet retrieved from Homo Climaticum, Zelena akcija/FoE Croatia's and Booksa's climate fiction competition 2017'

This approach, central to climate fiction or cli-fi, serves as a crucial educational tool, drawing from a wealth of perspectives provided by writers from various backgrounds — be it amateurs, professionals, activists, or scientists. Such a broad spectrum of views helps illustrate the extensive reach of climate change, affecting different facets of life and society across geographical and socio-economic spectrums. Cli-fi, through its narrative diversity, not only educates but also engages readers on a profound level, allowing them to perceive climate change as a complex, multi-dimensional challenge that demands a collective and informed response.

Leveraging Visual Arts for Environmental Conversation

Using visual arts, including posters from Environmental Film Festivals, as a conduit for environmental discussion, invites a unique exploration of ecological concerns. By creating an art gallery experience where participants select artworks that resonate with them and share their reflections, a deeper, more personal connection to environmental activism is fostered.



This method emphasizes the immediate impact of visual communication, encouraging participants to articulate their values and concerns related to environmental issues. The analysis of artistic elements and their environmental messages also enhances participants' analytical skills, enriching their understanding and appreciation of environmental advocacy through the power of art.

Engaging Through Music and Creative Expression

Music and songwriting offer a universally accessible and emotionally powerful way to engage with environmental issues. Through activities involving the Young FOE songbook, participants can connect with the material by listening to, singing, and even creating their own activist songs set to familiar tunes.

This practice transcends cultural and linguistic barriers and encourages personal investment and creativity. Writing their own music allows individuals to express their thoughts and emotions related to environmental activism uniquely and powerfully. Moreover, the communal aspect of music, including singing and sharing songs, builds a sense of collective action and solidarity among participants, underscoring the community-driven nature of effective environmental activism.

Climate Christmas Song

(To the Jingle Bells tune)
Made by YFoEE

TTIP sucks, CETA also does,
The corporations will ruin our world.
It's time for them to go.
You cut down all the trees, and sell us
GMO's.
People have no home to stay. So where
should they all go?

Climate change, climate change.
Please stay far away.
We want more ambitious goals.
We want them right away, hey!
Greenhouse gas, greenhouse gas.
You make the earth too warm.
Global North has big duties, so save our
world from harm.

Creative tools for art and campaigning

Imagine trying to explain how important our planet is to someone who has never thought about it. Sometimes, using a simple story or picture in words (we call these "metaphors") can help paint a big picture in just a few words. This workshop, called "Four Techniques, One Result," starts with everyone thinking about these special kinds of word pictures that show how we all are part of nature, how everything in the world is connected, and why we need to take care of our planet.

After picking a favorite metaphor, everyone gets to write down their thoughts as fast as they can without worrying if it's "right" or "perfect." This fun writing game helps people say what's really in their hearts without overthinking. From all these pieces of writing, each group picks just four sentences that stand out the most to them. These sentences are like puzzle pieces that come together to make one song that shares everyone's feelings and ideas about taking care of our Earth.

Now, it's showtime! Using the song they made together, each group puts on a small show using different ways to share art—like drawing, acting, dancing, or even making music. This isn't just about showing off what they've created; it's about sharing a powerful message in a way that everyone can feel and remember.

When you look at this workshop as a method, it's easy to see why it's a smart way to help people think and care more about the environment. Here's what makes it work so well:

1. **It Starts with Big Ideas:** Using metaphors makes big, complex ideas about the environment simpler and more powerful.
2. **Everyone's Ideas Matter:** Writing quickly from the heart means everyone's voice is heard, making the final song rich with real, heartfelt ideas.
3. **Creativity Connects:** Turning these ideas into a performance makes the message stick. When people see and feel your message, they're more likely to remember it and want to help make a change.
4. **Together is Better:** Doing all of this as a group shows how everyone can work together to make something beautiful and meaningful. It's a great way to show that when it comes to taking care of our planet, we're all in it together.

This workshop isn't just about making art or music; it's a clever way to get people talking, thinking, and acting together for our planet. By combining creativity with action, it shows that everyone has a part to play in protecting our world.

Tree of Problems and Solutions

The "Tree of Problems and Solutions" exercise serves as an innovative and holistic method for dissecting complex environmental issues, such as consumerism and climate migrations. By employing this approach,

participants delve into the anatomy of a problem, visualized through the metaphor of a tree, where each part—from roots to fallen leaves—holds a specific meaning related to the issue at hand.

At the core of this exercise is the trunk, representing the problem itself, which in this case focuses on consumerism and climate migrations. This central element anchors the discussion, ensuring that the exploration of causes, consequences, and solutions remains focused and relevant. The roots extend into the causes of the problem, encouraging participants to uncover the underlying factors that contribute to the issue, such as economic systems, cultural practices, and political decisions. This foundational analysis is crucial, as it lays the groundwork for understanding the problem in its entirety.

Branching out from the trunk are the consequences, depicted through the tree's branches. This visual representation helps illustrate the broad and far-reaching impacts of the problem, affecting everything from environmental health to social and economic stability. The leaves, sprouting from the branches, symbolize potential solutions. This encourages creative and practical thinking, as participants brainstorm ways to address the core issue and mitigate its consequences.



The fruits of the tree represent the values or positive outcomes that emerge from implementing these solutions, offering a visual incentive and highlighting the benefits of environmental action. Meanwhile, fallen leaves depict the solutions that have either failed or are misconceived, emphasizing the importance of learning from past mistakes and understanding that not all proposed solutions are viable.

This method offers multiple educational benefits. It fosters comprehensive analysis and critical thinking, as participants dissect the problem into its various components. The visual and interactive nature of the tree stimulates creativity and innovation, challenging participants to think outside the box. Furthermore, it promotes systems thinking by highlighting the interconnectedness of causes, consequences, and solutions, an essential perspective for tackling complex environmental challenges. Lastly, visualizing the positive outcomes of proposed solutions motivates participants, providing a tangible sense of what can be achieved through concerted environmental stewardship.

[Learning from Postaja: A Guide to Creating a Community Space](#)

The visit to Postaja, an independent cultural and community center, provides a wonderful example of how



people can come together to create a community and co-living space that focuses on art, taking care of the environment, and working together. This educational story shows how Postaja combines fun activities with serious goals like being self-sufficient and helping the planet.

Postaja is like a big, friendly house where people are serious about making the world a better place but do it in a fun and creative way. They want to show that it's possible to live in a way that's good for the planet and for the people living on it. They use art to share their message and also practice what they preach by living in a way that doesn't harm the environment.

Postaja is a place that proves you can do a lot with a little creativity and teamwork. They use energy from the sun and collect rainwater, showing that it's possible to use what nature gives us without hurting the planet. They even have a small garden where they grow their own food, which is a great way to make sure what you eat is healthy and doesn't harm the earth.

Inside Postaja, there are lots of different areas for all sorts of activities. There's a library for reading and learning, a gym for acrobatics to stay fit and have fun, and a workshop for making things out of wood. All these spaces show how you can use what you're passionate about to help bring people together and make a positive change in the world.

One of the coolest things about Postaja is all the art on the walls. It makes the place feel alive and tells stories about what the people there care about. During the visit, the group got to add their own touch by painting a mural of a tree, which was all about coming up with solutions to help the environment. This was a way to leave a piece of themselves at Postaja and share their message with everyone who visits.

Some people in the group decided they wanted to cook a big lunch using vegetables from left overs from the markets, instead of painting. This was another great way to show how working together and sharing a meal can make everyone feel like part of a big family. It's also a chance to practice being kind to the planet by choosing ingredients that are good for the earth.

[A Model for Environmental Activism and Public Engagement](#)

Plastic Free July is a global movement that encourages people all around the world to reduce their use of plastic and to become more aware of their environmental impact. During this month, thousands of organizations and individuals come together to participate in activities aimed at reducing plastic pollution. This educational resource focuses on the contributions of Zelena akcija (Green Action/Friends of the Earth Croatia/Zero Waste Croatia Network) to the Plastic Free July campaign.

Zelena Akcija, as a member of the global movement Break Free From Plastic, has taken an active role in organizing events throughout July to raise awareness about the dangers of plastic pollution. Their campaign is highlighted by a series of innovative and engaging performances and activities designed to capture the public's attention and encourage action against plastic pollution.

Key Activities and Performances

International Plastic Bag Free Day Performance: Zelena Akcija kicked off their campaign with a performance that highlighted the issue of microplastic in food. This satirical performance, held in a restaurant setting, showcased a couple consuming plastic with their meal, ultimately leading to their dramatic "deaths." This strong visual message aimed to raise awareness about the prevalence of plastic in our daily lives and its detrimental effects on health.



Brand Audit Webinar: In collaboration with Greenpeace Croatia,



Zelena Akcija organized a webinar to discuss the findings of a brand audit on plastic pollution. This educational event focused on the concept of extended producer responsibility and explored how brand audits can be used as a tool in schools to educate students about environmental responsibility.

"Plastic Dinner" - Homo Plasticus Performance: Another public performance took place in park Ribnjak,



Zagreb, where participants, wrapped in plastic, paraded around the park to symbolize the overwhelming presence of plastic in our environment. This shocking performance was followed-up by a prize game where the public could have won Break Free From Plastic canvas bags and bottles made out of recycled glass. In order to win the prizes, attendees



should express their own plans to reduce their personal impact on plastic pollution. Additionally, there was screening of the movie "The story of plastic" which was used to further explain the importance of fighting plastic pollution while telling the story of Break Free From Plastic Movement.

Upcycling Workshop: Prior to the "Plastic Dinner" performance, an upcycling workshop was held to educate participants on how to repurpose single-use plastic products. This hands-on activity highlighted the importance of the reuse culture as a means to alleviate pressure on waste management systems.

Ministry of Environmental Protection and Energetics Performance: The campaign concluded with a performance in front of the Ministry, using an hourglass to symbolize the urgent need for action on single-use plastic and the implementation of the EU SUP Directive.

Zelena Akcija's Plastic Free July campaign serves as an exemplary model for environmental activism, combining creativity, education, and public engagement to address the issue of plastic pollution. By employing a variety of approaches—from theatrical performances to hands-on workshops—Zelena Akcija effectively communicated the urgency of the situation and inspired individuals and communities to take action.

This campaign not only raised awareness but also fostered a sense of community and collective responsibility towards the environment. The innovative methods used by Zelena Akcija can serve as inspiration for educators, activists, and community leaders looking to engage their audiences in meaningful discussions about sustainability and environmental stewardship

Sensory Labyrinth

The Sensory Labyrinth as a method for environmental awareness and activism involves creating immersive, interactive spaces that engage the senses to convey environmental messages. This innovative approach, developed by Iwan Brioc, allows participants to experience firsthand the impact of environmental issues



through a guided journey that incorporates visual, auditory, and tactile elements. It's a powerful way to connect individuals with environmental concerns on a personal level, fostering deeper understanding and commitment to environmental awareness.

Introduction

"The Art of Looking at Ourselves" presents a unique, participatory arts workshop designed to awaken and liberate individuals from the illusion of separation through the use of theater, art, and mindfulness. Spanning three days, this workshop culminates in the creation of a site-specific installation performance, inviting participants to explore their relationship with themselves and the world around them in a deeply immersive manner.

Approach and Process

At the heart of the workshop lies the invitation to consider existence in its simplest forms: space, objects, senses, and the array of human experiences. Participants are encouraged to ponder a world without the construct of personal identity, where experiences are not bound to an 'individual,' but are instead shared facets of human existence. This foundational concept guides attendees through a series of activities focusing on art and image making, movement, and mindfulness, allowing them to craft their own 'sensory portal.'

Participants are urged to envision new worlds, reflecting on where they desire to be, where they least want to be, and where they feel they truly belong. This introspection serves as a catalyst for creating personalized installations that represent a temple to aliveness, a sanctuary where one can invite others to share in this collective sensory journey.

Outcomes

The workshop aims to shift participants from a state of 'doing' to a state of 'being,' offering a reprieve from the relentless pace of modern life. Engaging with the workshop has been reported to enhance confidence, clarity, joy, peace, and aspiration among attendees. Moreover, it fosters a profound internal discovery, revealing an inner strength that, while always present, often remains obscured by daily stresses.

This reconnection not only revitalizes the individual but also weaves a strong, albeit sometimes unspoken, bond among participants. By extending this experience through a final performance to friends and family, a deep sense of community and shared human capacity is nurtured.

What to Expect

"The Art of Looking at Ourselves" is an invitation to embrace the fullness of being alive, to reconnect with the essence of existence through the senses, and to celebrate the richness of the present moment.

Participants can expect:

- A reawakening of the senses and a renewed sense of aliveness through creative expression.
- A supportive environment conducive to personal and interpersonal exploration.
- Opportunities to confront and transcend personal barriers to growth and connection.

Who It's For

This workshop is designed for a wide range of individuals seeking personal and professional development, including but not limited to therapists, performers, dancers, artists, activists, community organizers, social leaders, educators, innovators, and health & well-being professionals. It offers a unique blend of artistic creation and mindfulness practice, making it a valuable experience for anyone interested in exploring the art of presence and the transformative power of collective creativity.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the array of strategies discussed in this document underlines the importance of adopting a multifaceted approach to environmental activism and education. The innovative use of climate fiction, engaging workshops, and impactful public performances are just a few examples of how creativity and activism can merge to make environmental issues more accessible and compelling to the public.

The initiatives by organizations like Zelena Akcija, especially during events like "Plastic Free July," highlight the critical role of community involvement and public engagement in driving the environmental movement forward. These activities not only increase awareness but also encourage individuals and communities to take concrete steps toward sustainability.

Moreover, methods like the Sensory Labyrinth and collaborative art projects demonstrate the power of immersive and experiential learning in connecting people more deeply with environmental concerns. By engaging the senses and fostering creativity, these approaches can inspire a stronger commitment to environmental stewardship.

The practice of mapping out environmental challenges through exercises like the "Tree of Problems and Solutions" and the inspiring example set by community centers like Postaja show how visualization and active participation can lead to valuable insights and practical solutions. These methods stress the significance of community, creativity, and collective action in tackling the environmental crises we face.

The insights provided in this document advocate for a holistic approach to environmental activism, blending art, education, community engagement, and innovative campaigning to effect change. By embracing creativity, collaboration, and a spirit of perseverance, we can cultivate a culture of environmental awareness and action capable of addressing the complex challenges of our era. The path to sustainability is indeed challenging, but through shared effort and innovative thinking, progress towards a more sustainable and equitable world is within reach.

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