



## **The iACT and LAND Centres Handbook**

*A Guide to Creating your Sustainability or  
Regenerative Learning & Demonstration Centre &  
Activating Transformative Regional Networks*

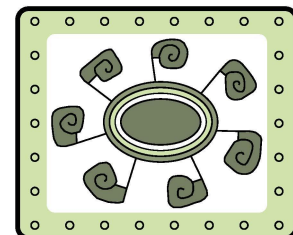
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## iACT Project Partners

Lead Partner:



Селище Зелено Училище  
Green School Village



Lead Authors:

Steve Charter, PAB (Permaculture Association Britain) and IPEN (International Permaculture Education Network) with editing, reorganisation and proof reading by Eileen Branigan, CloughJordan ecovillage, and significant contributions from all iACT partners.

# Acknowledgements

## The iACT project and the LAND Centre movement

We believe that the best way to understand regenerative practices is to see and experience them in action. By helping regenerative and sustainability practices to be more widely demonstrated, learned about, recognised and valued, the iACT support *Network of Learning and Demonstration Centres* will enable more people to benefit from these types of projects in Europe and around the world. The aims of the the iACT Project are:

1. **To encourage more quality learning and demonstration projects featuring regenerative and sustainability practices**, including permaculture, and enable such projects to grow, operate and network effectively with each other.
2. **To increase the availability and access to high-quality regenerative / permaculture courses and education resources**, particularly in languages other than English.
3. **To support and enhance the skills, knowledge, confidence and experience of people working at these centres**: educators, facilitators, pioneers and practitioners in regenerative / permaculture education and related disciplines.
4. **To help national and regional regenerative / permaculture organisations and networks to establish their own iACT / LAND<sup>1</sup> systems and networks**, guided by iACT information, resources and tools.

**Guided by iACT Tools and Resources**, more people can expand their capacity to offer learning and demonstration in areas such as *renewable energies, sustainable buildings, soil health, sustainable food growing and good nutrition; regenerative land management for enhanced biodiversity, community and ecosystem resilience; good nutrition; and ecologically sound lifestyles*. To help support Catalyst Centres and Projects involved in *activating community transformation*, this Handbook has been produced through the work of the **iACT Partnership Project** and its collaboration with the *Projects and LAND Network in Britain*. The iACT Project is an EU Erasmus+ funded project running from 2020-2023, with the following partners:

- [Permaculture Association \(Britain\)](#) - lead partner
- [Cloughjordan Ecovillage](#) (Sustainable Projects Ireland CLG)
- [Centre for Ecological Learning, Luxembourg \(CELL\)](#)
- [Permakultur Danmark](#)
- [Green School Village and the Permaculture Association of Bulgaria](#)
- [Laboratorio Sicilia 2030](#), Italy

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<sup>1</sup> LAND Centres are permaculture centres that combine Learning, Activities, Networking and Demonstration - the criteria for and characteristics of LAND centres are explained in depth in this Handbook.

- [Centre for Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Changes \(cE3c\)](#), University of Lisbon, Portugal.

## Glossary

The following terminology is widely used in the movements we are catering for and therefore appears in this document. More detailed explanations of these terms and ideas are set out in [Appendix 1: Core Concepts & Terminology](#)

- **Community Climate Action** refers to community-led initiatives (sometimes with the involvement of public sector partners) focused on carbon reduction and a wider array of areas of action because of the understanding of interconnectedness of issues.
- **Permaculture is a design approach, education-for-action system, set of practices and global movement based on a shared understanding of how nature works**, with three core ethics: Earth Care; People Care; Fair Shares, and a toolkit of design principles, methods, practices and tools.
- **Regenerative / regeneration** - within this Handbook these terms are rooted in the ecological understanding that because so many living systems have been significantly *degenerated* through human activity, viable, responsible and ethical approaches need to stimulate *regeneration* of those systems, in view of increased **aliveness, (re)productive capacity, and transformative resilience**.
- **Regenerative Agriculture (or 'regen ag')** are **conservation, rehabilitation and restoration approaches for food and farming systems** that focus in particular on topsoil / soil health regeneration, increasing biodiversity, improving the water cycle, enhancing ecosystems health and resilience, and supporting carbon sequestration to improve resilience to climate change, and strengthen the health and vitality of soils.
- **Sustainability** has different meanings to different audiences. From the perspective of critical ecological movements it is often seen as representing a mainstream approach to tackling the grand challenges of our time without questioning the operating system of the political economies that brought them about. However, when rooted in its original ecological understanding, with nature as the teacher of meanings, (ecological) sustainability is a state of dynamic equilibrium that can only be achieved with regenerative systems in place i.e. *genuine sustainability has to be inherently regenerative*.
- **Transition** is widely used to imply 'socio-ecological transition', i.e. transition to sustainability mindful of social equity, through grassroots community projects that aim to increase self-sufficiency to reduce the impacts of "peak everything", climate change, and economic instability through localization strategies and participatory approaches, especially around food and energy issues.
- **Community of Practice (COP)** is a group of people who share a common concern, a set of problems, interest in a topic or vision for a transformative project and who come together to fulfil both individual and group goals. Communities of Practice often focus on

*sharing good and emerging practices and tools, creating new knowledge to advance a domain of professional or community practice.*

- **Deep Adaptation is a concept, agenda, and international social movement** based on a re-evaluation of mainstream climate data that concludes that extreme weather events and other effects of climate change will increasingly disrupt food, water, shelter, power, and social and governmental systems, which is seen as likely to or to inevitably cause uneven societal collapse in the next few decades.
- **Circular Economy (also referred to as circularity or CE)** is a model of production and consumption that calls for a shift in thinking to doing "more good" (eco-effectiveness), with a distinction between biological (or organic) and technical (or non-organic) circular systems, to eliminate the concept of waste and perceive resources as "food" for another product or cycle.
- **Net Zero** is generally applied in relation to carbon emissions, but is also increasingly used to imply '*net zero carbon and net zero waste*' - and in a full 3D sense, '*zero toxicity*', and is generally applied more to technical and economic systems, and have less emphasis on the social and ecological dimensions of change.
- **Circular Economy Net Zero** combines the thinking, implications and goals of these two terms to create an integrated and balanced technical-ecological systems based approach to economic, manufacturing, energy and resource systems.

See [Appendix 1: Core Concepts & Terminology](#) for more detailed explanations of these terms and ideas.

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# iACT Project Statement of Potential

*The potential that the iACT Project aims to manifest includes the intention to deliver a practical, attractive, easy to use structure and support system for a strong, long term and ever-expanding network that:*

- **is a large collaborative international Network of Transformative / Regenerative Learning and Demonstration Centres** and interacting national systems that gather, synthesise and spread knowledge throughout Europe and the world
- **accelerates the progress of Learning and Demonstration Projects** and expands their benefits to a diverse range of audiences
- **seeds new Centres** and accelerates peer-to-peer learning
- **expands the offerings of those Centres** and provides comprehensive access to high quality and relatable learning in the regenerative, sustainability, resilience and climate action fields
- **amplifies the impact of each Centre** at the local and regional levels and beyond
- **maps and provides profiles for Centres** within each country, using a variety of different media
- **influences the existing educational and political / policy systems**
- **creates shining examples of (blended) transformative learning** linked to place-based catalyst centres
- **develops new occupational fields across relevant networks**, attracting many more people to regenerative work
- **taps into the capacity for change** that is evolving in the current climate
- **shares good and emerging practices for:** the regenerative, climate action, sustainability, permaculture, community resilience, eco-social transition and transformative learning movements, such as restoration of cultural and ecological landscapes; monitoring and evaluation systems; carbon sequestration practices and regenerative valuation systems that support the wellbeing economy.

**Overall, iACT carries the potential for creating an amazing, rich, collaborative and inspiring network and movement - serving millions of people locally and across Europe and the world as a whole. As such, iACT will help bring the future into the present through the examples and the learning that is manifested by the different types of projects and centres it supports, encourages and inspires. This is the iACT potential for activating community transformation.**



# Foreword: The Purpose of This Handbook

*This Handbook is designed to be a Guide for Designing, Creating and Managing Regenerative and Sustainability Learning & Demonstration Centres and for Growing Bioregional Transformation Networks.*

If you are planning or already involved in running any kind of Learning and Demonstration Project on sustainability learning, regenerative practices and climate action, we hope this Handbook will be a resource to guide and support you - a resource you can return to.

In creating this Handbook, the iACT project has learned from a range of successful permaculture LAND centres<sup>2</sup> and sustainability education and demonstration projects around the world, which are covered by the iACT Case Studies on our webpages and highlighted in Part Four of this Handbook.

Any new or established Centre can seek to meet the Good Practice Criteria set out in this Handbook, and when used in combination with the iACT Toolkit, Good Practice Guide, Competency Guide and Research and Mapping System, we hope this Handbook helps you to express the full potential of your project as *a catalyst for activating community transformation*.

## The Overall Aims of the Handbook

We urgently need to see and experience many more examples of the practical solutions and positive responses to *the significant problems of our time*. Then we can understand that the changes we can make in our personal lives and across our communities are in fact the *significant opportunities of our time* - opportunities that hold the potential for securing an improved quality of life and for protecting the complex systems of life upon which we depend.

This Handbook and the related Web-based support systems seek to create and support the expansion of a dedicated Open Network for sharing good and emerging practices.

It does not aim to bind any centre or project to a particular organisation or philosophy. Instead it seeks to encourage collaborative relationships between centres in formal and informal networks, and amongst organisations involved in activating and

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<sup>2</sup> LAND Centres are permaculture centres that combine Learning, Activities, Networking and Demonstration - the criteria for and characteristics of LAND centres are explained in depth in this Handbook.

spreading *climate action, regenerative practices, permaculture, sustainability, transition and community resilience* at local, regional, national and transnational levels.

This Handbook provides essential information and access to a wide range of resources that enable a good quality Learning and Demonstration Centre to be planned, designed, developed and managed.

### The 3 main aims of this Handbook:

1. To help grow national and international networks of regenerative, sustainability, permaculture and other transformational *Learning and Demonstration Centres\**
2. To share and enhance *good practice* and mutual learning between these Centres in the fields of: *climate action, sustainability, regeneration and resilience, including permaculture design and practices*
3. To help these Centres to *activate community\*\* and bioregional transformations\*\*\** by offering a range of related demonstration and learning programmes and resources that help spread that good practice.

## The Catalyst Role of Learning and Demonstration Centres

*Learning and Demonstration Centres have a unique and critical role in our journey towards a regeneratively sustainable and resilient future. This role has three dimensions:*

1. **Experiential learning-** Firstly, as physical demonstrations of sustainable and **regenerative practices** they provide visitors and learners with opportunities for practical application and experience - or learning by doing, which tends to embed learning more deeply, and which cannot be provided by other forms of learning, such as purely academic study:

*"Our Masters programme is very rigorous, with very highly qualified lecturers. But then we get students to do something very practical like building a rammed earth wall or a timber frame building... and when they come in, typically they have a twinkle in their eye that you can't get from the theory. It is that unique blend that makes it exciting for people. Touching, smelling, being in something you are studying works on different levels of a human being."*

*Paul Allen, The Centre for Alternative Technology, Machynlleth, Wales*

2. **Local & Regional Relevance:** As place-based hubs, they *localise and regionalise the broad themes of sustainability and regeneration*, making them relevant to their local and regional context in terms of people, culture, climate and landscape e.g. *in a rural or urban area, a Centre might encourage the setting up of a community composting system to help local allotment holders or run courses in sustainable vegetable growing and seed saving, but they will do so in different ways that meet the needs and address the priorities of the local rural or urban context.*
  
3. **They provide a focus for activity and networking** by bringing an ecosystem of people together in varied roles - from practitioners to educators to learners. By doing so they have a *catalytic* role in people's individual and collective learning journeys i.e. *they accelerate the progress of the peer-to-peer learning and sharing, and the implementation of that learning and sharing.*

This spreads, deepens and lengthens the benefits of peoples' learning journeys in terms of growing real sustainability, regeneration and resilience in our lives, communities and bioregions.

**\*Learning and Demonstration Centres:** *refers to Centres specifically providing activities, educational courses and resources on sustainable practices such as permaculture, regenerative agriculture, the transition to lower carbon living via waste reduction, recycling, green building, personal and inner transformation, etc, that lead to greater awareness and implementation of such practices within the immediate and wider community.*

**\*\*Community 'transformation':** *is achieved through enabling community engagement with the above range of sustainable and regenerative activities, educational courses and resources using sustainable and ecologically aware practices and knowledge; by actively implementing these and other sustainable approaches through projects in your locality, you and others can connect more deeply with and positively transform the place you live in, overcoming the historically deeply ingrained extractive and exploitative paradigm, institutions and practices while fostering social inclusion and equity.*

**\*\*\*Bioregion and 'bioregional transformation'**

*Bioregion = a region defined by characteristics of the natural environment (such as landscape, geology, soil types, ecosystems) rather than by man-made divisions. Examples of bioregions are a river valley, upland region or coastal plain. Bioregional transformation is change occurring beyond/wider than the local community in a given region that has specific cultural and geographical traits e.g. whilst based upon similar principles, change achieved via community networks in rural Ireland would most likely manifest differently to regional transformation in rural India.*



**ACT**  
Activating Community Transformation

**AN INVITATION TO BE THE CHANGE**

**PROJECT DESIGNS**

- What are your values?
- How to develop a good project design.

**LIVELIHOODS**

- How to develop your income streams
- Writing a good funding application

**MANAGEMENT**

- How to organise and manage a centre
- Creating a legal structure for your entity
- Monitoring & evaluation

**LEARNING**

- How to develop a great learning & activity programme
- Transformative learning

**DEMONSTRATION**

- The value of demonstration
- Good demonstration practices

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

- How to do community engagement
- Guide to communities of practice
- How to run a successful event

**COMMUNITY ACTION**

- Get involved in climate action
- Community Resilience

## The iACT Webpages and Online Support System

The iACT online support system provides a rich ecosystem of *tools, resources, case studies, videos and guidance documents* that are designed to amplify the content of the **iACT and Land Centres Handbook**.

*This suite of online tools and videos is designed to illustrate and support examples and guidance contained in the Handbook and is easy and straightforward to interact with.*

*The online support system and the Handbook can each be used independently or together to inspire and support projects to achieve their goals, fulfil their potential and manifest their vision.*

*You can link your organisation's website to the iACT web pages and become a part of this expanding, **Europe wide Network**.*

Once you are connected to the iACT online support Network, we can **add your organisation and its profile to our growing map of European Centres** engaged in sustainability & transformative learning and you can see and find out more about the organisations in your region!

***Take a look and see what we are all about!***

# Part One: The Why? What? How? Of Sustainability/Regenerative Learning and Demonstration Centres

## Why Learning and Demonstration Centres?

**Learning and Demonstration Centres (LDCs)** offer richer and more varied opportunities for making the most of the *different ways* in which people learn (*based on familiar models of learning and retention of benefits of that learning, such as the Multiple Intelligences model to the right*).

LDCs also often have a particularly important role in the early stages of the regenerative, sustainability or permaculture movements, because they are the places where most courses or events are being run by pioneering teachers and enthusiasts. As pioneers, they stand out and, over time, news of their activities spreads by word of mouth, when there is little else to inspire people in these new fields.



Compared with simple classroom-type learning or book/online-learning, LDCs provide many opportunities for *mixed modes of learning*, so that the people, facilities and activities together become 'facilitators of learning'. Therefore, a key goal of any LDC will typically be to create a *diverse ecology of multi-modal learning experiences* and opportunities.

***In this sense, the purpose of Learning and Demonstration Centres is to facilitate or bring about deep learning.*** They are showing that they are 'walking the talk' in terms of the themes and topics they are enabling people to learn about and experience at first hand.



*Deep learning* requires recall and use of *surface* knowledge and skills (Webb, 2005). 'Traditional' approaches like memorisation and rehearsal can equip students with these foundations (Hattie, 2012), but often that traditional teaching and learning stops there - at the surface.

In this sense, it is important that Centres understand themselves as ***catalytic centres for transformative learning***.

**Whilst iACT Centres** may be involved in learning activities that involve all layers of the Pyramid (right) they are much *more involved in facilitating learning in the bottom two-thirds* than the top three layers, which are more often the primary focus of academic and classroom-based learning environments.

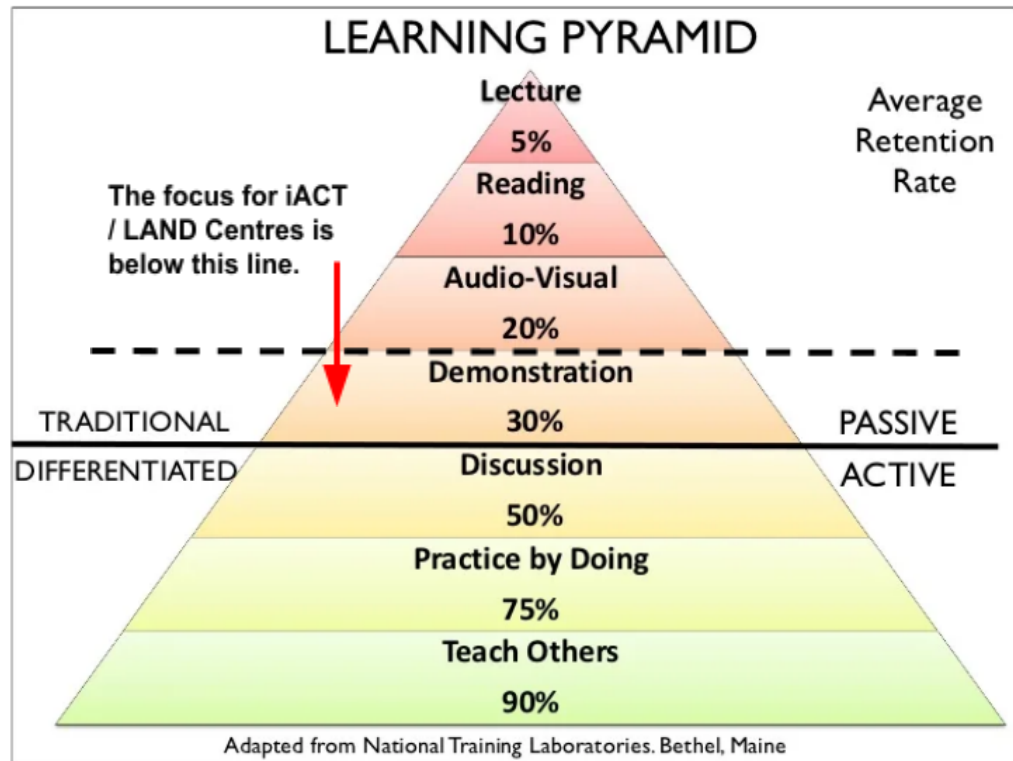


Image Source: <https://sites.google.com/site/pedagogiyandragogia2016/the-learning-pyramid>

**Robert Dilts 'extended learning levels'** (right) can be seen to add to this understanding, by incorporating the *motivational factors that relate to learning*, which is particularly important if we are involved in creating opportunities for and delivering *transformative learning*.

Importantly, *people usually attend these kinds of centres because they want to contribute to bringing about change*.



Source: <https://www.logicallevels.co.uk/pages/about-us/blog/lli-blog-03-June-2020>

**See Appendix 3 for Additional Resources on Transformative Learning**

## What are iACT and LAND Centres?

*iACT Centres and LAND Centres are place-based projects which show and share how to apply principles and practices of permaculture, regeneration, resilience-building, sustainability, transition and transformation in their local area and (bio)region with: trainees, visitors, volunteers, professionals, local partners, other stakeholders, and an interested public.*

### The Two Types of Centre

This Handbook focuses on two specific models for these types of Centre, which cover two levels of Learning and Demonstration:

#### 1. iACT Centres:

**iACT Centres** are hubs for *Activating Community Transformation* towards regenerative sustainability and resilience. They will be as much *outward* looking as inward looking (the centre as a site of demonstration and learning), with a strategic focus on *being active outside their site in catalytic ways, in the local community and (bio)region they are part of - such as helping develop community-based projects and delivering training, courses or events beyond the centre with community groups, businesses or local government.*

**iACT Centres** will be good examples of sustainability, regeneration, resilience and social inclusion in some holistic sense. They will provide education in and demonstration of essential principles, ethics and practices across a range of interconnected fields, from *agroecology and permaculture, sustainable nutrition to health, from low tech or appropriate technology to ecological building and renewable energy, from regenerative livelihoods and transformative economies, and from participatory governance to to new types of organisations and civic engagement that reinvigorates democracy.* Across the board there will be an emphasis on how *worldviews and values, frameworks and concepts, stories and metaphors* orient, limit or enable sense-making and the selection of tools and practices used in these areas are applied in a practical sense, often through problem-based learning, or projects that move people and communities forward.

#### 2. Land Centres:

**LAND Centres** are *Learning Action (or Activity) Networking and Demonstration Centres*, with a particular focus on *permaculture design, strategies and practices.* Often they will have more of a focus on activities *at their own site*, with the ripple effects of that activity influencing the local area or region in a physical sense and in terms of their networks of people (learners, volunteers, educators, local community organisers and activists, etc).

**LAND Centres** will be *good examples of permaculture in practice*. They will demonstrate that *good practice has a strong relationship with good design*. They will be guided by and rooted in *permaculture ethics and principles* although they need not focus only on permaculture, and may provide education in and demonstration of the essential principles and practices of *agroecology, sustainable nutrition, and / or sustainable water management, sanitation and health issues (including mental health), as well as ecological building and renewable energy*.

**There is a continuum between iACT and LAND centres, the difference is in the ambition, scope and scale, not in the spirit or principles. LAND centres can decide to evolve into iACT centres.**

*See Appendix 2 for: Lessons Learned from Land Centres*

## The Benefits of Belonging

### The Benefits to national or regional Centres of becoming part of the iACT & LAND Centres Network & Support System

The international Network of iACT Centres and LAND Centres aims to attract and cater for people from all walks of life, speaking many different languages, so that they can learn the principles and practices of *permaculture, regenerative sustainability and resilience in a locally and culturally relevant way*.

The iACT/LAND Network aims to help these Centres develop stronger local and regional groups, networks and organisations, by *sharing good practice* between the projects, and by *learning from other relevant projects*. By networking together, they allow opportunities for greater collaboration in providing the solutions and the practical positive responses that work, by - *educating more people and collecting information and research from different projects*.

In this sense, the vision of this Handbook, the iACT Project and the various LAND Centre networks, ecovillage networks and transition networks linked to it, is that: ***both types of Centre can play a vital role in stimulating, nurturing and building bioregional networks for socio-ecological transformation.***

Any national or regional iACT / LAND Centre Network or support system will generally aim to create a variety of benefits and types of support for the Centres they cater for. *Being clear what the benefits to Centres are will help to engage more projects in the Network.*

#### Key Benefits:



- **A set of Criteria and supporting Good Practice resources** which help projects to understand and implement the important elements and relationships that create an effective, informative and inspiring Learning and Demonstration Centre.
- **Access to tools and resources (such as curriculum guidelines) and support for translations, including developing new courses** or new course formats to ensure they are appropriate to the local and regional populations for each Centre
- **Access to best practice examples of how other Centres have been successful**, to help support, develop and expand their work e.g. Case Studies and Good Practice Guides.
- **Help promote Centres to people** enquiring about learning, visiting or volunteering.
- **Belonging to a recognised Network** so that projects can share skills and engage with each other, including 'twinning' between Centres, and collaborating with national and international organisations to provide increased credibility and higher profile.
- **A Web profile that enables projects to 'show and tell'** to potential visitors and funders as well as to other Centres in the Network, building a feeling of being part of a global Network and community.

## Key Objectives & Activities that define an iACT Centre

*Whatever your situation and focus, your level of support or lack of it, if you achieve these objectives, put in place these activities and provide these resources - and learn to do so well, enhancing the activities over time - you are likely to end up with an excellent Learning and Demonstration Project that will activate many community and bioregional transformations.*

### **LEARNING and ACTIVITY opportunities:**

Typically each Centre will have objectives and commitments to

#### **i) deliver or host:**

- introductory courses,
- practical short courses
- extended courses and longer personalised learning pathways

**ii) support the training and development of educators and trainers** - in these and related disciplines

#### **iii) encourage local or regional teachers teams and partnerships to form for**

- collaboration
- peer-to-peer learning and support.

Educators and facilitators of learning and group activities will usually teach on-site and facilitate various types of learning and practice in their local communities, often also using other local venues embedded in particular neighbourhoods or communities.

**Many Centres will provide training for new trainers**, and / or be connected to programmes for developing the skills and experience of existing educators.

**iv) Visitors, volunteers and learners who will benefit** from experiencing different types of learning experiences, including through:

- open days
- workshops
- courses
- learning materials for self-paced learning
- volunteering.

Often this will include learning at the Centre itself and through *blended* learning experiences that use *online learning and resources* to support the activities that take place at the Centre.

**DEMONSTRATION opportunities:** A Learning and Demonstration Centre will provide good-quality opportunities for seeing, experiencing and learning about regenerative practices. It will demonstrate practices such as:

- low impact building
- renewable energy systems
- permaculture and agroecology
- personal and community climate action
- one planet lifestyles
- regenerative livelihoods.

Similarly, visitors, volunteers and learners will benefit from experiencing appropriate scales of demonstrations and working models such as:

- open days, workshops, courses, education resources, volunteering.

Some Centres will specialise in particular fields or activities, so by connecting up to a regional or national network, a wider variety of general and specialist opportunities are available to visitors, learners and volunteers who can then visit a number of Centres to experience the demonstration of good practice in a wider range of fields.

**ACCESS to RESOURCES:** The objective of the Network as a whole is to create, improve and make available useful and accessible resources for learners and

visitors - and other Demonstration Centres and similar projects- *in styles and languages that are appropriate to each Centre's region and its varied audiences.*

Centres will collate, adapt and sometimes translate existing information resources shared from other projects, as well as creating new education resources, such as simple 'How To Guides' on topics such as:

- food growing at home
- affordable nutrition
- creating wildlife habitats.

**Centres will also usually provide access to other types of physical resources,** such as a *plant nursery or seed exchange, or low impact building products.* In many areas, these physical resources will be vital for initiating processes of change, particularly in areas dominated by practical needs, with less focus on literacy and learning. These types of resources are of particularly high value when they would not otherwise be easily available, and where they have particular relevance to meeting local needs and priorities.

- NETWORKING Opportunities:** The objective of a national or regional support system is to create a Network of publicly accessible good practice Learning and Demonstration Centres. These networks will often also include allied local groups, projects or organisations that engage with the Centres.

Each Learning and Demonstration Centre also aims to become a hub for networking, within the local community and between particular *Communities of Practice (CoPs)*, and to be a regional or national catalyst for other Centres, projects and educators to emerge and grow from. Through the networking activity that they host and catalyse, Centres generate a positive two-way exchange with their wider locality, region and landscape. They achieve this by both:

*a) engaging people in the Centre's own activities and*

*b) engaging the Centre's team, expertise and enthusiasm in processes and activities that are happening in their locality and wider region.*

- OUTREACH Activities:** The outreach objective for the Network as a whole and for each Centre is to reach new and varied audiences through activities such as:
  - open days and hosting group visits
  - delivering local presentations
  - regional or national skill sharing and training events for new and existing practitioners
  - hosting local festivals, events and family days
  - initiating and facilitating new institutional practices like local or regional food councils, food hubs, transition labs or climate assemblies.

They may also engage in other local and regional activities, including being active members of other local projects, and participating in community festivals and events.

- **VOLUNTEERING Opportunities:** The Network as a whole and each Centre aims to provide volunteer or work experience opportunities for local and international people, whether these are *formal or informal, short term or long term*, or a mix of these.

Through these volunteering activities learners and trainees, visitors and volunteers apply regenerative and sustainability principles, ethics and practices in their local area and region. These volunteer programmes aim to attract and cater for people from all walks of life, so that they can learn these principles, ethics and practices in a locally and culturally relevant way - **they can have a transformative effect on peoples' lives.**

- **RESEARCH and MONITORING:** This objective and activity is vital to the Network as a whole, and will be a key feature of some Centres - although not every Centre needs to be actively involved in research. The goal of the Network and any Centre is to identify and help spread across their network and wider movements:
  - i) useful new approaches or refinement or transformation of existing approaches
  - ii) developments in particular practices in key fields
  - iii) practices that create beneficial changes in ecosystems and species, and so on, which can be further developed by practitioners elsewhere in the Network, or beyond.

For example, this might include:

- a) successful new cropping combinations
- b) soil improvement practices that suit local conditions and the needs of local farmers
- c) programmes that bring good and consistent outcomes for centres engaging with people with particular mental health needs, or
- d) economic models that are working well in particular areas.

## **Some Considerations for National or Regional Systems**

The organisations or networks that run national or regional iACT or LAND Centres may have to consider a range of issues/requirements for being part of the system/ network, particularly if they are intending to provide those supports which require staff and financial resources. For example:

- **Centres might be asked or required to maintain membership of the coordinating organisation** (e.g. a regional Transition Hub, a national permaculture association, or any similarly suitable body) which is responsible for oversight of the iACT or LAND Centre system).
- **Centres might be required to have public liability insurance**, a Health & Safety policy and / or Equity, Diversity & Inclusion policy, and agree to provide Risk Assessments for visitors, volunteers and learners.

## Centres focused on or engaged with Community Climate Action and Community Resilience

Learning and demonstration centres will play a critical role in the growing movement to respond proactively to climate change, in particular to build resilience at the local to regional level. As climate change is a symptom arising from multiple crises that reflect the significant issues of our time, whilst the headline topics may be climate action or community resilience this means catalyst centres will be addressing multiple interconnected issues. A focus on climate action and community resilience is likely to help develop and strengthen key links to local stakeholders, such as local councils / municipalities, schools and education institutions (colleges, high schools, universities) and many local businesses.

The iACT project has been developed in a close relationship with the **Community Climate Coaches** project, the **Community Catalysts** project and other work focused on community climate action and local to regional resilience. Any centre can therefore access a wider range of valuable tools, resources and learning programmes for both a) building their own team's internal learning, resilience and expertise, and b) for catalysing community climate action and resilience at the local to regional level.

The following support systems are seen as being particularly valuable in these areas:

- [Community Climate Coaches \(CCC\)](#) - is a system to train, support and enable community facilitators, catalysts, coaches and leaders across Europe to coach communities in local resilience and climate action as a practical response to the multiple interconnected social and ecological crises we face.
- [52 Climate Actions](#) - is a website with numerous supporting resources that can be used with learners, visitors and local organisations and communities to:
  - help people understand their personal and collective power in tackling climate change
  - show people many practical, beneficial, doable responses to climate change
  - promote these solutions to a wide audience
  - inspire people to action to help them reduce their carbon footprint, adapt to climate change, and embrace a low carbon culture
  - be rooted in permaculture, a design system that aims to create sustainable human habitats by following nature's patterns.
- [Community Catalysts](#) - develops guidelines, trainings and tools aimed at youth leaders, community facilitators, educators and technical staff of local governments so that they can become community catalysts of inclusive regenerative development in their bioregions, through activities of participatory action research, citizen participation, development of (networks) of local projects and organisations, and the co-creation of public policies.

# How to Set up and Develop a good Learning and Demonstration Centre

The LAND Centre system created a set of essential and desirable Criteria as a framework for establishing appropriate good practice goals for new and established Centres.

This system has been adapted to create a more holistic set of good and emerging practice goals for iACT Centres. These Good Practice goals, and the Criteria for achieving them are set out below, with guidance on how they can be achieved, including information on:

- tools or resources that are helpful for that area of good practice
- skills or competencies that are particularly relevant for implementing that area of good practice.

This way of thinking about the skills, knowledge, attitudes and experience needed to develop a new Centre, or to manage or expand an existing Centre will not be relevant for everyone.

But for some people it will be particularly useful as a way to *highlight their gaps in skills or experience*, and to clarify *the Learning Pathways that are needed for the staff team to develop the competences they need* in a diverse range of areas.

## Support Systems and Good Practice Criteria for Learning and Demonstration Centres<sup>3</sup>

To create a support system for Centres that is flexible and able to provide ongoing support where needed, a number of options to be considered include:

1. **Specialist Tutors / Mentors or Coaches** (free or at a cost):

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<sup>3</sup> The Essential Criteria and Desirable Criteria are adapted from and draw on the experience of the initial UK LAND centre criteria, ScotLAND (catering for remote projects they could not get advisors to) and IPEN's attempt to start an international network. IPEN found that it did not have the capacity to support a system based on assessment of centres, and realised an international system would need to cater for the many regions and countries where few, if any, experienced tutors and designers are available.

- a. **to help projects achieve the Criteria**, assist with site/project design(s), to work with projects to help achieve their overall vision
- b. **to provide specialist support, advice and training in specific project areas** e.g. regen ag, diversity & inclusion, forest gardening, green building - this might also include the *management and administration issues or economic models* for Centres to support a range of livelihoods, not just teaching and demonstration aspects of projects.

Note: Tutors and Mentors would normally be expected to be recruited from existing networks of people with a relevant level of expertise.

For LAND Centre Networks, in countries where there is already a permaculture Diploma system with experienced diploma tutors in place, this can include *an induction system or training processes that enable Diploma tutors to become LAND advisors / mentors.*

2. **Peer Mentors / Peer-to-Peer Support** - for example, a *Buddy system where experienced projects can mentor new and emerging projects*, or *'Guilds' of 3-6 projects which meet regularly* to discuss their progress toward their goals and any challenges or opportunities they have developed.

**Other ways the system can provide value to Centres in the Network is through providing the following (all available through the UK Projects & LAND network):**

- useful resources
- trainings, masterclasses and monthly online meetings
- access to mentors
- publicity
- connections to specialist suppliers or services, and so on.

**Template agreements** often will often be helpful to set out the arrangements between Projects and Tutors / Mentors covering:

- clear expectations between parties in terms of roles and outcomes that should arise from working together;
- the economic exchange, whether this is financial (i.e. cost/hour, minimum number of hours, etc) or a non-financial trade (i.e. skills / produce / time exchange).

***See Part 3 for Detail on the iACT/Land Criteria***



## Elements of the support systems that complement this Handbook

- 1. iACT Good Practice Guide** - easy access to relevant examples of good and emerging practice, for centres and the areas of good practice covered by the Criteria system
- 2. iACT Toolkit** - of tools and resources, both online and downloads, with a variety of types of tools to make it easier for projects to implement good practice e.g. templates for volunteer agreements, guidance on 'how to run open days', design tools, etc
- 3. iACT Competency Framework and set of Learning Pathways** - to help centres understand and develop the skills, knowledge, experience (competencies) they need within their team to develop and run their projects well
- 4. A peer-to-peer research and mapping system (Regenerative Knowledge Commons)** - to identify and update good practice, and share examples of oowhat works well, through online Project Profiles.

## iACT and LAND Centres' Good Practice Guide and Toolkit

The **iACT Good Practice Guide and Toolkit** is hosted on the iACT pages of the [permaculture.org.uk](http://permaculture.org.uk) website and is arranged according to a set of themes that we know are of interest to audiences in LAND and iACT Centres, and practical projects in general. The tools and examples of good or emerging practice are organised:

- to help us implement good practice more easily in a range of important areas
- to understand how good practice in those areas arise from or depend on personal / team competency in particular areas, such as being a really skilled outdoor educator or facilitator of transformative learning.

The themes are:

- **Project Design - including Implementation of that Design / Vision**
- **Livelihoods**
- **Management**
- **Learning**
- **Demonstration example**
- **Community Engagement**
- **Community Action**

**Within each of these themes there are a variety of Tools or Resources.** For example, there is guidance on how to:

- Create and run a Volunteer Programme,
- Templates for Risk Assessments for volunteer or visitors group activities,
- Resources to help decide what legal structure best fits your project's needs,
- Resources to help make the business side of the project a success.

**Through the Web pages you can create your own Project Profile.** You'll also find that there are links from several of these themes to key resources in the Toolkit such as:

- **How to do Research, Monitoring & Evaluation**
- **Project Case Studies**
- **The iACT & LAND Video & Podcast Library**
- **The iACT Mapping & Research System** - called the Regenerative Knowledge Commons, which is shared with other projects such as [Community Climate Coaches \(CCC\)](#)

## **iACT Competencies & Learning Pathways for Learning & Demonstration Centres**

### **Competencies:**

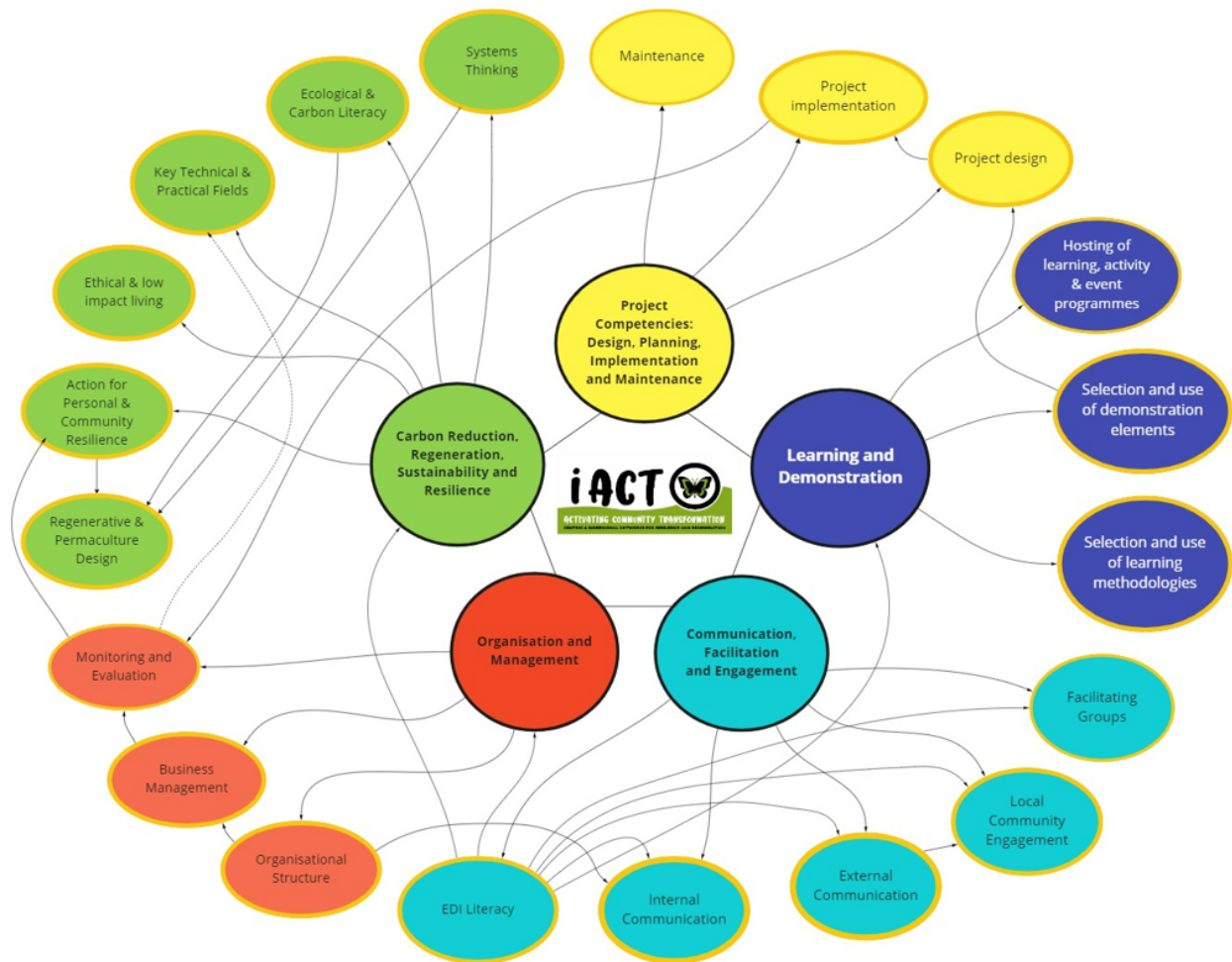
The iACT Project has identified a full range of Competencies (*skills, knowledge, attitudes and experience*) that are relevant for developing new and existing Learning and Demonstration Centres, including permaculture LAND Centres.

**These competencies have been organised into the following five main themes** (also show in the diagram), whilst recognising there is some crossover within these themes:

- 1. Project Design, Planning, Implementation and Maintenance**
- 2. Organisation and Management (system comps)**
- 3. Carbon reduction, regeneration & sustainability**
- 4. Learning (incl 'teaching' and 'coaching' / 'mentoring') and Demonstration**
- 5. Communication, Engagement and Facilitation (people comps)**

**For smaller projects the focus will tend to be on these five general themes**, with some more specific areas rising to the surface as important e.g. *regenerative horticulture or retrofit skills; community engagement and group facilitation; communications and marketing skills.*

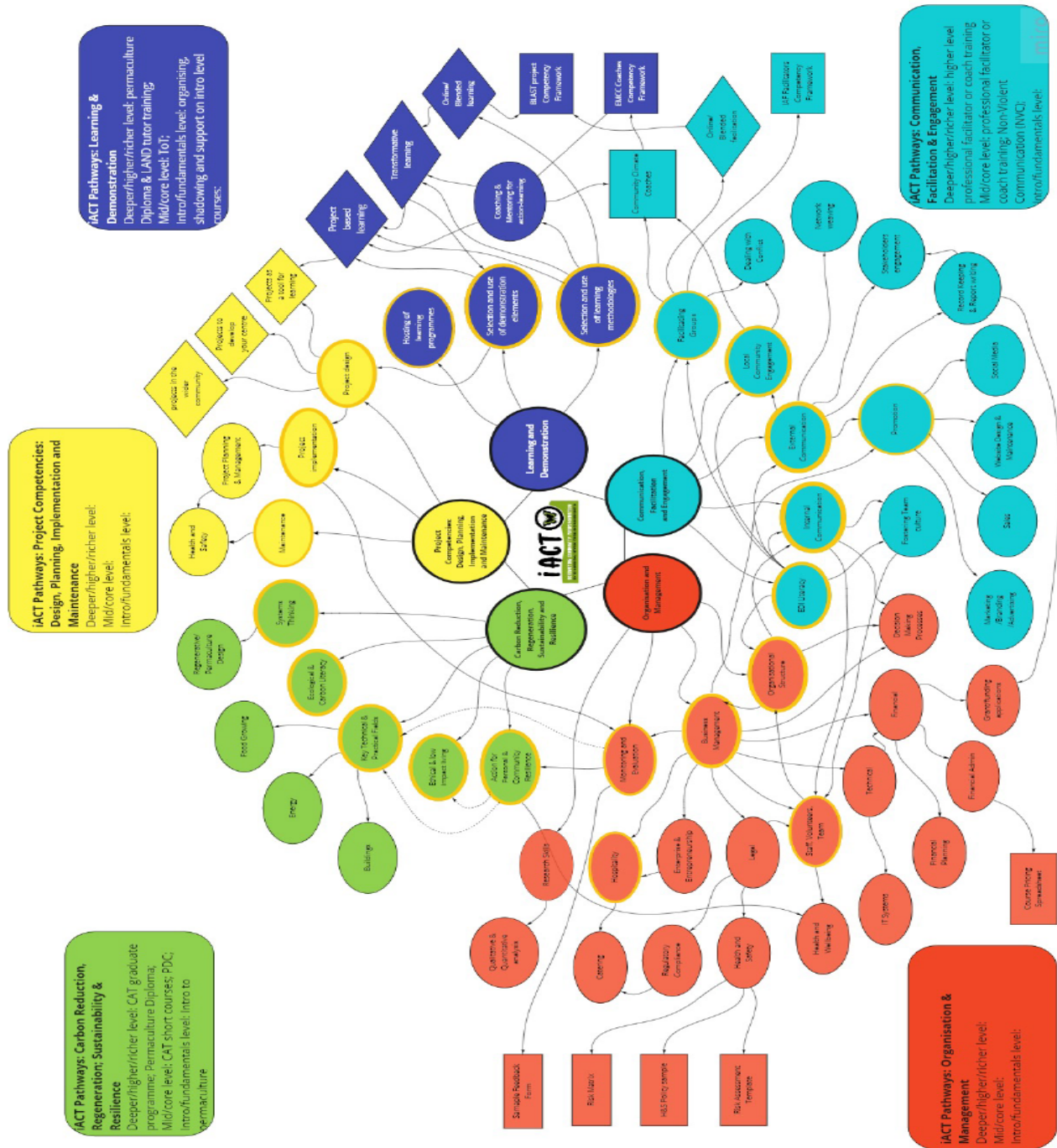
For larger Centres or more ambitious projects, the diverse ecology of competencies identified are expected to be generally relevant across the board, whatever the focus or vision of the Centre.



## A detailed Map and Framework of iACT Competencies

The five competencies areas are set out in detail in the **iACT Competencies & Learning Pathways Guide** (available as PDF within [the iACT webpages](#)), and the [Competencies pages of the Communities for Future wiki](#).

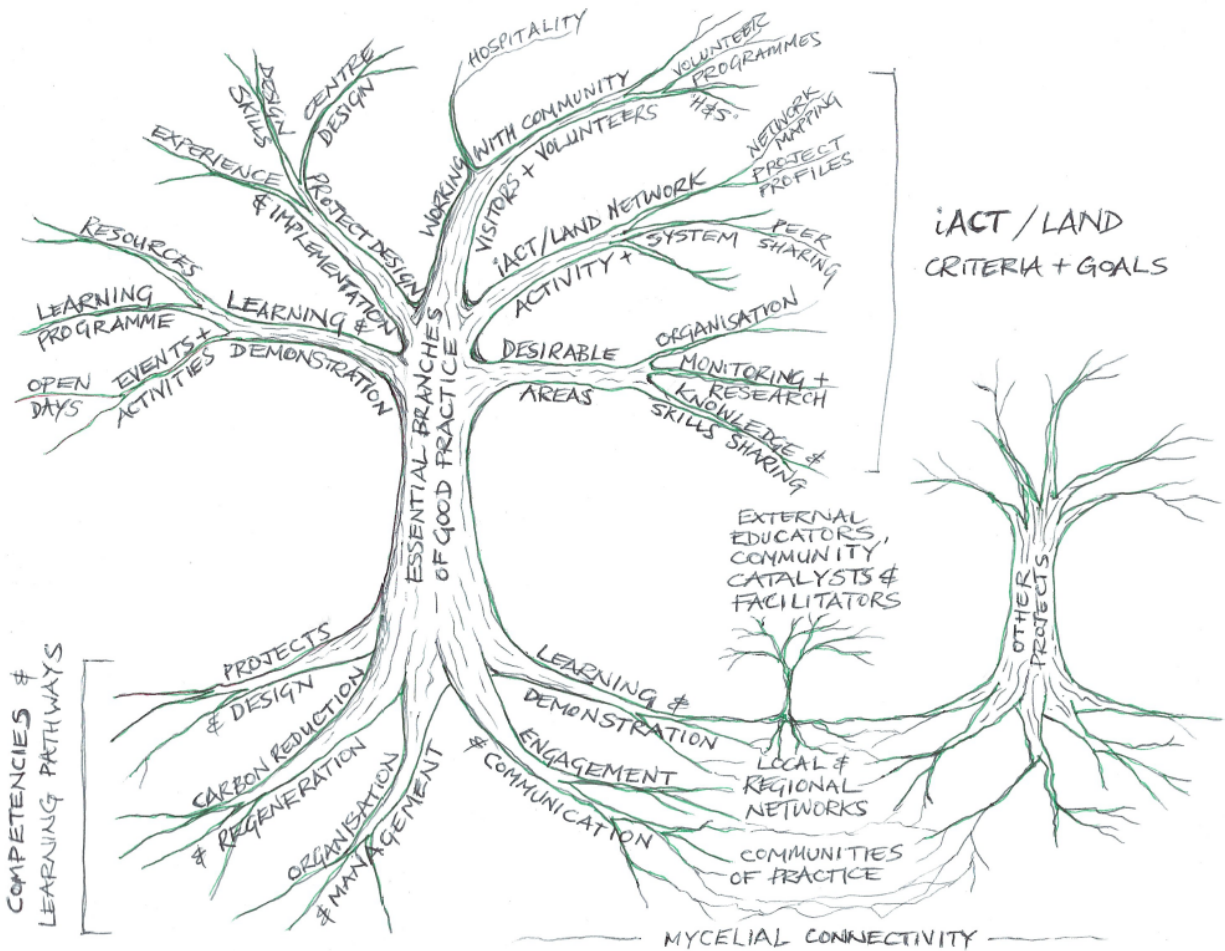
Although not easily legible, the **full Competency Map** image on the following page indicates the full range of competencies covered - you can zoom in to explore the detail if you view the Map online via the [the iACT webpages](#).



**Tools to help Map your existing competencies-** to identify competency gaps and plan how to fill them and plan your learning pathways for yourself or your Centre team- include:

**Go to the [iACT webpages](#) to view the [iACT Competencies Map](#) and the [iACT Summary of Competencies](#) document. A further level of detail is contained in the [iACT competencies pages of the Communities for Future Wiki](#). See also:**

- [iACT Competency Assessment Tool](#) [link to webpage / PDF]
- [iACT Learning Journey on a page tool](#) [link to webpage / PDF]



### Tree trunk, 'competencies' (roots) and 'activity branches' (Criteria):

The image above gives a simple indication of how strengthening and maturing **competencies in the 5 key areas** (roots) feed the Centre and its activities (the trunk of the tree) and enable it to flower and bear fruit in **multiple areas of activity** (the branches) which reflect the main categories of good practice covered by the iACT / LAND criteria.

- **iACT Centres** - will generally have a broader range of competencies across their team, because the projects will generally be larger and more holistic. In some areas, and often many areas, they are likely to have a deep level of competence because their value depends on being seen as providing *good examples* and *expert training*, particularly in areas they specialise in. iACT Centres are generally going to need a higher level of management and organisation skills and to be strong in areas

such as marketing and the quality of their website - as they will be larger organisations with a need for stable ongoing income streams, and careful management of costs.

- **LAND Centres - will generally have a narrower set of competencies distributed across a smaller team because the organisation will generally be smaller**, and often may have less developed competence in the *management* and *organisation* competencies. Often a LAND Centre team will have deep competence in particular areas they specialise in, such as *outdoor education for schools*, *working in the field of mental health*, or in *practical horticulture skills* if they are e.g. *running a veggie box scheme or farm shop*. They will often have individuals 'wearing many hats' i.e. *covering multiple competency areas*.

## □ Teaching and Learning

There are many ways for Centres to help people learn, some of which are seen as being more likely than others to cater for diverse audiences or to bring about longer term change in people, or deeper learning. Three simple distinctions in these ways of learning can be made, which can be described in reasonably simple terms (whilst they also have rather clunky technical terms associated with them, which are given in brackets!).

- **Teaching** - where there is a specific teacher or educator providing content with a clear learning process for a specific student or group of learners, with varying degrees of discussion or exercises to complete in the process (*pedagogy / didactic teaching*);
- **Self-directed learning** - where there is more of a facilitated and supported learning process in an agreed field or topic, with a tutor providing options for how a student / learner might progress, and the student having a high degree of choice and control over the learning approaches and choices they select (*androgogy*)
- **Self-determined or self-generated learning** - where the learner is in full control over their choices of what they are learning and how they go about that learning (*heutagogy*), sometimes with no educator or tutor, sometimes with educators, mentors or tutors called upon when and in the ways the learner needs and chooses.

It is increasingly understood that the deeper and more transformative outcomes are likely to be more consistent and deeper in this progression from teaching to self-generated learning. However, this will not always be the case if the learning process is a real struggle, and the learner's motivations and commitment becomes difficult to maintain.

Particularly inspiring and engaging educators, whether they are in a teacher or mentor / tutor role, will generally be much more likely to achieve deeper outcomes.

## Theories of Change for the iACT Project and for Creating iACT/LAND Centres

The practice of developing a **Theory of Change (TOC)** has evolved as a more sophisticated replacement for 'logframes', that are useful for *understanding processes of change to achieve desired outcomes*. Any project that is seeking to secure significant stakeholder interest or grant funding is likely to benefit from developing a *Theory of Change*.

In practical terms, the process of developing a realistic ToC is also likely to be a significant help for developing a deeper understanding of the **activities, outputs and mechanisms that a project or Centre is going to use to achieve its intended outcomes and impact(s)**.

As a way to better understand the necessary steps to achieve the ultimate impact that it is seeking, the Partnership behind the iACT Project has developed its own [iACT Project Theory of Change](#). The Project's intended ultimate impact is stated as:

*Local-to-regional resilience and regeneration increases and sustainability goals are achieved in places with Centres that apply the iACT framework.*

A *Theory of Change* may evolve over time, as a project understands its work, activities and influences better. If the impetus of the iACT Project is continued, it may be that the Partnership behind it evolves a more sophisticated ToC framework, which more accurately identifies the *Activities, Outputs and Processes of Change* which generate the outcomes that will create the scale, depth and breadth of *Impact* it is seeking.

**As a natural next step, the iACT Project is also offering in its Toolkit a [Theory of Change Template](#) for individual Centres or projects to use or adapt according to their own circumstances, or simply to be informed and inspired by.**

Depending on how it is applied, a ToC might lead to a framing of goals and actions in a way that is too linear and considers too few dimensions. Engaging with designs and dynamics rooted in living systems thinking can help counteract these limitations. If an appropriate design approach is the starting point that is used to generate a holistic living systems perspective, then the ToC can be used as a tool to engage stakeholders such as funders or local government who can more easily grasp the ToC as a framework, whilst they might struggle to grasp a more holistic form of project presentation, and be less likely to support your project. Choosing tools such as a ToC depends on your purpose and which audiences you want to engage, so that you are providing information in a language and format they can understand and relate to.

# iACT Centre Lifecycle Model

## Phases in the Design, Development & Evolution of Centres

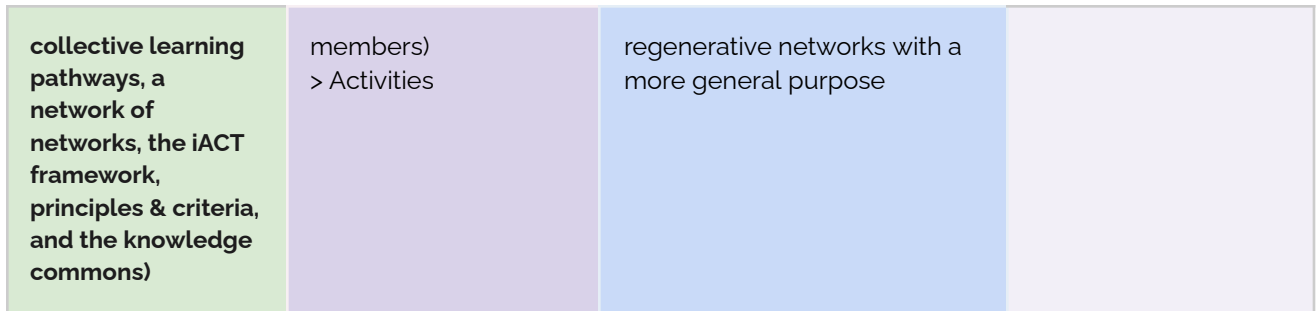
We know that mature Centres evolve in a variety of ways and phases over time, through interviewing highly experienced people with a long track record in these areas, such as Paul Allen of [CAT \(Centre for Alternative Technology\)](#) in Wales, and Matt Dunwell of [Ragmans Lane Permaculture Farm](#) in England.

The table below indicates a flexible model that highlights elements of *structure, process and patterns* that are relevant at different phases or character of a Project's life, although this should not necessarily be as linear in its phasing as is indicated here.

iACT Centre Life Cycle Framework	<u>Structure</u> iACT centre potential and manifestation	<u>Process</u> practices for the next step or iteration	<u>Patterns</u> helpful approaches & resources for realising an iACT mission
<p><b><u>Establish Phase &amp; Activities:</u></b> Everything inspiring and practically helpful for initiators that seek to create a new centre</p>	<p><b>Examples</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Inspiring case studies of existing project as inspiration</li> <li>&gt; iACT orientation cube</li> <li>&gt; Visioning</li> <li>&gt; Statement of Potential</li> <li>&gt; Back-casting vision from the future</li> </ul>	<p><b>Start-up Practices</b></p> <p>Reflection Points on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- forming a team</li> <li>- discovering needs</li> <li>- creating a shared vision</li> <li>- activating support</li> <li>- setting up an organisation (governance, legal entity type, resource model)</li> <li>- finding and designing a suitable place</li> <li>- prototyping first programme(s)</li> <li>- Participatory Action Research</li> </ul>	<p><b>Starter Pack</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Criteria and Guiding principles</li> <li>&gt; Types of relevant centres</li> <li>&gt; Main competence areas</li> <li>&gt; Selected tools</li> <li>&gt; iACT Handbook &amp; online support system</li> <li>&gt; LAND Learner programme / iACT online course</li> </ul>



<p><b><u>Sustain Phase &amp; Activities:</u></b> Everything relevant and digestible for those running an existing centre and seeking to maintain and improve it in order to achieve greater resilience and impact</p>	<p><b>Identity</b> Step-by-step Guide for &gt; reaffirming, refining or reinventing unique centre profile &gt; exploring further potential &gt; developing or strengthening complementary partnerships &gt; becoming an iACT Centre</p>	<p><b>Learning Pathways</b> Learning Modules e.g. on: - team development, incl. recruitment &amp; onboarding, working with volunteers - serving stakeholders and target groups better - managing organisation(s), improving on resourcing - maintaining place with decreasing effort; - managing and marketing programmes - review of purpose, strategy and operations - increasing resilience &amp; reach</p>	<p><b>Resources for Local Centres</b> &gt; Survey local communities needs &gt; Centre online profile &gt; iACT criteria &gt; Toolbox &gt; Competence framework (simplified) &amp; learning pathways &gt; iACT Handbook</p>
<p><b><u>Catalyse Phase &amp; Activities:</u></b> Everything for those centres or players stepping up to the ambition of serving as bioregional catalysts</p>	<p><b><u>Compass</u></b> iACT Structural Framework for &gt; reviewing the achievements &gt; identifying roles for expressing more potential &gt; co-evolving synergistic partnerships &gt; creating an ambitious collective vision and updated centre vision &gt; supporting start-up or complementary centres</p>	<p><b><u>Wheel/Spiral</u></b> iACT Process Framework supporting &gt; learning to engage in whole/systemic interventions (understanding, designing, implementing and evaluating them) &gt; evolving all dimensions of one's centre accordingly Participatory Action Research (full template/guide)</p>	<p><b>Knowledge Commons</b> User focus: &gt; Keywords / Table of Content &gt; Principles &gt; Integrative frameworks &gt; Toolbox (all tools) &gt; Survey (full version) &gt; Pattern Language</p>
<p><b><u>Synergise Phase &amp; Activities:</u></b> Everything to evolve iACT as transformation ecosystems that amplifies the required transformative change (by means of the community of practice,</p>	<p><b>Community of Practice</b> Description of / invitation to (inter)national CoP: &gt; Purpose &gt; Domain &gt; Principles &gt; Practices (typology of practices) &gt; Community (target group, current</p>	<p><b>Network Weaving</b> Map of participating people, organisations and networks &gt; finding peers (internal social network) &gt; reaching out to existing networks of (a certain type of) centres &gt; creating national or language-community iACT networks &gt; linking up to existing</p>	<p><b>Knowledge Commons</b> Systems, networks &amp; movement focus: &gt; Patterns &gt; Rules &gt; Roles &gt; Coordination &gt; IT support and development &gt; Interface to multiple websites</p>



## Bioregional Networks for Regeneration & Resilience

An important intention of iACT / LAND Centres is that they become hubs for learning and networking that directly and indirectly contribute to growing and strengthening bioregional networks for regeneration and resilience.

In bioregional networks there might be a number of particularly influential hubs that are connected to multiple active individuals or smaller projects and initiatives that collectively contribute to steadily build resilience in their localities and bioregions. Alongside an influential iACT / LAND centre there might be a significant community garden or community farm / CSA project.

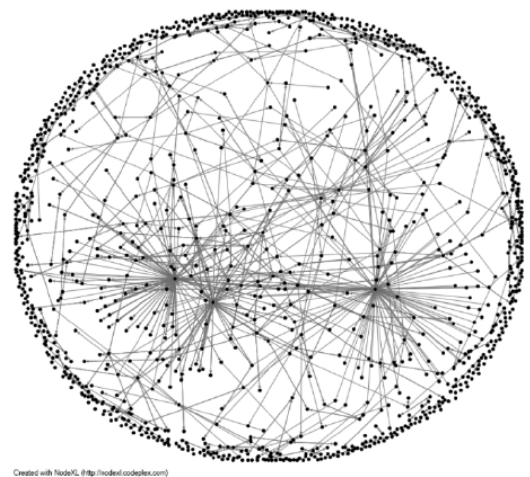
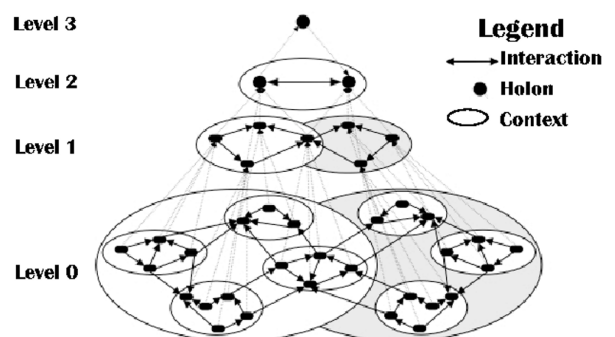


Image source: [Raquel Recuero](#) and [Ricardo Matsumura Araujo](#)

The second image is useful for seeing that Learning and Demonstration Centres will engage with networks of a) projects or organisations and b) people. In this sense the *Left Hand side circles can be seen as networks of projects and organisations*, that interact with and overlay the *Right Hand side circles of networks of individuals and communities of practice*. Each works up and down through their layers of influence- *levels 1 and 2 being connector networks that connect to on the ground projects and people at Level 0*.



## Retrieved from the Future: *looking back at the iACT story from 2035*<sup>4</sup>

**Note for iACT Handbook readers:** this 'story from the future' back-casting method or any other visioning technique can be used as a creative way contributing to the design or planning of an iACT or LAND centre. Imagine the following as an article published in 2035. Think about what your centre or national network might do to help achieve the outcomes this article describes. How might such a method help your centre define its vision, mission and objectives?

### Activating Community Transformation - The Story

*“Without these pioneering centres for learning and demonstration, where would the movement for regeneration and resilience be now?”*

Published in 2025, the *European (Transition To) Net Zero Accord* is ten years old this week, making it an apt time to take stock of where Europe has got to on its sometimes rocky path to the goals of 'net zero carbon', 'net zero waste', 'net zero toxicity' and its wider progress toward the UN Regenerative Development Goals (RDGs) that were also adopted in 2025.

In what international observers and UN climate scientists have termed a 'superhuman turnaround', the European landscape looks radically different today to the darkly pessimistic predictions of the early 2020s. To the more optimistic observers, the concepts of deep adaptation are no longer buried within the small print of long ignored UN reports but appear to be coming to life before our eyes. Could it be that we have indeed finally woken up to the need for fundamental system change?

Certainly the extraordinary proliferation of regenerative Centres and Networks in the last decade have activated profound change in our communities - in our approaches to food growing and production systems, in our smarter use of finite energy and resources, and have clearly played a major role in transforming the hopes and expectations of communities all around Europe, in both rural and urban areas.

Back in 2023, with even the richest countries on the planet facing seemingly insurmountable challenges including soaring energy prices, food shortages, extreme climate crises, mass immigration and plummeting productivity, few could have imagined the impact of these centres, and their links to grassroots community activists, leaders, teachers and learners. Together they have effectively led the way in framing 'radically realistic' new approaches to actively respond to the significant challenges of our time, without waiting for permission or for national policies to catch up.

Just published this week, a significant long term study of Europe's most resilient and regenerative communities: *The Regenerative Revolution: Centres Catalysing Community*

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<sup>4</sup> This heading is inspired by the excellent novel *Retrieved From The Future* (New European Publications, 1996), written by John Seymour, a leading UK and international pioneer in the self-sufficiency and sustainable living movement, who also published *The Complete Book of Self-Sufficiency* in 1976.

*Change* has highlighted the key role of the regenerative Learning and Demonstration Centres based in, or close to, those communities. Analysing the work of these Centres over the last ten years, from when the iACT Centre model first emerged in 2023 aided by European funding, the Report has found that the emergence of the small but influential partnership-based *iACT Foundation in 2024* played a crucial role in the spread of the iACT model, both in Europe and globally.

The research from this period of rapid change shows that these iACT Centres, permaculture LAND Centres, community climate action hubs and ecovillage living & learning centres have all played a key catalytic role in their communities for the last decade and more in terms of achieving gains in climate mitigation solutions and providing food security, as well as in developing energy alternatives and new economic models for living.

The Report credits these Centres with having played a major role in educating, supporting and implementing the work of the growing Network of activists, practitioners, organisers and educators who have collectively engaged in the crucial business of building community resilience at a time of critical climate challenges - by placing regenerative sustainability at the heart of everything they do.

These influential iACT Centres initially had a main focus on establishing themselves as living examples of sustainability, regeneration and resilience in practice. The study highlights how important the sharing of this regenerative and resilience learning and good practice between the European and global networks of these iACT and LAND Centres was, as a later phase in their evolution saw changes extend across their bioregion as a whole, due to their having worked with all sectors over the last decade to bring about this Europe wide transformation to resilience.

Thanks to them, the socioeconomic face of Europe is visibly changing. There is a determined swing toward the values of ethical and sustainable production, the circular economy and regional food security, with supply lines shortening and localising and the increasing rise of water harvesting and district energy systems springing up faster than electric car ports and charging stations. Despite nation states having been slow to implement supportive legislation and grant subsidies - and fully divest from fossil fuel infrastructure - the result has been the emergence of a profoundly transformative movement, now sprouting many global imitators. This is a movement that is enacting wide ranging change on a scale which would have defied belief in Europe just ten years ago - and which seems to exemplify the sanguine words of climate writer and activist George Monbiot, when he said:

*“In motivating people to love and defend the natural world, an ounce of hope is worth a ton of despair.”*

It is increasingly clear that the proliferation of regenerative activity resulting from this ever expanding grass roots ‘network of hope’ is greatly helping to keep despair at bay in

Europe and beyond at this time. If the momentum of this people powered movement continues to grow, it is likely to continue to do so for decades to come.

*An extract from **The Regenerative Revolution: Centres Catalysing Community Change Report, 2035**, follows below:*

*'By sharing and learning from each other's experience, selecting solutions that worked well in other regions and then adapting them to their own community and locality according to their particular cultural, climate and landscape needs, the increasingly vibrant and self-organising activity of these broader Networks enabled the Centres and their communities to envision and manifest their own local potential for regeneration and resilience - visions which, as we can see clearly today, they have collectively gone on to achieve at an unprecedented scale.*

***In summary, the following 10 characteristics of these Centres were of particular value in facilitating and manifesting this transformation:***

- 1. Demonstration of regenerative horticulture, agriculture and land-use in economically viable ways and regenerative local to regional food supply chains and distribution systems - such examples showed people and enabled them to experience and value what sustainability, regeneration and resilience in food systems means in practice in ways that were relevant to their locality, regional and personal situations.***
- 2. Demonstration of sustainable energy systems, including renewable energy generation, community ownership, energy efficiency and energy storage technologies that enabled them to generate energy infrastructures and community / ethical ownership systems to meet their range of energy security needs, particularly from home scale to community and municipal scale schemes, linked through bioregional community energy networks.***
- 3. Demonstration of ultra-low energy and ultra-low (embodied) impact sustainable building and retrofit methods, systems, products and technologies, generally with a strong focus on affordable options to achieve affordable warmth and attractive, practical responses for high impact buildings and lifestyles; transformation to a net zero built environment manifested through significant local to regional skills development, training systems and 'net zero' employment, and through strategic collaborations such as co-financing with the local to regional energy transformation.***
- 4. Sustainable and integrated low impact transport, mobility and access systems that increasingly integrated and supported low impact modes of travel with increased local to regional access to needs (food, products, services etc) in order to significantly reduce the need for travel and transport, including a significant shift to community and collective ownership of low impact options; meeting needs from local-to-regional supply chains.***
- 5. In all the above areas, solutions that could be scaled from homes, businesses and small scale plots to large scale farms and publicly or privately owned property estates, with sharing or***

*good and emerging practice at the local to bioregional level, with iACT Centres playing a key role in seeding and facilitating this sharing culture.*

6. ***Transformative learning, volunteering and visitor programmes*** through activities that covered all of the above and other aspects of regenerative living and working, with a range of clear action learning pathways that steadily developed and embedded physical outcomes and enhanced competence (skills, knowledge, experience, attitudes) in these essential key fields in the local community and across their wider bioregion.
7. ***A wide range of social engagement, community facilitation and positive cultural activities*** that grew social connectivity and motivation, and strengthened connection and identification with the local area and bioregion, and that generated collective visions and desires for a regenerative, resilient future that people and organisations then worked individually and collectively to manifest within a given timescale.
8. ***Local demonstration of a range of economic and financial models of ownership, legal structures, decision-making***, collective action and organisation that provided vehicles to manifest the transformation to resilience, many of which were linked back to, hosted by or helped to emerge by the iACT and LAND centres.
9. ***Growing ‘communities of practice’ of increasingly competent and motivated people who worked, learned and socialised individually and collectively*** in a variety of ways as part of a local to bioregional movement focused on transformation to resilience - including Europe’s Community Climate Coach and Community Catalyst Alliance, pioneering regenerative farmers within the La Via Campesina network and permaculture LAND Centre movement.
10. ***A steady increase in the healthy, fulfilling and economically viable jobs, training and work opportunities*** hosted by the Centres themselves or directly linked to the centres, which the Centres helped to catalyse in the local area or bioregion. For example, numerous locally-based jobs in the operation or maintenance of community energy systems, in ultra-low energy and healthy retrofit of homes and buildings, and in local to bioregional regenerative food growing and distribution, low impact leisure and transformative tourism, as well as in transformative learning activities, skills training and in local health and wellbeing programmes.’

The above ‘Report extract’ and preceding ‘news story’ were created specially for this creative visioning exercise. [See Appendix 3](#) for more on Theories of Change.

# Part Two: Developing & maintaining a viable Centre

## Business & Enterprise Models for iACT and LAND Centres

Successful Learning and Demonstration Centres will need to define their own viable economic model.

The aim of this section and this area of the iACT support systems is to help and encourage Centres to identify and create their own sustainable income streams.

To do so they need to develop a good understanding of:

- the capital costs for establishing or developing a Centre
- the operating costs involved in running it
- any related debt or financing.

A major aim of this Handbook and the iACT / LAND Centre support system is to continuously improve the support in this area over time, particularly through networking between Centres to share examples of what has been learnt, what is working well and what isn't.

Business support is often available (e.g. from regional economic development organisations, Universities, etc), so this can also be accessed and taken advantage of by projects themselves, as well as by organisations that are running national networks.

This Handbook can't give you all the answers to the questions of how to ensure a project is economically resilient and thriving. However, it can highlight many of the areas that should be considered and the range of options that can generate an income stream and support many regenerative livelihoods.

## Basic Economic Models for Centres

The economic dimensions of setting up and running a centre is critical for most projects. In the past this has often been a weak point and it's fair to say the original UK support system for LAND Centres did not address this dimension sufficiently.

There will be a diversity of economic models among Centres, and many opportunities to learn from each other within networks of such centres. 'No one size fits all'.

## Regenerative Learning and Demonstration Centres

- **can be social enterprises or other forms of non-profit organisation**, or could be run as a private enterprise, as a purpose-driven commercial enterprise or be publicly owned or managed;
- **will identify and create their own sustainable income streams**, so there will be a diversity of economic models among Centres;
- **will generally have multiple income streams** which may need different types of business experience or promotion

**These will include income from their core programme of courses and education activities, as well as possibly including for example:**

- ❖ **produce sales:**
  - vegetable box schemes
  - market stalls
- ❖ **events and hospitality:**
  - local green festivals
  - green weddings
  - visitor / holiday accommodation (camping / glamping, cabins, eco-bed & breakfast, etc); catering sales e.g. cafe's or field-to-fork restaurants
- ❖ **hubs for micro-enterprises:**
  - hosting organic food-processing businesses
  - craft enterprises
  - renewable energy generation
- ❖ **social prescribing:**
  - safe spaces & nurturing environments
  - tailored activities & engagement programmes
  - catering for health & wellbeing groups
- ❖ **school activities:**
  - Forest School
  - school group visits
  - school/student curriculum activities

**Some of the enterprise types/ different types of business that might form the primary income streams for Centres:**

- *Visitor based businesses* - selling accommodation, camping, food sales from cafes or restaurants, events and so on;



- *Farm or horticulture based business*, primarily selling their produce, often including added value food products;
- *Centres for learning / education* - primarily selling courses, workshops, learning journeys and / or educational events;
- *Centres selling health and wellbeing activities* and other support services to people with a range of needs, often including a range of disadvantaged groups;
- *Centres that operate as hubs for a range of businesses / supply chains* in key sectors such as food, sustainable building and / or energy.

## Options for Income Generating, Cost Saving and Creating Livelihoods

*Some projects might incorporate all or several of these income streams, while others may be dominated by just one.*

Usage / Element in Whole Farm System	Income / Costing Saving / Livelihoods
Commercial market garden for vegetables, salads, herbs in an organic regenerative system - elements including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Fields</li> <li>● Polytunnels (caterpillar tunnels)</li> <li>● Greenhouses</li> </ul>	Significant income generation through vegetable box schemes (e.g. perhaps 100+ / week for viability) and / or farm shop/market stall, and significant food production for the residents / work team.
Plant & tree nursery e.g. 'forest garden; mixes of 50-200 most productive / useful plants, trees and seeds; permaculture garden on a pallet' options;	Potential for a useful income stream if the project attracts sufficient visitors, has a local outlet or can sell online, or has complementary sales such as from a cafe or farm shop.
Mixed orchard and agroforestry system, incl alley cropping arable + tree crop system + potentially mushroom cultivation	Each of these options may be viable for growing income generating produce and / or added value food products as part of a farm system.
Arable & main crop field system	
Pasture /grazing / poultry in holistic management system e.g. including hedgerow forage system	
Aquaculture system (outdoors or in polytunnel/greenhouse system)	
Forest Garden (for visitors & residents) – for leisure, inspiration, relaxation, learning, and productivity	Attractive and educational for visitors - potential to contribute as an attraction for paying day

	visitors if well designed and maintained, with interesting features.
Start-up & Apprentice plot system	Potential as a low cost lease model for providing start-up plots to those starting their journey as commercial growers
Managed woodland / forest – including management as shelter belts	Potential for cost savings (fuel, timber resources) and to generate income from sales of timber and added value products e.g. mushrooms
Rewilding land	Not usually directly income generating - potential to attract visitors if this becomes a significant example with clear biodiversity benefits, and without significant wildlife disruption
Water collection and biological water treatment systems	Potential for long term cost savings if well designed
Multifunctional building for education and events, including café/restaurant & music/performance space	A core element of many projects as a primary venue for hosting learning programmes and other income generating events
Facilities & related activities to cater for contracted users, such as social prescribing, mental health support, forest school groups, etc.	A significant income stream for projects with the facilities and skills to provide these services.
Curriculum-based delivery e.g. regenerative science centre - education & research	Potential income from catering to schools / educational / research audiences
Cabins for trainees, apprentices and long term volunteers	Generating value from hosting these roles - may also have potential for income generation if these are paying schemes - or for visitors also
Camping area	A good income generating source
Cabins / low impact holiday / course accommodation for visitors	A good income generating source
Shared workspace / hosting various enterprises e.g. market gardens, nursery, craft enterprises, green builders and architects; etc.	Potential for income generation by hosting complementary eco-social enterprises
Buildings for food processing, preparation, distribution etc	Significant for added value from produce
Cohousing project (6-10+ dwellings + residents' community building)	Potential for rental or sales income if a cohousing project can realistically be developed within or in association with the project i.e. in the neighbourhood / locality
Good practice Retrofit examples	Important if sustainable building training and demonstration is key to attracting learners, trainees and visitors - will have very low running

	costs if this is a functional building within the centre
Good practice Newbuild examples	Important if sustainable building training and demonstration is key to attracting learners, trainees and visitors- will have very low running costs if this is a functional building within the centre
Renewable energy generation & management systems	Important if energy systems training and demonstration is key to attracting learners, trainees and visitors - should provide long term energy security and low energy costs if systems meet whole project energy needs - potential for income generation from export to the grid

## Vocations and Livelihoods linked to Learning & Demonstration Centres

*As a Centre evolves and matures, depending on the design and implementation plan for the Centre, it can become a Centre that hosts many livelihoods - for those that run the Centre and its core activities, and for people engaged in complementary activities and livelihoods that serve or complement the centre. Sometimes, this will mean there is a growing resident community of people working at the Centre, either on site or nearby, or a mixture of both.*

*Obviously, for ecovillage Living and Learning Centres, this aspect of living and working is an inherent feature of the project, and a characteristic that helps attract a larger audience.*

Livelihoods often may be less thought about during the design and planning stage of a project as the focus is often understandably on the features of the project and its activities. However, be aware that:

- the more jobs and livelihoods a Centre supports, then the stronger its case will normally be for support from local planning and economic development systems and the local community.
- the more livelihoods are supported, the larger and possibly more resilient the social and economic system of the Centre will be.

### In considering livelihoods, you may want to think in terms of Onion Rings!

- At the centre of the Onion= the core jobs of running and managing the Centre
- The next ring = people whose enterprises are based at the Centre or are delivered through it

- And the next - the livelihoods based beyond the Centre that are supported by it, such as food supplies if the majority of food is not grown on site.

## Roles, Vocations and Learning Pathways

### iACT Learning Pathways for Centre Teams

*When considering the learning pathways for your whole Centre team, you can identify the key elements that are important for each person's learning journey within the 5 Core Competency fields (outlined above) that together build and distribute Competence and Learning across the whole Centre team. A great deal more detail on individual and collective Competencies and Learning Pathways is contained in the **iACT Competencies Summary** document and the related **iACT webpages**.*

<b>Learning Journeys for Core Competencies for Catalyst Centres</b>	<b>Entry Level</b>	<b>Core 'Experience' Level</b>	<b>Extended Learning 'Journey'</b>
<b>Project Design, Planning, Implementation &amp; Maintenance (project competencies)</b> - What do you / your team need to learn in this area? At what level? What expertise or experience is needed?			
<b>Organisation &amp; Management (system competencies)</b> - What do you / your team need to learn in this area? At what level? What expertise or experience is needed?			
<b>Communication, Engagement &amp; Facilitation (people competencies)</b> - What do you / your team need to learn in this area? At what level? What expertise or experience is needed?			
<b>Carbon Reduction, Regeneration &amp; Sustainability</b> - What do you / your team need to learn in this area? At what level? What expertise or experience is needed?			

<p><b>Learning &amp; Demonstration (including 'teaching', 'coaching' and 'mentoring')</b> - What do you / your team need to learn in this area? At what level? What expertise or experience is needed?</p>			
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## Coaching and Mentoring

*Coaching and Mentoring are different. Both can have a highly beneficial role in supporting peoples' learning, particularly when they are on a longer term learning journey. If applied well, Mentoring and /or Coaching are likely to accelerate or deepen learning, and will often do both.*

**Mentoring** generally will support someone to develop their skills, knowledge, expertise and confidence in a specific field where the mentor has many years of experience - such as: business management, green building or food growing.

The learner might be at an earlier stage of their learning journey (i.e. an apprentice), or they might be at a high level of experience already, and be seeking to become a real master in their field or to reach the next level of transformative expertise.

**Coaching** is about facilitating another person's learning (or group of people), helping them to identify their goals and to reflect on their personal experience and inner journey as a learner or practitioner, as well as their progress in achieving their 'external' goals.

Coaching can be applied to a general process of learning or development or might be applied to learning and development in a particular field. It is generally not about imparting or sharing the coaches expertise or experience in that field (particularly for many professional coaches - this is often called 'clean coaching'), but instead will be guided by a questioning approach that encourages insight and investigation by the learner.

### The essence or purpose of Coaching can be described as:

*To help a person (or group) change in the way they wish, and to help them go in the direction they want to go. Coaching supports a person (or group / community) at every level in becoming who they want to be. Coaching builds awareness, empowers choice and leads to change... **It unlocks a person's potential to maximise their capacity to achieve their goals.** Coaching helps them to learn, rather than teaching them.*

Source: <https://internationalcoachingcommunity.com/what-is-coaching/>

## Some Examples of Coaching Questions

### **Action Learning & Permaculture Diploma Pathway questions:**

1. What's going well?
2. What's difficult or challenging?
3. Is there anything I / we / you would do differently?
4. What's my / our / your Vision e.g. for 1 or 2 years from now?
5. What's my / our / your Goal(s) e.g. for the next 3 months?
6. What are my / our / your practical first steps to get there?

### **Visioning Questions for yourself, your team, your centre:**

1. Where are we heading?
2. Where do we really want to be? (the Vision)
3. What is the route to get to the vision?
4. What are your practical first steps (towards that Vision)?

### **'Nested Wholes' questions for yourself, your team, your centre:**

1. What does the world as a whole most need from the regenerative / permaculture movement in general, and learning & demonstration centres in particular?
2. What does the regenerative / permaculture learning & demonstration centre movement in general most need from our project?
3. What does our project most need from me / us?
4. What do I / what does this team most need to help fulfil these greater needs?

Source for Nested Wholes questions: the [Courageous Coaching course](#) from Grattan ODonnelly and Chris Chapman that focuses on *nature-based coaching for sustainability, regeneration and resilience*.

### **Other valuable reflective questions (which can be used for self and others) include:**

#### **Transformative coaching questions to use with a focus on your centre**

1. What are you learning (most) about?
2. What can you change or transform?
3. How are your beliefs or ideas affecting your actions?
4. To what extent do you feel threatened by uncertainty or change?
5. What resources might / do you have available? ... or support? ... or inspiration? ...or motivation? ... or information?
6. What supportive relationships can you use / build?

### **Coaching works towards transformations, by aiming create Critical Awareness though:**

- Working towards perspective transformation

- Building agency for transformation
- Identifying any disorienting dilemmas
- Encouraging and supporting self-examination and Critical Assessment
- Exploring options for a new way of being (overall or in a given situation) - Envision... / decide on... / plan for ... new actions or ways of being
- Building competence / build confidence
  - Acquire / practise new knowledge / skills / behaviours
  - Try a new role / new way of getting feedback
  - Reintegrating with a new relationship / new context

## Special Section: Health & Wellbeing

**Health & Wellbeing is a vital theme that needs highlighting in the mind, plans and activities of Centres.** For some Centres these themes may become a major part of their activities and community engagement, whether on a formal or informal basis, or a mixture of these. Two key elements of working with this health and wellbeing theme are:

**Volunteers & participants:** the health and wellbeing of those who are volunteering, visiting or learning at Centres and the wider community the Centres are part of.

**Staff: Looking after ourselves:** Health and wellbeing of the people running Centres - avoiding staff burn-out, or adverse health impacts such as stress.

**In considering this focus on Health & Wellbeing, particularly important areas are:**

- **Mental health** - including risks from work-related stress (e.g. often in the context of very limited resources, when staff identify strongly with the need for the Centre to be a success), climate and ecological grief, working with or in severely disadvantaged communities, etc - as well as the positive contributions Centres can make to factors that benefit mental health;
- **Social health** - in particular where and how Centres can play a role in enhancing social interaction, community engagement, and overcoming loneliness.
- **Outdoor activity and nature connection** - Centres are very well placed to provide situations where people can engage with the increasingly recognised benefits of regular outdoor activity and enhanced nature connection;
- **Food growing for healthier eating.**

Other dimensions of this theme that are important to consider are:

- **The different health & wellbeing needs** across different social or cultural groups.
- **Work-life balance** - such as, outdoor activity for volunteers from business or public sector; hosting staff / team development days, healthy organisational culture, etc.

- **The different health & wellbeing needs** of: adults of different ages, young people, children and parents.

To address the above points, areas for development of your Centre and Staff Team that are important to consider and develop appropriately are:

- *Natural and physical features* that support audiences with health and wellbeing challenges - quiet sit spots, spaces for social interaction;
- *An appropriate and suitably flexible or structured range of activities*, ways to engage and get involved, that meet peoples' differing needs;
- *How to engage with audiences with a range of health and wellbeing needs* - do staff need mental health awareness training from an organisation such as MIND (UK)?
- *Staff training / development plans* if this is expected to be a significant activity area.
- *What forms of 'training' or 'activity' work well for this theme*: smaller permaculture projects within your Centre (design & implementation activities); RHS courses; the John Muir Award; etc.

## The Paradigms and Patterns of Thinking which Centres Communicate

There are different perceptions and ways of thinking within the wider sustainability and regenerative movement as to how to address the significant problems of our time.

Broadly these include the:

- **Sustainability perspective** (more mainstream and often more *technocentric*)
- **Regenerative perspective** (a more *ecocentric* view)
- **Deep adaptation perspective** (rooted in acceptance that ecological, social and economic *systems breakdown* is likely)
- **Health & wellbeing perspective** (rooted in creating & maintaining health naturally)
- **Inner transformation** - a focus on *inner transformation of the individual* to achieve *outer transformation in society*.

Some Centres may want to try to integrate all these perspectives into their work, demonstration activities and learning programmes. Others may want to be very focused on one particular paradigm.



Being clear on the guiding paradigm for your project will help generate clarity for defining what you do and how you do it, your priorities and areas of greatest potential. Sometimes differences in the paradigms and ways of thinking between different members of the team may not be apparent, so general team activities to clarify and bring these patterns to the surface are likely to be helpful - and in some circumstances, essential, particularly where a Centre has a narrower focus.

## Part Three: The iACT and LAND Criteria Goals for Good and Emerging Practice - an Overview

*The iACT and LAND Centres Criteria are designed to guide decision-making for projects so that they can work towards creating an excellent Centre.*

*It is important to understand that for new and developing Centres, whether they are LAND or iACT Centres, the Criteria can be seen as a set of Goals for your project to achieve.*

*The iACT Tools and Resources are a valuable support system for assessing how to achieve Good Practice via the LAND Criteria and the iACT Goals. By using these Tools and Resources well, in ways that help you meet your project's needs and the needs of your key audiences and wider stakeholders, your project will take a more direct and successful route to fulfilling the LAND / iACT Centre Criteria.*

### iACT & LAND Support Systems & Criteria - an Overview

**Objective:** *to create a support system for Learning and Demonstration Centres that:*

- enables them to follow a self-directed pathway to implement good and emerging practice and learn from and with each other;
- includes an appropriate form of self-assessment for projects using that system;
- is not necessarily dependent on support by an organisation or network BUT can be administered by and supported by an appropriate organisation where that capacity exists.

***If you want to help develop a Network of Learning and Demonstration projects in your country or region, think about and explore whether it might be more viable to have:***

**i) a diverse Network of Centres**

or

**ii) a more focused Network (such as Permaculture Projects and LAND Centres).**

In areas where there is less support, even if your own focus is clearly on one discipline such as permaculture or regenerative agriculture, it may be easier to get a network off the ground and to create a supportive network if it is more diverse.<sup>5</sup>

If you are aiming to generate income to support a Network Coordinator, the breadth or narrowness of your Network ambitions will be a key factor for determining the viability of *network gatherings or events, training courses, membership or access to grants.*

## **Resources for supported systems:**

- **Funding:** the expectation is that supported systems will need a level of funding / capacity support for at least 2-3 years to enable them to become established in a country or region.
- **Voluntary coordination:** support systems can be run on a **voluntary basis**, but this may make them vulnerable to a lack of capacity to support projects that have joined the system with an expectation that support is available.

## **The Two Pathway options for Centres**

The experience of establishing a successful network in a way that became dependent on funded support systems (i.e. key roles of LAND Network Coordinator and a team of LAND Tutors / Advisers) has taught us that the optimum situation is to offer:

- a) **A self-directed pathway** - this pathway is needed because in many situations support simply may not be available or necessary - for example:
  - i) Projects in remote locations, or in countries or regions with little relevant expertise or experience to provide that support;
  - ii) This path is generally a more affordable and flexible option, and it can continue on an ongoing basis whether or not there are resources to maintain a supported pathway;
  - iii) There may be some existing well established projects, or projects or teams with people who are confident about pursuing a self directed path;

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<sup>5</sup> **Note for European organisations, projects and networks:** although it is not always the case, for most countries the National Agencies running Erasmus+ funding programmes a narrow focus on permaculture or another specific field is likely to be seen as too narrow to score well in funding assessments.

- iv) A self directed approach is inline with the spirit of a variety of regenerative movements;
- v) If the good practice Criteria / Goals of the system are well designed as a relatively simple framework, a self-directed pathway is well-suited for catering for a diverse range of project types in a diverse range of situations.

b) **A supported pathway** - this pathway is needed because it is clear that many projects want and need support - for example:

- i) A Network Coordinator that gives general advice on the criteria, process etc, to make useful connections in the network, and to coordinate other elements of the support system such as network events (online and in-person), trainings and masterclasses, sharing resources between network members, etc;
- ii) Specialist tutor / mentor support giving specific advice on different aspects of a project's needs and priorities;
- iii) A structured & supported pathway helps them progress step by step;
- iv) The supported pathway often provides a stronger sense of being part of a network or movement, and can help provide peer-to-peer connections, which can help overcome a sense of isolation.

**An essential consideration and goal is then to determine viable ways to support these pathways that enable projects to achieve each Criterion / Goal at a pace that suits them, as well as achieving the goal of fulfilling the full set of Criteria. For this reason the UK system has evolved to become a Projects & LAND Network, to be more inclusive and create support systems for a wider range of projects, including those with no desire to become LAND Centres.**

The table below sets out the core headings of the iACT / LAND Goals and Criteria.

<b>Overview of Criteria &amp; Goals for Good and Emerging Practice</b>
<p><b>DESIGN CRITERIA:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Design Plan &amp; Project Development Goal</li> <li>2. Design &amp; Project Development Experience Goal</li> </ol>
<p><b>LEARNING &amp; DEMONSTRATION CRITERIA:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Demonstration Goal</li> <li>4. Learning Programme Goal</li> <li>5. Resources Goal</li> </ol>
<p><b>CRITERIA FOR WORKING WITH VISITORS, VOLUNTEERS &amp; COMMUNITY:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Volunteers &amp; Visitors Goal</li> </ol>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Local &amp; Regional Engagement Goal</li> <li>8. Health &amp; Safety Goal</li> </ul>
<p><b>NETWORK DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Peer-to-Peer Sharing Goal</li> <li>10. iACT / LAND Centres System Goal</li> </ul>
<p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY CRITERIA:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. Organisation Goal</li> <li>12. Monitoring &amp; Research Goal</li> <li>13. Skill Sharing Events Goal</li> </ul>

These Criteria and Good Practice Guide on the iACT webpages are provided as a way to help projects understand what generally makes a good Learning and Demonstration Centre. However, some projects may not need or want to achieve all the Criteria set out in this document (or as set out in any national / regional system). So it is important to be aware that a Key Goal of the support systems developed by the iACT Project and of the national LAND Centre Systems that exist, is to: *help projects achieve all or any of the Criteria at a pace that suits each project.*

## **iACT / LAND Centre Goals & Criteria - The Detail**

**Centres that want to join formal iACT or LAND Networks would normally be expected to make a commitment to achieve the Essential Criteria - with an agreement about any evidence you may be asked to provide for each to demonstrate it has been achieved.**

The Criteria were initially designed for light-touch, supportive assessment systems that can be provided through:

- Visits by advisors (e.g. LAND tutors) or by remote support**, for example through calls with the Coordinators of the national LAND Centre systems in Britain or Denmark, or by mentor support from other well-established Centres arranged by those Coordinators.
- They can also be used as a framework for self-assessment** by emerging Centres. Evolving the iACT and LAND support system to allow for self-assessment means that *Centres can develop in areas where experienced advice is not easily available in that region or country.*

**i) If you are following a *supported pathway* to start to work toward becoming an iACT or LAND Centre you normally need to be able to show that:**

- **All or most of the Essential Criteria are already achieved**, or will be achieved in the foreseeable future;
- **A number of the Desirable Criteria are already met** or being worked towards.

ii) **If you are using the Criteria as a *self-assessment system*** then you will need to determine your own standards for deciding when or to what extent you have achieved the Criteria, and any future goals you may set to enhance your fulfilment of that Criteria.

**Linking up with 1 or 2 other projects in your country or region** could create the opportunity for a peer-to-peer support and assessment system that helps all of you achieve the Criteria.

**The following table provides more detail on each of these Criteria / Goals, describing them in terms of the Outcomes a Centre would be seeking to achieve.**

### Table of Criteria

<b>DESIGN CRITERIA</b>	
1. <b>Design Plan &amp; Project Development Goal:</b>	Have a (permaculture/regenerative) design for your site (land design) and project (e.g. education systems design or economic systems design) including a development plan that you are committed to implementing - which clearly incorporates permaculture/regenerative ethics, principles and methods, with the design on display.
2. <b>Design &amp; Project Development Experience Goal:</b>	Have at least one project member who has completed a Permaculture Design Course (PDC), Ecovillage Design Training or Regenerative Design Training or be able to demonstrate equivalent knowledge and experience.
<b>LEARNING &amp; DEMONSTRATION CRITERIA</b>	
3. <b>Demonstration Goal:</b>	Demonstrate permaculture / regenerative / sustainable principles and practices in action on site, with appropriate information available to aid understanding e.g. information sheets, signage, etc.
4. <b>Learning Programme Goal:</b>	Have or be connected to a programme of permaculture / regenerative / sustainability training and events, including involvement in trainer / tutor development (e.g. training for trainers, opportunities for apprentice teachers to build experience, etc) and a system of quality assurance for PDCs / key courses.

5. <b>Resources Goal:</b>	Have learning resources and other types of resources (e.g. plant nursery, seeds) available for visitors, and be committed to helping develop existing and new education resources, including in the most relevant language(s) for your location or region.
<b>CRITERIA FOR WORKING WITH VISITORS, VOLUNTEERS &amp; COMMUNITY</b>	
6. <b>Volunteers &amp; Visitors Goal:</b>	Be able to receive volunteers and visitors and have appropriate systems and resources in place to support them.
7. <b>Local &amp; Regional Engagement Goal:</b>	Have strong connections with relevant regenerative / sustainability / climate action networks, locally or across your region / country.
8. <b>Health &amp; Safety Goal:</b>	Have appropriate health & safety procedures and risk assessments in place, as necessary.
<b>NETWORK DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA</b>	
9. <b>Peer-to-Peer Sharing Goal:</b>	Share skills and resources with other projects in the iACT / Projects & LAND network, including via a Project Profile page and other elements of the web-based support systems.
10. <b>iACT / Projects &amp; LAND Centres System Goal:</b>	Contribute to the development and evolution of the iACT / Projects & LAND centre system and network, including by contributing to monitoring and evaluation of the system, and work with its coordinators to help achieve more of our shared outcomes.
<b>SUPPLEMENTARY CRITERIA: OPTIONAL FOR LAND CENTRES</b>	
11. <b>Organisation Goal:</b>	Be well organised with the aim of continuing to develop your management, communication and education skills within your organisation / enterprise / project, with appropriate consideration of equity, diversity and access issues for your situation - and a realistic business plan to meet your income and livelihood needs.
12. <b>Monitoring &amp; Research Goal:</b>	Have your own programme of monitoring or research. This might include: visitor and training numbers; outcomes of education activities; ongoing records of planting and yields; records of other activities e.g. relating to water, sanitation, health; systematic photographic recording of the site; other research activities.
13. <b>Skill Sharing Events Goal:</b>	Host or help generate local, regional or national skill sharing and training events and resources.

**As emphasised earlier in Part 2 of this Handbook**, although not a part of the Criteria, from the learning generated across the UK LAND and Projects Network, we would also strongly advise Centres to **develop a robust business plan for their income generating elements and how they function as an eco-social enterprise.**

It may be that alongside the Criteria above, you define a small number of Good Practice Criteria or Goals of your own on the *economic and livelihoods* dimensions of your project.

## **Holistic Frameworks for Learning & Demonstration Projects**

The iACT Centres model for \*Catalytic Learning and Demonstration Centres requires a **holistic framework** to be used **in conjunction** with the above **Criteria / Goals**.

This combination ensures that Centres activities and features cover a broad enough range of activities to be considered as a *Holistic Catalyst Centre* whose activities *lead to transformative change*. Optional holistic frameworks which are set out in the following pages include:

- **The iACT Orientation Cube**
- **The Holmgren Flower**
- **GEN's 5 Principles for Ecovillages**
- **Any other meaningful Holistic Framework of that you choose yourself**

In addition to these holistic frameworks, which can be used in parallel and should not be seen as exclusive, **the iACT Centre Lifecycle Model** in Part One of this Handbook can be used. These are optional tools that LAND Centres can use to help them think about and plan how to become more holistic, how to develop and express their potential over time and, in some cases, how they might evolve to become an iACT Centre.

## **Holistic Criteria - Option 1: The iACT Orientation Cube**

### **iACT Orientation Cube and the Centre Vision.**

An iACT Centre is intended to be an example and a driving force for three dimensions of **regenerative design and development** that depend on each other, flow into each other and inspire each other:

1. demonstration site(s)
2. learning programme(s)
3. transformative ecosystem(s)

**These can be represented as the three dimensions of a Cube, as illustrated below.**

Each of these dimensions can be differentiated into three complementary categories or overlapping elements - the **Roles**, **Realms** and **Roots**.

### **The iACT Orientation Cube is a tool to help shape the Vision for a Project or Centre:**

- for what they want to be
- in what ways they want to activate community transformation.

### **A demonstration project is rooted in:**

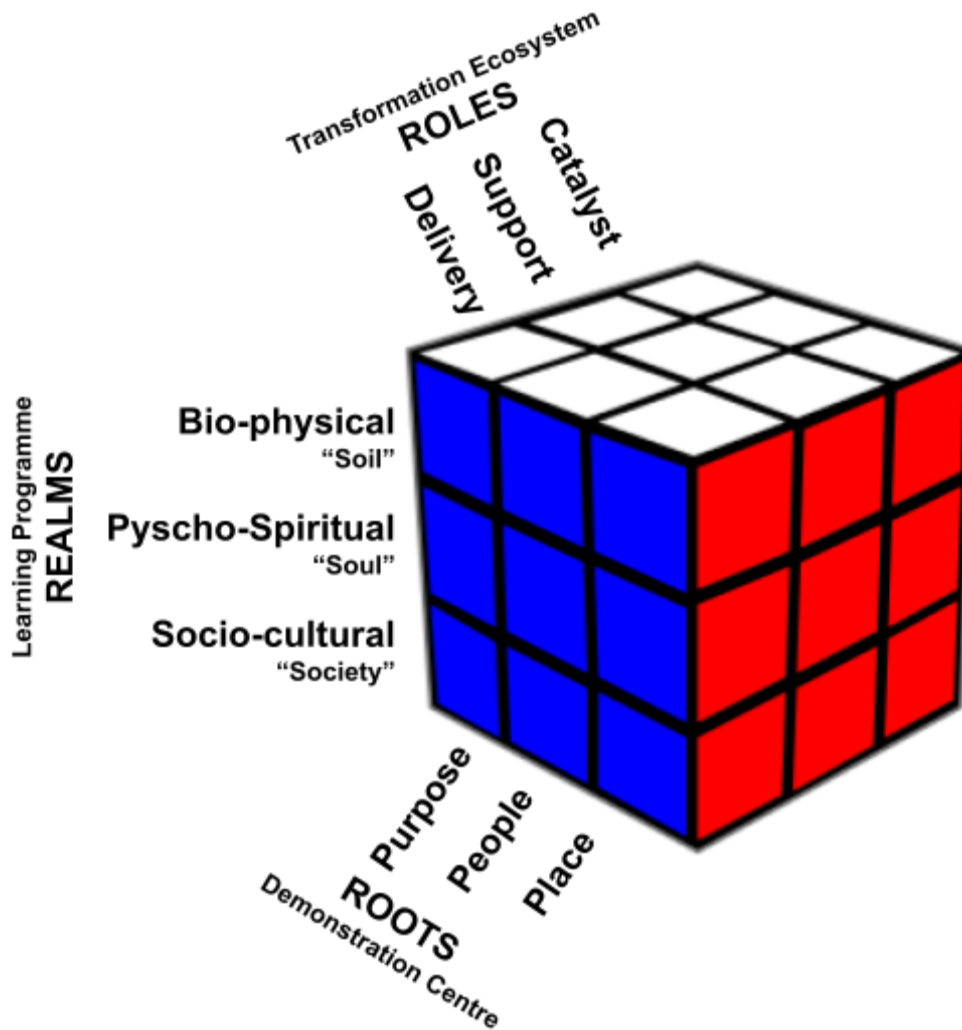
- the **potential** of the available place ("genius loci")
- the **people** engaging with each other and the place (local community, professionals, volunteers, workshop participants, visitors, etc)
- the **purpose** shared by the stakeholders that the project is meant to serve

**A learning programme** supports the development of new individual and collective capabilities called for by the regenerative paradigm in one or several of the following realms (*cogently coined "[soil, soul, society, the new trinity of our time](#)" by Satish Kumar*):

- **biophysical** ("soil") - everything related to land, soil, biodiversity, ecosystems, and also buildings, infrastructure and appropriate technology
- **psycho-spiritual** ("soul") - everything related to inner transition, self-awareness, consciousness, vocation and engagement, personal resilience and inner balance as an activist in the VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous) world
- **socio-cultural** incl. socio-economic ("society") - everything related to culture, ethics, sense-making, frameworks and stories, communication and engagement, society, governance, EDI (equity, diversity & inclusion), modes of cooperation and economic systems

This trinity also invites Centres to address the significant potential beyond a locally focused demonstration site and individual workshop participants, by considering their **role or roles in their (bio)regional and (intern)national partnerships, networks and communities of practice, and their contribution to the development of multi-level transformation ecosystems** (*local-regional-national-international*).





The Cube also provides a focus to consider three specific key types of roles:

- **Delivery roles** - implementation and visible manifestation (e.g. growing food, renovating a meeting room, running a workshop or training programme)
- **Support roles** - capacity building (e.g. in living systems thinking), design (of sites, local projects or programmes) or services that enable delivery (e.g. IT, communications, hosting of participants, hosting other educators, etc.)
- **Catalyst roles** - stimulating collective intentionality, building partnerships, cultivating physical or digital commons, curating shared resources, hosting and activating local-to-regional networking and catalysing regional communities of practice.

The Cube can help determine the level and / or quality, or degree to which they focus on any of these dimensions, and each of the 9 *strands* within those 3 *dimensions*, and their 27 *intersections*.

**To consider two examples of existing transformative Centres in Part 5 of this Handbook:**

- *CAT in Wales* has a strong emphasis on the bio-physical realm with its learning programmes and demonstration features focusing on the delivery role, and its catalyst role expressed through the *Zero Carbon Britain* programme and policy work.
- *Findhorn* is more active in the psycho-spiritual realm, although also with strength in the bio-physical realm, with activity in the delivery and catalyst roles.

**The Cube lends itself to be used at different scales:**

- Both a single organisation and a centre which might consist of multiple organisations e.g. a non-profit and various micro-enterprises
- Both a single event or learning activity and an annual programme
- Both (bio)regional partnerships and national iACT networks

**The Cube can also be used for multiple functions:**

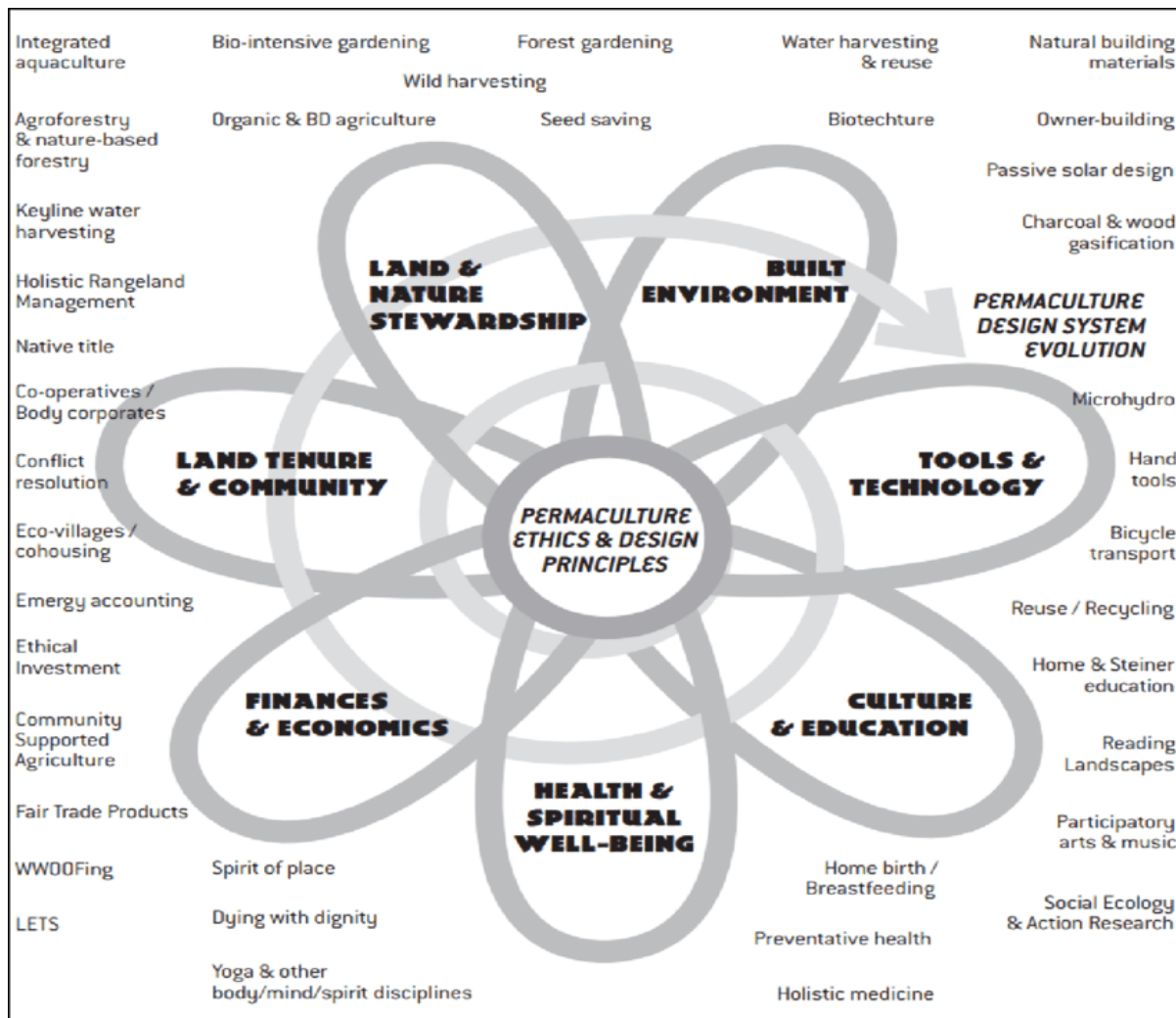
- clarifying the vision / ambition of an initiative
- designing a programme
- reviewing the achievements of an existing centre
- visioning and strategic planning of the further development of a centre
- guiding a more differentiated form of iACT "SWOT" analysis
- identifying complementary partners / creating partnerships
- inspiring the development of longer programmes run by a partnership
- monitoring / reflecting the unfolding of a project → the cube is compatible with the 3D evaluation framework:
  - Deepening impacts & outcomes = improving the quality within each cell of the cube
  - Widening impacts & outcomes = extending within and across cells
  - Lengthening impacts & outcomes = building transformative resilience over time

## Holistic Criteria - Option 2: The Holmgren Flower

The 7 petals of the Holmgren Flower can be applied to a project of any scale to provide a holistic framework for a Centre to consider, design and implement different areas of demonstration and learning activity.

It can be used alongside the [iACT Cube / LAND Criteria](#) to help add some detail to the biophysical and socio-cultural realms in particular, although it also addresses aspects of the psycho-spiritual realm.

As well as the 7 petals, the many elements included in the graphic below are useful prompts for considering at design stage:



Source:

[https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Holmgrens-permaculture-flower-showing-the-seven-interrelated-domains-integral-to\\_fig1\\_336407138](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Holmgrens-permaculture-flower-showing-the-seven-interrelated-domains-integral-to_fig1_336407138)

More information: [https://files.permacultureprinciples.com/downloads/Pc\\_Flower\\_Poster\\_EN.pdf](https://files.permacultureprinciples.com/downloads/Pc_Flower_Poster_EN.pdf)

Poster available in 9 other languages at:

<https://permacultureprinciples.com/resources/free-downloads/>

## Holistic Criteria - Option 3: The 5 Principles of Ecovillages by GEN

Being a GEN (Global Ecovillages Network) framework, the assumption might be that these principles are only applicable or most valuably applied at the scale of ecovillages. However, the 5 Principles of Ecovillages (Social-Cultural-Ecological-Economic-Whole Systems Design) can be usefully applied at any scale of learning and demonstration project. Again, they can be used to great effect alongside the iACT Orientation Cube, LAND Criteria and Holmgren Flower.



Source: <https://learn.ecovillage.org/about/>

# An Overview of the Process for Meeting the Criteria

*The following information is from the UK LAND Network's web pages and guidance so it provides a general overview of the reasons for becoming a LAND or iACT Centre and the process that is used in the UK, which is likely to be broadly similar to other countries with national or regional support systems.*

*This approach can also be used as a process for self-completion elsewhere. Other countries setting up LAND or iACT Networks could use or adapt this information for their own websites or guidance. In some systems the assessment process might be held online with some form of evidence of progress or completion of Criteria i.e. where distances to Centres are large or there are few experienced LAND advisors/mentors/tutors.*

## Why become a LAND Centre?

Are you passionate about permaculture and want to share your knowledge with others? Do you have a garden that demonstrates permaculture principles in practice, a productive food forest allotment, a regenerative farm with multiple income streams or the world's most impressive compost toilet?

Becoming a LAND Centre is primarily an act of service, because you have knowledge and resources that could inspire others to practise permaculture in order to enable better earth care, people care and fair shares in the world.

However, there are also many tangible benefits for you in developing your project or garden to become a LAND Centre. These include;

- Your site mapped on the Permaculture Association website as a recognised place of permaculture practice.
- Attract more visitors and volunteers
- Raises the profile of your project for funding and partnership working
- Lends more credibility to your courses and events
- Becoming part of an active, supportive network
- Support to develop your site to better meet your project aims
- To draw inspiration from the visitors and volunteers that visit you

If you are an [applied permaculture diploma](#) apprentice, developing your site into a LAND Centre can be an excellent focus for your diploma designs plus you will have the additional support of your diploma tutor to help you.

Watch [this video](#) to find out why permaculture educators Looby MacNamara and Chris Evans wanted [Applewood Permaculture Centre](#) to become part of the LAND Centre Network.



## How do I become a LAND Centre?

### Step 1 - Is to be really clear on your intentions for wanting to become a LAND Centre.

Download and complete the expression of interest form at the bottom of this page and send it to the [Projects Network Development Officer](#) so we can advise you on how to begin your LAND learner journey.

**Step 2 - Become familiar with the LAND Centre Criteria**, as these map out what you are aiming for in order to achieve LAND Centre status. Use the LAND Criteria self assessment document at the bottom of this page to map out what you have already achieved at your project and the areas where you feel like you may need more support. It is important to note that as all LAND Centres are different in their size and scope, the criteria are to be seen as learning goals to support you in the development of your centre and are not rigid. Your LAND tutor will work with you to design your LAND learner pathway as is relevant to your project.



**Step 3 - Arrange an initial assessment with a LAND Tutor.** This will take place ideally on your site, though some tutors may be willing to do initial assessments online. Initial assessments take approximately three hours and will involve you and your tutor looking at what stage your site is currently at and what areas need to be developed in order for you to become a LAND Centre. We will support you to find a LAND tutor who either lives

near you or has a specialism in your area of development when you apply.

**Step 4 - Work through all of the suggestions that you have agreed with your LAND Tutor.**

You may choose to do this independently, with a peer group or with further support from your LAND or diploma tutor. It is good to consider at this stage how you can evidence that you have met the criteria. We really welcome a creative approach to this process.

**Do you have a site map?** Do you have designs for elements of your site, courses or open days you are planning to run or a succession plan?

**Can you make some short videos** demonstrating how you apply permaculture principles and techniques on site?

**Have you mapped other projects or organisations** that do complimentary work in your area?



**What resources have you developed for people visiting** your site to help them understand what permaculture is?

**Step 5 - Arrange a final assessment with your LAND tutor,** once you are confident that you have met all of the criteria. This will take two to three hours. Some tutors advise having an informal online check in before the final assessment to make sure that everything is in place.

**Step 6 - The final assessment documents will go to the LAND Advisory Board** for verification. This is to ensure that all LAND centres are assessed fairly and to make any final clarifications or amendments before you officially become a LAND Centre.

**Step 7 - It's Celebration time! We recommend hosting an open day to celebrate your new LAND Centre status.** Your profile listing on our website will be updated to state that you are a LAND Centre and your achievement will be celebrated in our newsletter. There will be lots of opportunities for you to participate in the Projects and LAND Network, support other emerging land centres and to continue to develop your site.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Q. What are the requirements to becoming a LAND Learner?

To become a LAND learner and begin your journey to becoming a LAND Centre you must:

- **Be a current project member of the Permaculture Association**
- **Add your project/ site to the [Projects and LAND Map](#)** on the Permaculture Association Website.
- **Have completed a permaculture design course** or have equivalent relevant experience.

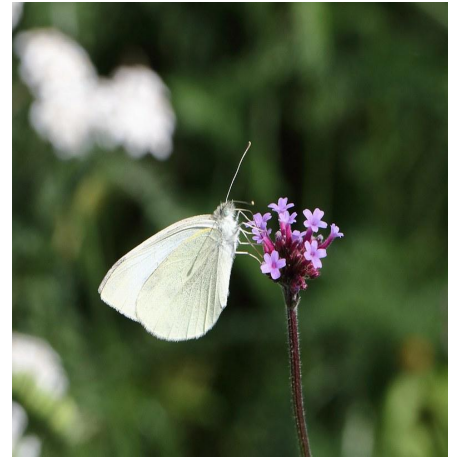
- **Have public liability insurance** (for small domestic centres this may be covered under your home insurance), we can support you in finding this.
- **Complete your expression of interest form** and return it to the **Projects Development Officer**.

## How long will it take?

This depends entirely on what stage of development your site is at and the amount of time and energy you have to spend on the process.

Some projects may already meet all of the criteria and can move very quickly through both assessments. Other projects may have several areas that they wish to develop before feeling ready to be an official demonstration site.

**We aim to support you through the whole process within two years.** However, some of you may wish to take longer, especially if you are developing your LAND Centre as a part of your Diploma. Your LAND tutor will be able to give you an idea as to how much you need to do in order to complete the process.



## What will it cost?

**We currently don't have funding for the development of new LAND Centres, so there will be some associated costs.** This is why we want you to be clear at the initial expression of interest stage that becoming a LAND Centre is going to be of benefit to you.

*Initial assessment will cost you approximately £100-£150 for three hours of LAND tutor time plus travel expenses and a small fee for administration (tbc). Your final assessment will cost approximately £100-£150 plus travel expenses. You may also wish to arrange some extra LAND tutor support along the way. (Note - UK LAND tutors rates are likely to rise from their 2023 rate of around £30-35 per hour.)*



## What support is available?

**We are developing a LAND Learner online programme** to take you through each of the criteria on a month by month basis. As part of this we will be setting up *peer support guilds, masterclasses on key themes, and a monthly gathering* where you will get the opportunity to ask questions and discuss your progress and challenges with other LAND Learners.



## There will be an accompanying knowledge bank & toolkit to help you.

You can contact our project network development officers for [Scotland](#), [Northern Ireland](#) and [England & Wales](#) for support with:

- your application
- mapping your projects,
- to find out about the LAND learner programme
- general questions about LAND.

For additional support with the development of your project, you may wish to pay for additional LAND tutor time, or independent, specialist support from our network of [diploma tutors](#) and [educators](#).

### Downloads:

 [land\\_learner\\_expression\\_of\\_interest\\_form\\_master\\_copy.doc](#)

 [\\_land\\_criteria-self\\_assessment\\_form.doc](#)

# Part Four: Inspiring Global Models

## Good Practice Examples of Mature Learning & Demonstration Centres

*Different types of sustainability and regenerative Learning and Demonstration Centres have existed for many years and developed 'organically', responding to local and regional needs, without any specific sets of criteria, good practice guidance or support systems to aid them. We can be inspired by the following well established examples to help accelerate the learning and development of new and younger Centres and to aid the expansion of existing Centres.*

### Larger Scale Holistic Learning and Demonstration Centre Examples

**CAT (the Centre for Alternative Technology):** founded in 1973, the Centre for Alternative Technology is an eco-centre in mid-Wales, dedicated to demonstrating and teaching sustainable development. CAT, despite its name, no longer concentrates its efforts exclusively on alternative technology, but provides information on all aspects of sustainable living. As well as an extensive programme of short courses, some of which are professionally accredited, CAT has a well established and highly respected Graduate Programme which offers postgraduate courses in renewable energy, architecture and environmental studies. <https://cat.org.uk/visiting/>

**Ecovillage learning and demonstration examples** - there are various examples of ecovillages that offer learning programmes which use the ecovillage itself as a demonstration of both the technical and social aspects of sustainable living, as well as often offering programmes with a strong personal development or spiritual focus. They show that learning and demonstration can be achieved at various scales, and include:

- **Findhorn in Scotland** offers holistic education programmes. These include an annual ecovillage training programme, permaculture workshops, courses in personal development, spirituality, arts and crafts. Findhorn is home to Britain's oldest and largest organic community-supported agricultural scheme. It has its own currency and bank, uses renewable energy systems (solar, wind and biomass), recycles waste, including sewage treated in a reed-bed living machine system. <https://www.findhorn.org/>
- **ZEGG (Centre for Experimental Society Design) in Germany** actively promotes an ethic of peace and sustainable living. Zegg offers courses in ecological building and renovation, mud-construction, organic gardening, permaculture design, spiritual ecology, the arts, social communication, conflict resolution, social networking,

strategies for peace, and environmentally sustainable enterprises.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ZEGG\\_\(community\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ZEGG_(community))

- **Cloughjordan Ecovillage in Ireland** is a registered educational charity and an internationally recognised destination for learning about sustainable living. Education is at the heart of the ecovillage, so that the aim is to live sustainably and act as an educational hub, to share lessons on the journey to a low-carbon society. There are over 100 residents living in high-performance green homes, over 20,000 newly planted trees and Ireland's largest renewable energy district heating system. A low-carbon lifestyle is supported by Cloughjordan's Ecological Charter which specifies the ecological standards for building in the ecovillage, ensuring homes are low-energy and ecological in the materials used. <https://www.thevillage.ie/>
- **Damanhur in Italy** is a community with its own currency, a diverse social structure, many successful businesses, organic farms, photovoltaic installations, and an experiential school for children. Damanhur offers courses in the healing arts, communication, personal and spiritual transformation, community building, and the arts. Damanhur also runs work exchange programmes, especially on its farms. <https://damanhur.org/>
- **Sarvodaya in Sri Lanka** is a network of more than 11,000 villages working on becoming self-sustaining. It focuses on participatory self-help community development based on a vision of a society without either poverty or affluence. Its mainstays are food security, micro-banking, livelihood training, small enterprise promotion, cross cultural-meditation, and preschool development. <https://www.sarvodaya.org/>
- **The Thanamalwila Living and Learning Centre**, located near two national parks in southeast Sri Lanka, focuses on permaculture, biological diversity, human rights, and peace initiatives. The Centre offers courses to villagers throughout Sri Lanka and to people elsewhere in Asia and around the world. <https://www.sarvodayaleisure.lk/thanamalwila/>
- **Auroville in South India** is a multicultural eco city that has been endorsed by UNESCO as a universal city of the future. It has a wide variety of programmes and receives visiting researchers, university students, and international volunteers. Programmes exist in low cost building technology and sustainable living, food security and organic farming, training in architectural applications and town planning. There is also emphasis on environmental education, creating seed banks and medicinal plant gardens, and doing research on traditional botanical knowledge, experiential education methods, philosophy, medicine, and healing. <https://auroville.org/>
- **Crystal Waters in Australia** offers courses in permaculture design, environmental restoration, and community work. The UN Habitat Award-winning ecovillage features housing models in rammed earth, pole structures, mud brick, domes and straw bale.

Demonstration sites exist for water harvesting, waste water use, rainwater collection, swales, dams and constructed wetlands. <https://crystalwaters.org.au/>

- **The Farm in Tennessee** is oriented towards low-cost high satisfaction community living and self-reliance. It offers excellent examples of solar building design, micro-enterprise development, large scale composting, food production, and regenerative hardwood forest management. The Ecovillage Training Centre at the Farm offers total immersion courses ranging from basic and advanced permaculture and village design to solar electricity, water treatment, and natural building techniques. <https://thefarmcommunity.com/>

## Regenerative Farming and Permaculture Learning & Demonstration Centres

### *European Examples (including UK!)*

**Three European small farm scale Learning and Demonstration Centres are:**

- [Ferme du Bec Hellouin \(France\)](#)
- [Ridgedale Permaculture \(Sweden\)](#) - run by farm-scale permaculture specialist Richard Perkins
- [Henbant Farm \(Wales\)](#)

In addition:

- [Ragmans Lane Farm \(UK\)](#) - is the UK's longest establish permaculture farm, which has been through several evolutions in how it operates - as well as its current focus on apple juice and regenerative beef farming, it hosts a number of other enterprises supporting multiple livelihoods including a market garden veg box scheme and specialist willow grower.
- [La Bolina, Spain](#) (website) - [La Bolina Case Study](#) - is a rural multi-site small-farm permaculture learning and demonstration project linked with rural repopulation, regenerative solutions to the refugee crisis, creation of eco-enterprises, employment and community living.

**Urban LAND Centres in Britain are:**

- [Organic Lea](#) on the edge of London
- [Hulme Community Garden Centre](#) close to central Manchester.

Case studies of some [European permaculture demonstration projects](#) collected by the European permaculture Teachers partnership project.

## International Examples Beyond Europe

### World wide Case Studies of mature Learning, Networking and Demonstration Centres:

[Amrita Bhoomi \(Karnataka, SW India\)](#) – 66 acre agroecology training centre and demonstration farms, pioneering Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF) methods with an estimated 100,000 peasant farmers now practising ZBNF methods in Karnataka state.

**Amrita Bhoomi** demonstrates the significant value of a training centre with demonstration farms that delivers agroecology and ZBNF training for peasant farmers, and that also promotes and enables a philosophy of self-reliance and local self-governance. Key elements of the Amrita Bhoomi Learning and Demonstration Centre model are:

- **Agroecology training centre and model farms:** The 66 acre Amrita Bhoomi agroecology training centre, along with a number of model agroecology farms, houses an indigenous seed & livestock bank, a garden conserving medicinal varieties that currently face extinction, an auditorium for 250 people, and a training centre with classrooms and dormitories, with excellent food provided by the centre's chef. The model farms are run by peasant youth interns, who each manage them for a couple of years under guidance from expert farmers, in order to acquire practical agroecology skills. Amrita Bhoomi currently has model farms for zero budget natural farming, agroforestry, seed production, rice and millets in drought conditions, oil seeds production, vegetable plots, as well as medicinal plants.
- **Delivering state-level mass training camps** in zero budget natural farming methods (ZBNF), averaging 1000-6000 farmer participants over 5-7 days including women, men and youth;
- **Linking agroecology training with seed banking & distribution**, for practical approaches to generating seed sovereignty and food sovereignty through zero budget natural farming;
- **Providing long term residential internships for young people** who are keen to learn agroecology and ZBNF methods.
- **ZBNF 'toolkit':** The basic ZBNF 'toolkit' of methods was put together by Mr Subhash Palekar, an agricultural scientist. Disillusioned by the ill effects of the green revolution on his own family farm, he drew from extensive research and observation of ecological processes and indigenous farming methods during his work in the 1990's.

[Sustainable Agriculture Tanzania](#) – a large-scale farmer-led training with an 80Ha Farmer Training Centre linked to 52 Farmer Field Schools, that have brought over 3000 small-scale farmers into the agroecological farming movement. **Sustainable Agriculture**

**Tanzania (SAT)** programmes link farmers, educators, researchers and government to generate and inspire locally-relevant practical knowledge:

- **The Farmer Training Centre (FTC) linked to 52 Farmer Field Schools:** An 80ha / 200 acre demonstration farm is a hub connected to a network of village demonstration plots, over-laid with an equivalent network of FTC teachers and village teachers. Since 2013 the FTC has hosted more than 2,200 farmers, extension officers and youth from all over East Africa, and is close to becoming financially self-sustaining.
- **Annual Training Programme: Training** covers Organic Agriculture (Basic & Intermediate); Entrepreneurship & Agribusiness Development; Natural Medicine; Permaculture Design Course (PDC); Training of Teachers; Agriculture Camp for Youth; Sustainable Waste Management; etc.
- **SAT Innovation Platform:** Over 3000 small farmers from 120 groups form the Core-Network that builds SAT's Innovation Platform. Using the experience and knowledge of farmers, SAT gives and receives information, so that agro ecological knowledge is incubated and refined. All experiences from the field are accessible to a national community of more than 50,000 farmers, and public and private stakeholders, achieving outreach through the SAT Farmer Training Centre (FTC). The monthly Farmer Magazine "Mkulima Mbunifu", published in Swahili, provides technical agroecological farming guidance, reaching up to 45,000 farmers.

**SAT's work within the Core-Farmer-Network is based on a holistic approach.**

Different modules are facilitated which cover agroecology in all its facets. Farmers receive in-village facilitation on agriculture, life skills, saving and lending, entrepreneurship and are accompanied through organic certification using a Participatory Guarantee System. SAT follows a social-entrepreneur philosophy. It provides high-quality products which are unique, disseminates them through appropriate marketing and uses a strong financial planning and control model. SAT's activities, facilities and systems combined together represent best practice in Food Sovereignty.

[Himalayan Permaculture Centre \(HPC\)](#) alongside its demonstration and work across numerous villages in remote areas of Nepal, HPC has developed an excellent 'barefoot consultant' farmer-to-farmer training system to spread permaculture education and practice to villages across a wider area. This [Case Study of the Himalaya Permaculture Centre](#) explains in more detail how HPC, as a grass roots non-government organisation (NGO), was set up by trained and motivated farmers from Surkhet district (Mid-Western Nepal) in 2010 to implement regenerative and sustainable rural development programs in Nepal, where over 90% of the working population are dependent on agriculture for their livelihood.

Subsistence agricultural practices have developed to be finely in tune with local climate, landscape and people's needs. Such practices are intimately interwoven with the forest and other natural resources to provide basic needs of food, fuel, fodder, timber, medicines, etc.

These communities can be seen as "marginal" – lacking access to key resources such as education, health care, food security and credit. At the same time the physical areas where they live can also be described as marginal – high altitude, remote and steep, with poor infrastructure of roads, power and communications. These are the people and places where HPC has prioritised its work, where small inputs of appropriate technology and appropriate education can make huge differences. HPC's strategy centres around 3 main activities:

1. **DEMONSTRATION:** (seeing is believing) of how local resources can be assembled, with additions from non-local sources as appropriate, to form a sustainable agriculture and resilient domestic food and energy security. "Sustainable agriculture" here can be defined as "successful management of resources for agriculture to satisfy changing human needs while maintaining or enhancing the quality of the environment and conserving natural resources" (ILEIA). This encapsulates all agro-ecological principles and practices.
2. **TRAINING & EDUCATION (learning how)** - to farmers and development workers in the process of design and implementation of demonstrated sustainable agriculture systems and agro-ecological approaches.
3. **RESOURCES (to DO)** - the seed, seedlings and published information (books, booklets, posters, etc.) needed for farmers and development workers to design and implement such systems on their own land and in their communities.

**RESEARCH** is a fourth important activity to identify useful new species and cropping patterns, or combinations of those existing traditionally, which are favoured and can be appropriated by local farmers for their own use.

HPC carries out demonstration, training, resource production and research on its own resource centres (working farms) in Kathmandu, Surkhet and Humla districts. It also carries out these activities on farmers' own land. In addition to its farming-related activities HPC also works in the health, education (schools and adult literacy) and livelihood sectors because of their connection with its agro-ecological strategies.

[Case Study PDF: Timbaktu Collective \(South Central India\)](#) – a cooperative of cooperatives and action-oriented education and demonstration projects, creating numerous cooperatives as effective systems of organisation for the development of rural enterprise, employment and skills development.

[Case Study PDF: Soils, Food & Healthy Communities \(Malawi\)](#) – large-scale farmer-led training and research network covering over 80 villages, with a Training Centre under construction.

**The Permaculture Research Institutes:** Upon his retirement in 1997, *Bill Mollison* asked *Geoff Lawton* to establish and direct a new Permaculture Research Institute on the 66 hectare Tagari Farm developed by Mollison. Lawton further developed the site over three years and established The [Permaculture Research Institute](#) Australia as a not for profit company. PRI was eventually moved to Zaytuna Farm, a sixty-six acre (27 hectares) property near the village of The Channon, Northern NSW, where it continues today.

Geoff Lawton is also Director of The Permaculture Research Institute USA (also a registered not for profit organisation). Establishing sustainable aid projects as permaculture demonstration sites that also function as education centres for local and international students has become a major focus with the establishment of Permaculture Research Institutes in: *Jordan, Afghanistan, Spain, Malaysia, Vietnam, Yemen, United Arab Emirates, Morocco, Thailand, China* -and many more countries underway. (source: *Wikipedia*)

## Examples of National LAND Centre Systems

[UK Projects & LAND project](#) – pioneered the LAND Centre initiative and shows how well a network can develop with good support, helping the development of many very active Learning and Demonstration Centres, that are actively networking in the local community and regions.

[Danish LAND Centre initiative](#) – was the first to take up the UK LAND model and adapt it to its own needs, integrating this with the development of Denmark's permaculture education and teacher training system – and going on to advise other European countries in these areas.

[Visegrad LAND Centre Network](#) – is linked to a wider permaculture education development project in eastern Europe covering Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Ukraine.

## Detailed Project Research Reports by Guilda Design

These are extremely well presented and detailed, practically oriented Research Reports that are designed to encourage learning from the good practice being demonstrated by 5 long established projects including:

- **The Food Forest** - small farm project of Graham & Marie Brookman, one of Australia's most respected and admired projects



- **Melliodora** - David Holmgren's home
- **Djanbung Gardens Permaculture College** - the project of pioneering permaculture educator and practitioner Robyn Francis
- **Rosemary Morrow's home** - a mature sub-urban plot
- **The Plummery** - project of permaculture designer and teacher Kate Lavers

***These Reports are available via download at a cost of \$15 each from:***

<https://www.guildapermaculture.com/research>

# Part Five: Other Important Good Practice Areas

## Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Guide

Considering equity, diversity and inclusion issues, including accessibility and affordability, is vital for all centres. For guidance as to how to go about this process and what your goals might be refer to the [Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Pathway Guide PDF](#) produced by the BLAST project team.

## Beneficial Relationships for Activating Community

### Transformation- *Connect with colleagues working in this field:*

- [Community Climate Coaches \(CCC\) project](#) - a system developed in parallel to iACT for training, supporting and enabling community facilitators, catalysts and leaders across Europe to support and coach communities in local resilience and climate action in the face of the multiple social and ecological crises.
- [Community Catalysts](#) - a pioneering system of learning and practice aimed at youth leaders, community facilitators, educators and technical staff (e.g. of local governments) to act as catalysts of regenerative development, community resilience and transformative economies in their bioregions, through tools and activities of participatory action research, citizen participation, development and networking of local projects, and the co-creation of public policies.

### Transformative Learning (from p.12):

#### Resources:

Visit [the BLAST Project webpage](#) for a deeper understanding of transformative learning methods and principles and follow its links to valuable transformative learning resources.

Visit the [Hosting Transformations Toolbox](#) for access to a range of transformative learning methods, pathways and tools, and ideas about how best to use them.

## Planning Policy Issues for Learning & Demonstration Centres

A variety of planning or development policy issues and arguments can be considered for learning and demonstration projects, relating to local implementation and realisation of sustainability, the SDGs, net zero and circular economy goals, especially relating to the food economy, or other focused areas of interest. We hope the iACT support system may be able

to provide more future support in these areas. One issue to be aware of is not to solely focus on the sustainability or carbon reduction elements of a project, but to be aware that planning and economic development policies are often more interested in the jobs you are creating or sustaining, skills and training outcomes for people, and your projects contribution to the economic sustainability and resilience of the local economy. The following provides one example of a strong sustainability oriented planning policy.

## Wales One Planet Development Policy

Low-Impact Development is recognised by the Welsh Planning system as playing a key role in the transition towards a low-carbon society. Various pieces of planning legislation support new and existing low-impact projects, though most applications revolve around the [One Planet Development policy](#) (TAN6, July 2010). This policy covers the whole of Wales. Whilst such a policy may not be in place in other countries it is likely to be able to reference this policy as a highly credible Government implemented policy, and use its methods and tools to argue the case for your project achieving or aspiring to achieve One Planet or 'net zero' status with a set period such as 5 years.

**The Welsh One Planet Living policy** was significantly influenced by work by [Lammas Ecovillage](#) (a permaculture inspired ecovillage) and [Chapter 7](#), a specialist organisation in Britain that is focused on low impact development, that acts the Planning Office of [The Land Is Ours \(TLIO\)](#), which campaigns for a planning system which actively encourages sustainable, low impact and affordable homes. In Wales the One Planet Living policy makes it possible to build new homes in the open countryside if there is a clear commitment to sustainable living, natural building techniques, and land-based livelihood. In particular:

- Households will be expected to demonstrate an ecological footprint as low as 2.4gHa/cap (after 5 years), and work towards a one-planet footprint.
- All construction must be zero carbon in construction and use.
- Projects must meet their basic household needs from land-based livelihoods within 5 years. This translates to approximately £3000 per adult per annum from land based activities. Over and above that residents are free to supplement incomes by other means (so long as that doesn't include excessive travel).

There is additional policy guidance at both the national level (in particular [PPW Chapter 4](#)), and at the local level (local development plans), which is particularly relevant for areas with a special designation (National Parks for example). The following document provides detailed guidance on exactly what is required for a one-planet development application - One Planet Development Practical Guidance document from the Welsh Government: <http://lammas.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/one-planet-development-guidance.pdf>

The Welsh Government also commissioned this Ecological Footprint Analysis tool:

- One Planet Ecological Footprint Analysis calculator - download as excel spreadsheet from [One Planet Trust Ecological Footprint Calculator](#)

- [Guidance notes for using the One Planet Ecological Footprint Analysis calculator](#)

## Appendix 1: Core Concepts and Terminology

The types of Learning and Demonstration projects that this Handbook is particularly intended for are likely to be described with any of the following terminology:

- Permaculture and Regenerative Agriculture ('regen ag')
- Regenerative
- Sustainability
- Circular Economy Net Zero (CENZ)
- Transition and Community Climate Action

As these terms are widely used, it is useful to briefly describe and distinguish between them here.

- **Community Climate Action** is a term that is starting to be widely used to refer to community led initiatives (sometimes with the involvement of public sector partners) focused on carbon reduction and a wider array of areas of action because of the understanding of interconnectedness of issues - that the climate crisis relates to multiple other crises or 'significant problems of our time'. Community Climate Action therefore typically aims for localisation of supply chains, responses to the biodiversity crisis, ecosystem restoration as well as actions that address multiple local to regional social issues. Whilst the headline term may be 'climate action', increasingly the other side of the coin is seen as building community resilience.
- **Permaculture is a design approach and set of practices based on a shared understanding of how nature works.** At its heart permaculture has three ethics: Earth Care; People Care; Fair Shares, and sets of design principles and tools. Permaculture is a unique education-for-action system and toolkit that is used to design regenerative systems at all scales - from home and garden to community, farms and bioregions around the world.

The word permaculture originates from considering the needs for establishing ' **permanent agriculture**', then '**permanent culture**'. It brings together a long history of practices from indigenous cultures around the world, and combines them with the science of ecology, design approaches and appropriate technology.

With permaculture, people aim to tread lightly on our planet, in harmony with nature, taking care of people and fellow creatures, to sustain human activities for many generations to come. *Culture change not climate change!*

Permaculture seeks to utilise land, resources, people and the environment in a manner that doesn't produce any waste – and encourages the use of *closed loop systems* seen in nature *e.g vegetable waste getting recycled into organic compost and providing nutrients for and enriching the soil to grow more vegetables.*

It aims to develop landscapes, settlements and lifestyles that will be self-sustaining and productive for generations, and can be applied to a small balcony or farms of many hectares. Ultimately, permaculture offers a vision of how humanity can participate in rather than damage our planet's ecosystems.

(Primary source: <https://www.permaculture.org.uk/>)

- **Regenerative / regeneration** - within the movements this Handbook is catering for, the use of the terms **regenerative** or **regeneration** is rooted in the ecological understanding that because so many living systems have been (significantly) *degenerated* due to human activity, the only viable (and responsible and ethical) solution is (significant) 'regeneration'<sup>6</sup>. **Regenerative approaches seek to increase resilience and productive capacity and are based on a 'living systems' approach** that seeks to build the diversity and complexity of systems to a point that they are able to support themselves in a state of *dynamic stability*. 'Regenerative' is sometimes used in ways that segregate it from 'sustainability' because of the mainstream use of the latter term to imply a maintaining of the status quo. There is also an emerging distinction between **shallow** and **deep** use of the term:

**Shallow regeneration** - refers to the current general understanding of the term that dominates the popular discourse. It centres on white western understanding of the term, rather than its roots in indigenous cultures. It does not promote leadership or transfer of resources to the communities who developed the knowledge it is based on; it is apolitical; it is easily co-opted by the status quo and dominant economic interests. There is nothing inherently harmful about its principles in terms of their ability to benefit the climate. However, shallow regeneration will not transform the food system because of its failure to address legacies of exploitation and colonisation, or to address the difficult *political and rights-based questions*.

**Deep regeneration** - whilst shallow regeneration cries "We need houses! People are without shelter!", **deep regeneration** tells us that no matter how badly we need houses, building them on unstable ground will leave us no better-off than before.

Deep regeneration asks the difficult questions: "Why are people without shelter in the first place? Which systems created this housing shortage?...Whose land are we building these houses on? What is its history?"

Deep regeneration goes beyond the soil and looks at the entire system: the people who have been marginalised and oppressed throughout agriculture's history. The unequal distribution of resources. The role of capitalist extraction. These are all inseparable from the goal of regenerating the earth's systems.

Deep Regeneration is political. It means giving back resources that have been withheld from Indigenous and agricultural communities. It means *redistributing power*.

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<sup>6</sup> Do be aware that the term 'regeneration' has also been used for many decades in the urban planning and development field with solely an economic and physical focus, often with a strong intention to promote conventional (unsustainable) economic growth, whilst aiming to enhance employment, skills and the physical environments in which people live and work.

Adapted from:

<https://agrowingculture.substack.com/p/can-we-talk-about-regenerative-agriculture?s=r>

- **Regenerative Agriculture (or 'regen ag')** is a conservation, rehabilitation and restoration approach to food and farming systems. It focuses in particular on topsoil / soil health regeneration and increasing biodiversity, improving the water cycle, enhancing ecosystems health and resilience, supporting carbon sequestration (through significantly enhanced soil life), to create resilience to climate change, and to strengthen the health and vitality of farm soil.

Regenerative agriculture is not a specific practice itself, but uses various sustainable agriculture techniques in combination. Regenerative agriculture on small farms and gardens is often based on philosophies like *permaculture*, *agroecology*, *agroforestry*, *keyline design* and *holistic management*. Large farms are also increasingly adopting such techniques, and often starting by using "no-till" and/or "reduced till" practices.

The key principles of 'regen ag' are that as soil health improves, input requirements will decrease and crop yields can increase as soils are more resilient against extreme weather, pests and pathogens. (Source: edited from Wikipedia)

- **Sustainability** - this term also has different meanings to different audiences. It is often now seen as representing a mainstream approach to tackling the significant problems of our time - environmental, social and economic. When rooted in its original ecological understanding, with nature as the teacher of meanings, (ecological) sustainability is a state of dynamic stability that can only be achieved with regenerative systems in place i.e. *genuine sustainability has to be inherently regenerative*. Often this understanding will be missing though, so sustainability is increasingly used- particularly in mainstream use - as implying approaches that steadily reduce the damaging impacts of status quo systems, based on assuming that maintaining the status quo is the goal. Mainstream use of the term Sustainability is therefore often directly associated with the pursuit of Sustainable Development, where the latter is presented as the root to achieve the goal / end-state of sustainability. Currently there is little evidence that the pursuit of sustainable development will ever achieve a state of sustainability because of its attachment to the maintenance of inherently degenerative and destructive economic and industrial systems and patterns of thinking that generate states of dynamic instability in multiple interconnected systems. Part of the challenge with understanding sustainability is whether you want to understand 'sustainability' as an intellectual concept (usually defined by minds with no direct personal experience of ecological sustainability or anything approaching sustainable living) - or whether you want to understand 'sustainability' as an inherent characteristic of ecological systems that nature and evolution has generated over millennia as a way of maintaining healthy states of dynamic stability across interconnected ecosystems. So the term sustainability and its use, is full of paradoxes - whereas the quality of natural systems that we can term ecological sustainability is not.

For the iACT Project, the term sustainability is used to mean an *inherently regenerative state of dynamic stability*.

- **Transition** - this term is now widely used to imply 'socio-ecological transition' and transition to sustainability. This is particularly due to the widespread use of the terms **transition town**, **transition initiative** and **transition model** to refer to grassroots community projects that aim to increase self-sufficiency to reduce the impacts of peak oil, the climate crisis, and economic instability through localization strategies, especially around food production and energy usage.

The origins of the use of the term *transition town and transition movement* are in 2004, when permaculture designer and teacher *Rob Hopkins* set his students at *Kinsale Further Education College (Ireland)* the task of applying permaculture principles to the concept of peak oil. This led a student project to produce the '*Kinsale Energy Descent Action Plan*', which looked at across-the-board creative adaptations in the realms of *energy production, health, education, economy and agriculture* as a "road map" to a sustainable future for the town.

From this, *Louise Rooney* and *Catherine Dunne* (two of the course students) developed the *Transition towns* concept, which Kinsale Town councillors decided to adopt in order to work towards energy independence.

In 2006, the founding of *Transition Town Totnes (UK)* led other groups to form, with **The Transition Network** charity founded in early 2007, to support them. Transition initiatives have been started in locations around the world. While the aims remain the same, Transition initiatives' solutions are specific depending on the characteristics of the local area. (*Sources: adapted / edited from Wikipedia*)

'*Transition*' and '*Community Climate Action*' will imply community-led approaches, and therefore will often emphasise the social and ecological dimensions of change. Whilst the latter term includes the term 'climate', it is increasingly understood a focus on community resilience and connection to place are often more effective for building engagement than a narrow emphasis on climate impacts, reduction of carbon emissions and energy.

- **Community of Practice (COP)** is a group of people who share a common concern, a set of problems, interest in a topic or vision for a transformative project and who come together to fulfil both individual and group goals. Communities of practice often focus on *sharing best practices and creating new knowledge* to advance a domain of professional or community practice.
- **Deep Adaptation** is a concept, agenda, and international social movement. Based on a deep analysis and re-evaluation of mainstream and up-to-date climate data, it concludes that extreme weather events and other effects of climate change will increasingly disrupt food, water, shelter, power, and social and governmental systems. These disruptions are seen as being likely to or to inevitably cause uneven societal collapse in the next few decades. The word "deep" indicates that strong

measures are required to adapt to an unravelling of western industrial and consumer lifestyles. The agenda includes values of nonviolence, compassion, curiosity and respect, with a framework for constructive action.

**The Deep Adaptation concept was introduced in the 2018 paper "Deep Adaptation: A Map for Navigating Climate Tragedy" by University of Cumbria (UK) sustainability leadership Professor Jem Bendell.** The paper was submitted to the Sustainability Accounting, Management and Policy Journal, but reviewers requested major revisions. *Bendell* then chose to self-publish through the *Institute for Leadership and Sustainability at the University of Cumbria*. In the paper, Bendell stated that near term social collapse due to climate disruption was inevitable. He has since offered that as opinion, rather than fact, in a second version of the paper in 2020. The original paper was addressed to the corporate and academic sustainability community but found a large general readership, being downloaded more than 600,000 times as of November 2019, and subsequently translated into various languages, spawning a global deep adaptation movement through the Deep Adaptation Forum: <https://www.deepadaptation.info/>

(Source: edited from Wikipedia)

- **Circular Economy (also referred to as circularity or CE)** is a model of production and consumption, which involves sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling existing materials and products for as long as possible. CE calls for a shift in thinking about products to doing "more good" (eco-effectiveness), in contrast to doing "less bad" (eco-efficiency). The core concepts of CE are often seen as being first distilled by *Michael Braungart and William McDonough* in the book, *Cradle to Cradle*, including the distinction between biological (or organic) and technical (or non-organic) circular systems, to eliminate the concept of waste and instead perceive resources as "food" for another product or cycle.

CE aims to tackle global challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss, waste and pollution by emphasising design-based implementation of the three base principles of the model, which are: *eliminating waste and pollution, circulating products and materials, and the regeneration of nature*. CE is seen as distinct from the traditional linear economy. CE has been gaining popularity because it aims to minimise emissions and consumption of raw materials, open up new markets, and increase the sustainability of consumption and improve resource efficiency. (Sources: edited from wikipedia and <https://www.ceguide.org/>)

- **Net Zero** is generally applied in relation to carbon emissions, but is also increasingly used to imply 'net zero carbon and net zero waste' - and in a full 3D sense, 'zero toxicity'. These terms are generally applied more to technical and economic systems, and have less emphasis on the social and ecological dimensions of change.





## Appendix 2: Lessons Learned from LAND Networks

### Lessons from the LAND Centre System in Britain

#### History and Context

The LAND Centre system emerged in the UK in 2012 when the *Permaculture Association of Britain (PAB)* was involved as a smaller partner in a large and well funded project that was focused on *local food growing and health and wellbeing*.

The concept of LAND Centres emerged from the lessons learnt from well established Permaculture Centres in Britain and abroad, such as the *Garden Cottage project*, established by *Graham Bell* in 1991 and the *Jajarkot Permaculture Project and Himalaya Permaculture Centre (HPC) in Nepal* established by *Chris Evans* and local Nepali partners in 1988 and 2010 respectively.

There was sufficient funding to pay for a LAND Coordinator and to fund LAND tutors to visit projects that wanted to become LAND Centres, and to give advice and support in completing the steps to become approved as a LAND Centre, by providing evidence that demonstrated they fulfilled the LAND Criteria.

**The original Permaculture LAND (*Learning Action Networking Demonstration*) project in Britain** involved successful delivery of a £457,000 project over 5 years, including in-kind support. The project helped to support the development of 80 Centres across England, delivered over 40 training and networking events, engaged 35,000 people, and enabled 120 group visits by disadvantaged community groups. Therefore, in terms of outcomes, the project was a great success.

However, then the funding ran out, the post of LAND Coordinator at PAB came to an end and no ongoing support system was available. Meanwhile, the **ScotLAND project** was able to maintain some momentum thanks to funding for a part-time ScotLAND Coordinator and some LAND tutor support to help several more projects become LAND Centres in Scotland.

So, although the rest of the British LAND *Network system* became dormant, many LAND Centres remained independently active and developed further, whilst others became less active or floundered.

#### Some of the Important Lessons from the UK LAND Network

Creating the LAND Network led to a huge level of positive activity, and supported a large number of projects to progress in ways that would not have been likely, or would have taken much longer, without the LAND project.

Those Centres have delivered a very large amount of *training, education and engagement* activity, hosted many thousands of visitors, and helped numerous educators and practitioners to develop and share their skills and experience.

*They are also growing a large amount of food, creating numerous diverse habitats to support biodiversity, and often are vital hubs for community activities* that support physical and mental health and wellbeing, and build strong social relationships.

- **Investment needed to support the work:** The core model of LAND Centres works very well, but to maintain a Network and support new, emerging Centres *a viable support system that can be sustained financially* is important.
- **Badge/accreditation system:** The LAND Centre badge should not be seen as a quality mark - it is more like a certificate of completion of a process to fulfil a set of criteria.
- **Tutor Support:** Even with funded LAND tutor support there was no way to generate *a consistent level of quality in projects*, due primarily to the very significant diversity in skills, resources, experience and commitment amongst those people that were setting up and running LAND Centres, as well as some inconsistencies in the approaches, experience and perspectives amongst the small number of LAND tutors.
- **Maintaining consistent quality:** Some LAND Centres are outstanding. However, some projects approved as LAND centres were not excellent examples of permaculture, and whilst they are examples of the diversity within the movement, they certainly should not be promoted as 'centres of excellence' or 'best practice examples'.
- **Financial viability and creating income streams:** An area that deserves more attention is the *enterprise and entrepreneurial aspects of Centres*, the related skills of people involved in running Centres and of the people and micro-enterprises they support and train.

Here, the LAND networks can perhaps learn from some of the [International Examples Beyond Europe](#) of good practice projects and programmes cited in Part Four of this document, such as *Sustainable Agriculture Tanzania*, and *Amrita Bhoomi and the Timbaktu Collective in India*.

## Lessons from the LAND Centre Network in Denmark

### History and Context

Because of the success of the British LAND Centre system, a Danish adoption of LAND happened in 2013 with its first accreditation to LAND centres in 2014. Initial funding was obtained for a LAND Coordinator and some activities to start the LAND Network. The same criteria and setup was used as in the UK and was translated to Danish.

Although the highly qualified tutors were not available to begin with, an Advisory Board consisting of some of the most qualified permaculture practitioners was established to support the Coordinator and to visit potential LAND Centres in their geographical region.

The LAND Network was supported by EU funding through *Erasmus+*. The LAND Coordinator described the **Danish Permaculture Association** as '*a kind of school with LAND Centres as its distributed classrooms*'.

Each LAND Centre has one or more LAND educators, because all LAND Centres have educational activities. These activities consist of mostly informal and non-formal learning and can be regular courses, like the *PDC (Permaculture Design Certificate)*, workshops and tours and many include volunteers and interns.

LAND educators were eligible to be part of the *Erasmus+ Adult education mobilities programme (KA104)*. A mobility is a journey to a different country in Europe to attend a course with the aim of anchoring that knowledge back into the organisation.

Typical mobilities were to obtain higher quality in learning activities, ie. *teacher training* and more specific professional skills like *forest gardening* or *regenerative agriculture*.

### Lessons:

- Adopting this type of concept was a success especially when adapting it to circumstances in the country i.e. the type of association and support systems, like the educational resources.
- Over time, the LAND Centre concept was developed to include **LAND learners/starters and LAND "sprouts"** with different levels of criteria and completion. This enabled more "relatability" and integration.
- LAND Centres were accepted into the Network and some are still active and thriving while others have wilted and died.
  - Privately owned LAND Centres seem to be the ones that have more staying power because there is a strong ownership and economic gain.
  - Community LAND Centres seem to be more fragile if key persons choose to leave the project.

## Lessons from the LAND Networks in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Estonia

### History and Context

Following the success of the British and Danish LAND Networks, the Norwegian Permaculture Association started a project in 2015, while Sweden, Finland and Estonia started in 2017.

The Norwegian LAND coordinator organised Erasmus+ funded visits to UK and Denmark to get sufficient knowledge and experience to set up and coordinate the LAND network in Norway.

The Danish LAND Coordinator got funding to visit Norway, Sweden, Finland and Estonia and in 2017 the first LAND Centres were accredited in Sweden and Finland.

Estonia has been struggling more because their first step is to set up a Permaculture Association. In Finland the system has continued on a voluntary basis, but has not developed due to lack of resources- in particular the financing for a worker responsible for support projects and developing the network.

### Lessons learned:

- **The increased focus and visibility of LAND Centres and the Network has made permaculture more attractive on a general level.** People who want to develop their professional skills within permaculture wish to become members of the Network because of the support and shared experience they can be part of.

## How These Lessons Have Informed The iACT Project

From around 2018, the very small IPEN (*International Permaculture Network*) team tried to initiate a pilot **International LAND Centre Network - the iLAND pilot network**. But, hit by Brexit and Covid disruptions, IPEN's 2 part-time Coordinators (based in the UK and Australia) came to realise they did not have the capacity or resources to provide the support that such a network of projects needed and deserved.

**Based on this realisation, IPEN worked with the iACT partners, led by the *Permaculture Association Britain (PAB)*, to secure the resources and put in place a partnership that could create a set of outputs, resources and web-based elements that would provide some form of ongoing support system for: *Regenerative sustainability Learning and Demonstration Centres and projects in Europe, and hopefully anywhere in the world - creating the iACT support system that this iACT Handbook is part of.***

***A Case for Support*** is also a useful and increasingly welcomed document for projects seeking external funding from grants and support from stakeholders.