

# Education in complete environments - Handlungspädagogik

*Degrowth - a paradigm shift and the needs for a new approach to education*

*Visions and experiences from the CSA Hof Pente – educational-province*

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**Our culture is dominated by an economic doctrine based on economic growth, short-term-profit and externalization of social and ecological side effects. Our educational system prepares our children to form part of this culture.**

**The transformation of our consumer culture towards a mindful society with a solidarity based economy can not be taught merely intellectual. The paradigm shift from a growth based, towards a degrowth based society starts with the suitable education. But this new education emphasizes the self-education. The self-educating community becomes an educational environment. This education is more indirect, it needs an individualized caring community that celebrates diversity, and takes responsibility by working and learning with each other and with the earth, the plants and the animals. Community-supported-agriculture offers an ideal, complete environment for a community-supported-education.**

## **agri - culture**

How can we develop new models of organization for a sustainable future? Inspired by the *Dialogue-Process-Methodology*, some new ideas about agriculture, community and child education have been developed and implemented on the CSA Hof Pente and will be described in the following.

### **From community supported agriculture to community supported education**

Due to the economic pressure and the disconnection between farmers and consumers, many farmers feel urged to either exploit themselves or nature. They feel hooked on to the subsidies or the prices of the world wide market. They can't influence both factors and to survive, they feel urged to put even more pressure on the plants, the animals and the soil.

To create sustainable models for the future, it seems necessary to start a dialogue to create a common learning partnership between consumers and farmers. Community supported agriculture (CSA) enables such a partnership. In a CSA project the food is produced in a direct relationship between farmers and the people who eat the food. In the partnership between farmers and consumers, the responsibilities and rewards of farming are shared.

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1 [www.hofpente.de](http://www.hofpente.de), [www.dialogprojekt.de](http://www.dialogprojekt.de),

A principal of the CSA farms is a solidarity oriented economy which stands in contradiction to the competition principals of the free market economy driven by egoistic profit maximization. It also stands in contrast to the socialistic command economy in which each one has to fulfill the planned production target.

Starting a CSA is starting an intergenerational learning process, with a concrete location that offers valuable learning opportunity for today's adults and children. CSA can become an *Community supported education (CSE)*. But let us take a closer look at the widespread conditions of childhood.

In practical school life, the child is still seen as an object of socialization, not as the subject of its own upbringing. The child is still not regarded as a person who has the right of free development and education, but as a person who must attend school. It is hard to acknowledge that when a child is born, it steps into his own rights. This new consciousness was expressed in the „*Magna Charta Libertatum*“ that was formulated by the polish doctor and pedagogue Janusz Korczak in 1919:

*“The child doesn't only become a human being, it is a human being!”*

In 1989 the UN-Convention on the Rights of Children was signed by almost every nation in the world. To acknowledge the child as a subject of his self-education is hard enough, but the idea has finally reached mankind.

### **Facilitating self-education and CSE**

A next step of change towards a CSE in a living-learning-environment is connected to the following idea emphasized by Steiner: *“Every education is self-education, and as teachers we can only provide the environment for children's self- education” (Steiner, 1998 p.88)*

To adapt the learning environment to what the child needs in order to develop fruitfully, would mean, for every adult, a deeply-rooted transformation of living and thinking habits. Taking this into account, teachers should become more and more facilitators and practical guides, mentors and role models, who work and learn together with children. Children of our century don't accept the “master” anymore, and are even less willing to accept to be isolated from real life all day long through timetables and school rooms. In the best – or worst – case they submit to it. Problems that come along are defined as problems of discipline. Actually it is in the very child's nature to desire to be active, but the school of the modern time prevents the child from being productively active, however the child's will is projected towards activity (Guttenhöfer, 2011).

The facilitators in a living-learning-environment are learners and do not necessarily have to be academic educated pedagogues. It seems much more convenient that the facilitator is a practical working person. But the typical teacher today is a person who is released from productive work at the costs of society in order to concentrate on educating children and – in contrary to the facilitator - he is to be much more a *knower* than a *learner*. Therefore farmers and craftsmen ought to be much more involved in the process of education.

In his fragment "Paedagogik", Novalis developed ideas on how to design the living learning environment :

*"Education of children, like the training of an apprentice, could gradually start taking part in the activities of adults, and not through direct education."* (Novalis HKA III 243 16)

Therefore the educating adults must be busy! But not busy in the direct education of children, but busy with work that originates from life's needs. This also includes writing, reading, calculating, and singing. And how does the apprentice learn? By imitation and by following the adult's model. This creates images of adults working meaningfully, whose work is worth being imitated and the model followed, because the adults express themselves in visible activities, in movements of arms and legs sensibly conducted. And the genius of the child who lives in the environment of such occupations is seen in the process of practicing its self-education by imitating and following the model of adults. This we call play, later we call it exercise.

### **CSA Hof Pente – educational province**

The Hof Pente<sup>2</sup> is a CSA with about 300 members and a self-understanding of a CSE intergenerational-learning-environment. We cultivate diversity on the field as well as in the community, which includes children, teenagers, farmers, teachers, senior volunteers and people with special need. Every day children from the on-farm Kindergarten are involved in farming and Community activities. We have established long-term collaborations with schools, so that about 30 9<sup>th</sup> grade pupils join the farm through the year, about 2 to 3 pupils at a time for several weeks. Besides that we have grade 3. classes from a neighboring school coming for 4 weeks. For this time the farming community becomes their classroom and their learning environment. The cultivation of the land is central to the farm. The cultivation of the Community is important too and this can be developed through dialogue-process<sup>3</sup> and an approach that combines work, art and music for example by starting the day together with a song, a verse and an awareness exercise.

### **literature**

Guttenhöfer, P. (2011) Rettung der Kindheit - Memorandum für eine elementare Handlungspädagogik, Das Goetheanum

Novalis (1984). Die Werke Friedrich von Hardenbergs, Band 3. Stuttgart. Kohlhammer.

Steiner, R. (1998). Rhythms of Learning: What Waldorf Education Offers Children, Parents & Teachers. Steiner Books

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2 [www.hofpente.de](http://www.hofpente.de)

3 The dialogue-process inspired by David Bohm is a core element on the CSA Hof Pente [www.dialogprojekt.de](http://www.dialogprojekt.de)