



PERMACULTURE DIPLOMA PATHWAY IN GERMANY

Introduction

The usual international agreements between permaculture organizations form the basis of the diploma pathway in Germany: participation in a 72-h-hour-course, minimum two years work on individual projects, two design tutors, 10 design projects. From 1984 until 2002, the Permaculture Association has offered the structure to become a permaculture designer with almost no administrative assistance. Since the founding of the Permaculture Academy in 2002, this basic concept has been extended twice: 1. according to the British system with the help of Andy Langford and the British Academy, 2. according to the work of the German Academy founder Jascha Rohr and a concept team in 2007, using pattern language as a design tool.

Diploma Pathway

The current education concept of the Permaculture Academy can be briefly described as follows:

PREREQUISITES / ELEMENTS	COSTS / DESCRIPTION
Permaculture Design Course (72-h)	ca. 900 Euro plus acc.+meals
Introduction into the education concept and pathway design (one week-end)	125 Euro plus acc.+meals (will be credited in case of registration as a student)
Registration with the Academy	Classes start with at least 7 students
YEAR ONE	1500 Euro/year (125 Euro/month)
Online course "self organization competence", (8-10 modules, once a month)	Due to the common starting point, there are two action learning guilds each year. They meet via internet or telephone once a month and get exercises to support their self organization process, like "how do I organize my documentation", or "how do I gain easy access to relevant information" etc. The online-course teacher gets paid directly by the Academy.

PREREQUISITES / ELEMENTS	COSTS / DESCRIPTION
YEAR ONE	1500 Euro/year (125 Euro/month)
Action learning design week-end	Personal meeting of the student group with the focus on "how can I find out about and support my personal way of learning?"
Two design tutorials (with the tutor of the first year)	One tutorial ca. half a day; monthly short reports via mail recommended. The design tutors get paid directly by the Academy.
3-4 in-depth courses to strengthen the knowledge of the PDC	More practical approach in 4 day courses, like forest gardening, building, social PC etc. – this format has been introduced in 2012, and was very well accepted by the students (two tutorials with the second tutor have been skipped for that, but these courses are held and visited by tutors, so an more informal exchange is guaranteed).
One or two Academy Weekends	The Academy organizes regular weekends (2-3 per year) for all Academy members and interested people to give the opportunity for exchange, presentations, tutorials etc.
Interim presentation	To share the project work, train the individual presentation style and get a feedback from the pc-community
YEAR TWO	1500 Euro/year (125 Euro/month)
Design workshop (one week)	Intensive design workshop to repeat and deepen design methods and principles. Teachers get paid directly by the Academy.
Four design tutorials (two with each tutor)	One tutorial appr. half a day, monthly short reports via mail recommended. The design tutors get paid directly by the Academy.
One or two Academy Weekends	
OTHER OPTIONS	
Year two can be extended to two years at the cost of 1020 Euro/year (85 Euro/month)	
Between the end of the registration period and the accreditation, there can be one year of free working time	
The students have three possibilities to register with the Academy: 1. Regular diploma pathway as described above, 2. Advanced studies (starting with 2nd year, for those who have done permaculture work already), 3. Fast Track (600 Euro - those who are fully self-organized and have done sufficient permaculture design work can get their diploma in 6 months, accompanied by 2 tutors)	

ACCREDITATION	100 Euro
	Handing in the documentary, final design project and statement of the tutors 6 weeks before the presentation date
Other elements that are not included in the costs:	
More learning guild meetings	
Specific tutorials	
Participation in specific workshops	
Practical training	
And last but not least: work on own design projects	

STRUCTURE AND ADMINISTRATION:

Structure

The German Permaculture Academy is a “Zweckbetrieb” of the Permaculture Association, which means that it is a business that fulfills the purpose of the charity (environmental education). Furthermore, it is an official project of the UNESCO-World Decade “Education for Sustainable Development” (no money, but good reputation). The Association’s funding is mainly guaranteed by member fees, the Academy has to survive on course and student fees so far. In the first year of the fusion of the two organizations in January 2007, the Association has supported the Academy financially because of low income.

Administration

To maintain the infrastructure of Association and Academy, there is the board of the Association with three members who work voluntarily and decentralized from their private homes, and an office for the academy in Berlin which is also run on a voluntary basis by the so-called Academy-Guild, consisting of five people. Additionally, regular supporters have been involved during the past years in various fields such as marketing, fundraising etc. The groups communicate via email and telephone-conference and try to have regular personal meetings. The activities of both organizations take place all over Germany.

Problems/Solutions

It became clear that this education concept is on the one hand an improvement because it offers a better support for the students’ diploma pathway, but on the other hand it needs continuous and quite intensive care. The Academy work includes course organization, marketing, networking, finances and fundraising, regular communication (email, telephone), internal coordination (students, tutors etc.). Because of the decentralized team structure, communication and work atmosphere can be difficult sometimes.

During summer 2008, the organizational design for the Academy has been re-evaluated, because the former model of two members of the Association’s board running also the Academy has lead to hierarchical problems and burn-out symptoms. With the help of John Croft’s “Dragon Dreaming Concept” and other tools, a successful way of organizing complex projects has been found. This concept invites more people to take over certain tasks and feel responsible for their own projects inside the Academy. With the financial concept of “project-support-project”, people are motivated and surpluses are used to finance more permaculture work – see as a shining example the EUPC 2012 ☺

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