

SWOC analysis

We made a SWOC analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Constraints – and Solutions) of different educational structures:

This information can be used for:

- each country and organization to analyze and understand their own situation
- between the participating countries, to learn from each others strengths and opportunities and see
- countries creating a permaculture organization, to learn and understand different strategies and ways to adapt to the local situation
- students to see the strength of each country and choose the association that is more adapted to their needs

If you want to add or modify information about your organization or country, don't hesitate to contact us.

Conclusions of SWOC analysis, september 2012

Here some conclusions and highlights of the SWOC. This overview is not complete, it gives some highlights and conclusions. The full information and details can be found in the spreadsheet [link to swoc]:

1. Strengths

- Enthusiasm and motivation

A general mentioned is a lot of enthusiasm and motivation for permaculture learning, practice and teaching.

- Teachers and diploma pathways

Some countries have a well-established education system and diploma pathway.

Austria delivers 150 courses a year.

Sweden, Germany, UK, Denmark, Austria, Italy and France are well organized and structured.

UK has paid staff, Germany and UK have paid tutors. Strong team of teachers (Italy).

France, Portugal and Italy mention offering cheap PDC's.

- Follow up and specialized courses

Both Portugal, Italy and Austria mentioned offering a wide range of follow up courses.

- Contacts with formal education

Ireland has accreditation from the national accreditations body and a 2-year

PC-course in a vocational college, that can be funded by employment agency. Both

UK and Netherlands are working on accreditation of permaculture material. UK has contact with formal education.

- contacts with other networks

Many countries mention strong links with other networks like ecovillage and transition town network (Latvia, Spain,

- Access to media, internet and social media

Netherlands mentions a strong access to internet and social media as a strength to quickly reach large numbers of people.

Slovenia and Latvia have strong connections with media.

- Social cohesion

Slovenia mentions to be a small permaculture community where people know each other and collaborate.

- National characteristics

Some advantages relate to national characteristics. Finland mentions the high education level of the population, open-minded people, the strong connection to the land (70% of the forests is family owned) and intact family systems.

2. Weaknesses

- no national organization or diploma pathway

Many countries don't have a regional or national organization or diploma pathway.

Lot of them lack diploma holders, teachers.

There is a shortage of PDC's, teachings and trainings.

Few demonstration centers.

- Standards and content of curricula

Often mentioned, as a weakness is no common agreement on the content of the curricula or accepted standard for teachers.

- Individualism

Many countries mention lack of cooperation between teachers and a lot of individualism and sometimes interpersonal issues.

- Distances

Some countries mention long travel distances for either teachers or students.

- Costs

UK and Germany mention as weaknesses the costs of the diploma pathway. Many countries mention lack of money and funding possibilities, poor population.

- Organizational challenges

UK, Germany and Sweden mention respectively bureaucracy, rigidity and static organization.

3. Opportunities

- Big demand, enthusiasm and new energy

A widely mentioned opportunity is the big demand and the enthusiasm in many countries among students and new teachers for PDC-courses, information, and practical workshops.

- Creating an organization

Creating a loose or light network or organization is seen as an opportunity. Both in Ireland and in Netherlands this is seen as the most realistic option, due to lack of time and resources.

- Standards of teaching

Clear standards of PDC's and diploma pathways are mentioned as valuable. Also connecting to the formal education systems is happening in some countries (Austria, UK, Netherlands).

- Working together, creating networks, permaculture events

Either national or international working together is seen as an opportunity for improvement. This goes for creating networks, organizing permaculture and teacher events (EPT, national convergence, teachers meetings).

-Self regulation,

Strong, autonomous teachers and diploma holders are mentioned as valuable.

- Different target groups and diversity in teaching models

Outreach to different target groups and cooperation with other networks is seen as opportunity. (cooperation with transition towns, ecovillages, environmental activists, free schools, vocational sectors and enterprises).

Outreach to different target groups needs adapted or specialized courses. The diversity in Europe of teaching models is an advantage.

- Recent economic crisis

The recent economic crisis brings awareness to people to consider different lifestyles and redesign their life.

Ireland created the possibility for unemployed people to get paid to attend PC-courses.

- Culture and tradition

Some countries mention the advantages of having a tradition of agriculture, strong connection to the land, or tradition of collecting food in the wild. Incorporation of this traditional knowledge creates opportunities.

- Access to land and relatively independent local government

Some countries have relatively cheap and easy access to land and abundance of nature, sometimes combined with independent, not too strict government and legal institutions.

4. Constraints

Constraints that are mentioned are often connected with the weaknesses.

- Permaculture teaching

Lack of diploma holders and diploma pathways is generally mentioned.

There is a general mentioned lack of teachers and tutors.

- Geography and climate

Some countries mention geographical or climate constraints, like too much travelling for teachers or students, seasonal restrictions for courses, effect of climate change.

- Money and funding

Another often mentioned restriction for courses is lack of money or funding. This impacts participation to courses, especially for the poor. In several countries the courses are expensive for students (Portugal/

Latvia). Also lack of funding for administrative work is mentioned.

-Time

Many countries mention a lack of time, especially to set up national structures or develop networks. Teachers are sometimes overloaded with work.

- Tools and skills

Lack of tools (promotion, marketing) and skills is mentioned by several countries.

- Personal issues

Several countries mention personal issues of or between teachers or schools. Regional divisions, lack of coherence, division within the permaculture community. This leads to unclear situation among students and the public, about who is doing what and how.

- barriers

Some countries face poor access to land or strong or many legal restrictions or barriers for applying permaculture principles.

- Research

There is little research done about the long-term effects of permaculture lifestyles in terms of resilience.