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PLASE
POWER OF LOCAL AUTHENTIC SUSTAINABLE EDUCATION

PLASE WORKSHOPS

The PLASE Workshops present local and transnational training sessions where educators enhanced their didactical and pedagogical skills through Place-Based Education (PBE), highlighting key activities, results, and participant feedback.



WORKSHOP: POWER OF PLACE

Overview of the Workshop

The workshop “Power of Place”, held in Rørvik, Norway and facilitated by Pernille Bech, brought together PLASE partners to explore how places can drive meaningful change through a regenerative approach. It encouraged participants to move beyond problem-solving and instead focus on potential, relationships, and local engagement, highlighting how transformation begins when people reconnect with the places they inhabit.

Objectives and Key Activities

The workshop introduced participants to a regenerative approach to place-based development, providing practical tools to apply in their own contexts. It aimed to deepen understanding of the relationship between people and place, shift perspectives from problem-solving to potential, and explore how communities can drive change through a structured analytical framework.

Participants engaged in hands-on group work, selecting meaningful places and analyzing them through mapping, stakeholder identification, and exploration of systems and historical patterns. The process was enriched by observation and informal research, encouraging personal reflection and offering a condensed experience of a longer, real-world methodology.







THE PLACE WHERE WE LIVE

A fundamental theme of the workshop is the deep connection between people and the places they inhabit. Understanding a place goes beyond its physical or social characteristics, as it also involves recognizing how individual behaviors, values, and emotions shape it.

Feelings such as belonging and attachment are key drivers of change. People are naturally more inclined to care for and improve environments they feel connected to, whether it is their neighborhood, a landscape, or a shared public space. The workshop encourages participants to reflect on their everyday actions and their impact, while also considering their role as individuals and educators in fostering awareness and responsibility in others. This perspective highlights how personal engagement with a place can become the starting point for broader social and environmental transformation.



UNLOCK THE POTENTIAL OF A PLACE

At the core of the workshop is the idea of unlocking potential rather than solving problems. This regenerative approach focuses on activating existing strengths and opportunities within a place instead of addressing issues in isolation.

It emphasizes building relationships between people and with the environment before taking action, and understanding places as complex, interconnected systems. A key principle is reciprocity, meaning that any intervention should aim to give back as much as it takes. By working with existing energies, this approach enables processes of long-term growth and transformation. In this way, change is understood as an evolving process rather than a fixed outcome.

THE UNIQUE STORY OF A PLACE

Working with a place requires uncovering its unique story, shaped by ecological, social, historical, and economic factors.
The method involves analyzing context and scale, identifying interconnections, exploring historical patterns, and defining the identity of the place. By examining past events and recurring dynamics, participants can identify underlying patterns that continue to influence the present. This deeper understanding supports more strategic and meaningful interventions that address long-term dynamics rather than surface-level issues. It also allows participants to recognize both challenges and hidden opportunities embedded in the evolution of the place.



ALWAYS SEEK POTENTIAL

A key message of the workshop is the need to shift from a problem–solution mindset to a potential-oriented approach.
This requires rethinking how change is approached. Instead of imposing quick fixes, participants are encouraged to observe and support natural and social processes. Although this approach can be more challenging, it leads to more sustainable and resilient outcomes and fosters a way of thinking that continuously looks for opportunities, even in complex contexts. Over time, this mindset helps build more adaptive and forward-looking practices.





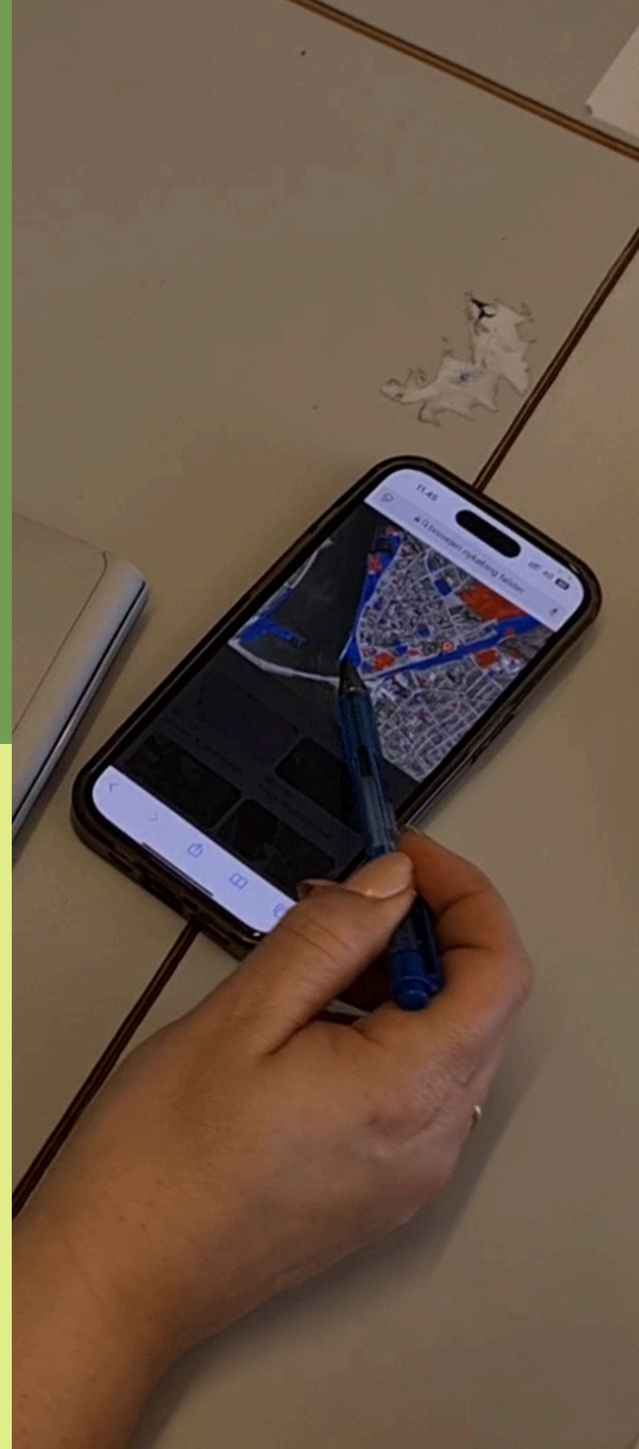
ACUPUNCTURE POINTS

A practical tool introduced in the workshop is the concept of “acupuncture points,” specific locations with high potential for transformation. These are identified by local citizens rather than external experts, ensuring that interventions are grounded in local knowledge and experience.
By focusing on these strategic points, small-scale actions such as reactivating empty spaces or improving public areas can trigger wider systemic change. This approach shows how targeted interventions can gradually influence broader social and urban dynamics. It also demonstrates how local initiatives can scale up their impact through collective participation and shared vision.

Feedback and Lessons Learned

The workshop highlighted the value of adopting a regenerative, place-based approach, while also revealing some of its challenges. Participants found the shift from problem-solving to potential-oriented thinking both inspiring and demanding, as it requires time, practice, and a change in mindset. Engaging directly with places through observation, dialogue, and personal reflection proved to be particularly effective in building deeper understanding and connection.

A key lesson learned is the importance of relationships, both among participants and with the place itself, as a foundation for any meaningful intervention. The process also showed that working with complexity, rather than simplifying it, leads to more nuanced and sustainable outcomes. At the same time, the workshop made clear that this methodology cannot be fully grasped in a short time, but needs to be tested and developed over longer processes.







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