

The Wild Spot - Ecological placemaking

Community nature connectedness

The Wild Spot is a light placemaking format anchored in green urban spaces which aims at fostering community nature-based well-being. We present here a pillar of the methodology, nature connectedness, and how to lead a community reflection on it.

What is nature connectedness?

Nature connectedness is a “measure of an individual's trait levels of feeling emotionally connected to the natural world” (Meyer and Frantz, 2004) and it implies assessing the affective component of the human-nature connection. There is scientific evidence that nature connectedness supports well-being and pro-environmental behaviours. The following set of activities can make a community more aware of their connection with nature and their place in the natural ecosystem. Such information can inspire functions and infrastructures of green areas and increase the participants' sense of belonging.

Step 1 - Relationship with nature

Explore participants' relationship with nature. For instance, ask them to think about and recall a natural place from the past that they hold dear, and describe its attributes and how it makes them feel. It is possible that they relate nature to something scary, or bad memories. Accept this outcome, it is important that they describe this in their own words. Participants jot down their answers on paper and, if they want, draw their nature spot.

Step 2 - Practices and habits in nature

Let's make the general observations of step 1 rooted in today's experience: how are participants connected with nature as individuals and group? Explore practices in nature: where do they go, if they go, in nature? What do they do and with whom? Are there similar motivations or benefits emerging? This can be a roundtable discussion, with a rapporteur illustrating the answers.



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Step 3 Experience nearby nature

Assign participants an urban area outside to cover (it can be different streets, or portions of streets, a square...). Their task is to detect nature manifestations in the area with their five senses, going from evident visual features to micro elements, from weather conditions to sensorial impressions such as smells, textures or sounds. Ask them to detect also the beings, from macro to micro ones. Give them a time for exploration (at least 15-20 minutes, according to the size of the area) and then report in plenary.



The Wild Spot methodology was developed by Futuribile and piloted at Amsterdam Science Park over a semester with students from Amsterdam University College. To build legacy on the experience, the Wild Spots organisation was established.

www.wild-spots.com info@wild-spots.com