



# POP-UP LEARNING PROJECT

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POP-UP LEARNING



# POP-UP LEARNING BE-AWARE RE-AWARE AND RE-DISCOVER CURIOSITY AND CONNECTION IN EDUCATION THROUGH OUTDOOR LEARNING

IN COLLABORATION WITH:



# **THE OUTDOOR LEARNING APPROACH APPLIED TO CHILDREN AGED 3-11**



*«Schools began to exist when a man sitting under a tree, unaware that he was a teacher, began to discuss his awareness with a few others, who did not know they were students»*

Louis Kahn (1961)

# IT IS THE MOMENT OF REINVENTION

Before talking about innovative schools we need to rethink the concept of schooling and reinvent it to keep up with the new generations, more dynamic, technological and more 'complicated' than in the past.

**Rethinking the way we teach and rethinking spaces  
is a must!**

To make a school, you don't need great architecture, but, first and foremost, a willingness to teach - by a "teacher" - and the will to learn - by the "students".

The **European Institute for Outdoor Education and Experiential Learning** identifies outdoor education as encompassing "outdoor activities", "environmental education" and "personal and social development"



**WHAT DO YOU MEAN?**

It is difficult to give a specific definition of this concept, as its interpretation varies according to philosophy, culture and local conditions.

But it is possible to say that **Outdoor Education** is part of the idea of Experiential education, a "learning philosophy that contains many different methodologies and practices in which experts plan and offer direct experiences and tools for reflection, in order to increase knowledge, develop competences, skills, identify values and develop people's contribution to their communities".

The aim is to promote the possibility of direct experience with phenomena and environments that are different from those to which children are accustomed, avoiding that the only mode of knowledge is that which comes from contact with books, computers and television.

**THE ONLY  
MEANING?**

## **FOREST KINDERGARTEN**

During the course of the 20th century, starting with experiences in Scandinavian countries, both in Europe and the rest of the world, numerous that make Outdoor Education the central element of children's learning

# EVERYTHING BEGAN...

The first school in the forest was founded in the 1950s by Ella Flatau, born in Søllerød, Denmark.

The idea for this school came from the fact that Flatau spent a lot of time with her children in the woods behind her house. This aroused the curiosity of other parents and, with their help, she decided to create the first model of this school.

This initiative received a great deal of support, especially because its creator realised that nature generated great happiness in children and that these days in the woods with their parents increased the bond between them, with a clear positive effect on the children's growth and development.

There was a need to bring children closer to nature and not limit this time to weekend walks or trips out of town.

This idea quickly caught on because in northern European countries, "life in contact with nature is of central importance both from an educational point of view and in terms of the quality of life that translates into good everyday practice".

# ...TODAY

This approach led to the spread of the school model in the forest so quickly that by the 1970s and 2000 more than 70 forest schools had been established.

Soon the philosophy of school in the woods developed in Sweden, Norway, Germany and the United Kingdom.

Today there are hundreds of schools all over Europe that apply this approach.

# TYPES OF SCHOOLS IN THE FOREST

The **classic school in the forest** is the most widespread model, accounting for about 75% of all kindergartens in the forest.

According to this model, children spend the entire morning in the forest in a specific area that is easy to reach and accessible to the public.

The characteristic of these schools is that there is no actual reference building, but shelters or simple huts that are found in the forest or on its edge, used to store spare clothes, various objects and to be used in case of bad weather.

The **integrated forest school**, on the other hand, is a full-time traditional school with activities in the forest every morning.

In this model, the traditional mornings are dedicated to forest exploration and outdoor activities.



*«In childhood one is more open to sensory impressions than ever again in one's life. Smells, sensations of heat, softness, weight, beauty and much more, form the basis of all sensations in life.»*

*Eva Insulander, Swedish School Ground Designer and Planner*

# **THE CHALLENGE OF OUR TIMES**

Children's contact with nature has the enormous power to foster their not only physical and cognitive development but also social development, curiosity, imagination and self-awareness.

Technology, television and current lifestyles have already have long since distanced children and young people from the outdoors and the from being in the open air and in the woods, with considerable consequences on children's health (increased obesity, attention disorders and depression).

The challenge is to create spaces in the urban fabric for young for young people to do what comes naturally to them: play.

# THE ROLE OF PLAY

Play is the most important element in a child's growth and by encouraging this activity in a natural environment the benefits are clear.

"Play allows children to use their creativity and develop their imagination, agility and physical strength, cognitive and emotional strength.

Play is important for healthy mental. It is through play that children at a very young age get involved and interact with the world around them.

Play allows children to create and explore a world they can master, overcoming their fears as they practice their role as adults, sometimes in contrast to others"



**PLAYING IN NATURE IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL  
AND CENTRAL TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF  
CREATIVITY, EMOTIONALITY, INTELLIGENCE AND  
PROBLEM SOLVING FOR CHILDREN**

# WHAT ARE THE EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS THAT THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT ENVIRONMENT COULD PRODUCE FOR STUDENTS?

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## INCREASES KNOWLEDGE

"Outdoor Education gives children the opportunity to ask themselves complex questions and learn many things. About themselves, about others and about the world."

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## BENEFITS MENTAL AND PHYSICAL WELL-BEING

"Outdoor Education is a panacea. Research confirms that contact with nature is good for children's health and well-being. It has even been proven that contact with nature has benefits for children from the time they are in the womb. This means that a pregnant woman's time in the open air can already have a positive effect on the well-being of her foetus."

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## IMPROVES THE QUALITY OF RELATIONSHIPS

"Outdoor education increases children's social and emotional well-being and has a positive impact on the way they relate to others. In particular, it increases the cooperative capacity among peers and broadens communication between children and adults. Because the teacher who finds himself with his pupils in an outdoor space breaks out of the traditional patterns of classroom teaching and rediscovers the pleasure and opportunity to explore with the children. To experiment with less formal spaces and connect with new questions".

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## IMPROVES SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

"Outdoor education has a positive impact on academic performance. Through learning in contact with nature, it increases children's ability to develop critical and creative thinking, problem solving skills, attention span and even a love of learning."

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## PROMOTES THE DEVELOPMENT OF A GREEN ATTITUDE

"Outdoor Education, by proposing contact with the environment, encourages the development of an attitude of attention, care and respect towards nature and the world“.

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## RE-ESTABLISHES A NEW BALANCE BETWEEN THE REAL AND THE VIRTUAL

"Outdoor Education leads children to regain a good balance between concrete digital experiences. In other words, it re-establishes a completeness of stimuli between the real world and the virtual world, (two dimensions which, especially during the lockdown months, had become very distant from each other)."



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## FOSTERS A SENSE OF AUTONOMY

"Outdoor Education enables children to develop a greater sense of autonomy and responsibility and helps them refine their ability to make choices."

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## PROMOTES MORE FORMS OF PLAY

"Outdoor Education promotes a more dynamic view of play and the possibility of experiencing more forms of fun. Because let's remember that Outdoor Education, at its core, includes "also" a playful component."



# RECOMMENDED ACTIVITIES

## VEGETABLE GARDEN IN A BOX

An activity much loved by children and easy to do.

**Needed:** A plastic or wooden box; a sheet; a dustpan; watering can; potting soil; seeds or bulbs

Optional: markers and tags to write the type of seed or bulb

**Procedure:** Place the chosen cloth inside the box, then the soil and finally create the space for planting the seeds, which you cover with a thin layer of soil.

**Tip:** Depending on the age of the children, suggest reading simple books on the subject and creating a calendar for looking after the plants.



## **BUILD A HERBARIUM**

Collect samples of leaves, herbs and flowers.

Compare the collected material, looking at previously printed pictures or leafing through books.

If the children are of school age, you can do more detailed research and make classification sheets.

You can make your herbarium on a wooden board, attaching the collected material with string and clothes pegs, or on sturdy cardboard using woollen threads to weave together like a loom.

If you prefer to make a booklet, dry your sample under weights for at least ten days.



**NOW IT'S YOUR TURN!  
APPLY THE METHODOLOGY WITH  
YOUR STUDENTS!**

**THANK FOR  
YOUR  
ATTENTION!**

