

A close-up photograph of a small green seedling with two leaves growing out of dark brown soil. The seedling is positioned in the center-left of the frame. The background is slightly blurred, showing more soil and some other small plants. The overall tone is natural and earthy.

Planting Our Seeds

*EDEN Engagement: Luxembourg
Seed City Curriculum
James Libbey & Patricia Abdelnour*
FEBRUARY-MARCH 2022



ABOUT

Three-time Grammy Award winning opera superstar Joyce DiDonato has created the global tour of EDEN, her major concert hall performance about environmentalism. Her personal commitment and partnership with ITAC has launched a re-imagining of the impact of a concert experience through teaching artist-led workshops in every city. The International Teaching Artists Collaborative (ITAC) is the world-wide network of artists who work in community and educational settings, who have the skills to bring change to communities. Together ITAC and EDEN Engagement will pilot a new approach to prove that touring can be a legitimate and powerful tool for change in communities.

Cities on the tour are designated either "Root Cities" or "Seed Cities". Seed Cities are a 1-4 day(s) event that engages the youth with one of three specific environmental issues; Urban Gardens, Urban Trees, Food Choices:

- Urban Gardens: They are youth-friendly. Among many social benefits, they bring these environmental benefits: reduce carbon use (reduced food transport); reduce water runoff; help pollinators; plants absorb CO2 and pollutants and produce oxygen; health benefits in the food and the community building (reduced stress and blood pressure).
- Urban Trees: Trees are omnipresent and overlooked in cities—kid friendly. They can plant them, and the EDEN performance encourages that. Trees are powerful answers to heat mitigation (reduce temperatures by 8 to 10 degrees and need for air conditioning), carbon and pollution sequestration and oxygen production, water flow pollution reduction, biodiversity, and food insecurity. Health benefits include healthier air, psychological benefits, lowering blood pressure and stress.
- Food Choices: Scientists have proven that small choices make a big difference. Because many foods with a high health burden, including processed meats or red meats, also have high environmental costs, switching out 10 percent of a person's daily caloric intake can cut a person's food-based environmental footprint by over 30 percent. Between growing it, packaging it, moving it around, cooking it, and often wasting it, food production makes up about one-fifth to one-third of all annual greenhouse gas emissions globally. Eat less red and processed meats, eat more veggies and fruits, reduce food waste, and if you have a way...compost.

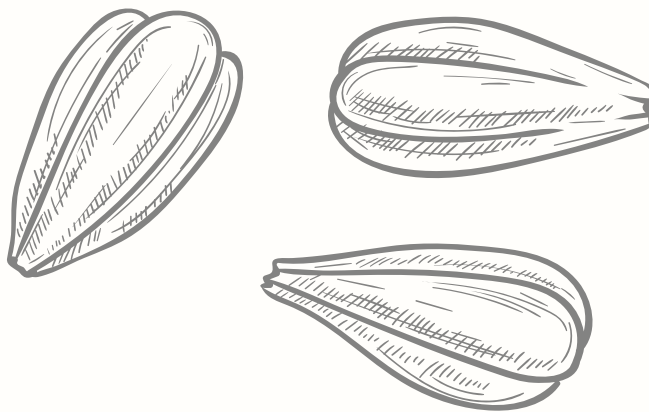
Teaching Artists: James Libbey & Patricia Abdelnour

Duration: 3 workshops (120 minutes each)

Where: Luxembourg

Goals: This workshop aims to activate two things in the young participants:

- Their sense of personal connection to and grasp of the specific environmental issue
- Their ability to make a difference regarding that issue—their sense of agency



WORKSHOP 1

About:

- Students: 9-13 year olds
- Environmental Focus: Biodiversity
- Art Forms: Theater and music
- Impact measurement: A group of total strangers becomes a community choir and can sing from start to finish the Eden anthem "Seeds of Hope"

Arrival

- Name tags given to all participants

Opening:

- Hand Tree. Participants will enter the space, trace and cut out their hand. They put their name and languages they speak on it to add to our tree of life.

Welcome

- Words of welcome and introduction. Minimize talking. There are three goals for the session today.
 - Create an ensemble and get to know each other
 - Rehearse the Eden anthem
 - Learn about the world of gardens and the importance of biodiversity, how we can build one and how building more gardens can help our planet. Eden project

Key question: How can we build gardens in cities in order to help our planet?

- Review the project: Eden project and Joyce DiDonato
- Introduce and meet El-Sistem Luxembourg

Ensemble

- Theatre Games 1 (developing an ensemble) – atrium
 - "Popcorn" – students in the middle ask a question. If it applies to them, then they move and change seats. Example: Who speaks arabic? Who is 9 years old?
- The goal is for kids to see that they have much in common despite their differences.

Rehearsal of Song 1

- Choral workshop: physical and vocal warm up. Pronunciation, diction, division of harmonies, etc.



Warm-up activity: Group Discussion

- What gardens have you seen before? What was growing in them? Are all gardens the same? After the discussion, students will journal for five minutes in response to this prompt: If you could build your own garden, what would you grow in it? What would it look like? Smell like? Feel like? Why is your garden important?

Biodiversity: Local seed bank and local sourcing

- Show article of Seedbank <https://www.leudelange.lu/fr/commune-de-leudelange/blog/interviews/2021/04/interview-mit-schwartz-steve>
- Match seeds to plant images - in groups

Break

Rehearsal Eden Anthem 2

- Placement of singers - body language and posture - memorisation of text - musicianship

Ensemble

- Theatre activity - write the word EDEN with their bodies (picture from above). Collaboration and working together

Eden - "Seeds of Hope"

- Choose one and plant it in supplied pot with dirt - start of own garden (They take a picture to document the growth of the plant and share at the next session).

Final Rehearsal - start to finish performance of "Seeds of Hope"

Eden Anthem - Final rehearsal

Coda

- Details of the concert - timings, clothing, etc
- Collect plant and challenge students to create a garden and to purchase local produce

Closing: Eden CALL & RESPONSE



WORKSHOP 2

- Students: Designed for 11-12 year olds
- Environmental Focus: the choices we make on the foods we eat
- Art Forms: music

Arrival

Opening: Body percussion greeting/warm-up

Welcome

- Words of welcome and introduction. Minimize talking. There are three goals for the session today.
 - Re-affirm sense of ensemble and continue to get to know each other
 - Rehearse Jubilate Deo songs
 - Learn about the impact our food choices have on the environment. Eden project

Key question: What are choirs good for? Which will lead to: how is this choir going to help our planet?

Main activity:

- The teaching artist introduces a list of food groups that smaller groups of participants are going to work on—e.g. Fruits and vegetables. Grains. Meat. Processed foods. Working with the lists that were just started about environmental benefits and damages, they may need to spend some time getting more detail about the benefits and damages for their food group regarding the environment.

Reflection:

- We'll read lists out loud and then we'll play a ball game: first person holding the ball will call out a food and pass the ball, person catching the ball must respond with a positive action for the environment connected to that food (if a person gets stuck, the person next to him/her can answer).

Culminating presentation:

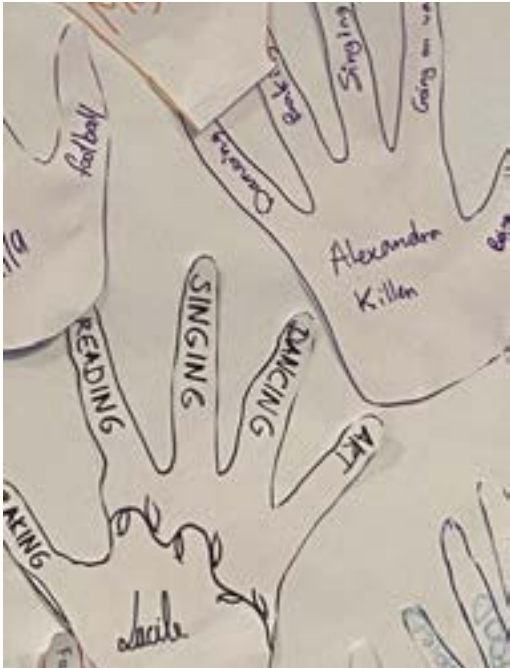
- Each child must present one take-away thought and sing it with a pre-selected melody and the piano

Final activity:

- Children will fill out a postcard each with their take-away thought. This postcard will be mailed to them in two weeks as a reminder of the thought they committed to during the workshop.

Follow-up:

- Postcards will be mailed to the kids after Easter holiday as a reminder of the take-home thought they made.



WORKSHOP 3

- Students: Designed for 11-12 year olds
- Environmental Focus: Bees and urban gardens
- Art Forms: music

Arrival

Opening: Body percussion greeting/warm-up

Welcome

- Words of welcome and introduction. Minimize talking. There are three goals for the session today.
 - Re-affirm sense of ensemble and continue to get to know each other
 - Rehearse Jubilate Deo songs
 - Learn about the impact bees have in the environment and about the benefits of urban gardening. Eden project

Key question: What are choirs good for? Which will lead to: how is this choir going to help our planet? Ask briefly about food choices.

Main activity:

- The teaching artist makes a brief introduction about the role of bees in the environment, the importance of agricultural diversity and the benefits of the urban gardens, like the one outside the abbey.

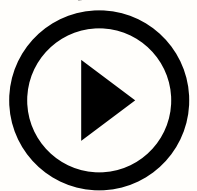
Reflection:

- We'll talk about different gardens in Luxembourg and in people's homes. Which are bio diverse? How can we collaborate in making it more so?

Final activity:

- Beekeeper from Neimenster Abbey will take us to visit the bees and the vegetable gardens.



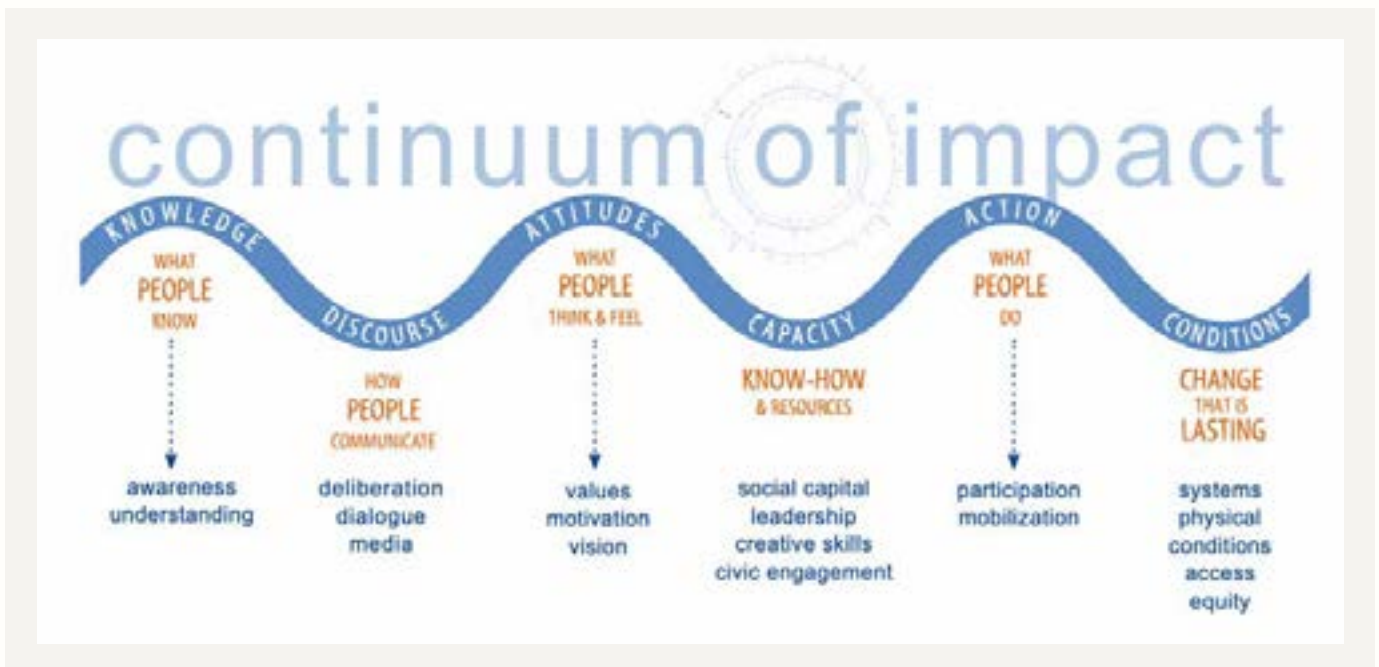


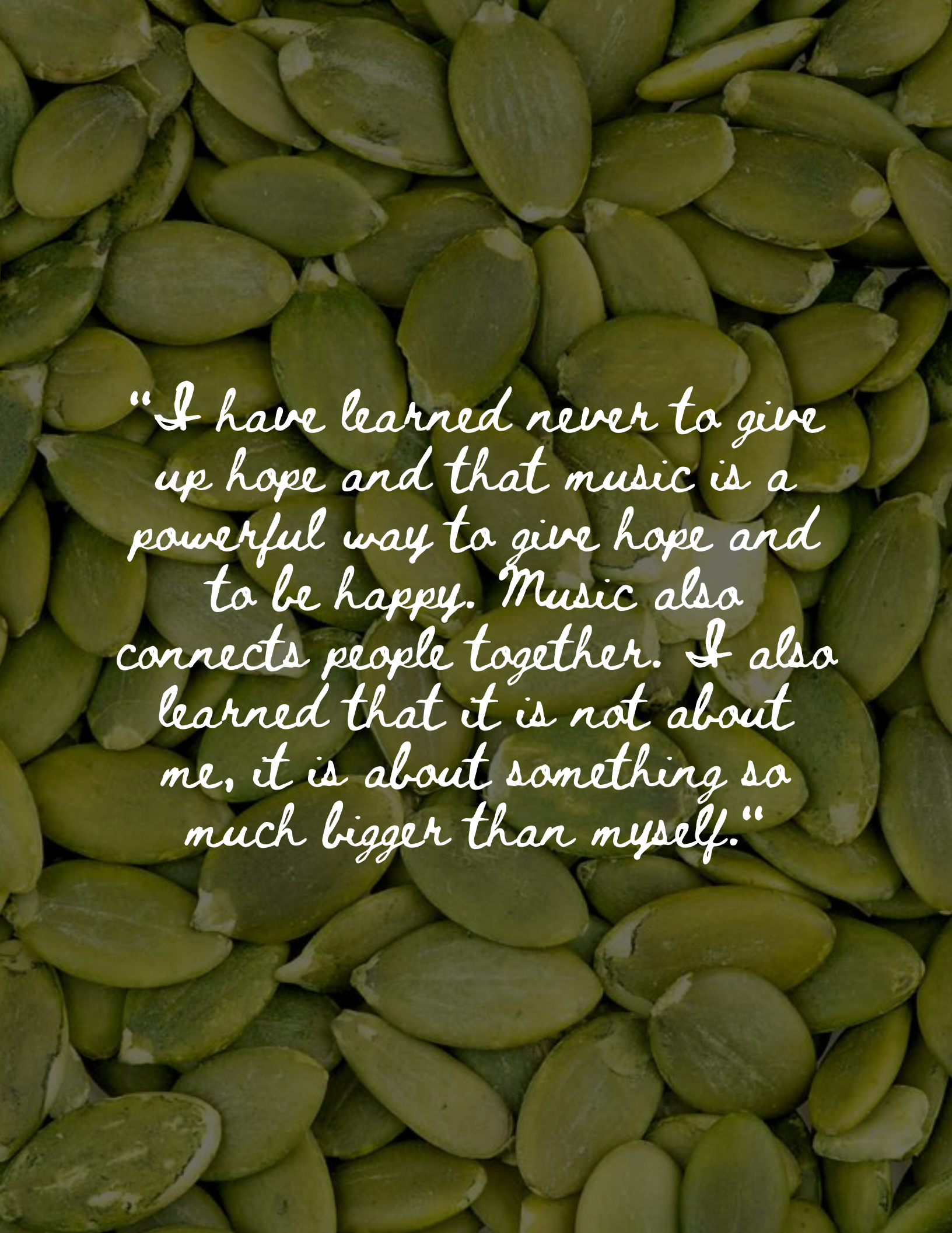
Watch
the
Video!

IMPACT & EVALUATION

The goal of this effort is to learn about the impact that the activities have on participants. We are especially curious to learn if there is any evidence that they have the impulse to take action and/or feel they can make a difference—this is the high goal of the arts-for-climate field, and we believe teaching artists have a particularly strong contribution to the field.

During the EDEN project, teaching artists were encouraged to use the Continuum of Impact Guide as a model when thinking about impact and assessment in their workshops.



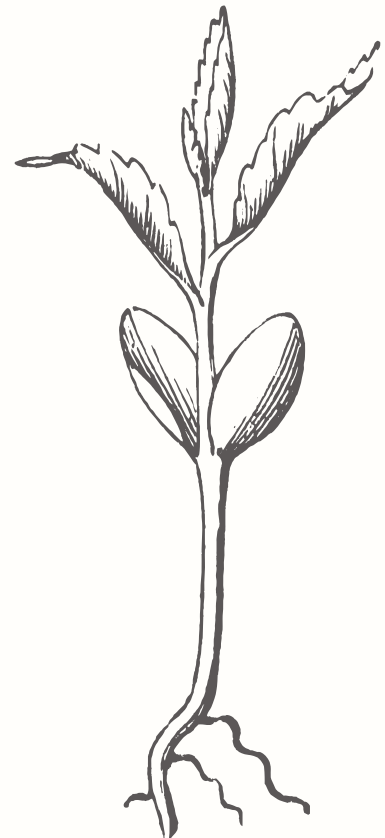


"I have learned never to give up hope and that music is a powerful way to give hope and to be happy. Music also connects people together. I also learned that it is not about me, it is about something so much bigger than myself."

Evaluation Responses

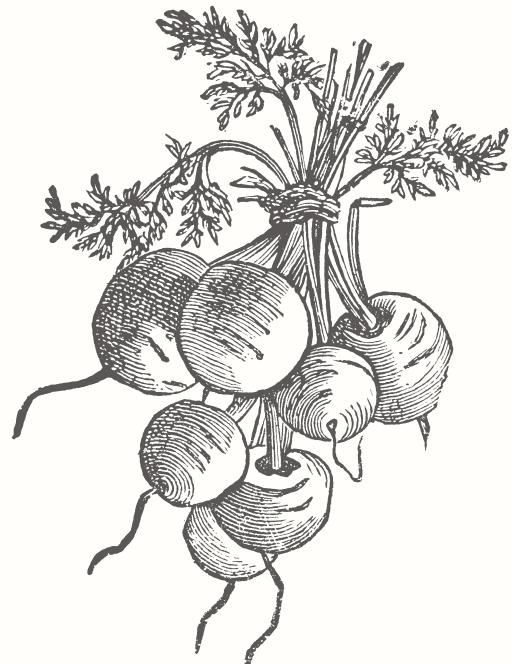
What have you learned from the EDEN Project?

- I learned how music can change people's minds
- That we need to open our eyes and help the environment
- I have learned not to waste
- I have learned that even something small can turn into a really big message. Also, every message matters
- I learned about spreading hope & joy. We are the future generation and its learned about taking our future in our own hands, by spreading hope to the community
- I have learned that we should take action, and that words can make people happy, and words are important
- I have learned that no matter what age we are or where we are from together everybody can make a perfect picture
- That nature is stronger than you think
- That I may be small, but I can still be peoples friends
- I learned that even when there is a particular way of singing the song one can pick it up with a different tone
- I have learned that hope can come in many different ways, and in order to achieve something you have to reach for the sky
- I learned that perfection is always a seed away
- I learned not to waste paper and to always plant new seeds
- I learned that we should not waste paper and we should plant tree seeds
- I have learned never to give up hope and that music is a powerful way to give hope and to be happy. Music also connects people together. I also learned that it is not about me, it is about something so much bigger than myself.
- The world is a lot bigger than just one small country
- I have learned that only one person can change the world
- How to plant seeds of hope
- I have learned that not only adults talk but kids spread peace by talking to elders
- That in order to have a good result you will need to practice, and that from backstage every is different, especially if you have seen the person before, the concert or...
- I've learned that it's in our hands to change the world. Its like we're the seeds of hope that can change the world. At the meantime, everyone has to work together to help our environment.
- I have learned that we need to take care of the plants around us
- We learned that this is about us kids: the seeds of hope, that we can spread a message with music and we can make a difference in the world



Which seeds do you feel inspired to plant going forward?

- Roses, radishes, and seeds of hope
- Seeds of hope
- I learned that you don't plant seeds really, but a message
- I am inspired to spread seeds of hope. Even though they aren't literal seeds, hope is what we need to save our world
- I feel inspired with the seeds called "words" because we get to spread words (seeds) for people to take action for the earth because we do not have an "earth B"
- Seeds of hope (and radish seeds!)
- Radish because I feel like its unique
- Mango!
- Radish seeds, tomato seeds, carrots
- Sunflower seeds because they always bend and reach out to the light and music is the light
- I want to grow seeds that help the future
- I want to grow mango trees
- I want to grow mango trees because they give you fruit
- I feel inspired to plant all seeds that give life but especially radish seeds and strawberry seeds because I love strawberries
- I feel inspired to plant radish seeds because they were mentioned a lot during the workshops
- Radish seeds
- Seeds of hope and radish seeds
- Seeds of hope, relaxation and joy
- I am inspired to grow pine trees because you can see them everywhere (depending on where you live)
- Flower seeds and all sorts of plant seeds
- Radishes, trees, tulips, poppies
- Radishes, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, macadamia seeds



REFLECTIONS FROM THE TEACHING ARTIST

In what ways did you observe change in your participants understanding and engagement of the environmental issue you chose?

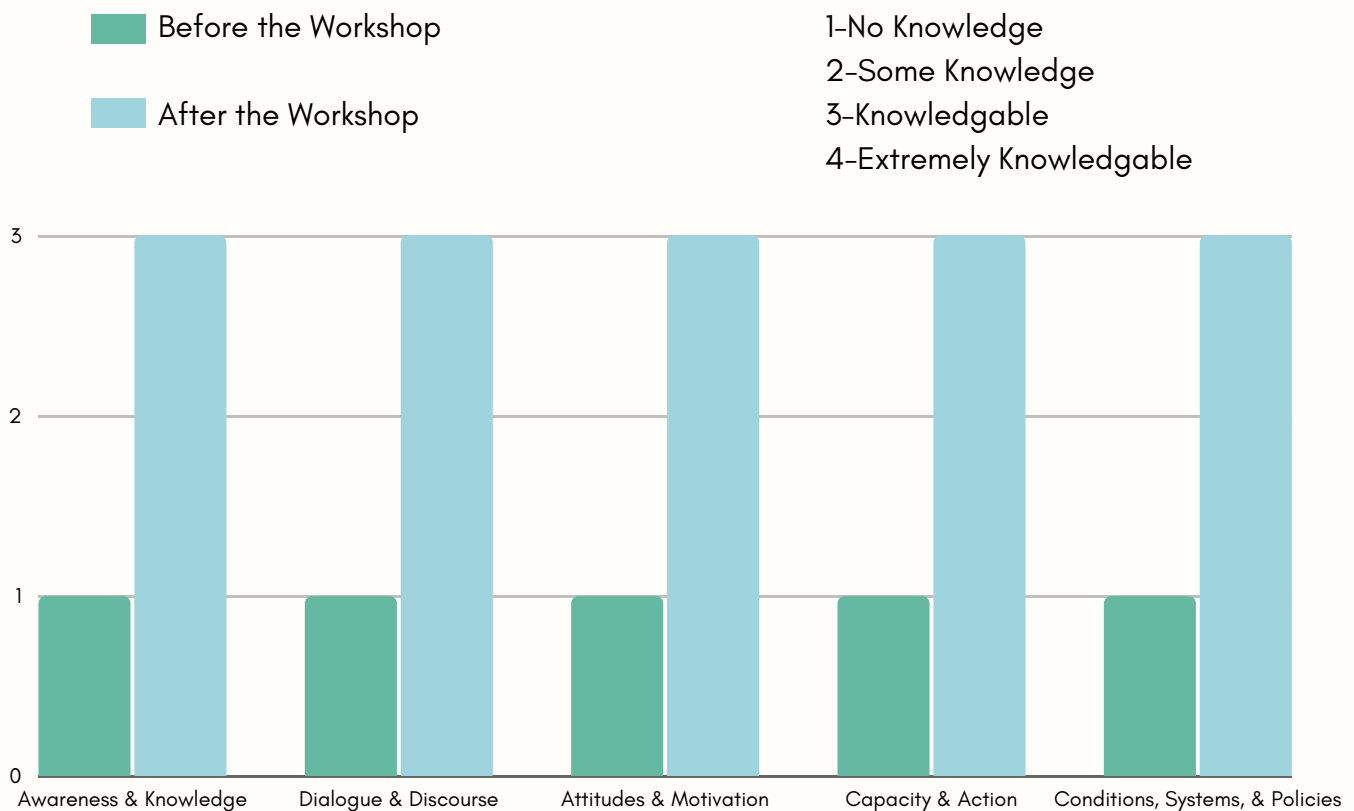
"I feel the conversations that we had brought to them new information and a new way of looking at everyday things because they are now aware that they can make a difference with their choices."

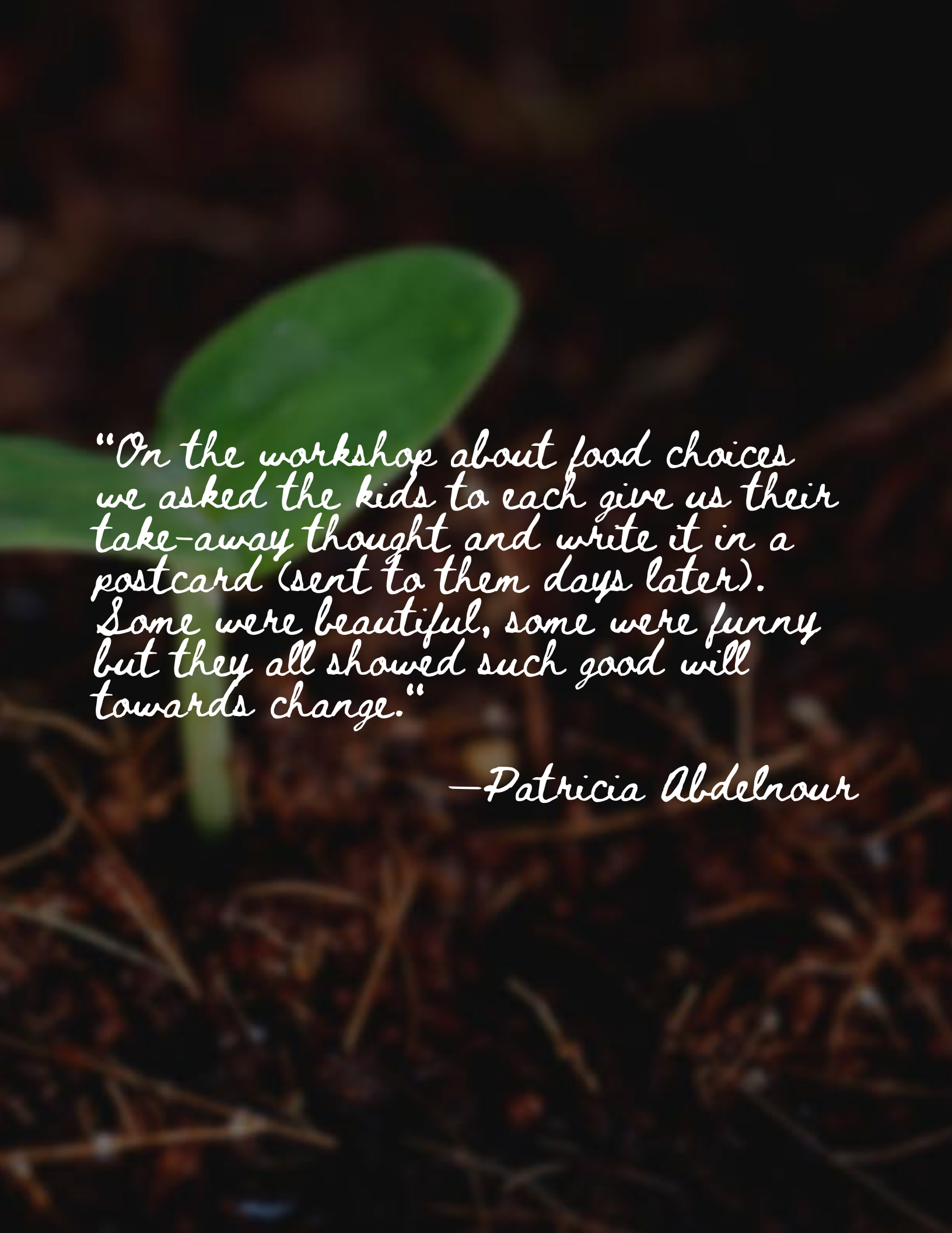
What challenges did you face in creating and facilitating your workshop?

"Organizing time. We wanted to do a lot and you can only keep the kids for so long."

Did your EDEN experience expand your work or skills as a teaching artist in any specific ways?

"It definitely made me experiment with new things, like creating games and connecting environmental issues to music making."



A single, vibrant green leaf is positioned in the upper left quadrant of the image. The background is a dark, mottled brown with a fibrous, textured appearance, resembling soil or mulch. The lighting is soft, highlighting the smooth surface of the leaf against the rough, dark ground.

"On the workshop about food choices we asked the kids to each give us their take-away thought and write it in a postcard (sent to them days later). Some were beautiful, some were funny but they all showed such good will towards change."

—Patricia Abdelnour

ABOUT THE TEACHING ARTISTS



PATRICIA ABDELNOUR

Patricia Abdelnour with over 15 years of experience in cultural programming and public policy, Ms. Abdelnour has successfully designed and implemented programs in social inclusion through the different arts platforms. As part of the El Sistema team in Venezuela, she was the contact point for all Sistema-inspired programs around the world providing technical support in developing methodology and well as building administrative structures. She has since then become an advocate for the use of music for social transformation. Watch her TEDX Talk on the subject: "Social change through music education" or visit www.elsistemaluxembourg.lu

JAMES LIBBEY

James Libbey is a music and theatre teacher at the International School of Luxembourg and has over 20 years of teaching experience. He is an experienced choral conductor and is currently the artistic director of Voices International in Luxembourg. Sought after as a guest conductor, James has had the privilege to direct multiple Association for Music in International Schools choral festivals. As a professional touring musician, he recorded seven albums and a full-length concert video. James holds a doctoral degree in intercultural international education and believes in the power of music to bring people from diverse backgrounds together to create something beautiful in the world.



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Katie Rainey

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James Libbey & Patricia Abdelnour

Choir
A collaborative youth choir comprised of children from El Sistema Luxembourg,
Fondation EME and the International School of Luxembourg.

Education Partners
Patricia Abdelnour

Concert Venue
Philharmonie

