



NOTHING PROTECTS BETTER THAN TREES

*EDEN Engagement: Vienna
Seed City Curriculum
Erica Pazur & Sybille Egger*

JUNE 2022



International Teaching Artists Collaborative (ITAC)
and
Joyce DiDonato's

EDEN ENGAGEMENT

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 Artist: Erica Pazur (with assistance from Sybille Egger)

Participants: Vienna Boys Choir & Superar Music Moves

Workshop length: 3 hours

Dates: June 20, 2022

Topic: Urban Trees



WORKSHOP: *NOTHING PROTECTS BETTER THAN TREES*

Opening: When the students enter the room, we will sit in a circle and show them two pictures

Welcome:

- Brief students and teachers introduction (name, age)
- We will talk about what are 'urban forests', the way trees protect us and the ways we can learn about trees in order to protect them, too. *What do you know about climate change? What is an urban forest? What do you think happens if urban forests are reduced? What happens if there are more urban forests? What do urban forests help us for?*

Goals:

- To get students to pay attention to urban forests and urban trees around them
- To make students aware of the problems that trees face and how it affects us too
- To make students know that trees can also be the solutions for many of these problems

Introduce a key question: *Why are trees so important?*

- An inherently interesting question that the explorations of the workshop are built around. The question appears throughout the workshop, providing a spine, and should provoke a sense of relevance. See "What Are Guiding Questions? Examples + Tips" for more information on creating a key question.

Introduction (1 hour – Sybille)

Why do trees need care? (safety and health)

- Walk in the neighborhood & school garden
- How do I know if a tree is healthy? Looking at signs in the roots, stem and leaves
- Protecting *young trees* with proper watering.
- Temperature/ Watering and monitoring to reduce heat.
- Diverse urban canopy for quality of the air and allergies reduction
- Proper pruning for storm protection
- Being curious about the problems *mature trees* face.
- Reflection **urban trees** – similarities and differences with the trees in an urban garden, urban forest and school garden
- Tree inventory school garden: 3 simple measurements of a tree: leaf shape, trunk circumference and tree high.
- Exploring ideas to contribute to solutions and actions to care for trees. What can we do?

E.g. Taking care of the trunks and roots. Also not walking on the bed (soil gets compacted) and gardening can help so that dogs don't pee in their trunk. Watering trees in heat seasons.



Warm-up activity: (30 minutes) Activates and engages the artistry of participants, playfully introducing creative skills that are used more fully later.

- Theater game – The tree. We start naming the parts of a tree and some of the problems that they face. (15 minutes)
- Theater game – Action. (15 minutes)

Main activity(ies): (30 minutes) These emphasize artistic engagement of participants to create things they care about in direct relationship to the chosen environmental theme. The activities include opportunities for participants to surface and share what they think and feel about the environmental issue, to learn about the issue and how it works in their lives and in communities, to improvise about these themes and consider actions people could take.

- A story in pictures and improvisations
 1. The gift of trees: The apple tree How do trees feed themselves?
 2. A tree of problems (the stressors) Storm damage / water pollution/ sound & air pollution (allergies) / extreme heat How to prevent pollen season from affecting human health? How can we increase resilience to storms?
 3. A tree of solutions (the tree and its functions): Storm damage risk & mitigation/ water & air quality / Heat reduction / Heat island

Break (5 minutes)

Main activity(ies): (50 minutes)

- We will sit again in a circle and I will show them a picture of an 'urban tree'
- What difficulties do you think urban trees face?
- Guided improvisation: The life of an apple seed.

Culminating presentation: (30 minutes)

- We will culminate with some improvisations about planting trees from the Tree perspective: Look up! Do you see power lines over your head? Look around! Do you see a road, sidewalk, or curb nearby? How much sunlight does this spot get? Is a hose nearby to water the young tree? Look down! Are there any pipes or wires underground? Plant a seed or buy a tree in the plant nursery. Lift the tree by the root ball or container. Do not park the car in the sun nor leave the tree in the car.

Reflection: "We do not learn from our experiences if we do not reflect on them." – John Dewey.

Guidance to pull out key learning and its implications for individuals. (10 minutes)

- Open group discussion: How can we help protect trees? And written evaluation Why are trees so important? Students will also write a postcard with one ACTION they will take to protect trees.

Closing: EDEN Call + Response

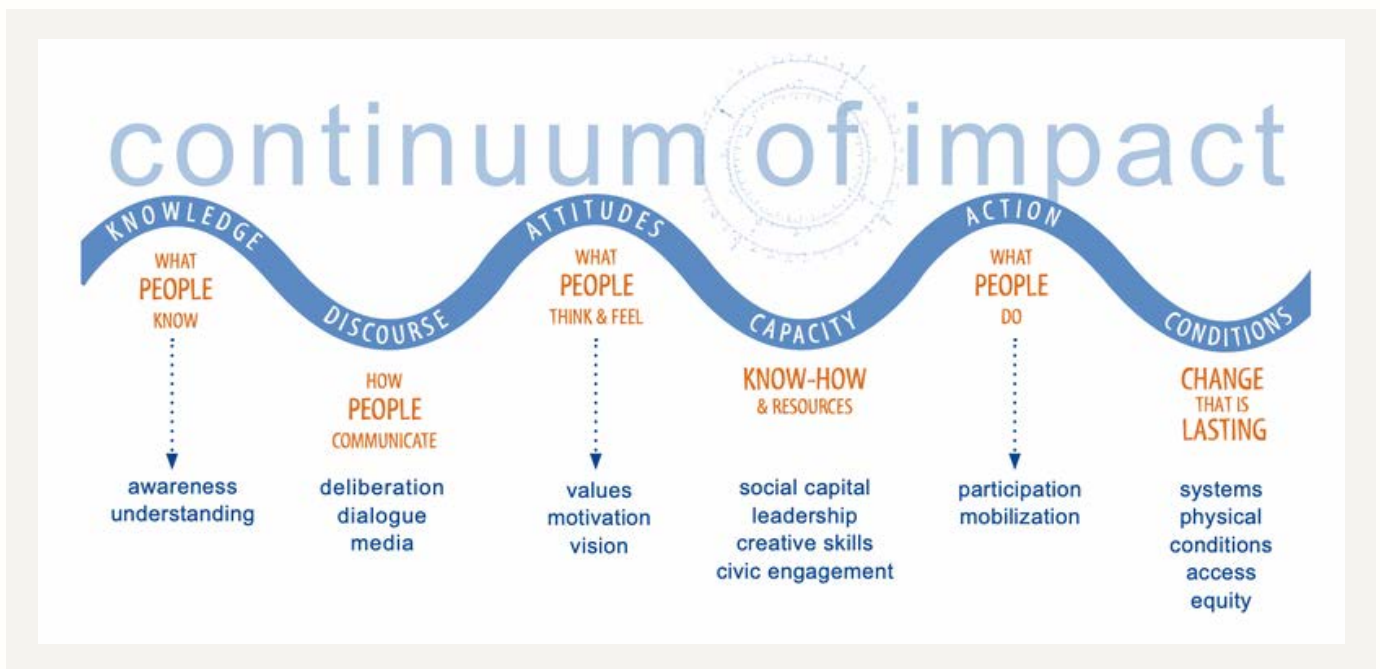
- It's my tree, it's your tree, it's our tree, let's take care of it! Because nothing protects better than trees!
- There will images of 3 fruit trees with their corresponding seeds for students to take with them.



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.



"At the beginning of the seminar I asked the group to make a circle and it looked like a croissant. Some didn't even want to participate. From this group, when we went out to see the trees, a boy from Romania approached me and it turned out that on a trip I got to know his city and then everything flowed for him on the workshop."

"A similar situation was with a boy from France, to whom I commented that he did not laugh much, but that he improvised very well and then he could only but smile (his teacher, too). Of course, all the improvisations where you could see them enjoying themselves and us (the spectators) laughing."

REFLECTIONS FROM THE TEACHING ARTIST

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

"For example, in an improvisation in which the children fictionally cut down a tree, there was silence and the tree somehow was able to act out the sadness we were feeling collectively with humor. I think this experience made it clear, how much we want to care for them. Also in another improvisation, where the children took the topic of high temperatures due to climate change and fewer trees in the city (before the theater class we made an inventory of the different temperatures on the cement, on the grass and under the shade of a tree). And how the heat island effect can affect the elderly and children. In this improvisation, a child's grandmother fainted from the heat.

Finally, at the end of the workshop I showed them some apple, pear and apricot seeds and several children began to ask questions and wanted to take the seeds with them. In the first part and through the improvisations, to reflect on the main functions of trees (which are the ones they wrote in their feedback) and in the second part, to ask themselves certain questions (Look up, look down, look around) when wanting to plant a tree, in order to select the best site."

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

"I think the main challenge was not knowing the group of children. However, the adaptation was good and we really enjoyed their improvisations."

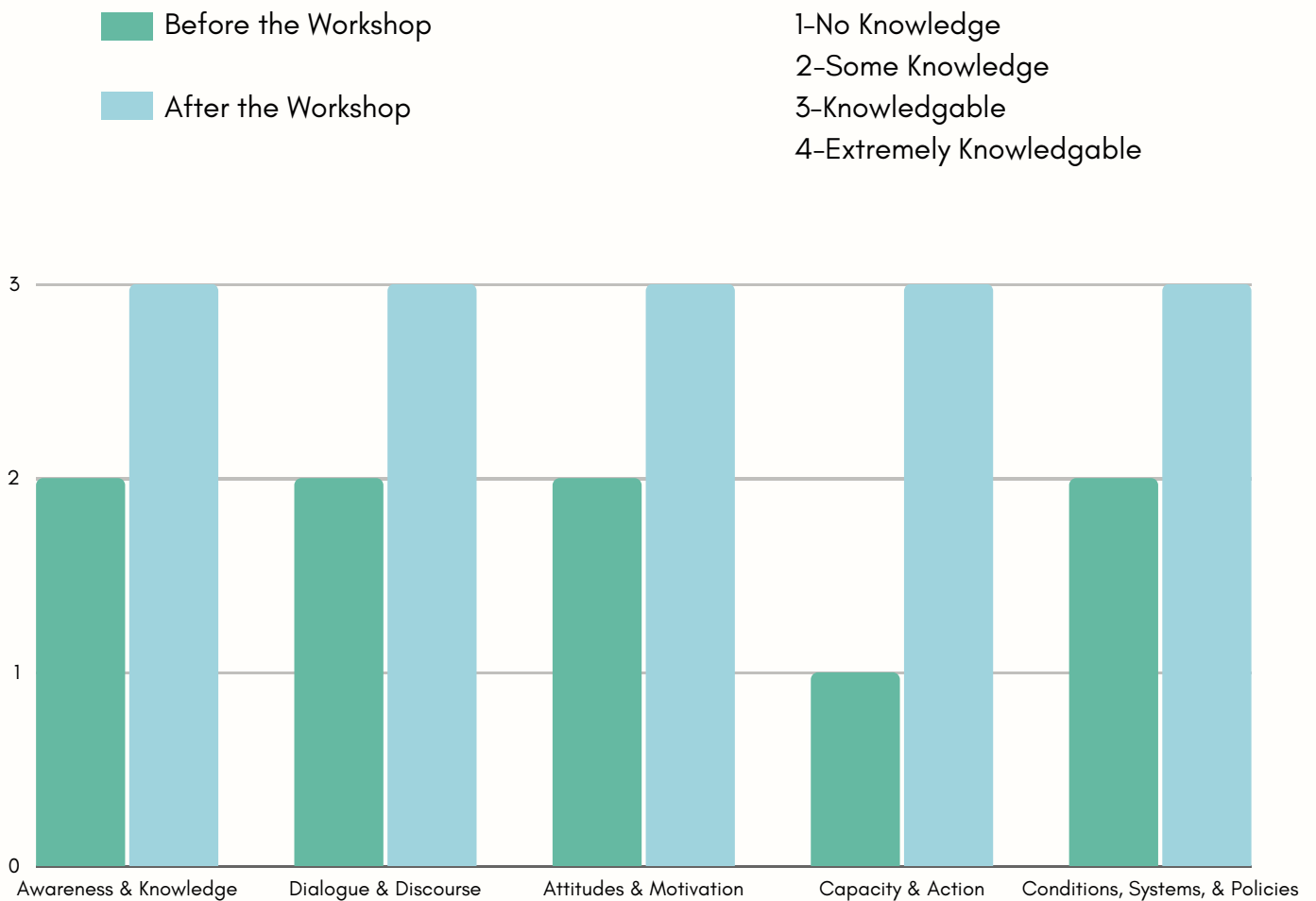
Did your EDEN experience expand your work or skills as a teaching artist in any specific ways?

"I think I worked a lot for this workshop and what I think was expanded (as an artist) is my knowledge of trees and forests (a little), which is a beautiful theme. About the children, they learnt quickly and some how after the adaptation I felt that I could just enjoy their talent, because it was clear they were used to be on stage. To observe the daily energy and the extra-daily energy on stage, was amazing. In addition, working with an intercultural group."





We tasked each teaching artist with evaluating their students based on the Continuum of Impact Guide. They rated their students on a scale from 1 (no knowledge of the subject) to 4 (extremely knowledgeable about the subject). The following graph reflects Erica's observations of her students.



"A stand out moment was the improvisation of a student I think from China. Very shy, quiet, but when he started to act, his energy on stage was incredible. It was a great surprise and I could only enjoy the students' ability. He improvised on air pollution and excessive use of air conditioning and how trees can help us reduce energy consumption."

ABOUT THE TEACHING ARTIST



ERICA ISABEL PAZUR

Erica Isabel Pazur is an Argentinean actress and Theater teacher. She works as a drama teacher at the Waldorf Schule in Innsbruck, Austria and has worked for more than 15 years in several primary, secondary and recovery schools of the City and the Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina. She also conducted theatre workshops in Austria for the service of Culture in Tirol since 2015, seminars for young refugees in Salzburg (Save the child) and schools in Linz and Vienna always with the auspices of the Argentinean Ministry of Culture.



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