



## Plants and Play Promoting Universal Skills

# National Adaption Plan

## Field Research

*(Austria)*

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## National Adaption Plan – An Overview

### **Aim of the National Adaption Plan (NAP)**

Pappus will explore and bring together an innovative approach through plants and play that develops skills and enthusiasm for the natural world, horticulture and botany in both school practice and informal youth learning settings.

This will be reached by the help of two main project results: a toolkit and an online training course. The basis for the development of these products is formed by a National Adaptation Plan.

### **Research methodology**

This National Adaption Plans will be informed by diverse sources of information collated by both desk and field-based approaches. Approaches and sources will include:

- Initial desk research to establish an overview and understanding of the following: governmental framework, target groups, challenges and barriers to engagement; typical beneficiaries and effective ways to approach them.
- The desk-based research will drive relevant field research to be carried out in each partner country. This will be a minimum of 10 interviews with a semi-structured questionnaire on a one to one basis or if preferred, through focus groups to discuss the issues and possible implementation of the two products in partner countries.
- In March 2020, there will be a study visit to UK, to learn from the rich and comprehensive experience in the UK and to reflect, refine and enrich prior research through concrete observations.
- Finally, all partner countries will develop National Adaption Plans to specify their respective strategy to reach the aims of the project and discuss them with relevant stakeholders in various Multiplier Events.

### **Research Findings**

As a final result of all desk and field research, we will formulate our National Adaption Plans, which should be used as strategy papers for our National Project Implementations. These will include key findings (about e.g. challenges and barriers to engagement of Youth, Teacher, Youth Workers and others and overview of existing on-line tools and digital technologies in this field).



## Interview Guidelines

### 1.) Database and Methodology

We decided to apply a very flexible research design, so that all project partners have the possibility to use best fitting methodology within their own framework and with their own resources. So, partners can carry out interviews (oral or telephone) or focus groups.

The only specification you must be aware, that the database includes at least 10 persons for each country. We suggest interviewing different involved stakeholders (such as youth workers, (head)teacher, experts and students. In short, you should talk to relevant persons concerning bringing the natural world in school practice and/or informal youth learning settings, depending on your chosen framework for your country.

Interviews / focus groups should be recorded, or the interviewer takes notes to summarize main statements.

Please be aware, that in any case a written consent of all interviewees must be kept by each partner. In case of interviewing minors (under 18 years old), written consent of interviewee and parent is needed! We did provide you with a template for that.

### 2.) Aim of the field research

The main aim of the field research is to come into contact with relevant target groups and beneficiaries of the project and to validate the prior findings from the desk research from the perspective of youth workers, teachers, experts and students.

We will identify “use cases” from our interviewees to learn, how our interviewees approach the challenge to develop enthusiasm for play and the natural world, horticulture and botany in both school practice and informal youth learning settings. (or – if you interview pupils, how they got inspired).

A use case typically is a list of actions and tools defining the interaction between a role (e.g. teacher) and a system (e.g. school) to achieve a goal (to inspire children for nature).

Use case analysis is an important and valuable requirement analysis technique that has been widely used in modern software engineering since its formal introduction by Ivar Jacobsen, a Swedish computer scientist, in 1992. Since then, it became quite popular also in the field of social innovations.

### 3.) Steps

To carry out the interview, we suggest the following steps:

- 1.) Present the project (hand over a short project description)
- 2.) Discuss the main findings of the desk research (by using the executive summary of the field research)
- 3.) Discuss use case from your interviewee (personal experience of interviewees with play and nature approaches in school/youth settings; - which goals do they have? how do they get there? which methods applied? Which tools used?)
- 4.) Identify key messages, hooks and good practices used by interviewees
- 5.) Identify potential co-operators

An interview is expected to take around 20-30 min., a focus group should be around 75-90 min.



## Field Report template

### 1. Database

We interviewed a total of 10 people and paid attention to a mix of roles, age and gender. In the latter category, considerably more women than men agreed to give an interview or participate in the field research.

In the list below we give an overview of the interviewed persons. Please note that we use pseudonyms throughout for data protection reasons and that the real names of the interviewed persons are not published.

Case ID	Pseudonym	Role (age)	Method
AT-01	Sonja	Student (f 24)	Interview in person
AT-02	Veronika	Student (f 15)	Interview in person
AT-03	Hilde	Student (f 16)	Interview in person
AT-04	Alex	Mountain guide (m 52)	Interview in person
AT-05	Ina	Afternoon Caregiver (f 45)	Interview in person
AT 06	Rosemarie	Afternoon Tutor (f 53)	Interview in person
AT 07	Karina	Afternoon supervisor (f 37)	Interview in person
AT 08	Anita	Afternoon supervisor (f 48)	Interview in person
AT 09	Irmgard	Pedagogue (f 36)	Interview in person
AT 10	Fabian	Vegetable grower (m 32)	Interview in person
<b>Additional persons with whom we have had initial discussions (without documentation so far)</b>			
AT 11	Heidrun	Pedagogue (f 43)	Initial discussion
AT 12	Simon	Pedagogue (m 34)	Initial discussion
AT 13	Jasmin	Pedagogue (f 32)	Initial discussion



## 2. Research Method

The present study is based on the desk research we have already conducted for the Pappus project. All participating persons were informed about the results of the desk research and we started the interviews based on the findings it provided.

We conducted a total of 10 one-on-one interviews with the following people:

- 3 Students (f 15, f 16, f 24)
- 1 Mountain guide (m 52)
- 4 Afternoon supervisors (f 45, f 53, f 37, f 48)
- 1 Pedagogue (f 36)
- 1 Vegetable grower (m 32)

In the individual interviews we asked the persons to report on their own experiences and to describe what activities they propose. We prepared the documentation of the case studies together with the participants and after the reports were completed, copies were sent to all participants.

In addition, we had initial discussions with

- 3 pedagogues

giving us a good insight into their work. All three participants are very interested in the project results but due to lack of time they are not sure whether they will be able to support us during the project.



## 3. Key findings from field research

### 3.1. Executive summary

**The present study is based on the desk research we have conducted earlier for the Pappus project. All participating persons were informed about the results of the desk research and we started the interviews based on the findings it provided.** We conducted a total of 10 one-on-one interviews with students, a mountain guide, afternoon supervisors, pedagogues and a vegetable grower, asking them to report on their own experiences and to describe what activities they propose for our project.

**In a first step we summarize those findings of our interviewees that overlap with the results of desk research:** Practitioners (pedagogues) as well as experts agree that that children learn primarily through experience. As Gerald Hüther emphasizes, it is not the acquisition of knowledge about nature that is central, but the experience in and with nature that is made on one's own body. Therefore, it is an important input for teachers, recreational pedagogues and parents to perceive nature again as a place of learning, play and relaxation and to make this "free space nature" accessible to children as often as possible.

The educators, teachers and students we interviewed know the most important providers in Vienna and Lower Austria, such as "BIM- Bildung im Mittelpunkt" (BIM Education in Focus), which is responsible for organising afternoon and holiday care at Viennese schools, or wienXtra - the Institute for Leisure Time Education (Institut für Freizeitpädagogik) and children's and youth organisations dealing with the topic of "Nature, Garden, Botany and Environment".

The participants agreed to publish the cases, which sometimes reflect very personal beliefs, as long as we respect privacy and use only pseudonyms. We summarize the most important findings from the interviews:

**Hooks and key messages, that would attract interviewees themselves** – after an internal brainstorming session, we divided the recommendations into several topic areas:

- A) Present nature as an adventure to make children and young people familiar with it:** We need caregiver who goes out with children and thinks about "little adventures in nature"; Let children dig in the earth themselves, plant seeds, take care of the shoots until everything is ripe for the harvest; "Being allowed to do" and promoting creativity in and with nature.
- B) The healing effect - on a physical and psychological level - that we can experience through nature:** Picking herbs for tea and talking about which diseases can be cured with them; Cook at home, taste herbs and invent "secret recipes"; It is important to make feelings of happiness tangible through experiences of nature, e.g. by working in the field or garden, actively experiencing and appreciating nature with all its wonders.
- C) Nature teaches us to relax:** Go running and enjoy the good air; Getting to know the feeling of peace; Careful interaction with each other and with nature; Using nature for a break to counteract stress; Using the power of nature to find peace and stillness.
- D) Recommendations for parents of teenagers:** Parents of teenagers who are going through a "cool period" can be patient and confident that interest in nature will resurface later; Invent adventure trails and go in search of clues; Cooking and enjoying the delicacies of nature together; Promoting a respectful approach to the environment and to one's own health.
- E) Recommendations for pedagogues, afternoon supervisors and parents:** Do not put the curriculum above the much-needed leisure time in nature; Take every opportunity to go outside with the children; Appreciation for each other and for nature (this is closely linked);



Not teaching but living the connection with nature with all its consequences and letting others share in it; The best method is to be in nature, observe it and learn from it.

**Hooks and key messages to attract children and young persons – suggestions from our interviewees**

- in this summary we choose some examples, the further ideas and suggestions are presented in detail below: "Prepare magic tea with herbs"; "Make a pumpkin explode evenly"; "Cress experiment with cotton wool: Create a video documentary"; "Mushroom, berry and herb hunt with open fire cooking class"; "More adult stress? Join in the outdoor chilling! "; "Enough learning for today: We're going out!"; "If you learn a lot, you need a lot of air... German lesson today in the park"; "What's in a sprout, anyway?"

**Good practice identified by interviewees:** The participants we interviewed in the area of Vienna and Lower Austria seemed well informed about the local offers. As we have already described most of the providers in detail in the desk research, we briefly summarised the results in the regarding chapter below.

**When we asked out participants regarding the Toolkit content** which would assist their work, they came up with lots of ideas. We can summarize them as follows:

**1) Wishes from our interviewees concerning the topics 'information about new offers', 'networking' and 'further education & training in the field',** e.g. Where can I get information about nature education training? I spend a lot of time researching new offers on the Internet. It would be great if there was some kind of meta-database that summarizes all offers. I wish that we could exchange information better across schools.

**2) Thematic areas about which our participants would like to learn more:** Picking mushrooms - What do I have to pay attention to?; Herbology - What do medicinal herbs do?; Sowing plants, but when is the right time?; Man, and nature: making the manifold interactions visible, etc. as indicated below.

**The Pappus training should provide our interviewees with themes** from “Develop new ideas to arouse children's curiosity about nature” to “Mindfulness training to teach children how important it is to build something with their hands, to perceive smells consciously and to discover materials, plants and animals in a completely new way.” So, it's about high expectations that should cover many different areas.

**In conclusion, all persons involved in the survey are very interested in the results of the Pappus project and, depending on their time resources, would like to participate in the further development of results.**



## 3.2. User cases from interviewees

### CASE STUDY AT 01 - "Sonja" - Student

#### Sociodemographic data

- Gender: female
- Age group: 19 - 35 years old
- Role: Student
- Other criteria: Interest in medicinal plants

#### Description of situation

Sonja tells in an interview that she was already fascinated by plants as a small child. She grew up in the country and her grandparents had a house with a large garden. She loved sowing seeds, watering them, taking care of the plants and then collecting the harvest. She goes on: "Whenever I was sick, my grandmother knew exactly which plant would cure me quickly." Later she discovered that not all remedies came from her own garden, but her conviction that nature can heal has remained. She studies pharmacy, is very interested in natural medicine and names Hildegard von Bingen as her great role model. She is familiar with "The Great Pahlow - the standard work of medicinal plants" in the German-speaking world and loves Maria Treben's work "Medicinal Herbs from the Garden of God" ... and much more.

#### Objective: This is important to me

Sonja thinks that nowadays many children do not have the opportunity to get in touch with nature at an early age. Asked about her own school days, she says that there have been no school events about nature except for the annual hiking day. Of course, there were the factual lessons: one had to acquire the knowledge theoretically, which she was interested in, but she really learned through her grandparents' garden, through many hikes, through preparing "magic teas" and through cooking with her grandmother. Sonja is still in education and has no children of her own, but she thinks it is important to familiarize children with nature as early as possible and can imagine to work with children later on to pass on the fascination she has been taught herself. When asked about suitable methods for this, she lists those mentioned in the next point.

#### Methods & Instruments to achieve these goals

- Caregiver who goes out with children and thinks about "little adventures in nature"
- Picking herbs for tea and talking about which diseases can be cured with them
- Let children dig in the earth themselves, plant seeds, take care of the shoots until everything is ripe for the harvest
- Cook at home, taste herbs and invent "secret recipes"

#### Hooks:

- "Gather herbs to make up "secret formulas"
- "Prepare "magic tea" with herbs"



## CASE STUDY AT 02 - "Veronika" - Student

### Sociodemographic data

- Gender: female
- Age group: 14 - 18 years old
- Role: Student
- Other criteria: Interest in experiments

### Description of situation

Veronika tells us that her parents are very "nature-loving": They have their own vegetable garden, flowers on the balcony, go hiking regularly and make many excursions in the woods and on the mountains. When she was younger, she enjoyed it very much. She still enjoys cooking together and she knows that it never tastes as good without fresh herbs. However, she is now much more interested in her education in natural sciences at secondary school: "When we are allowed to experiment, I particularly enjoy it. I'm good at learning from books, but everything becomes much livelier when we're allowed to try things out and attack them." When she imitates experiments at home, her parents - according to Veronika - are not always enthusiastic, e.g. when it comes to making a pumpkin explode evenly in order to make a good soup out of it.

### Objective: This is important to me

Veronika says that since she is now 15 years old, hiking with her parents is simply too boring for her: "It is nice to be in nature, but I am interested in the chemical and physical processes and therefore I love the experiments we do at school - both indoors and outdoors." She feels that she will have an even better understanding of nature if she finds out how certain elements relate to each other and wants to learn about it in an active way. These are the points Veronika makes when we ask her about suitable methods:

### Methods & Instruments to achieve these goals

- Experiments and learning in nature
- The permission to try things out for yourself
- Go running and enjoy the good air
- Archery in the nature park

### Hooks:

- "Make a pumpkin explode evenly"
- "Experiments in nature - only for people with strong nerves!"



## CASE STUDY AT 03 - "Hilde" – Student (with her mother)

### Sociodemographic data

- Gender: female
- Age group: 14 - 18 years old
- Role: Student
- Other criteria: "No interest" in nature

### Description of situation

Hilde explains to us in an interview that at the age of 16 you really have other things to do than to be busy with nature: "When I was a child, my parents used to drag me around outside and we went hiking and camping a lot, and we always went on excursions. I think they wanted to teach me how I could survive alone in nature because they explained so much to me. It was a nice time, but now I'm interested in other things. But I always separate the garbage properly, because that's already an important thing."

### Objective: This is important to me

Hilde's mother, who is also present at the interview, smiles and tells us that in the past they used the "kinderaktiv" offer of the City of Vienna a lot. Here there are numerous activities on the topics of experiencing nature in a playful way, botany, discovering plants, etc. This program is designed for children up to 13 years and is no longer interesting for Hilde. The mother shows understanding for her daughter and says: "As parents we think it is a pity that very little is offered in the way of experiencing nature at school. That was much better in elementary school than it is now in grammar school." She assumes that Hilde is currently focusing on other things, but that she has a good basis and will later rediscover her love for nature.

### Methods & Instruments to achieve these goals

- Parents of teenagers who are going through a "cool period" can be patient and confident that interest in nature will resurface later.
- Making nature tangible and experienceable for children, although this is not always easy for teenagers.

### Hooks:

- "Grab your phone and make slow-motion nature films"
- "Cress experiment with cotton wool: Create a video documentary"



## CASE STUDY AT 04 - "Alex" - Mountain guide

### Sociodemographic data

- Gender: male
- Age group: 50 +
- Role: mountain guide
- Other criteria: "Nature feeds us" - Hikes with children

### Description of situation

In his main job Alex runs a small pension in a tourist region. According to Alex, this is a job that is always quite hectic and therefore he needs a balance: "I go to the woods and mountains to get some rest again." A few years ago, he took the children of guests on a hike - actually by chance - and was surprised how interested the children showed. For some years now he has been offering "discovery walks" for children. He says that he quickly discovered that children do not need lengthy explanations but have a natural urge to discover within themselves. If it suits the season, Alex goes hunting with the children: "There we look for mushrooms, distinguish the edible from the poisonous ones, pick good forest herbs and collect cranberries.

### Objective: This is important to me

It is important to Alex to bring children and young people closer to the liberating feeling of being in nature: "Instead of lots of explanations, I encourage the children to breathe in the good air, hug a tree or just pay attention to the silence. Then, however, they must get some variety again. Depending on the season, we either look for animal footprints or pick mushrooms and berries." Alex is particularly concerned to appreciate food that grows in the wild. The children have a lot of fun "hunting" and cooking together – e.g. mushroom risotto or "cranberry noodles" - unites the group and, Alex states: "These dishes always taste particularly good."

### Methods & Instruments to achieve these goals

- Invent adventure trails and go in search of clues
- "Hunting" for mushrooms, berries and herbs
- Getting to know the feeling of peace
- Cooking and enjoying the delicacies of nature together

### Hooks:

- "Discover our adventure trail"
- "Mushroom, berry and herb hunt with open fire cooking class"



## CASE STUDY AT 05 - "Ina" - Afternoon Caregiver

### Sociodemographic data

- Gender: female
- Age group: 36 - 49 years old
- Role: Afternoon supervisor
- Other criteria: Stress reduction in nature

### Description of situation

Ina works as an afternoon supervisor at a municipal grammar school in Vienna and tells in the interview that the school management is open to the topic "learning in and with nature" and that she can therefore contribute many ideas. Ina herself grew up in the country and tells with enthusiasm how much freedom she had as a child: "We still had permission to go into the forest unsupervised, to swing with lianas and build tree houses. At that time, we didn't have any snack boxes with us, because when we got hungry, we would pick berries, try dandelions, wild garlic and other herbs. My parents were always delighted when I brought them something from the forest from "my prey". Nowadays children often seem very stressed. Ina attributes this mainly to the constantly growing pressure to perform at school and is therefore particularly concerned about balancing out the situation.

### Objective: This is important to me

Ina loves nature and wants to show the children and young people she cares for ways to "grow with nature", as she says. She spends much of her time outdoors with the children and praises Vienna as a very green city that offers many opportunities. She particularly likes to go to the extensive Prater area, which with its large fields and small woods offers plenty of room for discovery. Her motto is: "Talk less, do more", because the children often come to her group after class quite exhausted. Ina therefore incorporates many outdoor relaxation exercises and teaches the children how relaxing it can be just to sit in the grass and look at a plant. Her pupils also love to collect objects in nature (cones, branches, leaves or stones), which they can then use for handicrafts. Ina has been working on the topic of mindfulness for years and uses nature to offer her students a relaxing time out.

### Methods & Instruments to achieve these goals

- Careful interaction with each other and with nature
- Making nature tangible and experienceable for children
- Using nature for a break to counteract stress
- Collect things that nature offers us
- Tasting plants: which ones can I eat and how do they taste?

### Hooks:

- "More adult stress? Join in the outdoor chilling! "
- "Ohhhhm... Stay cool - Yoga in the park"



## CASE STUDY AT 06 - "Rosemarie" - Afternoon tutor

### Sociodemographic data

- Gender: female
- Age group: 50+
- Role: Afternoon supervisor
- Other criteria: The "Garden Fairy"

### Description of situation

Rosemarie works as an afternoon care worker at a primary school in Vienna and has children between 9 and 10 years in her group. In the context of a school project she can pursue her own passion: "We have created a small school garden with raised beds and together we plant fruit, vegetables and herbs. Since the children found the wooden raised beds a bit boring, they painted them colourfully and wrote their names on them. I took this as a sign that they were taking responsibility for the plants. It is a very nice project and our first harvest was shared with all classes. The pupils have nicknamed me 'Garden Fairy', which makes me very happy." According to Rosemarie, the project is so valuable because children can better understand the cycle of nature without much explanation, can become active themselves, are willing to take responsibility and are very proud of the harvest.

### Objective: This is important to me

"Before the start of the project, there was a discussion about whether we would like to create this school garden with the beds. Some students wanted to use the space for ball games and others thought it would be unnecessary to plant fruit and vegetables themselves, as "the stuff" is available in the shop. When we started, all the children - even those who were very sceptical before - were there with great enthusiasm. Their harvest was then no longer "stuff", but they proudly presented the products they had grown themselves. My conclusion: goal achieved!"

### Methods & Instruments to achieve these goals

- "Being allowed to do" and promoting creativity in and with nature
- Appreciation of self-produced products
- Gain insight into the cycle of nature
- Taking responsibility for plants
- "Catch up on the harvest" and be proud of the result, even if an organic apple does not look like an advertising photo on a supermarket shelf

### Hooks:

- "DIY fruit and vegetables in the school garden"
- "The Smoothie Competition: Who has the best recipes? "



## CASE STUDY AT 07 - "Karina" - Afternoon Supervisor

### Sociodemographic data

- Gender: female
- Age group: 36 - 49 years old
- Role: Afternoon supervisor
- Other criteria: Equal opportunities

### Description of situation

Karina works for the Bassena association in Vienna, whose aim she describes as follows: "The pedagogical actions and interventions of the Bassena are intended to contribute to a positive personal development of children and young people. Possible disadvantages (social, financial, health) to which our visitors are exposed should be compensated by our work. We want to contribute actively to the improvement of equal opportunities, according to the motto: Strengthen strengths, weaken weaknesses!" Karina is particularly proud of the programme of the Viennese park management, which the association has helped to develop and actively implements. It is a varied leisure offer for children and young people in cooperation with many partners in Vienna.

### Objective: This is important to me

Karina says that she is happy for every child who can be taken off the street, so to speak, and who takes part in the program. In addition to the park supervision, there are numerous activities that take place in nature. A basic principle that the Bassena wants to convey is that you don't need money to make leisure time meaningful. At the different locations in Vienna, one attaches importance to the creation of own gardens, as the common planting, care and harvesting of fruits and vegetables connects and strengthens the groups. In addition, excursions are organised - with the support of partners - to discover nature in and around Vienna. Karina further explains: "In close cooperation with the City of Vienna, the public space, especially the parks, is to be made tangible as a space of social practice: It serves as a place of life, encounters and dialogue. It is a stage of life and a stage for people. People spend their time in it every day, want to show themselves and want to have space. "

### Methods & Instruments to achieve these goals

- Personality formation and development of own identities
- Making nature tangible and experienceable for children and young people
- Enabling a sense of achievement (e.g. through gardening)
- Promoting a respectful approach to the environment
- Promotion of a responsible approach to one's own health

### Hooks:

- "Show your strength! Take responsibility for YOUR plant in our garden"
- "Special event for environmental trackers - bring rubber boots"



## CASE STUDY AT 08 - "Anita" - Afternoon Caregiver

### Sociodemographic data

- Gender: female
- Age group: 36 - 49 years old
- Role: Afternoon supervisor
- Other criteria: Creating free space

### Description of situation

Anita works as an afternoon tutor at a New Middle School (NMS) in Vienna. She looks after children from different classes, who are between 10 and 14 years old. Anita is very close to nature and remembers with pleasure her own childhood in the countryside, which - according to her statement - allowed much more freedom in nature: "We put down our school bags at home for lunch and then went out in large groups to the surrounding fields and woods. The only rule that our parents set was to get home before nightfall. "Anita continues to tell us that nowadays children often seem to be very overstrained, as they have a high learning workload to fulfil, change from one "supervisor" to the next and hardly have the opportunity to discover nature on their own.

### Objective: This is important to me

"Create space!" Anita takes the children out into nature at every opportunity and likes to choose places where the children and teenagers can move freely, e.g. the Prater area, the recreation area 'Am Himmel' or the Kaiserwasser near the Danube. There is much to discover and Anita states: "If the children want to know something about plants, trees or animals, I will answer their questions. But it is even more important to me that they can play in the nature, let off steam or just relax. Often small groups are formed, which can then freely decide what they want to do for at least 2 to 3 hours.

### Methods & Instruments to achieve these goals

- Creating free spaces by allowing children and young people to move around as freely as possible
- Children and young people should experience nature in a playful way
- Using the power of nature to find peace and quiet
- I am interested in the active experience of nature and not in a new accumulation of knowledge

### Hooks:

- "Enough learning for today: We're going out!"
- "Free space to chill in Heaven" ["Am Himmel/In Heaven" is a recreation area near Cobenzl/Vienna]



## CASE STUDY AT 09 - "Irmgard" - Pedagogue

### Sociodemographic data

- Gender: female
- Age group: 36 - 49 years old
- Role: Pedagogue
- Other criteria: "Kids got to get out"

### Description of situation

Irmgard is a teacher at a Viennese grammar school and teaches children between 10 and 14 years of age in the subjects German and English. When we start our interview, she laughs and says: "Now I'm going to contradict myself in a moment. I know from my own childhood how important it is to spend enough time in nature. On the other hand, it is also very important to me to motivate my students to perform well in their subjects. We teachers are probably a strange people and our day should have 48 hours to accommodate everything." Irmgard describes very well how she is torn between fulfilling the curriculum and the needs of her students.

### Objective: This is important to me

Irmgard's motto, "Kids got to go out." Although it is not always easy to organize, the teachers at her school try to spend as much time as possible in nature. A big advantage of the school is that it is located right next to one of the biggest parks in Vienna, the Stadtpark. As soon as the weather permits, the lessons in exercise & sports take place in the park. Irmgard and some colleagues try to move some of the lessons outside. What Irmgard appreciates very much is the close cooperation of the school with wienXtra, the Institute for leisure education, which organizes many activities in nature. These activities are mainly used in the context of afternoon care.

### Methods & Instruments to achieve these goals

- Do not put the curriculum above the much-needed leisure time in nature
- Take every opportunity to go outside with the children
- Playing and learning together in the park is good fun
- As teachers we should deal with the topic of leisure education and more

### Hooks:

- "If you learn a lot, you need a lot of air... German lesson today in the park"
- "Hedge blossom & Bird brood" - we meet the "Environmental trackers" at the Danube



## CASE STUDY AT 10 - "Fabian" - Vegetable grower

### Sociodemographic data

- Gender: male
- Age group: 19 - 35 years old
- Role: Vegetable cultivation
- Other criteria: New ways of communicating nature

### Description of situation

Fabian completed his studies at the University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences and decided against a classical career in this area. He talks about the fact that road construction and house building seal so much soil that the natural balance is thrown off course. This has concrete effects on the heat radiation, the quality of the soil as well as on the water quality. Another issue that he is very concerned about is the spraying agents used in agriculture, which enter our food chains directly and cause great damage to the soil. Fabian deliberately chooses a different path: he currently cultivates a large field in his hometown and specialises in vegetable cultivation. His aim is to start small, which means that for the time being he will only be working a field that he can cultivate by hand. Fabian pays great attention to a natural and local cycle, which starts with the selected seeds and ends with the supply of farm shops in the vicinity.

### Objective: This is important to me

Fabian tells us in the interview that the knowledge of nature is an important concern for him: "Pay attention to your surroundings, because everything you know you treat with more appreciation". Recently he invited the children and teachers of the local school to a workshop on the topic "What do I eat?" to share his experiences with them. For Fabian, it is important not to lecture, but to let the children make their own experiences. He mentions a quote that could come from Gerhard Hüther: "You remember only about 5% of the things you hear, the rest of the learning takes place through experience." Fabian criticises that in our school system too much emphasis is placed on formal learning and that active learning is not given enough attention. Because real learning can only take place through the combination of ratio and emotion. When he does workshops for children, he wants them to experience nature "up close and personal": kids can cut up a carrot and pick to pieces a sprout in order to experience haptically how the vegetables feel. Kids experience what the plants need to grow and how they taste.

### Methods & Instruments to achieve these goals

- Appreciation for each other and for nature (this is closely linked)
- Making nature tangible and experienceable for children
- To make feelings of happiness tangible through experiences of nature, e.g. by working in the field or garden, actively experiencing and appreciating nature with all its wonders
- Not teaching but living the connection with nature with all its consequences and letting others share in it
- The best method is to be in nature, observe it and learn from it

### Hooks:

- "Are my carrots ripe for the picking? Let's have a look"
- "What's in a sprout, anyway?"



### 3.3. Hooks and key messages, identified by interviewees

**Hooks and key messages, that would attract interviewees themselves – sorted by subject areas:**

**A) Present nature as an adventure to make children familiar with it:**

- We need caregiver who goes out with children and thinks about "little adventures in nature"
- Let children dig in the earth themselves, plant seeds, take care of the shoots until everything is ripe for the harvest
- Experiments and learning in nature
- Give kids the permission to try things out for themselves
- Archery in the nature park
- "Hunting" for mushrooms, berries and herbs
- Collect things that nature offers us
- "Being allowed to do" and promoting creativity in and with nature
- Children and young people should experience nature in a playful way
- I am interested in the active experience of nature and not in a new accumulation of knowledge

**B) The healing effect - on a physical and psychological level - that we can experience through nature:**

- Picking herbs for tea and talking about which diseases can be cured with them
- Cook at home, taste herbs and invent "secret recipes"
- Tasting plants: which ones can I eat and how do they taste?
- Appreciation of self-produced products
- "Catch up on the harvest" and be proud of the result, even if an organic apple does not look like an advertising photo on a supermarket shelf
- Personality formation and development of own identities
- To make feelings of happiness tangible through experiences of nature, e.g. by working in the field or garden, actively experiencing and appreciating nature with all its wonders

**C) Nature teaches us to relax**

- Go running and enjoy the good air



- Getting to know the feeling of peace
- Careful interaction with each other and with nature
- Making nature tangible and experienceable for children
- Using nature for a break to counteract stress
- Gain insight into the cycle of nature
- Taking responsibility for plants
- Using the power of nature to find peace and quiet

#### **D) Recommendations for parents of teenagers**

- Parents of teenagers who are going through a "cool period" can be patient and confident that interest in nature will resurface later.
- Making nature tangible and experienceable for children, although this is not always easy for teenagers.
- Invent adventure trails and go in search of clues
- Cooking and enjoying the delicacies of nature together
- Enabling a sense of achievement (e.g. through gardening)
- Promoting a respectful approach to the environment
- Promotion of a responsible approach to one's own health
- Creating free spaces by allowing children and young people to move around as freely as possible

#### **E) Recommendations for pedagogues, afternoon supervisors and parents:**

- Do not put the curriculum above the much-needed leisure time in nature
- Take every opportunity to go outside with the children
- Playing and learning together in the park is good fun
- Appreciation for each other and for nature (this is closely linked)
- Making nature tangible and experienceable for children
- Not teaching but living the connection with nature with all its consequences and letting others share in it
- The best method is to be in nature, observe it and learn from it



### **Hooks and key messages to attract children and young persons – suggestions from our interviewees:**

- "Gather herbs to make up "secret formulas"
- "Prepare "magic tea" with herbs"
- "Make a pumpkin explode evenly"
- "Experiments in nature - only for people with strong nerves!"
- "Grab your phone and make slow-motion nature films"
- "Cress experiment with cotton wool: Create a video documentary"
- "Discover our adventure trail"
- "Mushroom, berry and herb hunt with open fire cooking class"
- "More adult stress? Join in the outdoor chilling! "
- "Ohhhhm... Stay cool - Yoga in the park"
- "DIY fruit and vegetables in the school garden"
- "The Smoothie Competition: Who has the best recipes? "
- "Show your strength! Take responsibility for YOUR plant in our garden"
- "Special event for environmental trackers - bring rubber boots"
- "Enough learning for today: We're going out!"
- "Free space to chill in Heaven" ["Am Himmel/In Heaven" near Cobenzl/Vienna]
- "If you learn a lot, you need a lot of air... German lesson today in the park"
- "Hedge blossom & Bird brood" - we meet the "Environmental sniffers" at the Danube
- "Are my carrots ripe for the picking? Let's have a look"
- "What's in a sprout, anyway?"



### 3.4. Good practice, identified by interviewees

The people we interviewed in the area of Vienna and Lower Austria seemed well informed about the local offers. As we have already described most of the providers in detail in the desk research, we will only briefly summarise the results here:

- **wienXtra – Institut für Freizeitpädagogik - (Institute for Leisure Time Education)**  
wienXtra organises leisure activities for children, families and young people throughout the year. In addition, wienXtra offers educational opportunities for everyone who lives and works with children and young people. 10 different facilities in Vienna belong to wienXtra. Of particular interest for our project is "wienXtra kinderaktiv", where various events for children between 6 and 15 years of age are offered monthly, whereby "Nature & Sport" is a separate category.  
wienXtra cooperates with various public authorities, private institutions, associations and project sponsors that offer a wide range of services on the topic of "Discovering Nature".
- **Die Umweltspürnasen - (The environmental tracers)**  
The project "Experience Nature" is carried out in cooperation with MA 22 (City of Vienna) and is a particularly popular programme among teachers. It is about experiencing nature in and around Vienna.
- **Wiener Pfadfinder und Pfadfinderinnen (WPP) - (Viennese Pathfinders)**  
In their educational mission, scout leaders set themselves the goal of promoting the holistic development of young people - while experiencing and integrating nature.
- **Die Spur - (The Track)**  
The association for nature and forest pedagogy "Die Spur" is an independent platform for the promotion of nature and forest pedagogy within the framework of adult and child education by qualified supervisors.
- **Waldpädagogik - (Forest pedagogy)**  
The focus of the work of the association is the child with its individual needs. A guiding principle is: "Children have enough opportunities to communicate with their environment and to control their own development."

In addition to these well-known projects and programmes, there are of course numerous initiatives by private providers and many internal school projects, ideas and events. Some examples are described in detail in the case studies above.



## 3.5. Toolkit content

Useful information in the toolkit to assist my work:

### 1) Wishes from our interviewees concerning the topics 'information about new offers', 'networking' and 'further education & training in the field':

- Where can I get information about nature education training?
- I spend a lot of time researching new offers on the Internet. It would be great if there was some kind of meta-database that summarizes all offers.
- Often, I only find out about new great offers by chance. It would be nice if there were a news section.
- Of course, I talk to my colleagues at school about interesting offers. I wish that we could exchange information better across schools.
- I do not have time to lead interesting activities in nature with the children myself. Where can I find experts?

### 2) Thematic areas about which our participants would like to learn more:

- Picking mushrooms - What do I have to pay attention to?
- Herbology - What do medicinal herbs do?
- Sowing plants, but when is the right time?
- Discover the forest without scaring the inhabitants
- The recognition of plants by their roots
- The preparation of tinctures, soaps and ointments
- Basics of homeopathy
- The world of insects
- The moor and its dangers
- Man, and nature: making the manifold interactions visible
- Showing new forms of encounter with nature



### 3.6. Pappus training

Time to attend Pappus training: 4 interviewees

Duration of the training: maximum 10 days (full time)

**Useful training content: The Pappus training should provide us with these themes:**

- Develop new ideas to arouse children's curiosity about nature.
- Learning methods to convey experiences of nature skilfully.
- Knowledge about body awareness to make the connection with and relationship to nature understandable for the children.
- To train the observation of nature with the help of all senses in order to open up new horizons for children.
- To understand education as a holistic process and to learn techniques to combine nature education with the strict curriculum prescribed by the school authority.
- Using nature as an adventure playground for children and young people.
- Learning techniques and methods to create free spaces in nature where children can take risks - without violating the duty of care of the educators.
- Mindfulness training to teach children how important it is to build something with their hands, to perceive smells consciously and to discover materials, plants and animals in a completely new way.

### 3.7. Any other ideas / suggestions from interviewees

- Many colleagues have already done training and further education in the field of mindfulness. This aspect, I think, fits very well into the project. I would be interested in getting to know this method or similar ones.
- Legal framework in Austria: I am interested in more clarification on what am I allowed to do with the children and what not?



**In conclusion, all persons involved in the survey are very interested in the results of the Pappus project and, depending on their time resources, would like to participate in the further development of results.**