

SCHOLARSHIP REPORT



HOST: Cultivate Living and Learning a practical sustainability organisation focused on active education, Ireland

TRAINEE: Konstantina Tsimpragou, Msc in Sustainable Development, Greece

Duration: 9.7. - 6.8.2019

Report from TRAINEE Konstantina Tsimpragou



WORKPLAN

Week One

Week One started with desk research on Fab Lab Community and Fab Cities movement, as well as finding other Fab Labs and the different sectors they link to. The focus then was on how Fab Labs around the world work with communities, to help them grow in a sustainable way and taking environmental sustainability into account. There was practical work in the WeCreate Fab Lab on the laser cutter - to learn how it works and perform some maintenance on it with the Fab Lab technician. The maintenance was to adjust the laser mirrors with the laser tube - an interesting outcome was finding out how people around the world share information to fix and repair Fab Lab machines.

Week Two

The research for Week Two was how Fab Labs are connected with Agriculture, and creating a list of tools created in Fab Labs or smart technologies for agriculture. This week was also the start of using open source software FarmOS in collaboration with the Community Farm. Related to this was the collection of information around the Ecovillage about the trees and plants that have been planted. The purpose of this was to test FarmOS to if it is useful for long term or every day management of the Community Farm or Ecovillage plantings and orchards.

Week Three

Week Three was focused on the Food Hub initiative, starting with research on other organisations having similar initiatives. This included clarifying the differences between Food Hubs, Living Labs and Community Kitchens, and contributing to a scoping document describing the steps to move a Cloughjordan Food Hub forward. Some research was also done around FarmBot, as an example to connect a Food Hub with new technology and Fab Labs. There is a European research program for academic research about digital technology and agriculture - Digitalisation for Rural Areas. There was an opportunity to study more about projects in this research area search for new innovative ideas. Finally, there was planning for and a visit to Dublin to meet the Food Hub, a Liffey Trust initiative.

Week Four

In Week Four, there was an opportunity to work with other interns to develop ideas for the Cloughjordan Food Hub. For this, we wrote an outline for a business plan and a framework for potential stakeholders to identify how a food hub could be useful in Cloughjordan. After reviewing the work with Cultivate staff, we moved ahead with two different plans for future ideas.

Plan 1 - Focus on small steps to open a Food Hub in one year, by creating a strong collaboration between WeCreate, as a Social Enterprise Centre, with the local community farm.

Plan 2 - Involve Cloughjordan town and bring the community together. Start a new project directly with the community and Cloughjordan town which would also include a public, Main Street location.

Outcomes

Fab Lab

Working with the community farm and using FarmOS as the main link between these organisations - WeCreate, Cultivate and the Community Farm.

Repaired Laser Cutter.

Food Hub

Better understanding of what a Food Hub and community kitchen are in a rural context. Further developed the ability to plan new community based projects.

Impact for Trainee

Konstantina as Trainee was able to work in different projects all grounded in sustainability. More specifically she learned how a Fab Lab works and how the machines are used. Spent in repairing the laser machine and accessing information from global networks about DIY repair projects. She did web research on different types of Fab Labs and Food Hubs and how both can be connected with a community farming practicing agroecological methods.

Also she worked with Devyn making two plans on how to set up a Food Hub. She discovered ways to cooperate with local communities and schedule new projects with them. This resulted in her being able to connect with many different initiatives, as well as making strong connections with a potential collaboration between the two of us, as a strategic partnership between the new initiative in Greece and Cultivate in Ireland working in the same field.