



Application for BMPI Diploma in Education & Community Development

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Introduction

Background:

There is a visible upsurge of permaculture in Greece this year. The country is in political and economic turmoil. This has provided an opportunity for permaculture to rise to the attention of people searching for alternatives.

More and more projects are popping up under the banner of 'permaculture' and/or 'natural farming'; more people are active and passionate as they realise the **power of collaboration**.

Perhaps early in 2016, we will start looking into the legalities of setting up a **permaculture association** in Greece.

I'm excited about what's happening here, because it compels people to see the truth: that we are ultimately responsible for our world and permaculture is a step in the dreamed direction.

After my first PDC in Turkey in Nov 2010 and 3 months apprenticeship at Vale da Lama in Portugal, Jan-Mar 2011, in April 2011 I started introductory permaculture sessions all around Greece. To date I have organised and taught 30+ introductory courses, ranging from 1-hour sessions to 2-days combining theory and practice. Numbers of attendees range from 10 to 100 people. I have received positive feedback about the courses, through direct contact after sessions, emails and phonecalls.

2015 is the culmination of my work with significant results.

As a self-proclaimed ambassador for permaculture, I am listing some of the permaculture 'firsts' I initiated so far this year (2015) and the other reasons why I'm ready to apply for a Diploma.

I've looked at other diploma options and been offered possibilities, however, the methods of acquiring it are time-consuming and costly. I was pleased to discover that there is a merit based process!

Recommendations

Establishing permaculture in a country where it's not known and there is minimum information (almost non-existent), propels me to make the following recommendations:

- > Start by writing informational and educational materials and publishing online. Make it fun! Show practical examples!
 - > Establish a brand (website) that's relevant, easy to remember and catchy.
 - > Once this gets a bit of traction, organise introductory seminars and practical workshops (in bite-sized chunks). Charge even a small fee for these.
 - > Promote the courses with one-liners that capture the essence of permaculture and the imagination of those who will be enticed to attend (eg self-sufficiency as a word in Greece is popular and attracts attention).
 - > Work with experts in different fields to create a permaculture vocabulary list (eg earthworks experts, etc)
 - > Select a practical book to be translated, eg EUG.
 - > Work with Environmental Educational Centres who get funding from government (or EU in my case), so that the courses are offered for free or at a very low cost to participants.
 - > Choose venues that can be demonstration sites, that will have adequate follow-up.
 - > Start initiatives with people, not on behalf of them. Involve them in the process from the beginning, assign roles and responsibilities.
 - > Never translate and publish a book whilst organising and co-teaching a PDC!!
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Weekend PDC in Greek

My weekend PDC was the first one taught in the Greek language. It ran over 4 weekends, one/month (Feb-May) at Anna Mordechai's children's permaculture education centre at [The Garden in Vari](#).

This PDC was the perfect opportunity to apply what I had learnt at the permaculture teacher's training with Rosemary Morrow in 2013. Breaking up the PDC content into 4 weekends allowed time for the students to absorb, analyse, apply and share their knowledge and for me to tune into the needs of the students, adapting the content as I went. As most students did not have rural land, I geared the course towards urban permaculture and in making useful connections. After the course, an evaluation showed most people didn't look at rubbish as rubbish, had started upcycling and were cultivating on their balconies and retrofitting their houses.

What I learned: If I had had more experience and felt confident in my design skills, I would have offered a more in-depth curriculum on urban and community design.

Student outcomes:



International Permaculture Day

I initiated and co-organised the **first International Permaculture Day** event in Greece on May 3rd, 2015, in collaboration with Elena Gogou from [Halandri Urban Farm](#) in Athens.

We ran theoretical sessions (intro to permaculture) and practical sessions (composting, making a small tyre pond).

It succeeded on many levels. It showed me how important it is that I have good networks and not feel I have to do everything myself. A simple call out ensured we had enough people to help with the set-up and pack-up. Many people, despite our doubts that they would bring food and clothing to share, brought clothes to give away and food to share. New people (about a quarter of attendees) had never heard of permaculture.

Things I would do differently: allow myself more time to organise the event and give adequate time for advertising, involve other groups (such as Nea Guinea) in the organisation of the day and invite them to run workshops.

[Click here for a report on the day.](#)



Permaculture picnic



In July 2015, Alexandros Kostis ([Athens Healing Garden](#)) and I co-initiated a **permaculture picnic** with a focus on social and urban permaculture and transition.

This was run as two afternoon sessions on a Saturday and Sunday (4pm-9pm). It was a perfect opportunity to test:

1. the interest in permaculture and transition despite the difficult financial and political situation (capital controls were imposed a couple of weeks prior)
2. the teaching dynamic between myself and Alexandros.

The interest in attending a permaculture seminar surpassed our expectations, with around 30 students attending the picnic. I was slightly uncomfortable with pursuing the social permaculture syllabus, because people were more interested in gaining practical skills (raised beds, composting, etc). I ensured they got their needs met through video screenings in the evening.

The collaboration with Alexandros was flawless and taught me to share the teaching space and the importance of bringing in new energy and perspectives. We returned 20% of our earnings to the Urban farm.



Greek permaculture book

The first comprehensive guide to permaculture in Greek was published in September 2015. It is called "Permaculture Guide - Design for our self-sufficiency and autonomy" («Οδηγός Περμακουλτούρας - Σχεδιασμός για την αυτάρκεια και την αυτονομία μας»).

I began the translation of '**earth user's guide to permaculture**' (EUG) by **Rosemary Morrow** in November 2013 straight after the teacher's course in Spain, where Rosemary encouraged me to do it. I completed this project nearly two years later.

To apply the people care and fair share ethics, I ran it as a *Community Supported Publication* to cover the self-publication costs. With great trust, people pre-paid for the book. I was successful in raising the entire amount I needed (€5,000) during the year of running the campaign.

The publishers are a collective of writers called *iwrite.gr*, who specialise in assisting people to self-publish.



When the publishers saw that the printers would not have the book printed in time for Rosemary's arrival and the scheduled book launches and the PDC, they printed 100 copies digitally and gifted them to me. In turn, I gifted the book to every Greek student of the 13-day PDC which I taught with Rosemary in September 2015.

Greek permaculture book - lessons

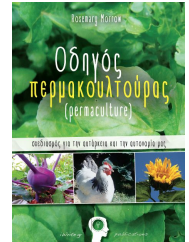
Up until September 2015, there was only one small permaculture book translated into Greek (Permaculture in a Nutshell, Patrick Whitefield) and information on the internet is minimal. The need for a) permaculture to reach more people and b) such information to be available in Greek with its nuances and correct vocabulary was imperative and propelled me to take on this project.

The opportunity to be fully immersed in such a project taught me **lessons for life**.

- > First of all, having Rosemary's trust and support was paramount in achieving this goal.
 - > Pursuing self publication and choosing the right publishers was imperative for the timely delivery of the vision.
 - > Having the trust of people who would buy this book and setting up an online crowdfunding platform to accept their pre-payments. This needed adequate time and one year was just enough.
 - > Choosing the right collaborators for the publication was easy, since my network has all the right resources: the editor is a PDC holder, runs an urban farm and heads the Athens seed-saving group of Peliti. Andreas helped with adding plants available in Greece, Yiorgos did all the graphics and various people contributed in many ways.
 - > Establishing clear channels of communication and collaboration and being uber-organised was key to the success of this project.
- All these people were celebrated and rewarded with free copies of the book.

While translating the book, I:

- > developed an English-Greek and Greek-English dictionary of terms used in the book
- > created a site design questionnaire in Greek
- > organised 3 book launches to coincide with Rosemary's arrival in Greece.



PDC: Co-teaching

Rosemary Morrow and I **co-taught** a 13-day [PDC](#) (27 Sep - 9 Oct), with an emphasis on the Mediterranean climate and dryland strategies.

Co-organisers: Fotini and Kostas from [Nea Guinea](#).

I chose a location close to Athens so that it would be accessible and so that I could develop my relationship with Kostas and Fotini. As this PDC coincided with the launch of the book and I was the PDC organiser, teacher and administrator, I reached my limits in terms of how many things I can take on. I feel that I needed more time and space to organise my teaching component. On the other hand, it was also a lesson about accepting that not all the conditions can be perfect at all times and that I have just got to flow with it!



I also ran a [fundraising campaign](#) to fund 15 Greek participants to attend the PDC. Although I didn't have the energy to promote the campaign as much as I would have liked, I raised enough money to partially fund the 15 attendees.

Establishing a permaculture internet presence in Greece



Blog (www.kangouro.gr): I began this blog in March 2009. It started as a personal blog, but has evolved to a site which includes educational permaculture articles, videos and events/seminars. Visitors subscribe to the site regularly and I now have a targeted database of 1,200+ people who receive my newsletter informing them of permaculture news, seminars, book launches in Greece.

Facebook: In 2011, I set-up a **Permaculture Greece** community page, now with over 2,700 members

I use my **personal profile** with 1000+ 'friends' for permaculture-related updates only.

Using facebook to promote permaculture related activities has raised the profile of permaculture in Greece and attracted people to events who normally wouldn't attend.

Social permaculture & transition

Initiatives I promoted when I was living in Amaliada (town of 20,000), between September and December 2012:

Organic food baskets: I collected plastic crates and used them to deliver local organic produce (fruit and vegetables) to the local consumers.

Transition group: set up a transition group.

Seed freedom event: an information evening about GM seeds, hybrids, sharing traditional seeds, meeting local producers.

Free permaculture lessons: These started in the library as theoretical lessons and evolved to permablitzes where we transformed students' gardens.

What I learned: These initiatives and the group collapsed as soon as I left, even though they had enormous potential. So next time I would start collaboratively rather than on my own, so people feel it's their project, not something someone is doing for them.



Tina Lymberis - Short bio

I grew up in between Australia and Greece. In Australia I studied **Electronic Engineering, Business Management, Adult Education Training, Meditation, Video Producing**. I also worked for multinationals as a **Sales Manager**.

I moved to Greece permanently in December 2008, because I wanted to live here.

Since then I have found my flow and combine my passions and skills to **spread permaculture**:

- facilitate seminars and workshops,
- organise PDCs with international teachers,
- started transition initiatives (organic food baskets),
- cultivate my food and
- launched the EUG in Greek

Permaculture is the solution for the many challenges we face here, that's why my **mission is to propel permaculture in Greece!**



Tina Lymberis - Education

Permaculture training:

> **Co-teacher** at 13-day Permaculture Design Course (PDC), in [Nea Makri](#), Athens, Greece with [Rosemary Morrow](#), 27 Sep - 9 Oct 2015

> **Assistant teacher** at 11-day Permaculture Design Course (PDC), in [Hopeland](#), Greece with [Peter Cow](#), June 2014

> Teacher training

- for **permaculture**, Catalunya, Spain with [Rosemary Morrow](#), September 2013
- for **transition**, Sint-Truiden, Belgium with Sophy Banks & Naresh Giangrande, October 2013

> Two **PDC certificates:**

- [Darren Doherty](#) in Athens, Greece, September 2011
- [Bill Mollison](#) & [Geoff Lawton](#) in Constantinople, Turkey

> Practical **permaculture experience/volunteering** (Portugal, Italy & Greece), November 2010

Main education pre-permaculture:

> **Graduate Diploma: Television – Producing** (1 year full time) @ The Australian Film Television and Radio School (AFTRS), Sydney, Australia, 2006

> **The University of South Australia** Double degree – Electronic Engineering and Management, 1993-1999

Other courses/awards:

- Certificate IV in Assessment & Workplace Training, 2005
- Presentation and Communication Skills, 2004
- Small business management, 2002
- Customer service and sales, 2002
- Leadership training, 2002

Learnings from my teachers

From Rosemary Morrow:

- > Conveying a clear, holistic and structured view of permaculture, connecting the elements.
- > Giving the big picture and moving to the details, ensuring that the students have enough information on each topic.
- > Sticking to the topic.
- > Using appropriate, short anecdotes and being prepared to give the students as much time as we give ourselves as teachers.
- > Applying design principles in the teaching methodology.
- > Being **aware** and sensitive to people's needs.
- > Balancing the needs of the teachers with the needs of the students.
- > Hearing students' voices.
- > Working on individual (personal) designs and team projects.
- > Not infusing spirituality or personal opinion.
- > Giving clear, accurate, verifiable information.
- > The importance of giving, supporting and sharing

From Peter Cow:

- > Social focus - establishing the group culture before moving into teaching the curriculum.
- > Organising PDC support teams.
- > Taking feedback from students.
- > The importance of voice and rhythm.

From Darren Doherty:

- > Dynamic delivery of clear and detailed information.
- > The importance of knowing when the information is too much.

From Geoff Lawton:

- > "If you're not living on the edge, you're taking up too much space!"
- > Delivery of concise information.
- > The importance of connection with students and not overloading a course with 120 students.

From Bill Mollison:

- > Know when you're too old to stop teaching!
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