

Bringing Urban Agriculture to the Community - Urban Agriculture Initiative

Introduction for the Teacher:

Entrepreneurship means driving an innovative project from the seed idea through to its realization. Most initiatives we hear about are business initiatives driven primarily by the financial gain incentive. There are, however, also many initiatives whose main motivation is to contribute toward the community and solve social or environmental problems. Entrepreneurship can also be done on a small scale and still produce a change for the immediate surroundings - whether in the community or even within the home.

As we have learned in the previous chapters, urban agriculture enables growing agricultural produce close to the consumer population. It enables cultivation virtually anywhere; it enables a supply of fresh food without the need for storage and transport. Urban agriculture can also be the focus of social-community activity.

In this activity we will plan and carry out an initiative within our community. This experience of an enterprising endeavor will enable us to make a contribution toward the community and become a significant part of it. It will also enable us to experience and practice many important skills: creative brainstorming, planning a complex activity, organization, working with a timetable, teamwork and more.

Goals:

- The students will experience creative brainstorming.
- The students will do a detailed design of a complex entrepreneurial project consisting of multiple tasks.
- The students will work as a team to roll out an initiative within the community related to the subject of urban agriculture and hydroponics.



Recommended duration

90 minutes



Key terminology

Community, entrepreneurship, brainstorming, planning



Acquired skills

Creativity, teamwork, project management

Prepare in advance

Accompanying presentation
Computer, linked to a projector
For each student: a sheet for the circles game printed from Appendix 1.

Group Game - What Do We All Have In Common?

In order to orient the students toward the fact that what typifies a community is the things the members of that community have in common, we will start with a game.

The class will break up into groups of 4-6 students.

In each group, the students must write as many things as possible that are common to all the members in the group.

After the time allocated has passed (5-10 minutes), each group will present the common features to the class.

What is a Community?

A community is a specific group of individuals, who share certain common factors. For example: where they live, common interests, shared goals, customs, beliefs, values, religion, social bonds.

Every person usually belongs to several different communities (the family, the town, youth movement, school, etc.)

What do we Gain from the Community?

Membership in a community fulfills several of a person's basic needs:

- **Belonging** - a basic need of every person to be part of a group of people.
- **Identity** - identification with the norms, values and beliefs of a community.
- **Meaning** - the individual's sense that they are able to contribute toward the community and that there is, in the community, a contribution and reciprocity.
- **Fulfillment of personal needs** - the community usually provides a person with things which are important for that person's everyday life, such as medical services, food, meeting places, places for leisure and recreation, etc.

Introducing the Class Challenge

Now that we have learned a little about urban agriculture and hydroponics, and perhaps we have also built a hydroponic garden at school, we want to attempt to make a contribution toward our community.

We will choose an idea for an initiative within the community, and we will plan it and carry it out.

Game: Outside-the-Circle Ideas

In order to practice a brainstorming process, we will play a game in which we will come up with various ideas, we will be thinking "outside the box".

- Each student will be given a sheet with circles drawn on it (Appendix 1).

- The students will brainstorm as many ideas as possible for things that can be added to the circles to produce something new (for example: a magnifying glass) and draw them on the worksheet.
- When the time is up (5 minutes), if they want, the students will be able to present their drawings to the class.

I've Got an Idea

Now we will hold a discussion in the entire forum (or in groups). Each student will suggest ideas for community activities, which are related to urban agriculture or to the hydroponic garden. We will write all the ideas on the whiteboard.

While the brainstorming is in progress, it is important not to judge the ideas. Any idea, even if it is impossible, can form a basis for some other idea that will follow. Besides, criticizing and judging ideas is detrimental to creativity.

When we raise the ideas, let's try to keep 3 main questions in mind:

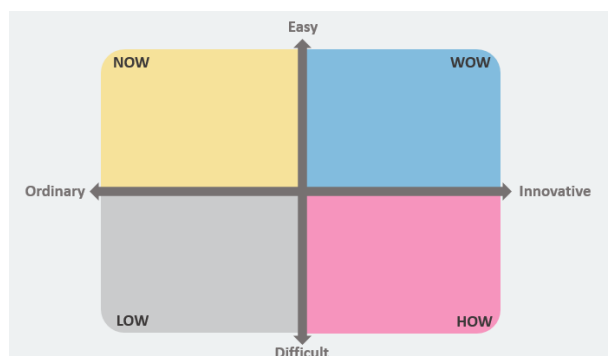
- What kind of community will we be wanting to operate in?
- What change will be brought about in the community due to our activity?
- How will we carry it out?

Only after all the ideas have been written on the board, will we proceed to the next stage - choosing the right idea.

How is the Idea For Our Initiative Selected?

We will want to choose an idea that can make a contribution toward our community, preferably it will be an innovative idea - something that has not been done before or which doesn't exist. Furthermore, and no less important - we want a practical idea we will be able to carry out within the timeframe and resources at our disposal.

You can mark all the ideas that fulfill these two criteria (innovative + practical), and have the class vote on all the suitable ideas. Or you can place all of your Ideas in the following grid, by judging how innovative and practical each idea is. We want to choose the ideas that are the most close to the top right "wow" quadrant.



If we don't have ideas in the Wow quadrant, this setup allows us to reflect about how to improve our ideas so that they will enter this quadrant (for example, by mixing ideas).

It is recommended that the initiative you select will not be too complicated, to ensure the students will succeed in carrying it out and to give them a sense of satisfaction on their success.

If you want, you'll be able to initiate another, more complicated idea later on.

Bringing the Idea for the Class Initiative into Focus

Once you have selected the idea for the class initiative, it is important to write it out clearly, including:

- A brief description of the planned initiative (you can give it a catchy name)
- In what kind of community will you be operating?
- What is the purpose? (In other words, what kind of change will you want to see following the initiative?)
- How will you be able to accomplish your purpose? What action or actions will be necessary for this?

Planning the Initiative

The planning stage is a highly-important stage. It includes a detailed specification of all the tasks required for carrying out the activity (the initiative), appointing persons to be responsible for each task, setting a timetable, detailing the equipment, materials and assistance, budgetary estimate and raising the funds, advance advertising of the event etc.

A complete, detailed plan will form a good, solid basis for carrying out the activity.

- It is important that all the stages be written in an orderly manner (this can be done in a shared file or in a shared notebook).
- We recommend that an orderly list of all the required tasks be prepared.
- Each stage must be broken down (parsed) into all its components (for example: scheduling a date for the activity will include coordination with the principal, the custodian and the community within which you will be operating)

Highlights for the planning stage:

- A date, or date range, has to be set in advance for when the initiative is going to be carried out.
- The date has to be coordinated with the community in which it is going to be carried out.
- In the planning table, start and end dates must be set for each task, and you need to make sure you have allocated enough time for all the tasks.
- Advertise your initiative in advance, in order to enable as many as possible members of the community to take part in it.

- Throughout all the stages, you can get assistance from other persons from within and from outside the school.
- Check in advance what materials and equipment are required and make sure you are able to secure everything necessary.
- We recommend that you document all the stages with photographs and videos.

Carrying out the initiative

We have now reached the final, most important stage - carrying out the initiative.

Now is the time to put everything we have learned and planned into action for the sake of making a contribution to the community and to demonstrate our organizational skills and our teamwork.

It is important to track the planning schedule while at the same time to be prepared for unforeseen changes and to adjust the execution to these changes.

Don't forget to document and advertise your initiative.

Well done!

You have worked as a team, you have demonstrated your planning and execution skills, you have made a contribution toward your community and you have helped draw attention to hydroponic agriculture and its benefits for the community and the environment!

Appendix 1: Outside-the-Circle Ideas

Think of as many ideas as possible for things that can be added to the circles to produce something new (for example: a magnifying glass) and draw them on the worksheet.
