

Breakthrough for Resilience: People, Places and Communities

Pilot Workshop November 16

This project aims at providing people, communities and places with the tools to overcome obstacles and coming out stronger.

This is a project within the Erasmus+ Programme and co-funded by the European Union. Erasmus+ is the EU's programme to support education, training, youth and sport in Europe. Within the programme, there are different sub-programmes, and we are operating within the Adult Education sub-programme. There are four partners in this project.

The Surefoot Effect CIC, based in Stirling, Scotland develops programmes for environmental and climate change awareness and action, resilience and mindfulness.

Volontariato Torino is the Volunteer Support Centre of Turin, Italy. They act as an umbrella non-profit organization with 160 member organisations and a network of 1300 voluntary associations, especially in the region of Piedmont in the north of Italy where they are based.

The Society of Social Psychiatry and Mental Health. Our partners are in Athens and Amfissa and they provide psychiatric and psychological support services throughout Greece.

Mobilizing Expertise is a Social Enterprise providing training and mobilise volunteers focus on Nordic, European and international projects, and they are based in Lund, in the south of Sweden.

The Breakthrough for Resilience working definition of '**resilience**':

In response to ongoing stress or a sudden shock, we can:

Breakdown,

Breakeven – get back to where we were, or

Breakthrough – use the adversity to springboard to a higher level of development

We held a pilot workshop on 19 November 2020 to showcase some of the tools we have found in our research across the 3 aspects the project covers: people, communities, and places or nature conservation. This pilot is also to gather feedback in preparation for three workshops to be held in each of the partner countries in 2021. Each of these workshops will focus on one of the 3 aspects.

This document contains the highlights of the pilot workshop. Please do contact us with any questions on info@surefoot-effect.com.

The main tools covered in this workshop were:

Resilience Compass - community

Wheel of Life - people

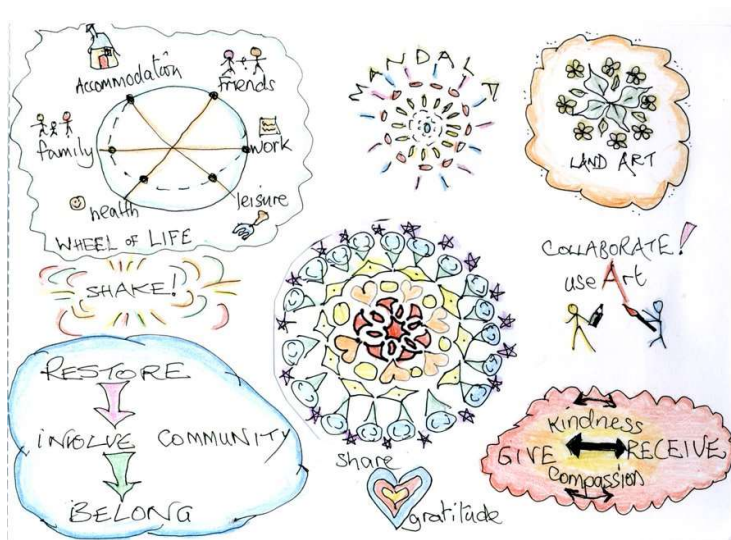
Mandala making - people

Tree Visualisation -people

Let's Draw – people and community

Restoration and re evaluation – Cascina Bert – nature conservation

One of the workshop's participants, Alison Shaw, created these amazing graphic recordings of the day. Thank you, Alison!



Resilience Compass

The original compass, created by Nick Wilding, can be accessed here:

<http://www.sustainable-communities.eu/resilience-compass/> where there are some interactive tools which can be used in a group.

It is an online tool used to make an assessment of the current state of resilience for a community. The compass enables the users to prioritise certain actions to become more resilient. There are four axes in the compass:

People - the level of wellbeing and individual resilience.

Economy - how successful the local economy is in meeting local needs and regenerating the local environment.

Culture – asks us to consider whether it is creative and inclusive.

Links – the connections with other communities and how strong those are.

The inner circle indicates breakdown, aspects where the community needs to do some work. An example of this on the economy axis would be where there is too much reliance on one aspects of the economy, for example, agriculture, tourism or banking.

The middle circle represents breakeven, when there is a diversity of enterprises and organisations. There is stability but not much more.

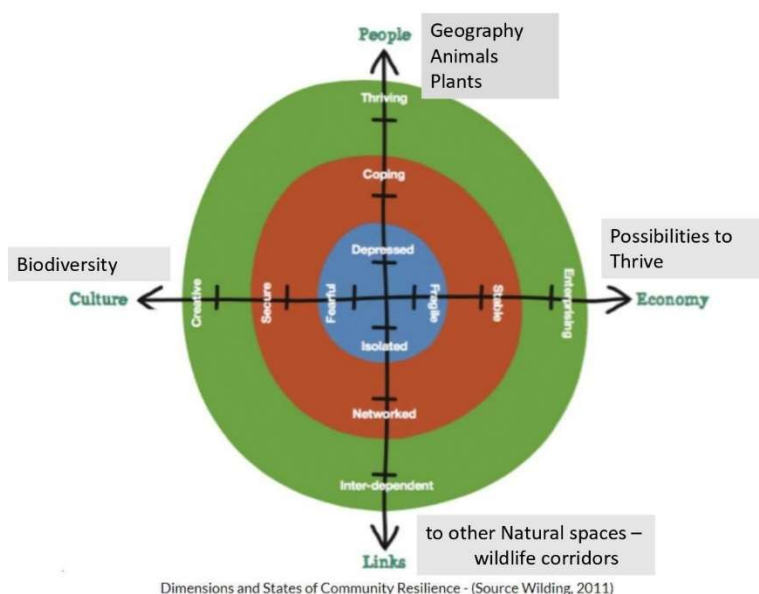
The outer circle shows breakthrough, when the community feels excited by change, take risks, and there is active learning.

The compass does not ask communities to be at the top level for each concept, but to prioritise resources to improve the themes that are most important to them.

In the workshop we took the principles of community resilience as explored through the Compass of Resilience and apply them to the resilience of places and nature conservancy.

Instead of the four axes described, we can think of

- Instead of people, what places have - geographical features, flora, fauna.
- Instead of the economy, we can think of the ability to thrive as a community?
- Instead of culture, we can think of the diversity, biodiversity.
- Links stays the same, so connections to other environments.



Applicability of the Resilience Compass to the natural spaces aspect

Can you think of a natural space that you know?

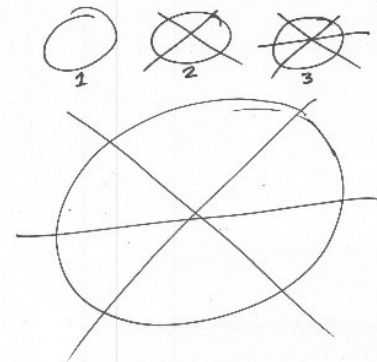
Where does the place you have in mind 'fit' on the compass?

What does the place need to move from the inner circles to the outer circles?

Wheel of Life

The Wheel of Life is a great tool to help you improve your life balance. It helps you quickly and graphically identify the areas in your life to which you want to devote more energy, and helps you understand where you might want to cut back.

Here is a diagram to draw the basic structure of the wheel.
Once the basic model is created:

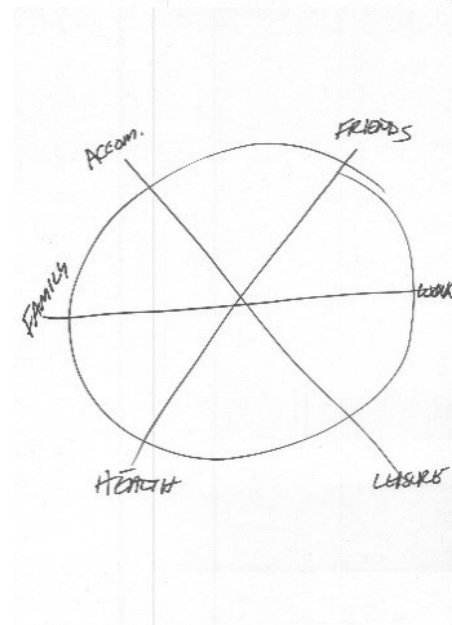


1. Brainstorm Life Areas - Start by brainstorming the six to eight dimensions of your life that are important for you. Different approaches to this are:

- The roles you play in life, for example: husband/wife, father/mother, manager, colleague, team member, sports player, community leader, or friend.
- Areas of life that are important to you, for example: artistic expression, positive attitude, career, education, family, friends, financial freedom, physical challenge, pleasure, or public service.
- Your own combination of these (or different) things, reflecting the things that are your priorities in life.

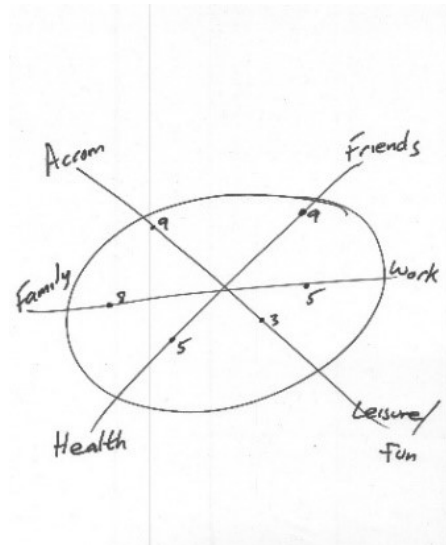
2. Write These Down on the Wheel

- Write down these dimensions on the diagram, one on each spoke of the life wheel.



3. Assess Each Area

- The areas of your life will have different levels of satisfaction and will need different levels of attention at different times. So the next step is to assess the amount of satisfaction you're currently experiencing in each area.
- Consider each dimension in turn, and on a scale of 0 (low, in the middle) – to 10 (high on the outer circle), note your satisfaction with that area of your life. Mark each score on the appropriate spoke of your Wheel.



4. Join up the Marks

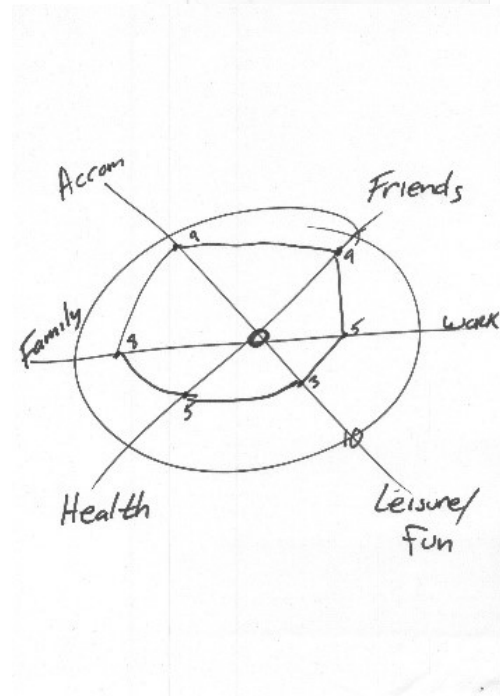
- Now join up the marks around the circle. Does your life wheel look and feel balanced? If the wheel was turning, how smooth would it be?

5. Think About Your Ideal Level

- Next it's time to consider which area you would like to improve. And inevitably you will need to make choices and compromises, as your time and energy are not in unlimited supply!

6. Take Action

- Now you have a visual representation of your current life balance and where you would like to make some improvements.
- it's time to plan the actions needed to work on the specific areas. What things do you need to start doing to improve your satisfaction? What are some small first steps you can take? In the areas that currently sap your energy and time, what can you stop doing or reprioritize or delegate to someone else? Make a commitment to these actions by writing them on your worksheet.



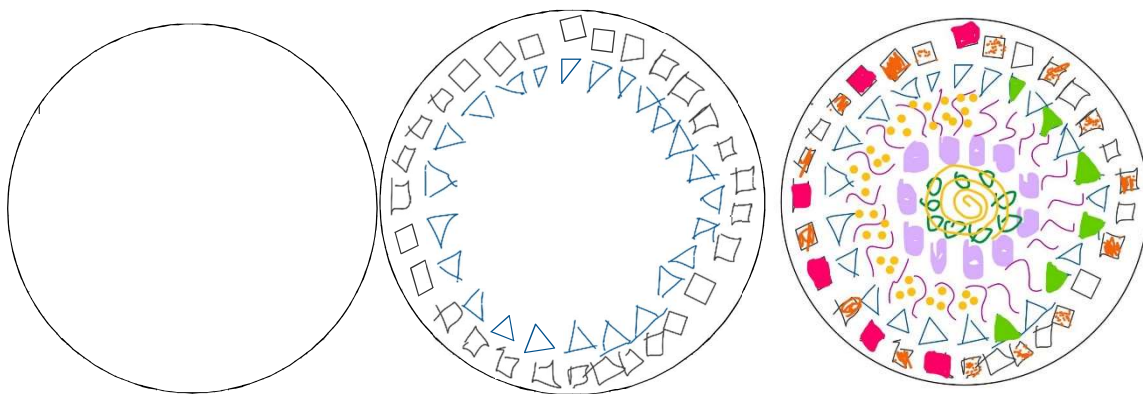
Mandala

The word, mandala, means "a sacred circle" in Sanskrit and it is used in both Hinduism and Buddhism. Traditionally, a Mandala consists of opposing geometric shapes, such as circles, squares, octagons that are assembled within a circle. Creating a mandala can be a meditative process that can lead to anxiety reduction and an increase in concentration.



There is a simple process to follow to create one:

1. Use a plate or compass to make a circle on the paper. You can draw the circle by hand.
2. Fill the circle with shapes, colours and lines of your choice. Each of these can have meaning, represent something that is important to us.



Applicability of the mandala to natural spaces

One way of applying to the principle of the mandala to the natural space aspect of resilience is use what we find around outdoors, like leaves and twigs - it's called landart, another way to connect to a natural space, and start to understand it better.



Tree Visualisation

Trees are a great example of resilience; which people can learn from. Trees have to cope with high winds, storms, dry weather, insect attacks and more. Their key to resilience is the balance between roots, trunk and branches. Imagine yourself as a tree:

Imagine the roots of a tree, and tune into the jobs they are doing. The roots spread out wider than the trunk, to give the tree stability in high winds. The roots gather nourishment, from the earth and other trees via the root network. Imagine your root system – is it broad enough to give you stability and access to the resources you need?

The trunk of a tree needs flexible strength to stand and support branches, but it also has to bend with the wind. Imagine your trunk as processes you use to meet problems. Are your approaches to life and work giving you flexible strength?

The branches are where the outputs are produced – the blossoms, fruits, nuts, and leaves. Imagine your branches - where you give out to others, and produce your fruits. Is your branch network producing the right amount of outputs?

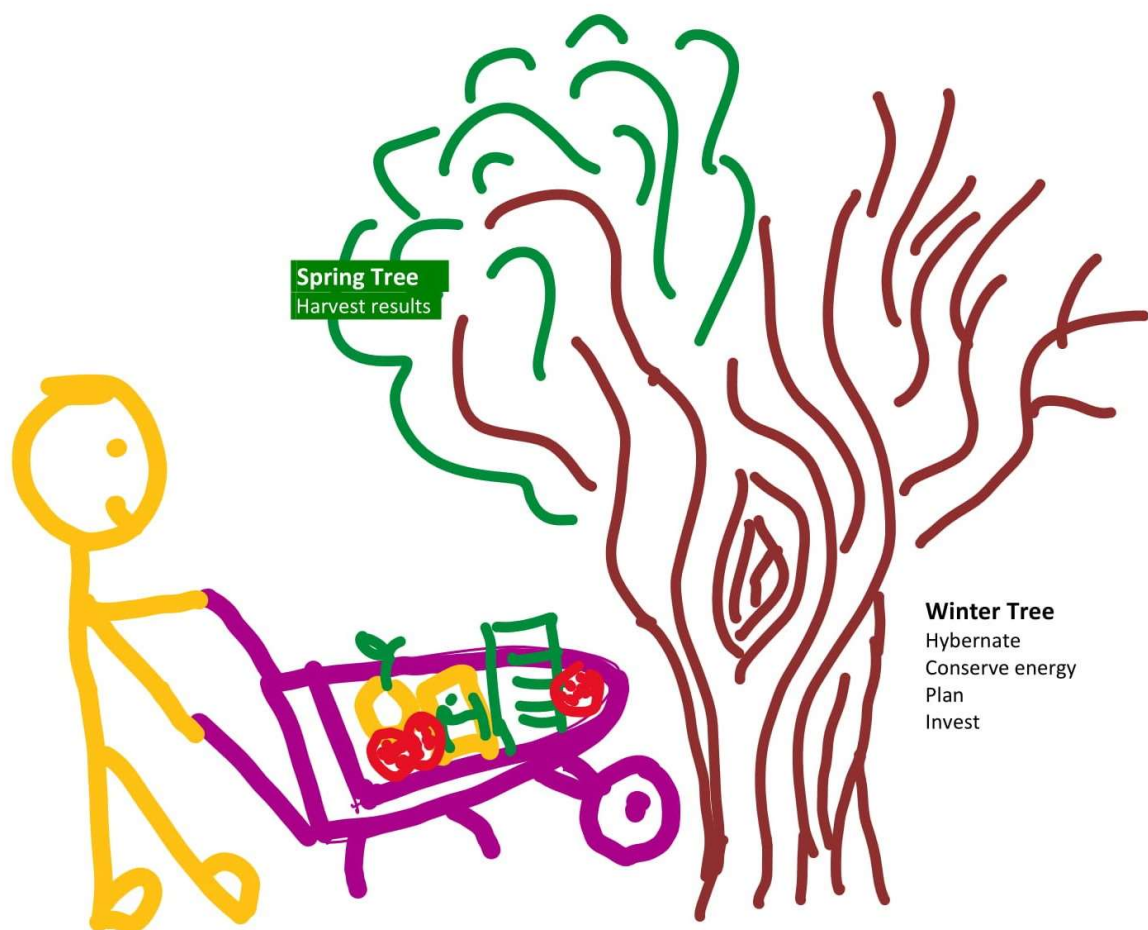
Look at the overall balance between your own roots, trunk and branches. A gardener looking after trees knows that there are two ways to bring the tree into balance. One is to feed the roots and the other is to prune back some of the branches. Does one of these apply to you?

Let's Draw

This tool is based on the principle that through art one has the ability to express one's inner states, personality and interests in a more visual form. Through this reflection, it becomes easier for people to express and process these inner states, interests and experiences. The work or image created when we are working with this tool can contain and symbolize memories from the past, feelings from the present, fears, ambivalence and conflict, and so become a bridge between the inner world and the outer reality.

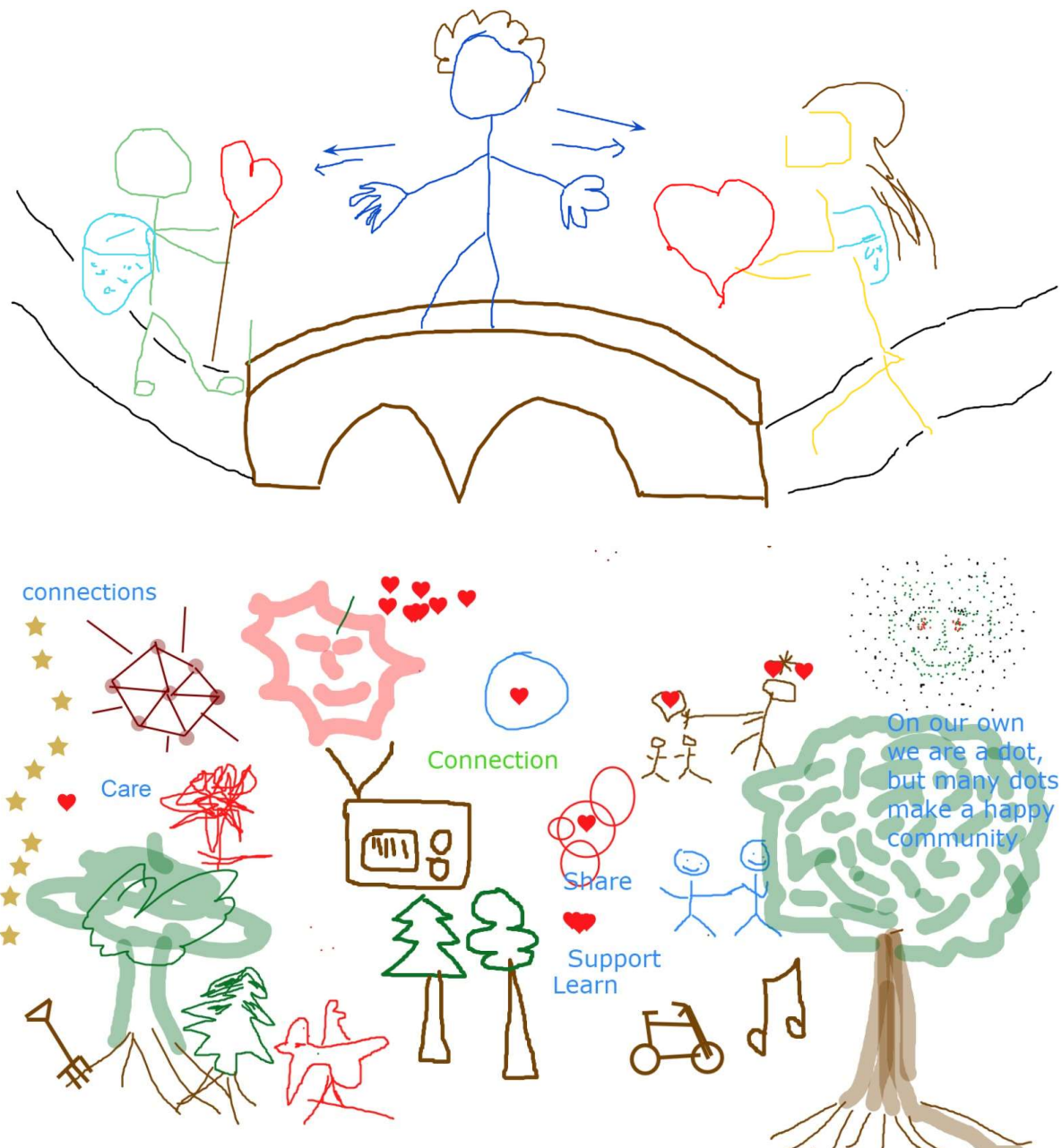
This tool can also be used not only for therapeutic goals but also for purposes beyond. Using this tool can be similar to creating a mandala, a meditative process that helps to remove anxiety and focus, but it can also bring into perspective certain issues that we deem important and priorities too.

There are different activities that can be part of this tool, but one which allows us to have a taste of the methodology without going too deep into the therapeutic aspects of "Let's Draw" is the creation of "a postcard that we will never send".



Applicability of “Let’s draw” to the community aspect of resilience

The principle of this tool can be applied to community resilience through collaborative art, which has the power to bring people together. Here are the drawings we did together during the workshop on the theme of ‘What does community mean to me?’



Cascina Bert : Re-evaluation and restoration towards resilience in natural spaces

<http://torino.pro-natura.it/cascina-bert>

Cascina Bert is a former farmstead and a building from the end of the year 1700, so over 300 years old. It is located at an altitude of 500 meters on the Turin hills. In 2008, the Municipality of Turin granted it on loan to the Pro Natura Torino Association. The association sought funds to restore and equip it in order to use it for environmental education and enhancement of the hilly territory.



Cascina Bert can serve as resilience tool for place and nature conservation when we emphasise the reevaluation and restoration process that took place. Reevaluation and restoration are principles that can be applied to community resilience and even to the individual.

How did Pronatura and the other people involved in the process use reevaluation and restoration to make it happen?

- Pro Natura was able to take a large piece of land with a building

- The association had a clear aim in mind: to protect the environment. Within this framework, they spent time reevaluating what that space should look like, how they could protect nature and see natural environment without harming it.
- By restoring the main building, the association opened the possibility to restore the land around it for people to enjoy, grow vegetables, to use it as an educational outdoor venue for other activities.

Applicability of the Cascina Bert process to community resilience

One example is that which took place at the University of Edinburgh in 2011-12. The University had in place an energy-saving approach based on emailing lists, posters and stickers that reminded people to saving energy in buildings. A new approach was put forward where a group of volunteers – made up of people who worked in each department - were invited to come up with new ways to save energy and implement relatively small-energy saving projects. This constituted a reevaluation of the approach to change and the restoration of using the people in the place instead of relying on experts coming in from the outside. The new approach saved the energy invested in the project in only 8 weeks, as compared to the 2 years that the University had foreseen.

How do you think you can use reevaluation and restoration principles to increase resilience in a community that you are part of, perhaps a group of volunteers, or at your work place?