

## **Short Abstract**

Subject of this paper is to analyse the potential of permaculture teachers as change agents for a sustainable modernity. The theoretical basis of the work is the change agent approach by KRISTOF (2010). Permaculture is presented as a sustainable design approach. The change agent approach is used as a framework. The methodology consists of qualitative interviews with teachers and students of permaculture. The survey was exploratory and semi-structured with the aid of a questionnaire. The evaluation of eleven qualitative interviews leads to the conclusion that the teachers meet the criteria of change agents in various ways. The lived culture of change makes permaculture special. Areas where permaculture comes to life in Germany are still scarce, but their visibility can be increased. Especially in connection with the community of permaculture, as a community of practice, the teachers have great potential to act as change agents for a sustainable modernity.

**Keywords:** permaculture, teacher, change agents, WBGU, Great Transformation, avant-garde, community of practice , sustainability

## **Long Abstract**

The comprehensive transformation of the economy and society should take place within the planetary boundaries to limit irreversible damage to the humanity of the Earth system as well as to ecosystems and their effects. In this case the concept of change agents – also called ,Pioneers of Change ' - of particular importance/in this case : What is often lacking is a tangible alternative to our current model of society. Also partly on awareness of self-efficacy and the perception of one's own strength is lacking. The Council therefore proposes to strengthen the role of change agents. These change agents always play a central role in the initiation and design of change process. The pioneers of change are key players in the establishment of convincing new perspectives of orientation and plans of action. They are important for the opening of experimental platforms. A process of social transformation takes place synchronically. First pioneers would be considered as outsiders, then later as role models and as avant-garde. An avant-garde doesn't need majorities in order to change societies. For this one needs a coherent (life) concept, which can diffuse into all levels of society, if it is carried by minorities of all relevant social layers ( Welzer 2013).

Subject of this paper is to analyse the potential of permaculture teachers, as change agents for a sustainable modernity. The theoretical basis of the work is the change agent approach by KRISTOF (2010). Permaculture is presented as a sustainable design approach: Permaculture integrates analysis and design methods with ecological knowledge and a holistic philosophy of nature, all with the aim to create sustainable, organic cycles. This way of thinking can be applied to gardens, farms and companies or even to social issues. First, in this paper the principles of permaculture are explained and practical examples shown. Second, the change agent approach by KRISTOF (2010) will be discussed. The methodology of the research consists of qualitative interviews with teachers and students of permaculture. The survey is exploratory and semi-

structured with the aid of a questionnaire. Finally the potential of permaculture teachers as change agents for a sustainable modernity and their role in the degrowth movement will be discussed.

The evaluation of eleven qualitative interviews leads to the conclusion that the teachers meet the criteria of change agents in various ways. The criteria of vision and desire for change are met. The joy of interaction can be assessed as very high. A target group's adequate behaviour is still missing. The self-efficacy is high. The theme of power is controversial. The technical and process knowledge is also very large, but due to the enormous scope of the topic of permaculture, it is difficult to fulfil this criterion fully. The lived culture of change makes permaculture special. Areas where permaculture comes to life in Germany are still scarce, but their visibility can be increased. Especially in connection with the community of permaculture, as a community of practice, the teachers have great potential to act as change agents for a sustainable modernity.

**Keywords:** permaculture, teacher, change agents, WBGU, Great Transformation, avant-garde, community of practice , sustainability