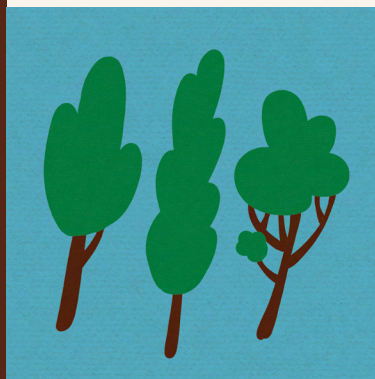


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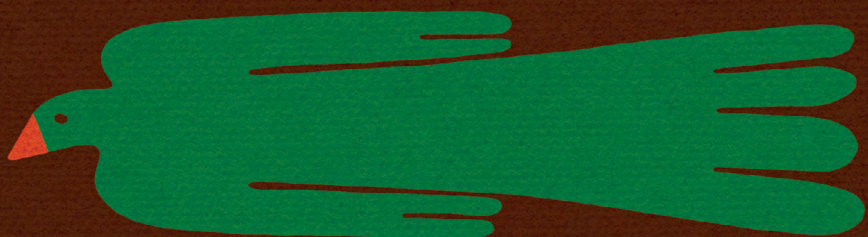


# JUST AROUND THE CORNER

Collaborating on sustainable,  
socially just learning ecosystems



PRACTICAL  
WORKBOOK





Juli 2026  
Sofia van Santen & Judith Ligtvoet

# JUST AROUND THE CORNER

Collaborating on sustainable,  
socially just learning ecosystems

**PRACTICAL WORKBOOK**

## Colophon

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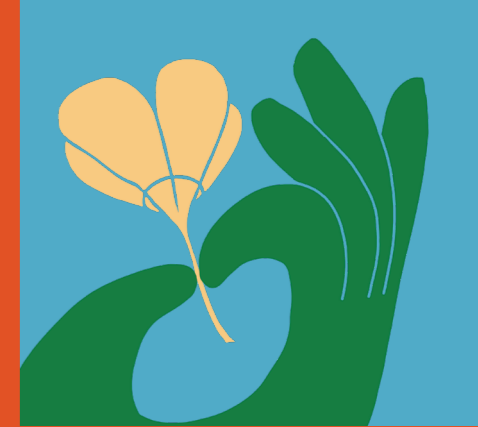
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# WHY THIS PRACTICAL WORKBOOK?

Learning opportunities for children are shaped by persistent and systemic inequalities. These inequalities are tied to broader social systems (from housing and healthcare to education) and it affects children from low income families, families with a migration background or less advantaged neighborhoods the hardest<sup>1-3</sup>. There is a growing recognition that schools cannot redress these inequities in learning opportunities on their own. This situation calls for a broader approach, starting with the recognition that learning takes place across contexts in children's lives: at home, in the neighborhood, in nature, at a club or in a museum<sup>4</sup>. But out-of-school learning opportunities are also unequally distributed<sup>5,6</sup>. To work towards a more socially just situation, it is important to look at both in school and out of school learning environments and view all learning opportunities together as a system.

A learning ecosystem approach offers a perspective for this: by intentionally connecting people, organizations and places, learning opportunities can be enriched, distributed more fairly, and better aligned with children's everyday worlds.

This workbook is made for professionals who are part of a learning ecosystem, or who want to develop one. It helps to map, evaluate and purposefully strengthen the learning ecosystem, with social justice as a guiding principle

**A learning ecosystem approach requires more than collaboration: a learning ecosystem only contributes to social justice if you critically examine and adapt both your own way of working and the system as a whole.**

## How to use this workbook

**This workbook combines explanations of socially just learning ecosystems with assignments for your own practice. It includes worksheets that you complete step by step.**

- As you work through steps 1 and 2, you will encounter a total of 14 questions in red boxes. These questions help you explore the learning ecosystem. Write your answers on the **Exploration Worksheet** (p. 35).
- In Step 3, you analyze your learning ecosystem. Using the analysis table, you complete the **Flower model for learning ecosystems Worksheet** (p. 36).
- In Step 4, you develop an action plan based on your analysis. You work out concrete steps on the **Action plan Worksheet** (p. 38).

Extra worksheets are available via the **QR code** below.



You work from the perspective of your organization, but you can also answer the questions from your personal point of view and compare the two. Use the outcomes to start a conversation with colleagues or partners and together identify blind spots and opportunities.

# NATURE AND SUSTAINABILITY IN LEARNING ECOSYSTEMS

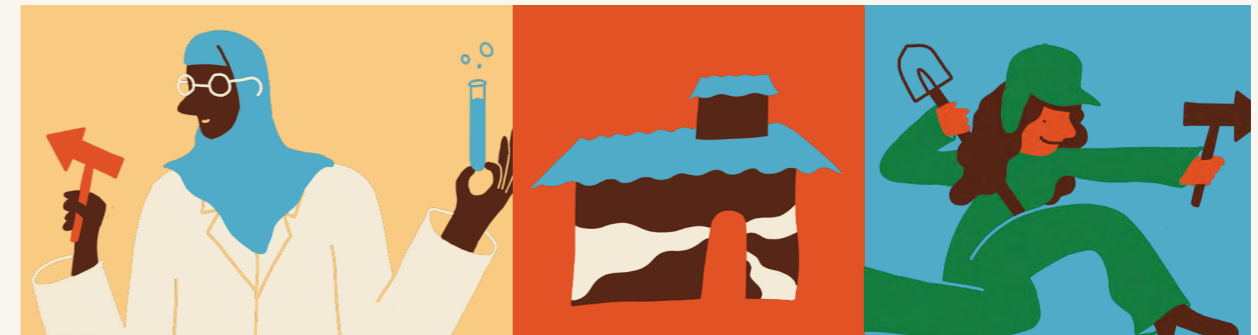
Learning ecosystems can be organized around all kinds of themes: from arts and culture to science or sport. This workbook focuses on learning ecosystems that include nature. That is no coincidence: learning and development is always place-based. The physical environment, and nature in particular, is an essential part of the world in which a child learns and develops<sup>7-9</sup>.

Nature is essential for a healthy and broad development of children. Contact with nature contributes to stress recovery, motor development, language development and cognitive development<sup>10,11</sup>. In a learning ecosystem, nature can play a versatile role: children do not only learn about nature, but also for, in, with, from and as nature<sup>12</sup>. A spider crawling across the table sparks a sense of wonder; a school garden can be the place where the math lesson comes to life. Moreover, nature mirrors the power of diversity; it teaches us that every individual species contributes to the greater whole.

Nature experiences are also unequally distributed<sup>13-15</sup>. In neighborhoods with many low-income households, nature often is scarce, far away, or not inviting for children to play and explore. Besides, many natural areas are designed around a dominant norm, such as 'quiet and individual walking'. Children and families who do not fit that norm, experience more social and cultural barriers to be out in nature. This has direct effects on their health, well-being, and learning opportunities. Therefore, in a justice oriented approach, nature should play a role, in a way that allows for diverse ways of experiencing it.

The urgency for socially just learning ecosystems that include nature is even greater when we bring in the theme of sustainability. Children worry about the future of the earth, about climate and biodiversity crises, and can feel powerless. How can we offer children a hopeful perspective on the future in these times?

By using the learning ecosystem to connect children with nature, inspiring role models and concrete perspectives for action, you can strengthen their connection with nature, and their action competence<sup>16-18</sup>. As a professional, you can help children experience that they are part of nature, that they can explore and experience it, and that everyone can contribute to a sustainable future. From a socially just approach, you can shape experiences in such a way, that every child can feel at home in the place where they grow up.



## CONCEPTS & SUMMARIES

- **Nature is essential for children's broad development.**
- **Including nature in learning ecosystems contributes to learning opportunities and connection with nature.**
- **Contact with nature is experienced differently by different people.**
- **All children need hopeful perspectives for action regarding a sustainable future.**



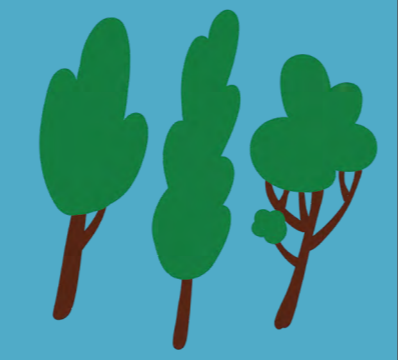
NATURE CLUB



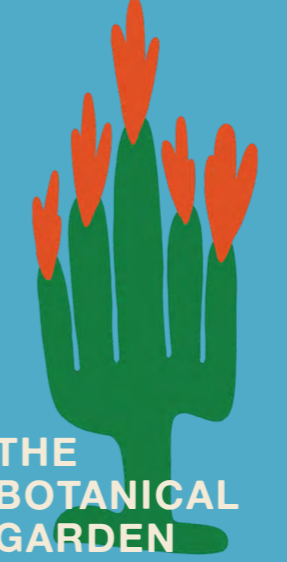
A KEYSTONE



THE PARK



THE BOTANICAL GARDEN



THE COMMUNITY CENTER



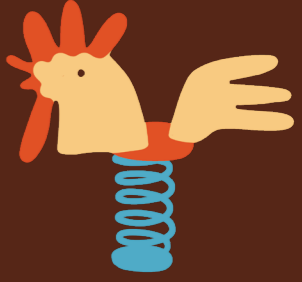
THE COMMUNITY GARDEN



THE CHILD IN THE LEARNING ECOSYSTEM



THE PARENT



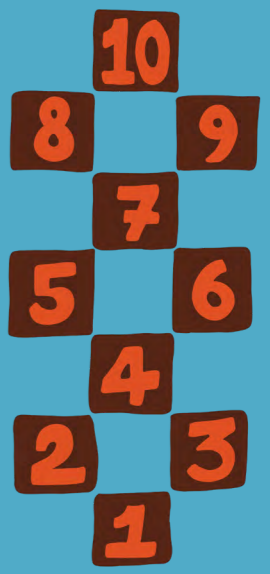
THE FOREST

RANGER

THE SCIENTIST



THE TEACHER



SCHOOL



NATURE MUSEUM



SPORTS CLUB



THE FACTORY



THE NEIGHBOR



THE BROTHER



## Step 1

# MAPPING THE LEARNING ECOSYSTEM

- What does a 'learning ecosystem' mean?
- The three key concepts: **keystones**, **ecotones** and **resilience**.
- You **map the learning ecosystem** you are active in (use the questions from the red boxes and fill in the worksheet at the back).

## What is a learning ecosystem and what does mine look like?

The idea of a learning ecosystem is inspired by biology: an ecosystem is a complex and dynamic system in which all living organisms (such as plants and animals) within a given area are constantly interacting with each other and with their environment.

Translated to learning and development, a learning ecosystem is an intentionally assembled network of people, organizations and places that jointly contribute to the growth of children around a specific topic, such as nature <sup>19,20</sup>.

Within such an organized learning ecosystem, the child's development is viewed from a broad perspective. The fundamental idea is that learning is not limited to school, but forms a rich web, rooted in the physical environment as well as in values, identity and culture. An organized learning ecosystem facilitates meaningful learning pathways: organized connections between learning experiences through which children can learn about a topic over a longer period of time, from different angles and at different levels <sup>21-23</sup>. For example, at school, in the park, at home and at an after-school club.

In practice, people work together to form a learning ecosystem, involving three different learning worlds: the formal learning world (schools), the non-formal learning world (organizations with an educational mission, such as clubs, museums, libraries and nature organizations) and the informal learning world (everyday learning at home, in the family, or in the local neighborhood) <sup>20,24</sup>. Whether it is organized at the level of a neighborhood, a city or an entire region: the goal is to connect these three learning worlds. Creating connections enriches the child's learning ecology by opening up learning pathways that can be explored, and offers space for talents to develop.

### Practical example

**Noura is a member of the nature club, an after-school club run by a nature museum in collaboration with a school and local nature organizations. She became a member after a classroom activity the museum held at her school. From her club leader she hears about a market with nature activities at the neighborhood center. At home she asks whether she and her brother Youssef can go.**

At the market, Noura enthusiastically greets the club leader and proudly shows her brother the animal pelts at the museum's stall. At the botanical garden's booth they receive an identification chart for plants that can be found growing between the paving stones. The social worker, who knows the family through the neighborhood center, tells them about a free excursion to the botanical garden, including bus transport and a guide.

When their mother comes to drop the children off during the holidays, the social worker encourages her to get on the bus herself. In the garden, Noura and Youssef work with an identification chart. The visit remains a topic of conversation at the kitchen table for a long time. The next day, Noura and Youssef go looking for plants in their street with the identification chart from the market. Noura comes up with the idea of lifting a few paving stones so she can plant something there. She brings this idea to the nature club, maybe they can create a little garden near the playground too.



Noura, from the example, has followed a learning pathway through different learning worlds: **formal** (school), **non-formal** (after-school club, trip to the botanical garden, nature activities market from nature organizations), **informal** (contact with social work, conversation at the kitchen table, looking for plants and taking out paving stones in the street).

## CONCEPTS & SUMMARIES

**A learning ecosystem connects people, organizations and places so that learning pathways emerge.**

### Learning pathway

Organized connections between learning experiences so that children can learn about a topic over a longer period, from different angles and at different levels.

### Formal learning world

School, with fixed learning goals.

### Non-formal learning world

Museums, nature organizations, etc. that have no school curriculum but do have educational goals.

### Informal learning world

Family / the community, in the neighborhood, at home, in the park.

### Learning opportunity

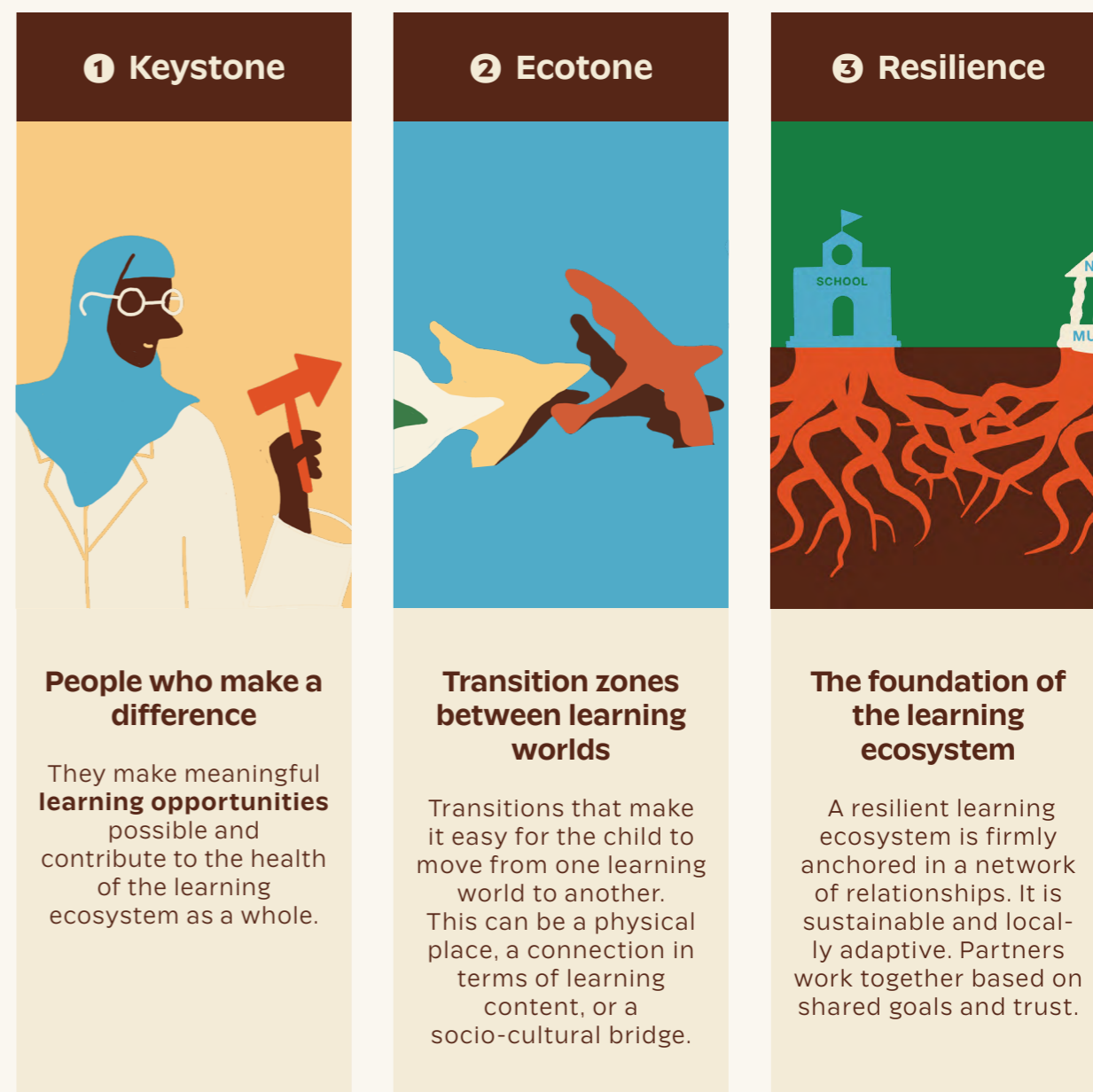
All possibilities for a child to learn and develop. This concerns broad development: physical, sensory, cognitive, social, emotional and creative.

## Questions

1. Which learning world does your organization belong to?
2. Which actors (people or organizations) do you collaborate with, and which learning world do they come from?

## The three key concepts of learning ecosystems

**A learning ecosystem approach helps to look at the entire web of children's learning opportunities, and to enrich and connect that whole. To do so, we highlight three important key concepts from learning ecosystem theory<sup>19</sup>, which we then apply:**



## 1 Keystones

Keystones are the people who make a difference in the learning ecosystem. They are: teachers, parents/carers, social workers, educational professionals, role models, neighborhood residents. Children and young people themselves can also fulfil this role. They have a great impact on children's learning opportunities and the health of the system as a whole.



### Practical example

During the holidays, a free bus can be taken from the neighborhood to the nature museum. Social work arranges promotion and recruitment in the neighborhood. Jordi tags along with a friend's family. After the museum visit, he enthusiastically tells his family about it. His grandmother then decides to apply for a museum pass for him. "Grandma looks after me every Wednesday, and then I get to choose where we go. With the pass I can go to the museum with grandma more often."

### Characteristics of keystones

- **Bring knowledge and inspiration.** They unlock knowledge and expertise that children would otherwise have difficulty accessing. They are role models for professions and future perspectives, and they connect to and share in the lived world of children.
- **Guide and support.** They refer children and families to new learning opportunities, inform them about financial possibilities, and focus on children's personal growth.
- **Design.** They develop programs and teaching materials that make meaningful learning pathways possible.
- **Build on relationships.** They invest in lasting bonds with children, families and partners. As a familiar face, they give families the confidence to discover new learning opportunities together with children.
- **Collaborate.** They are in contact with keystones from other learning worlds, and learn from and with each other. For example, about children's everyday lives.

### Questions

3. Who or what are keystones in the learning ecosystem you are part of? Do they come from different learning worlds of the child?
4. Do you also share your insights about a child's lived world with your partners? This ensures that the whole system learns from what you see.

## 2 Ecotone

Ecotones are transitional zones where different learning worlds meet. They ensure that a child does not just follow separate activities, but can follow a coherent learning pathway. That is important, because many children experience a gap between learning worlds <sup>25</sup>. Ecotones reduce that gap.

### Practical example

Zayn has a guest lesson from the nature museum about plants. In the playground, the children look for plants and identify them using an identification chart. At home, Zayn sows garden cress. He says: "At first, I thought: what do I care about nature? But now I think: nature is actually important." After the lesson, Zayn makes his own nature trail about plants in his neighborhood. He now notices them in the playground. At home, he tells his parents about the importance of plants. He says his parents now also have more respect for nature: "Before, they sometimes dropped paper bags in the grass, and now they don't do that anymore."

Ecotones can take three forms: **physical places** where learning worlds come together (such as a school playground that borders a library), **content connections** (activities in different places that align with each other), or **socio-cultural bridges** (content/places where children see and recognize their own language, culture or background).



### Characteristics of ecotones

- **Make movement between learning worlds natural.** Children know the way, the content follows logically from one place to another, and children feel at home in various places.
- **Increase relevance.** Learning becomes meaningful when it takes place in the real world, connected to children's worlds: in nature, with real objects, in practice.
- **Broaden horizons.** By experiencing that new places are also for them, children can develop new interests and future perspectives. When you also give them a platform to share their expertise, their self-confidence grows, and with it, their own identity.

### Questions

5. Where does the learning world in which you/your organization operates meet other learning worlds?
6. Are those physical places, content connections or socio-cultural bridges? How do these connections help children to follow learning pathways?

### 3 Resilience

Resilience is the foundation of the learning ecosystem. It is about the stability and sustainability of the system. It is about a network that is strong and flexible enough to stay in place when a subsidy ends, or someone leaves. Partners share a common vision, feel responsible for the whole, and speak the same language. A resilient system also dares to critically assess whether collaborations are still in the interest of the goals and the target group.

#### Practical example

In the neighborhood, school boards, nature organizations, museums, welfare organizations, and the municipality are working together on a learning ecosystem focused on nature. Each organization contributes from their own role: schools, museums and nature organizations develop an aligned learning program on diverse levels with activities inside and outside school; welfare organizations involve families and help with communication; and the municipality provides funding and green spaces in the neighborhood. Together, they carry and foster the learning ecosystem.



#### Characteristics of resilience

- **Makes the system sustainable and locally adaptive.** There is attention to the local context: the opportunities, partners and needs that exist there. The system adapts without losing direction.
- **Requires investment in collaborations.** Partners build relationships and communicate effectively, share goals, divide responsibilities, and value each other's contributions. Trust and a long-term approach are indispensable.

#### Questions

7. With whom and how have goals and responsibilities been formulated for the learning ecosystem, and how are they secured?
8. With whom or which organization would you actually like to have better contact?

## Step 2

# SOCIALLY JUST LEARNING ECOSYSTEMS

The learning ecosystem approach is often presented to advance social justice in learning and development. However, this is not a given. We often see that children, who already know how to find their way, are the ones reached, while **children in vulnerable positions** lack high-quality options, experience more barriers, do not recognize themselves in what is on offer, or do not feel welcome in learning environments.

That is precisely why it is important to shape learning ecosystems not only for, but with children and their environment. Learning ecosystems can only contribute to more just learning and development opportunities when children's perspectives and experiences are genuinely considered. Learning ecosystems can promote more just opportunities in learning and development better when it is deliberately guided by social justice values.

## What is social justice and how does it relate to my learning ecosystem?

Social justice concerns the pursuit of a fair distribution of opportunities, prosperity and rights in society. You can look at this through two different lenses <sup>26,27</sup>:

**LENS 1 Equality of access and participation:** focuses on the fair distribution of resources and access across social groups. It is about removing barriers so that specific groups can participate. Not everyone gets the same, but every child gets what it needs. In this way, learning opportunities are more fairly distributed.

**LENS 2 Equity:** focuses on recognition and reciprocal respect. It is about recognizing and valuing what every child brings with them in terms of language, culture, knowledge and experience. Equity is about inclusion and about sharing power in decisions.

**Only when we work from both lenses, we can truly change the system.**

#### CONCEPTS & SUMMARIES

**A learning ecosystem approach can promote just opportunities in learning and development better when it is deliberately guided by social justice values, focusing on both equality of access and participation, and equity.**

## CONCEPTS & SUMMARIES

### Social justice

Concerns the pursuit of a fair distribution of opportunities, prosperity and rights in society. You can look at this through the lenses of equality and equity.

### Children in vulnerable positions

Children who structurally receive fewer opportunities to learn and develop due to inequalities in societal systems.

### Equality of access and participation

Concerning the fair distribution of resources and access across groups. It means removing barriers so that specific groups can participate. Not everyone gets the same, but children get what they need, so that learning opportunities are distributed more fairly.



## Equality of access and participation in learning ecosystems

### Practical example

Many families in the neighborhood live on a low income. The learning ecosystem focuses on offering accessible activities in the neighborhood in nearby and familiar places, free of charge. When excursions to places outside the neighborhood are organized, free transport is provided. Also, a free weekly after-school nature club is offered that children can join. At school, the teachers get children excited about this club and they collaborate with the club leader to ensure that classroom activities and club activities complement one another.

Equality is about children in vulnerable positions being able to participate. A needs-based approach is central: you look at what a child needs and adapt your approach accordingly. This approach requires actively seeking out your chosen target group. You then examine your own range of activities, communication, and reach, and ask yourself: "Does this suit the people I want to reach?". In this way, you can discover what barriers exist (such as money, transport, or information) and think of ways to remove them.

Equality focuses on helping children to participate in the system. For example, it is about:

- **Making quality accessible:** you bring high-quality activities to the target group (free, nearby and for long-term). You deploy role models who bring subject knowledge.
- **Brokering:** you help children navigating learning pathways by referring to them, or by visiting places that are unknown to the children together with them.
- **Connecting content:** you create connections between formal and non-formal learning worlds, so that children can experience the value of what they learn in the real world.



### Questions

9. Which children do you want to reach, and what barriers might they currently experience (money, transport, information)?
10. How can those be removed so that access to learning opportunities is increased?
11. Who has a role in that?

## Equity in learning ecosystems

### Practical example

A school class visits the local nature museum. Each child chooses an object they are curious about and delves deeper into it together with museum experts and, in the following weeks, at school. During a second visit, the roles are reversed: the children stand next to “their” object and explain what they have learned to parents, carers, and passing visitors. Without exception, the children do so with pride and enthusiasm, impressing their audience.

Equity is about recognizing and valuing the unique identity, culture and background of every child. Assets-based thinking is central; you do not look at what a child is lacking, but at what it already brings with them in terms of knowledge, language and experience. This requires a shift in perspective: Not the child is falling short, but the system.

Equity calls for a **culturally responsive approach**, in which home languages, knowledge and talents of children are actively used as learning resources<sup>28,29</sup>. You have to be genuinely curious about what they bring from their own neighborhood, background and network, and give children the space to contribute their own ideas and views.

Equity also requires **shared decision-making**: you cannot design the learning ecosystem solely for the target group, but you will have to do this with children and their community. This gives them ownership of possible learning pathways.

Equity focuses on adapting the system so that every child recognizes themselves, feels valued, and feels at home. For example, it is about:

- **Deploying recognizable role models:** you involve role models who not only bring expertise but also represent the identity of the target group (such as shared culture, language or life experience).
- **Connecting content to the everyday world:** you create connections with the informal world, for example by using children’s knowledge or by aligning activities cultural celebrations or neighborhood events.
- **Sharing decision-making power:** you involve children, families or the community as equal partners; fostering co-creation in formulating goals, designing activities or shaping learning pathways.

### Questions

12. Do you talk within the learning ecosystem about the meaning of equity, inclusion, prejudice, etc.?
13. How is equity, or professionalization regarding inclusion, secured in your learning ecosystem?
14. Which types of knowledge are valued?

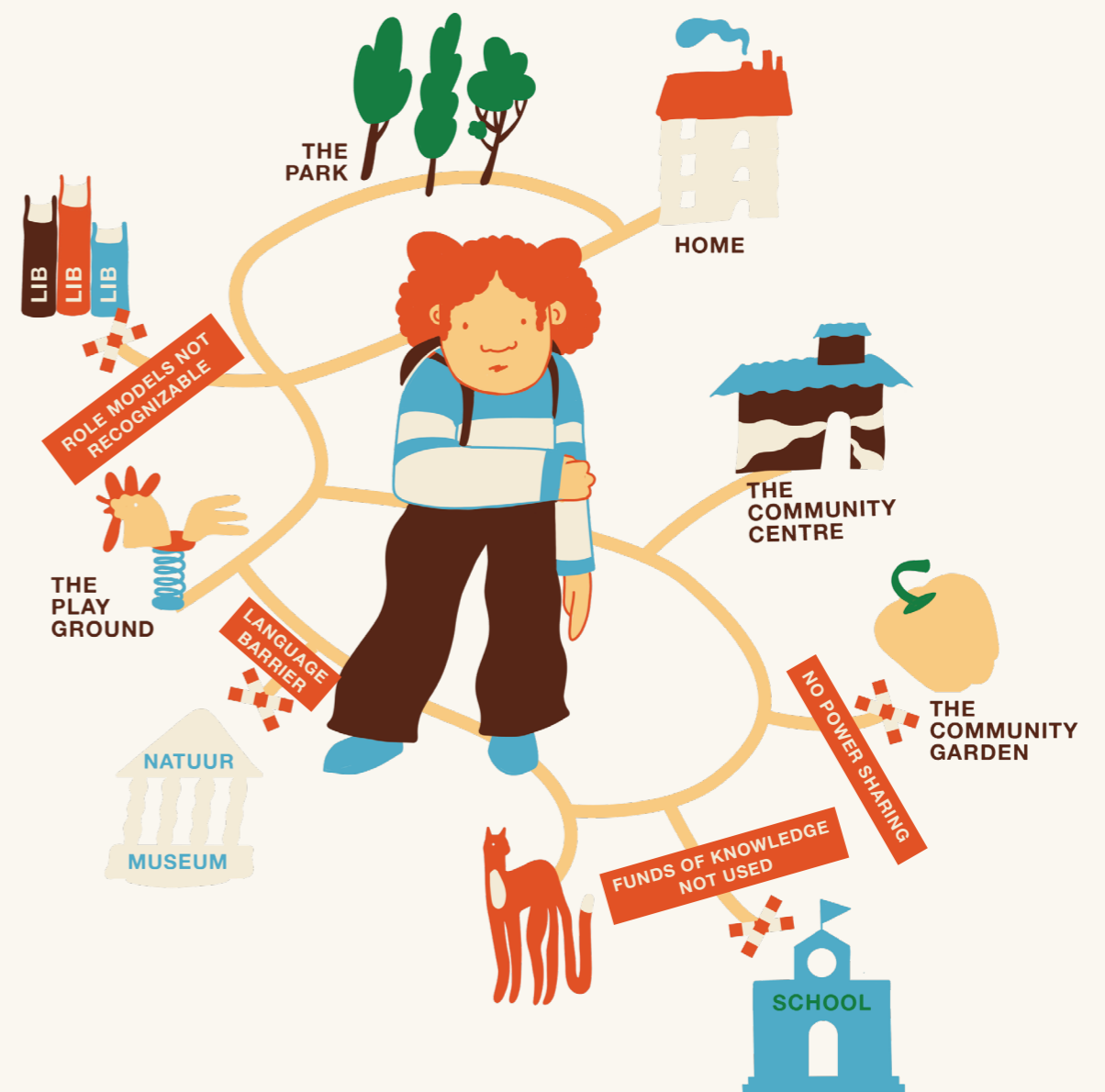
### CONCEPTS & SUMMARIES

#### Equity

Concerning recognizing, respecting and valuing differences and equal worth. This means valuing the diversity and contributions of children and their communities, and sharing decision making over how the learning ecosystem is shaped.

#### Cultural responsiveness

Actively involving and valuing the cultural backgrounds, talents and experiences of children and their communities (funds of knowledge).



## Ideas on nature and equality



Bring nature closer, ensuring that natural spaces and nature experiences are free and accessible within the local neighborhood.

Deploy role models who: pass on knowledge of nature, convey appreciation for nature, and guide children towards nature and science organizations in the neighborhood.

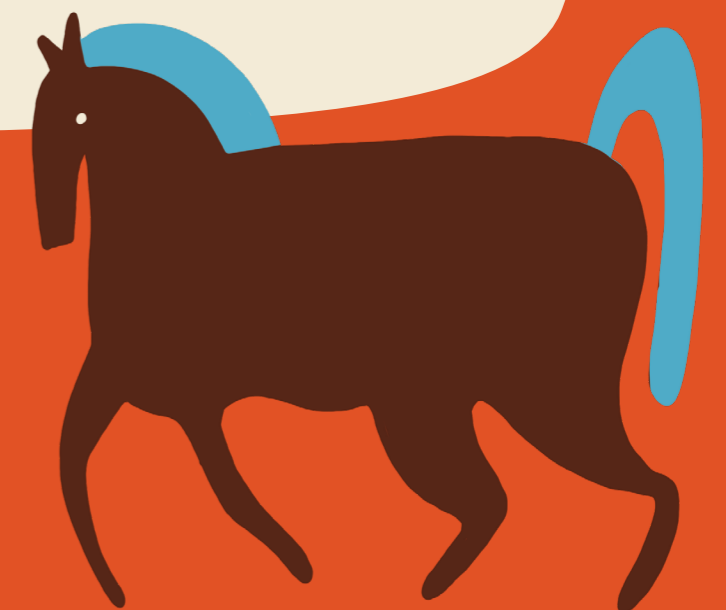
Connect outside and inside. Align out-of-school nature experiences with the school curriculum, so that children see the connection between what they learn and what they encounter outside..

## Ideas on nature and equity

Broaden your view, valuing “home-nature language”, knowledge of nature from other countries, and urban nature such as pets or neighborhood green spaces.

Pay attention to value judgements about nature hobbies (walking versus fishing), nature behaviors (quiet observing versus expressive collecting), and sustainable practices (shopping at an eco-store versus consuming less / reusing / repairing).

Use recognizable role models who connect nature to children’s everyday lives and experiences, cultures, languages.



# CHILDREN'S VOICES

In **steps 1 and 2**, you mapped your learning ecosystem. But whether the ecosystem really works is most visible in children's experiences. Their voice is an important "health indicator" of the learning ecosystem.

Do children follow learning pathways across different learning worlds? Do they feel at home in different places? Are they able to deepen their learning over time? You can only answer those questions by taking children's perspectives seriously.

If you want to explore this, it is important to first choose a focus: What do you most want to learn from the children? What is the best way to find that out? Which questions go with that?

## Here are some ways to explore this with children:

- Use a short questionnaire for a quick general picture of a larger group of children. Keep the number of questions limited and make sure they are easy to understand.

Use questions like:

'Did you try something new after activity ...?'

'Did you tell someone at home about ...? Would you like to go back to ...?'

- Have children keep a **(nature) diary**: what have they discovered, where, how, with whom, what are they curious about and how do they want to explore this further?
- **Interview** children, preferably within a week after an activity. Ask, for example, how they've experienced activities and places, whether they have visited places or done any related activities outside the organized moments, whether they've told someone at home about their experiences, and whether they are curious to learn more. Ask further questions to find out why or why not.
- Do a **neighborhood walk** together with a child and talk along the way about memories and experiences. Think in advance about who determines the route and what you want to talk about.

For example:

'Show me what nature you have in your neighborhood.'

Ask questions such as:

'What do you like to do here?'

'How do you feel when you are here?'

'What are you curious about?'

You can also deliberately walk past places where organized activities have taken place and ask:

'Do you remember that ... was here, how did you find that, why, have you done that again since, where, with whom?'

- Have children **take photos**, for example during the walk. Think in advance about the assignment you give them, for example: take a photo of something in nature that you would like to find out more about. Analyze the images together:

'What do we see and what do you already know about this?'

'how can you investigate this further?'

- Have children **make drawings** and talk about them. Have children draw, for example, what they have experienced in or with nature, or which natural places are important to them. Talk about it by asking questions like:

'What do I see here?', 'What does this mean?' and 'Did you experience this yourself?'

'Do you do this often?'

- **Involve parents and carers**: they may have participated in activities too. "How have they heard about the activities?"; "Did they feel welcome?" They also see how children talk about activities at home and whether experiences carry over into daily life.

Based on this, you can determine how to improve the learning ecosystem. Do you see, for example: where learning pathways do or do not go, why learning pathways are not followed further, which places and people children involve themselves with, etc.? At the same time, you have a wealth of information you can use to better align activities with children's worlds and interests.

# A MODEL FOR SOCIALLY JUST LEARNING ECOSYSTEMS

The model combines the three key concepts with the two lenses of social justice <sup>30</sup>. In **step 3** you will fill in the model on the worksheet for the learning ecosystem you are part of.

## How to read the model?

The model is divided into three parts, one for each key concept:

**Blue:** Keystones, the people in the learning ecosystem

**Red:** Ecotones, the transitions between learning worlds

**Brown:** Resilience, the organization of the learning ecosystem

The inner and outer parts of the petals represent the **two lenses of social justice**:

**Inner part of the petal:** equality of access and participation

**Outer part of the petal:** equity

For each key concept, characteristics are described, seen from both lenses. These characteristics are derived from our research.

**Note:** some characteristics require more than an adjustment to your way of working. For example, deploying role models who represent the target group sometimes requires a deliberate choice in HR policy. A shared cultural or ethnic identity cannot be developed through training alone.

**Do you want to know more about policy choices that contribute to socially just learning ecosystems?** See [www.hsleiden.nl/onderzoeken/resultaat/kansrijk-om-de-hoek](http://www.hsleiden.nl/onderzoeken/resultaat/kansrijk-om-de-hoek)



Step 3

# ANALYZE YOUR LEARNING ECOSYSTEM

## Table

Use the **table** below and the **blank flower model** on **page 36**. In the table, you can see different characteristics for each key concept. Each characteristic is described from an equality perspective (left column) and an equity perspective (right column). The number of characteristics in the table matches the number of sections in the blank flower model.

- For each key concept, look at the characteristics in the table. Decide for each characteristic whether it applies to your situation: only in the left column, only in the right column, in both columns, or not at all.
- Put a cross next to the characteristics that apply.
- For every characteristic that applies, color in one section in the blank flower model on the worksheet.
- Have you gone through all the characteristics? Look at the colored-in model to determine how socially just your learning ecosystem currently is and where there is still room for improvement.

Focused on **equality of access and participation**: We...

Focused on **equity**: We...

Keystones

- A1 Offer role models who represent a professional field or occupation.
- A2 Provide knowledge and support the development of skills that the target group would otherwise have difficulty accessing.
- A3 Offer practical or material support (such as learning materials, information, financial support).
- A4 Pay attention to follow-up steps and refer children to new learning experiences.
- A5 Identify children's needs within the group and communicate about this to professionals from other relevant organizations.

Keystones

- E1 Offer role models who represent the target group in various shared identities (such as shared culture, language or life experience, etc.).
- E2 Value and make use of the knowledge and talents children bring, and are culturally responsive. We look for different perspectives on topics and incorporate them. We explicitly invite children to share their home languages, cultural knowledge and experiences, and we use these as learning resources.
- E3 Provide a safe, trusted environment, build trusting relationships with children. We strengthen children's self-image, self-confidence and agency.
- E4 Develop diverse programs, based on children's interests and personal relevance.
- E5 Professionalize in the area of inclusion / prejudice / inequality of opportunity / social justice. We learn from people who show us different/new perspectives.

Ecotones

- A6 Ensure good content alignment between school activities and out-of-school learning environments (connections between formal and non-formal learning world).
- A7 Create activities where children can acquire and apply school knowledge and skills in diverse, real, meaningful places (aimed at increasing the relevance of formal learning goals).
- A8 Offer children experiences that help them get to know new courses of study, professions and worlds that would otherwise be less accessible to them (broadening horizons).

Ecotones

- E6 Ensure content alignment with children's everyday worlds, such as the home environment, the neighborhood, and nature (connections between formal, non-formal and informal learning world).
- E7 Include places from children's everyday worlds (the neighborhood, the park, home) in the learning ecosystem and value the learning opportunities in these places (aimed at increasing personal relevance).
- E8 Create opportunities in the long term for children to become experts in a particular area and to share and use this expertise in different learning worlds (strengthening agency).

Resilience

- A9 Ensure sustainable collaborations with shared goals and responsibilities, and mutual trust between partners.
- A10 Direct our collaborations towards provision for the target group, based on the quality, knowledge and expertise we can offer.
- A11 Collaborate with partners who can help reach the target group.

Resilience

- E9 Work explicitly with our partners on social justice.
- E10 Involve children, families, or representatives of the community as equal partners. There is sustainable collaboration and co-creation with the target group in the areas of formulating goals, designing activities or shaping learning pathways.
- E11 Collaborate with local partners who represent the target group so that the learning ecosystem is locally and culturally embedded.



### Exploration

Learning ecosystem

- 1.
- 2.

Keystones

- 3.
- 4.

Ecotones

- 5.
- 6.

Resilience

- 7.
- 8.

Equality

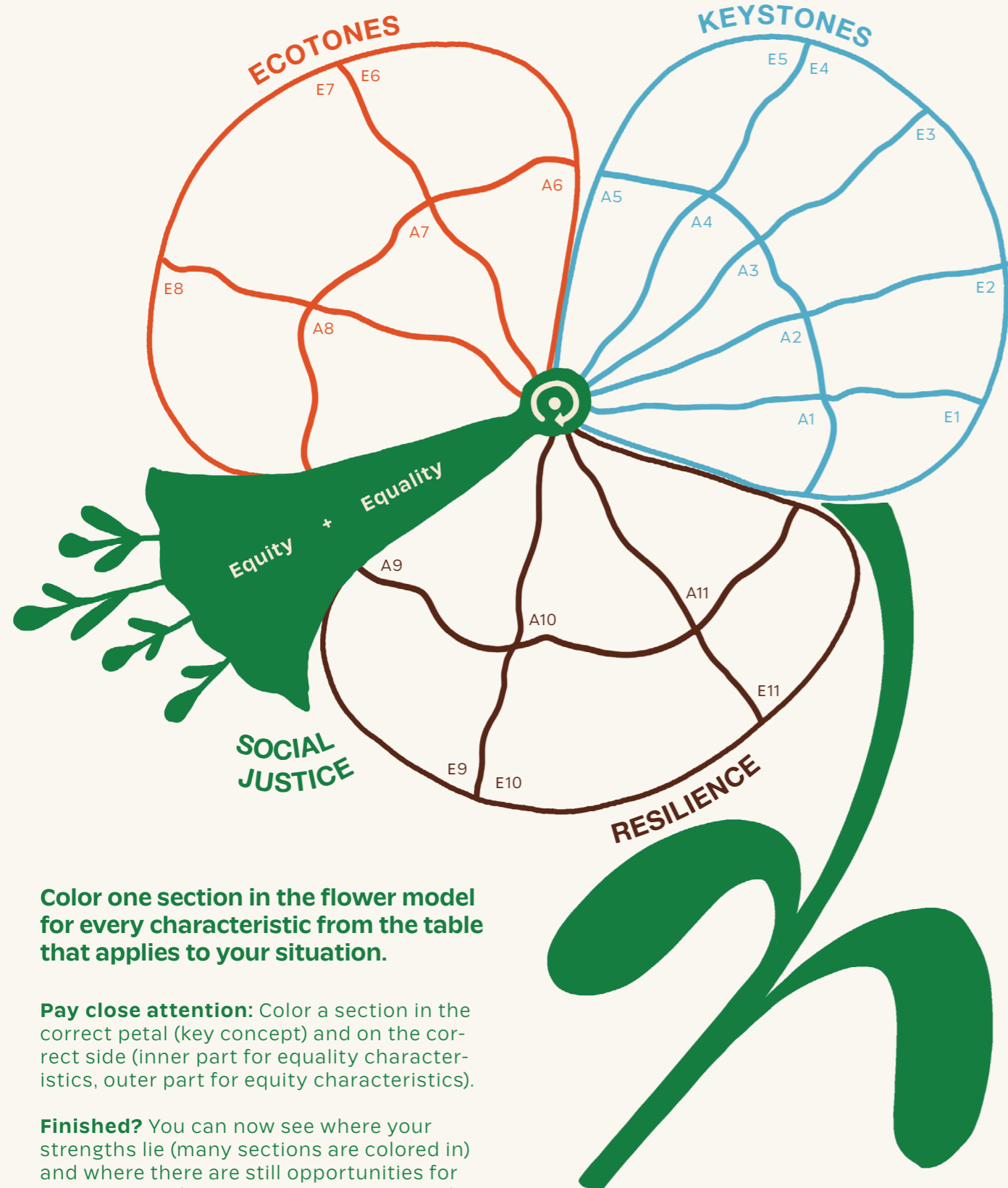
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.

Equity

- 12.
- 13.
- 14.



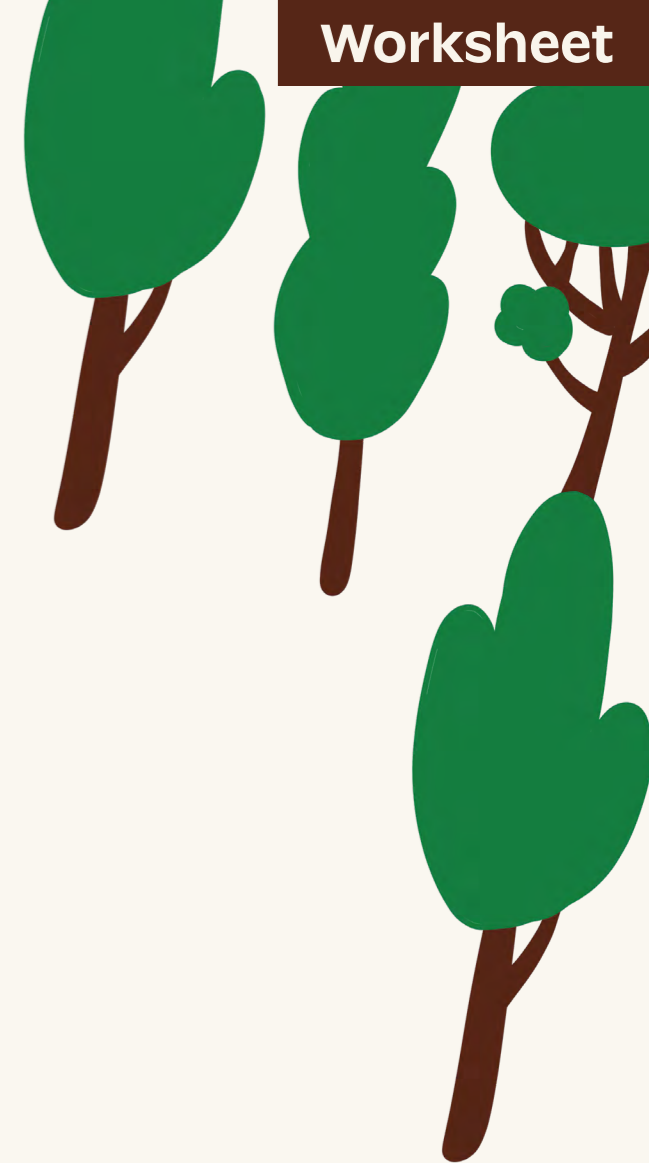
Flower model for learning ecosystems



Color one section in the flower model for every characteristic from the table that applies to your situation.

**Pay close attention:** Color a section in the correct petal (key concept) and on the correct side (inner part for equality characteristics, outer part for equity characteristics).

**Finished?** You can now see where your strengths lie (many sections are colored in) and where there are still opportunities for development (few sections are colored in). You can also see whether you are mainly strong in promoting **equality** (inner sections), in promoting **equity** (outer sections), or in both.



Step 4

# DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN

Look at the extent to which the **flower model** on **page 36** has been colored in and note your insights in the table below. Specifically, pay attention to the sections that are still empty:

- What can you or your organization do to make progress here?  
**Decide where to start (what has priority and is feasible) and work this out:**  
 Who or what do you need, how will you involve them, what concrete intermediate steps are needed, and within what timeframe is it realistic and desirable to realize this?
- **Start a conversation with colleagues or partners:** Do they recognize the priorities you have chosen? Which actions do you want to take on together? How will you divide roles and responsibilities?
- Have you completed the model both for yourself and for your organization?  
**Compare the results:** where do you see similarities and differences? Which tension or opportunity calls for action?

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Possible steps
Keystones			
Ecotones			
Resilience			

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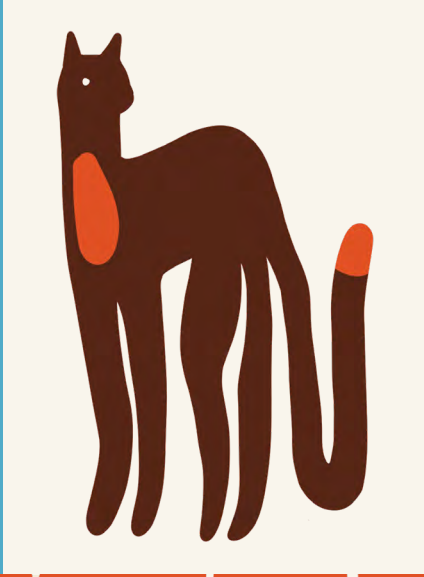
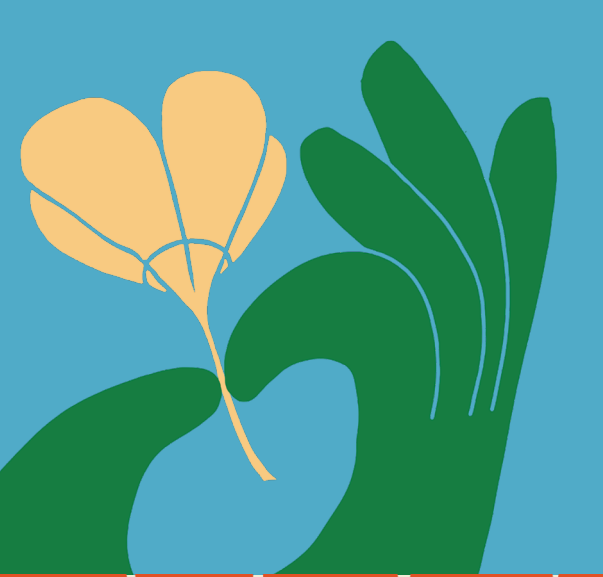
## Read more?

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**Learning opportunities for children are unevenly distributed. This calls for an approach that powerfully connects the different learning worlds they move through.**

This workbook helps professionals work with learning ecosystems: networks of people, organizations and places that link learning across home, school, neighborhood and nature, with social justice as their guiding compass.

Drawing on theory, research, real-life examples and practical assignments, you work step by step towards an action plan for a more socially just learning ecosystem. For every professional who wants to co-create learning pathways with children, right around the corner.

