

HOSTING A COURSE

The following are questions to answer when you are considering hosting a course.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

- Why do you want to do this course?
- What outcomes do you want to have from this course?
- If applicable, how does this fit in with your long-term planning/vision? How does this help you get there?
- Who are the participants?
- Is this a residential course? [i.e. room and food included]
- How many days might it be?
- Where is it happening, the Venue?
- In English or through translation?
- If translation, who is translating?
- How will you finance this course?

Once you have decided on what type of course you want focus on the venue and finances. Who the participants are will have an influence on both of these and is the other big piece.

BASICS

Date: The sooner this is set the better for both of us.

Number of Days: Basically depends upon what outcomes you want and the participants life and needs. Some times the time of year or season influences this. Definitely best to start out with a shorter course if this is the first time, or thereabouts, that you are hosting one.

Class size: For longer courses maximum 17 or 23 (one instructor or, two or more) For short courses, depending on the actual number of days and number of instructors this number can be increased

Participants: Up to you. Farmers, villagers, professional, NGO/Non-profit workers, Bureaucrats, and foreigners. With a mix some of these can help pay for some of those.

Venue: A lot of variables influence this choice. Who the participants are, residential course or not, venue infrastructure and state of repair, cost of venue, venue location, the neighborhood and what's in it.

Cost of Hosting: Will vary greatly depending on course and the decisions we make regarding all aspects of the course. If residential, than housing and food will be the greatest expense. Classroom supplies are kept minimal and we can do a lot on very little money in this regard. Depending on projects and tools available, Hands-on projects can have some expenses, though generally quite affordable.

Our payment: We work on a sliding scale. Our charge will depend on who you are and who the participants are. Baseline will be our travel, room and food expenses. We will

do our best to make hosting a course affordable and will be happy to discuss ways that you can finance a course

VENUE NEEDFULS, The Wish List

- Classroom. What this is depends on weather. Outside fine if weather is fine. It is helpful to have a place to project photos during the day.
- Electricity. Much better if we have, but can do without if I have place to recharge computer and projector at night.
- Place to do hands-on projects. Refer to hands-on document for ideas of needfuls for this.
- Toilet(s). Clean ones!
- Are there venue rules or regulations that will affect this course?

RESIDENTIAL OR NOT

A residential course has the benefit of a captive audience. There are not the distractions of home and there is not the need to do work. It allows more time for the participants to share their stories and knowledge. Likewise there are many more opportunities for informal discussions of course content, thus creating a deeper learning experience. Usually this leads to deeper relationships between people who meet at the course, thus strengthening any networks that form during the course.

The biggest challenge of a residential course is the significant increase course costs and the work necessary to create a successful one.

A non-residential course usually means one hosted in the village where the farmers live, or live around. This allows the instructors to see specific details of what the farmers are currently doing; what crops they plant, the different agricultural and living techniques and strategies they use, specific environmental and cultural/social conditions, as well as other subtle aspects of place and people. This then allows the instructor to be much more culturally and environmentally specific with the teachings, as well as noting and encouraging appropriate practices already present with specific suggestions on how to further benefit from or deepen these practices. There is also the added benefit of greatly reducing the course costs, and perhaps, the organizing work. The challenge of a non-residential course is that the farmers usually have to do most or all of their work early in the morning prior to class. This means later class starts each day, as well as earlier departures in the afternoon. It is very easy for participants not to show up on time or even at all. The drop out rate is higher in these courses, while nonexistent in the residential course. Overall this means less time each day for class and the near impossibility to do evening class time.

LIAISON

During the course there will need to be a designated person who will act as a liaison between the instructors and the venue. This is a critical part of having a successful course. The liaison will either need to know the venue well and be able to make decisions on its behalf, or be able to access such a person on a moments notice. There

will always be last minute decisions and changes in the course that will need timely resolutions for the smooth running of the course. The liaison will also be responsible for seeing that all prep and tools are ready for all hands-on projects. For a design certification course these responsibilities most often do not allow the liaison to be in the course with the intent of receiving certification, as they will be out of class too often. And with good planning it could happen. However it is, they are welcome and encouraged to be in class and involved as much as they are able to be.

LOGISTICS

Whoever is hosting is the one who usually works with all the logistics or at least most of them. All venue aspects; food, rooms, facilities, and any participant needs. If food is separate from venue, not an unusual thing, then it is more work and, perhaps, more time. Some of the course needs, such as material purchases or acquisitions, venue preparation, equipment and tool needs, hands-on preparations, are usually done by the host. There are often arrangements regarding participant's arrival and departure, as well as being around to assist with these processes. Any local relations or necessities. Registration and bookkeeping. You may or may not be involved in handling and/or ticketing the instructor's travel. You might have to arrange and/or book field trip(s) needs; travel, food, site visit relations. Advertising is usually a shared endeavor with the instructors. And you'll be working with the instructor(s) to create the course that best fulfills your goals.