



URBAN RECIPES

826 Valencia

In San Francisco in 2002, author Dave Eggers and educator Nínive Calegari began an initiative to support disengaged and underprivileged kids to gain a passion for writing and learning.

At the 826 Valencia centre they work with students from ages 6 to 18 to improve their writing skills. Writers and tutors dedicate their time at the centre, either with drop-in tutoring for individuals who need help with homework, or in-house field trips and workshops for entire classes.

When the initiative started it was hard to attract kids to attend after school tutoring and since the centre was situated in an old store they decided to make it more fun. They opened up a Pirate Accessory Store where you could buy wooden legs, eye patches, planks and much more. In the back the tutoring took place. This initiative has since spread to other cities like Los Angeles, Seattle, Boston and New York where for instance they have opened a Super Hero Store.

The centers have grown into spaces where kids can go to learn to enjoy writing and get help with their homework. Through a healthy amount of volunteer power, students get the one-on-one attention they need, which is often lacking in normal public schools. Currently, the centers provide a variety of free programs including specialized workshops, in-school assistance, extensive student publishing, and drop-in tutoring.

826 Valencia believes that writing skills are fundamental to success and that getting one-on-one time makes a big difference in the student's approach, which has been seen in the higher grades the kids have gotten by going to the centers.

Ingredients:

- Idealism and passion for social transformation
- A space for the tutoring
- Contact to local schools and teachers
- Students
- Volunteers
- Skilled and dedicated writers and tutors within the field of writing
- Contact to publishers
- Online space for sharing and creation
- Trend spotting and ideation
- Local partners wanting to contribute for free

Steps:

1. Find a community that wants help on improving children's writing skills.
2. Decide whether you will sell something in the centre, if you would try to get government funding, or do both.
3. Find a good central location for the centre.
4. Gather your network of writers, designers, volunteers and creative people to work from your centre.
5. Get in contact with your local schools and teachers and let them guide you and lead the way in which way to help the students.
6. Invite students and let the concept grow.

Variations:

If the cultural setting is very different from the one in this example, you should look into different cultural aspects such as resources (schools, governmental, volunteers), shape and form your centre according to that.

Contact info:

Website: www.826valencia.org



#01
Organizations
826 Valencia
Type:
Organization

Category:
Education
Organization

Food Not Bombs

Food Not Bombs shares free vegan and vegetarian meals every week with the hungry in over 1,000 cities around the world to protest war, poverty and the environment crisis. Each group recovers food that would otherwise be thrown out and makes fresh hot vegan and vegetarian meals that are served outside in public spaces to anyone without restriction.

It was founded in 1980 in Massachusetts, U.S.A by a group of anti-nuclear activists. It is one of the fastest growing movements and is gaining momentum throughout the world. There are hundreds of autonomous chapters sharing free vegetarian food with hungry people and protesting war and poverty. The movement is active throughout the Americas, Europe, Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Australia. Food Not Bombs is often the first to provide food and supplies to the survivors of disasters. During the first three days after the 1989 Earthquake, Food Not Bombs was the only organization in San Francisco providing hot meals to the survivors.

Food Not Bombs was also the first to provide hot meals to the rescue workers responding to September 11th World Trade Center attacks and one of the only organizations sharing daily meals in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. The volunteers organized a national collection program and delivered bus and truckloads of food and supplies to the gulf region.

Food Not Bombs is an all-volunteer organization dedicated to non-violent social change. It has no formal leaders and strives to include everyone in its decision making process.

www.foodnotbombs.net/story.html

Ingredients:

- A group of hungry people in your local area
- A sufficient amount of shops that throw away their outdated products and let you take them.
- 2 big pots
- 1 cooking stove
- A couple of co-chefs
- Spice with salt, pepper and love

Steps:

1. Visit www.foodnotbombs.net create a profile, print flyers, and get advice.
2. Build or find a mobile kitchen.
3. Go dumpster diving for vegetables or make a deals with local grocery-stores and bakeries to get the food, which they would otherwise have thrown out or find local sponsors of goods and foods (Food Not Bombs does not have any official funding through sponsors because the organization does not want to be driven by commercial interests)
4. Find yourself a group of happy chefs.
5. Find hungry people
6. Cook
7. Serve
8. Have fun

Variations:

Many chapters also organize Bikes Not Bombs programs collecting and repairing used bicycles to provide to people in low-income communities.



#02
Organizations
Food Not Bombs
Type:
Organization

Category:
Care
Food
Organization

Junior Social Professionals

The Junior Social Professional solve the need for human resources in NGO's and gives students the opportunity to put their education into practice. The initiative recruits university students for internships with NGO's and help the NGO's get qualified assistance.

The Junior Social Professionals is a talent pool, which already assist NGOs with their strategic and operational issues. With mentoring help from experts and professionals, the university students will learn the necessary skills to support the quality of their work, thus improving the NGOs' performance and expansion.

One of the biggest challenges for an NGO is attracting the right volunteers and staff with the necessary skills in order to help it grow. A group of students in Shanghai felt this need when they worked with a series of grass roots organizations. Since then, they have found an innovative and sustainable solution to this issue while simultaneously providing the opportunity for university students to apply their skills in a real world setting and gain valuable experience.

The founder of this initiative is Jason Zhu, started in 2010, Shanghai, China.

Ingredients:

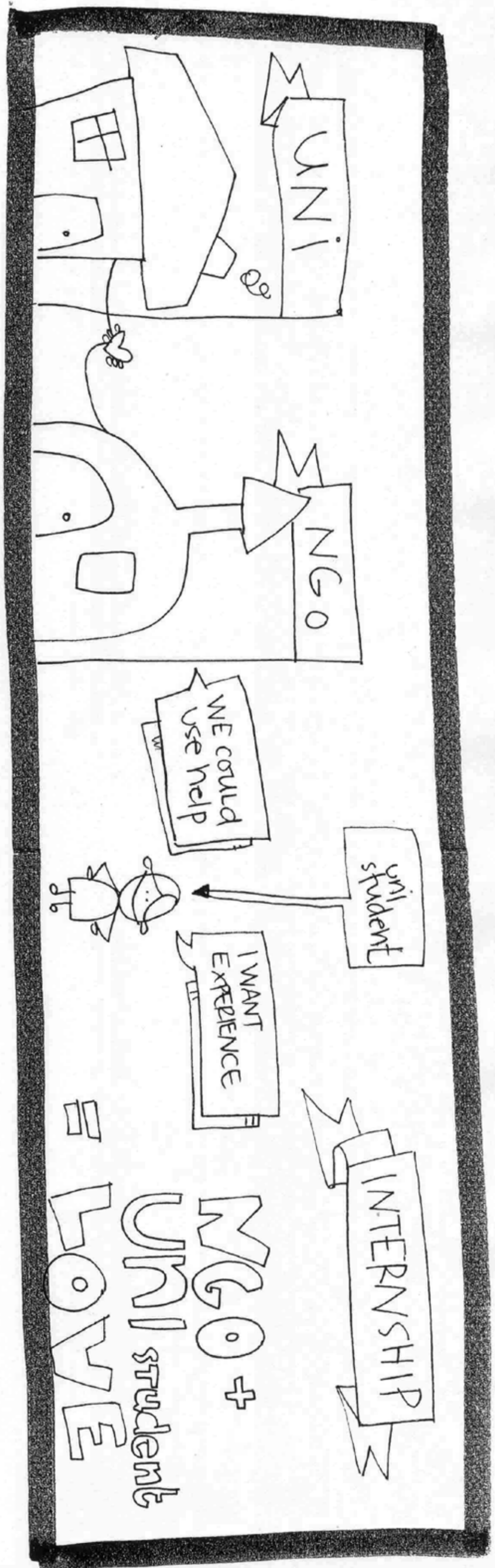
- 1 Motivated Business Student
- 1 NGO in need of Human Resource assistance
- 1 University, which values real world experience for its students
- A pool of experts and professionals willing to mentor

Steps:

1. Promote the program actively on the campus in order to find recruits.
2. Let the experienced Junior Social Professionals or the NGO hold interviews for the new recruits.
3. Collect experts and professionals
3. Let the experts within the various fields give mentoring help to the new recruits while they are working as interns at the NGO's.

Variations:

Think about the educational culture where you live and how this program can be applied in your cultural context. It might be a good idea to map out the key challenges in setting up a program like this to help you understand your path to success.



#03
Organizations
Junior Social Professionals
Type:
Organization

Category:
NGO
Organization
Education

The Oasis Game

The Oasis Game is about community development and helping people create a better community both physically and mentally. It is about engaging people by asking them what they need, instead of assuming and guessing what we think they want. In that process people will grow and so will the community.

The Oasis Game originally started by a group of architect students in Brazil, and has in the past 10 years successfully given communities small parks, gardens, culture centers, playgrounds, marketplaces, football grounds, meeting spots and much more. The people in the communities have built these things with no outside resources except for the help from volunteers. And it is all done in one week.

The Oasis game has been played in South America and lately in China and India and soon Europe.

The founders of this initiative are Edgard Gouveia Junior and Rodrigo Rubido Alonso, started in 1995, Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Ingredients:

- A community
- A week to do the Oasis Game
- Friends and volunteers who can help
- An online platform like www.ning.com

Steps:

The Oasis Game consists of 6 steps, also called disciplines, which will support you in creating the oasis.

1. The Appreciative gaze: First you go into the community with an appreciative gaze. That means that you look for beautiful things. It can be a small garden, an interesting building, a homemade playground, a weekly gathering of people, sports, art or whatever you find interesting. Talk and walk with the people in the community and have them show you around.
2. Relationships: Now you look for the person behind the beauty. Who are the initiators and characters that you would like to build a relationship with? Try to get connected to the people in the community and have them understand that you are interested in them.
3. Dream: Once you established relationships it is time to ask what the community needs. Let people dream and come up with as many ideas as possible with them.
4. Design: After dreaming it is time to get the ideas out of people's heads. Have them build models, draw or write them down and share them with everyone. It is important that everyone builds on others so you have one big plan and the design in the end.
5. Miracle: This is the step where you make the dreams and the design come to life. Hopefully you have connected to a lot of people in the community and gotten volunteers to help build what you have settled on.
6. Celebration: When the oasis is built then celebrate and reflect about the great work you have done and how the community have come together.

Variations:

Cultural differences might force slightly different approaches to the game so spend time on understanding the culture you are in to be able to empower the people to do it themselves when you leave.

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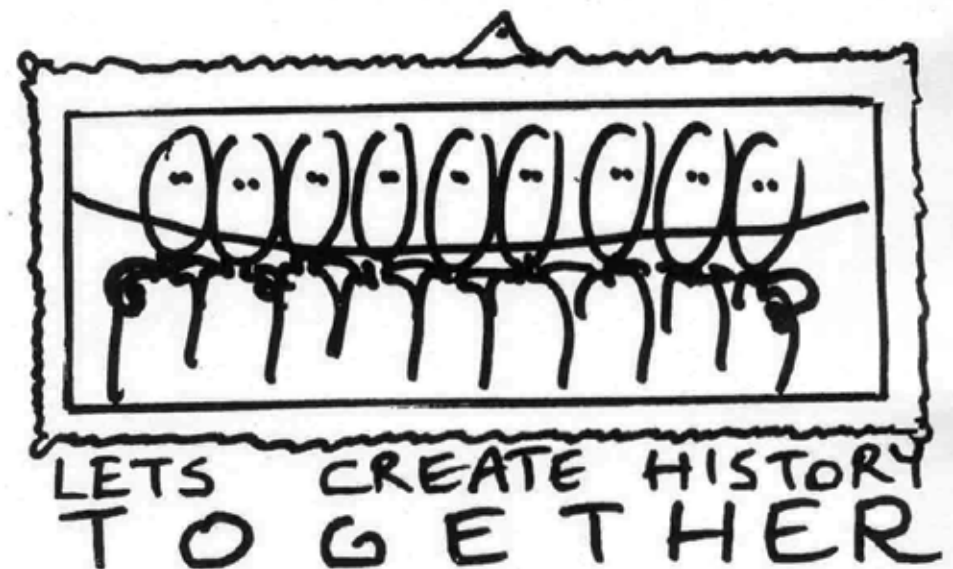
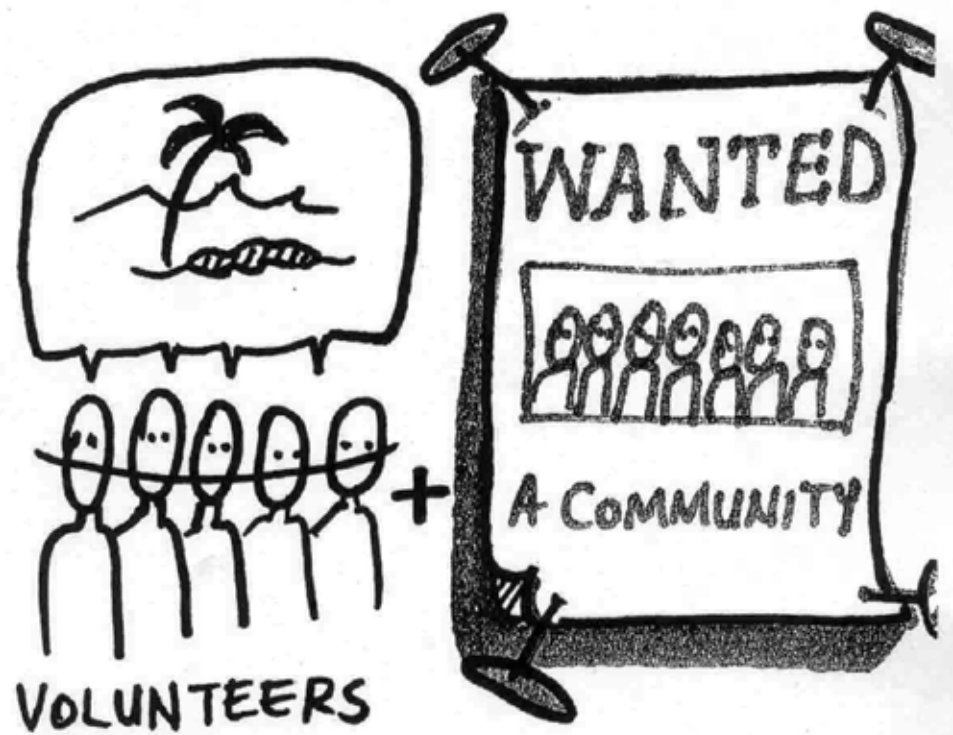
Instituto Elos Rua Marechal Hermes, 37 Boqueirão, Santos
www.institutoelosbr.org.br or www.elosbrasil.org

For inspiration:

www.oasisshanghai.ning.com

or

www.oasis santacatarina.ning.com



#04
Organizations
The Oasis Game
Type:
Organization

Category:
Organization
Building
Community
Dream

Ontario Campus Bottle Water Free Challenge

Drinking bottled water consumes a lot of energy when manufactured and causes a lot of pollution and later waste because the bottles often end up in the ocean or waste fields.

To solve this problem a bunch of people started a campaign and contacted the Ryerson University and the University of Ottawa in Ontario, Canada. They had them pledge to stop selling bottled water on their campuses, thus the Ontario Campus Bottle Water Free Challenge was born.

The campaign was started with the goal to get Ontario Colleges and Universities that have plastic bottled water removed from their campuses and save the environment in an easy way. When the campaign started, a University referendum asked students to vote if they would support banning bottled water on campus and more than 80% said yes. Since then it has gained momentum and other organizations have supported the cause. For example on days like world water day and bottle water free day there have been events like 'Bling your bottle' or giving free water to people with own bottles.

The founder of this initiative is Joanna McDonald and it was started in Ontario, Canada.

Ingredients:

- A campus
- A dedicated team of at least 5 members with strong communication and networking skills, that want to start a campaign of no bottle water
- Internet as a tool to create a viral movement around it

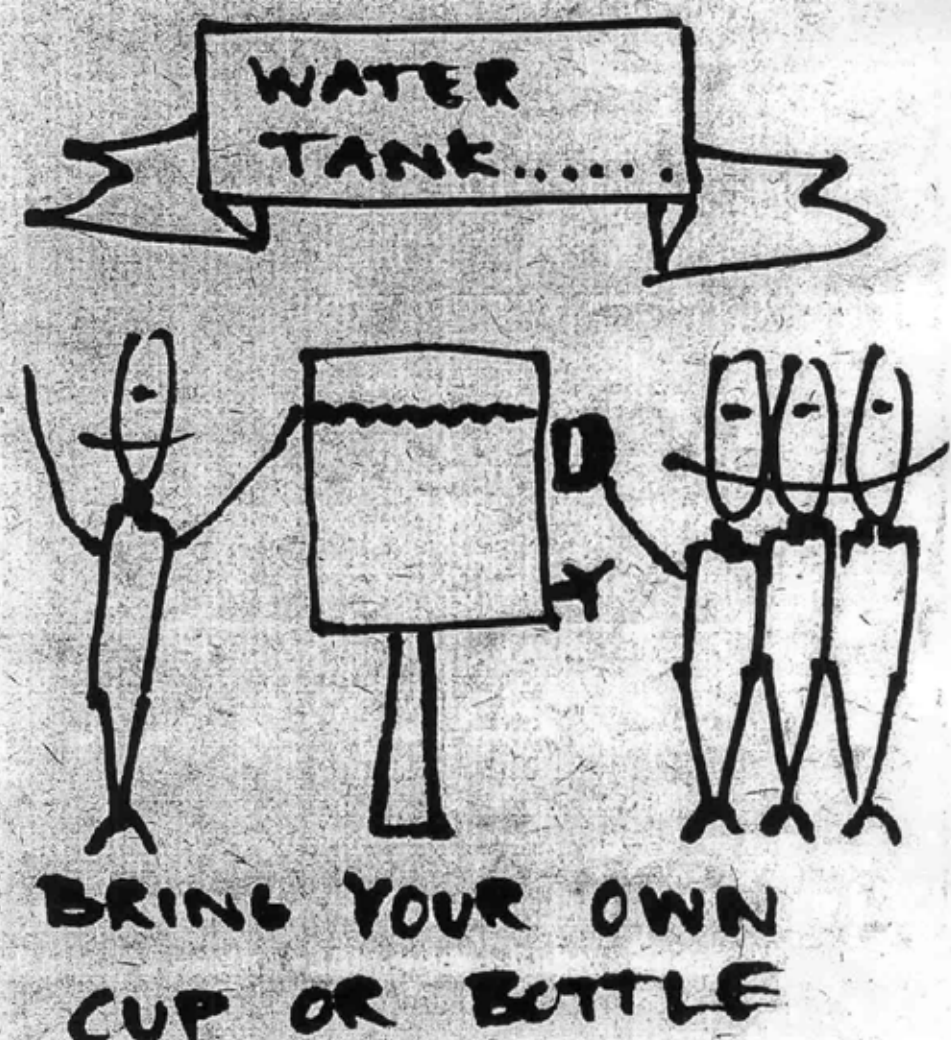
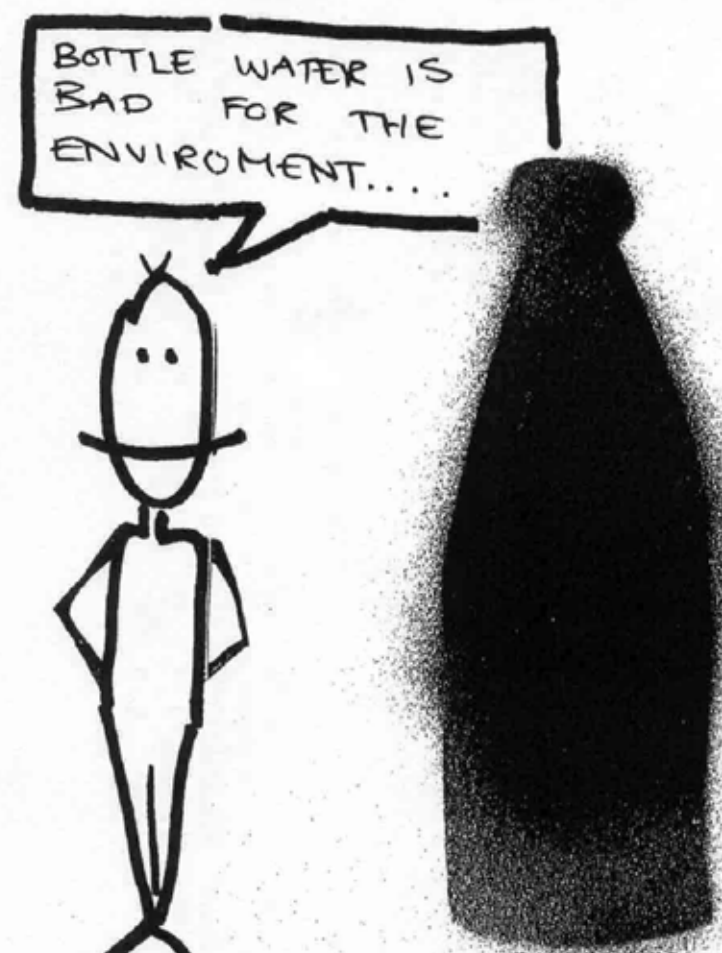
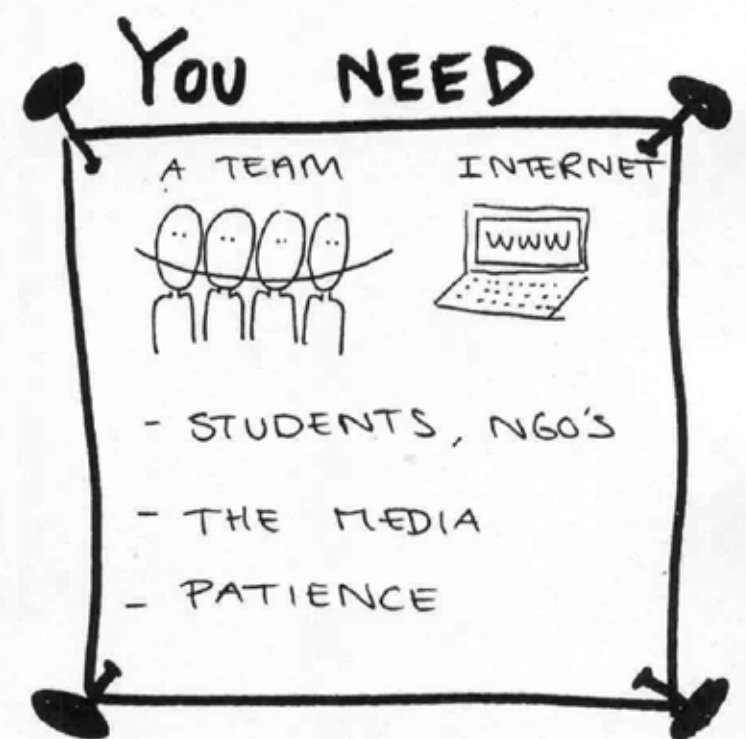
Steps:

1. Get involved with environmental clubs at your school
2. Get informed and start to partner with different groups, do events on campus and talk to the administration of the University
3. Reach out to other universities through provincial conferences, and pull resources together.
4. Use social media to organize

Variations:

As long as you live in a society with clean drinking water widely available this is an initiative worth spreading. If clean drinking water is an issue and bottled water is one of the few reliable sources of clean drinking water than this is probably not easily adaptable to your local context.

÷ BOTTLE WATER



#05
Organizations
Ontario Campus
Bottle Water
Free Challenge
Type:
Organization

Category:
Nature
Education
Environment

Platform 6000

If your city is hurting from lack of creativity and initiatives, you can do as Platform 6000 did in Kolding, Denmark. In 2008, a group of students from the School of Design in Kolding decided to start a contemporary citizens house together with Bureau Detours (<http://www.detours.biz/>). The hope was that this would spark the creativity of the public by involving them in projects and workshops. Projects from Platform 6000 included workshops for making musical instruments out of garbage, using recycled materials to create public furniture, building a community rooftop garden and gallery for exhibiting the many more projects. By connecting the creative resources in the youth of Kolding, the initiative managed to inspire and provide an outlet for the youth of the city.

Unfortunately the citizen's house burned down before the initiative could really move the residents of the city, but its potential was felt and is still being pushed forward to this day.

Ingredients:

- A city looking for inspiration
- A group of motivated people
- A place to work
 - (in this case Koldings municipality sponsored a house)
- Money (in this case the municipality sponsored the project)
- A bunch of ideas for brainstorming and action processes
- Citizens that want to have fun and create a better life in their city

Steps:

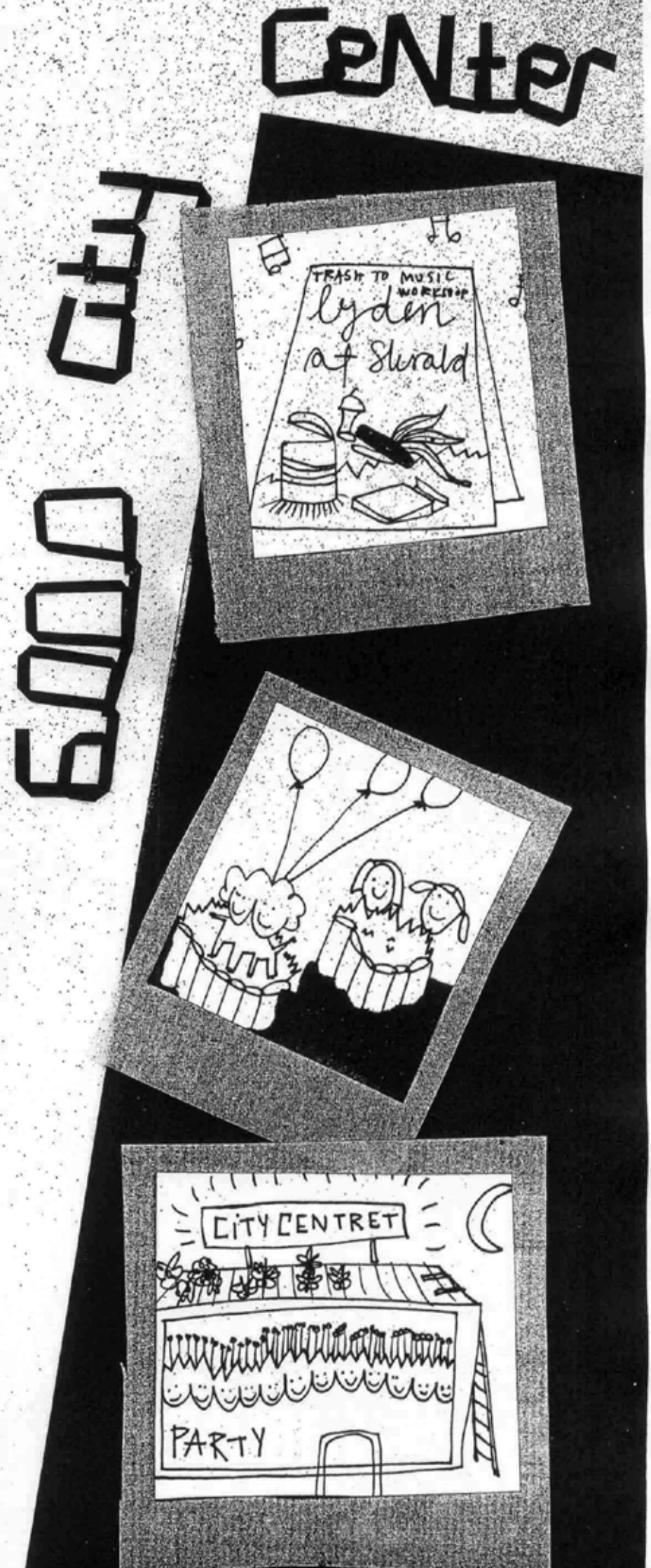
1. Start with figuring out what the need of your city is. Then you gather a group of people that are passionate about solving this need together with you, the whole point is doing this together as a community.
2. Go to your municipality or other local institutions that would potentially sponsor your citizens-house, and apply for funding.
3. Move in and decorate the house. Remember to have signs outside describing what the purpose of the house is and that everyone is welcome (since it actually is their house)
4. Make a calendar for the outside facade, so everyone passing can see what is going on. Remember to make free time and tell people that they are welcome to fill it out.
5. Invite the city in.
6. Provide the users with as much help, sparring and co-creation on their projects as you have resources for.
7. Celebrate your achievements and tell the story of your city on a blog or a book, so others can be inspired and get involved.

Variations:

In some countries, municipal support is not as available as it is in Denmark. Should you choose to take on this task, it may be more beneficial to find private sponsors and consider using a public space and make this a one-day event to inspire.

Contact information:

<http://www.detours.biz/platform6000.html>



#06
Organizations
Platform 6000
Type:
Organization

Category:
Design
Installation
Organization
Art
Building
Citizeninvolvement
Community
Userinvolvement

SCRAP - School and Community

Reuse Action Project

SCRAP was founded in 1976 in San Francisco, it is run by teachers who can't bear to throw away good art materials and supplies left over from school projects. Instead of throwing them away they transport the reusable materials to a Teacher's Space, a resource center for educators in the Portland Oregon area. Teachers from all over the area bring in materials that they no longer need in their classroom. These teachers also solicit materials from businesses in the area.

The mission is to inspire creative reuse and environmentally sustainable behavior by providing educational programs and affordable materials to the community (<http://scrapaction.org>). Based on these supplies, SCRAP has created many initiatives. The SCRAP store is open to the public seven days a week and sells all kinds of reused materials for arts, crafts, and scrap-booking, as well as school, office, and party supplies. The Re:Vision Art Gallery hosts monthly and bi-monthly exhibits of art made from at least 75% reclaimed or recycled materials. The SCRAP workshop is a space available to individuals free of charge. It's a place to work on a crafty project and enjoy access to a variety of workshop tools. SCRAP promotes less waste and more efficient use of materials. Although the SCRAP store is a fairly large project to undertake, the mind-set of reusing materials and the steps needed to support this are very easy to start.

Ingredients:

- People who are passionate about reusing materials
- A communal space to put the materials
- Knowledge
- Donation of materials
- People to receive the materials
- A space to bring in materials
- Committed volunteers
- A good supply of clean and reusable creative materials and office/school supplies.
- Businesses and individuals who are willing to donate materials
- Community members who are up for participating in the programs

Steps:

1. Start by keeping it simple
2. Find a way to capture all of the scrap your school or office is wasting
3. Find a constructive outlet for using the scrap (SCRAP workshops, donating to schools in need etc)
4. Keep the initiative going and keep an open mind to opportunities for it to grow

Variations:

Remember that the essence of this initiative is to reuse and reduce waste. Stay in line with the essence and start small in your local community than let it grow from there.

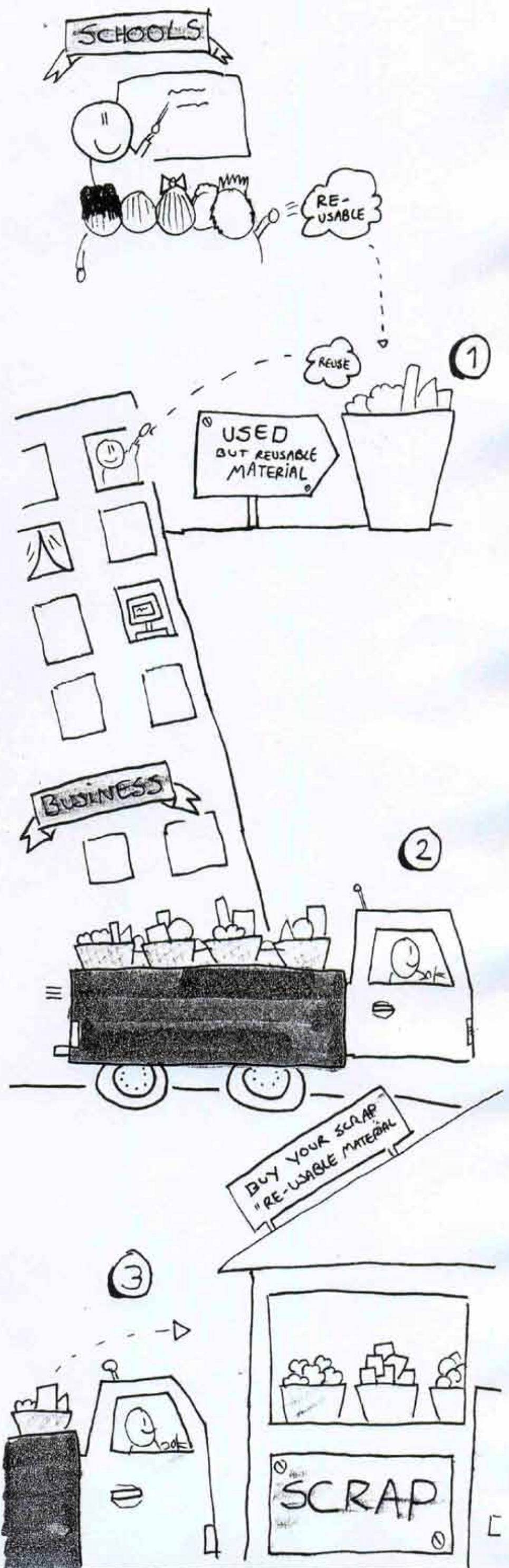
Some examples of variations:

Art from Scrap in Santa Barbara focus on environmental education initiatives. They also have a Reuse store, which keeps thousands of pounds of clean, reusable materials from ending up in the Santa Barbara County landfill each year.

Urban Source Alternative Materials, Vancouver, Canada has over 100 bins that are set up at a child-friendly height encouraging kids to explore, create, and shop for themselves.

Contact Info:

Location: 2915 NE Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd
Hours: daily from 11am to 6pm
Phone: +1 503 294-0769



#07
Organizations
SCRAP- School
and Community
Reuse Action Project
Type:
Organization

Category:
Organization
Education
Recycling

The Fun Theory

Is a city that is more fun also more sustainable and a better place to live? The people behind the Fun Theory think so. This initiative builds on the thought that something as simple as making things fun is the easiest way to change people's behavior for the better (thefuntheory.com).

They must be onto something because everything they put on the internet spreads like a wildfire and the idea has spread to every corner of the earth (that has internet access).

The initiative was originally made as a marketing stunt for Volkswagen of Sweden, and is continuously evolving on the webpage where people can enter competitions to come up with the best/funniest ideas for making regular activities more fun. The best-known example is the piano staircase that can easily be found on youtube. The idea was to make more people take the regular stairs instead of the escalator and they succeeded.

This impacts your community by promoting laughter, health and a more enjoyable environment to interact with. On their website you can find a lot of great ideas to make life in cities so much more exciting, check it out and do it in your community:
www.thefuntheory.com

Ingredients:

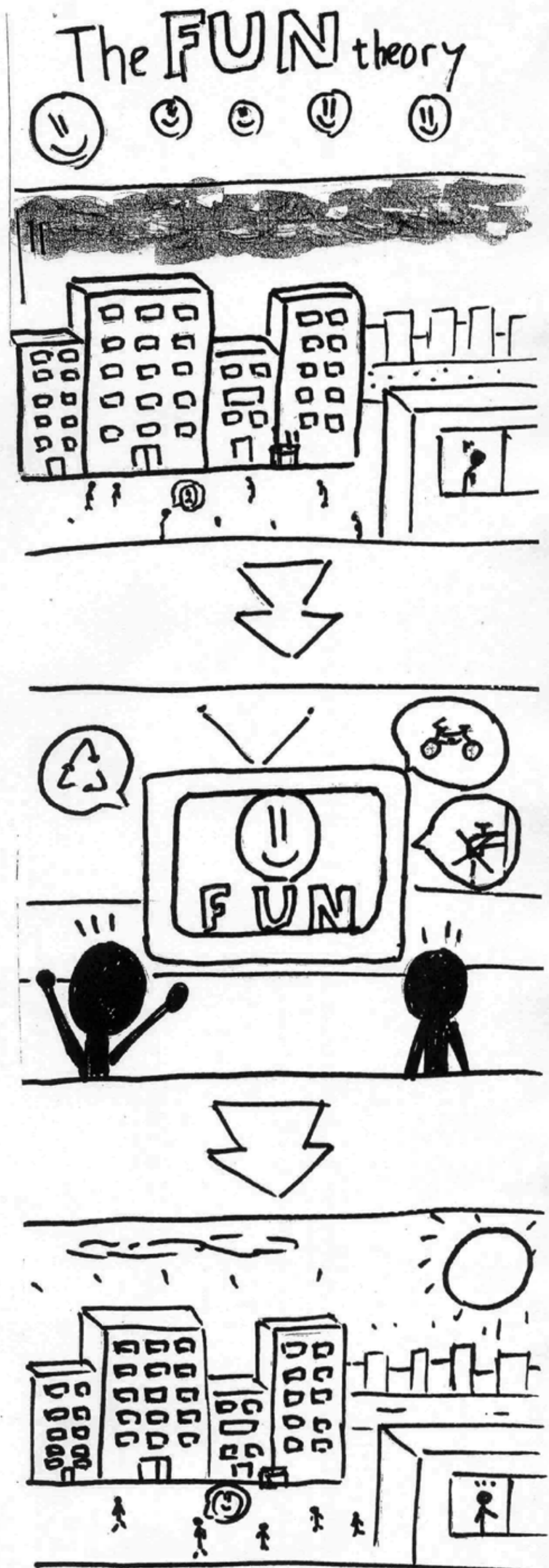
- Something boring or something that takes a lot of work
- The desire to change it
- The tools and materials needed to realize the change
- A video camera and Internet access (to spread the fun!)

Steps:

1. Take a walk around your city, think about what you find boring and feel that takes too much effort, but is good for both yourself, society and the environment.
2. Flip this around and think of what would make this more fun to do
3. Then if necessary contact your local municipality and other public offices to get the needed permissions and get the initiative approved.
4. If your idea needs funding, you could try and contact your local Volkswagen distributor, since they initiated this idea, they might have an interest in sponsoring and getting more attention.
5. Now set up a video camera and start creating the next viral video showing people all over the world to have fun while doing the right thing.
6. And last but not least, get the idea out there use youtube, facebook, twitter etc.

Variations:

Although it isn't possible for all of us to make a piano staircase, it is possible for all of us to get involved in making our immediate environment more fun. Take a look around, look at something that you find boring and give it a twist. Think of standing in line for something, how can this be a more enjoyable experience for us all?



#08
Organizations
The Fun Theory
Type:
Organizations

Category:
Fun
Organization

The Library Project

The Library Project gives books and creates libraries to under financed schools and orphanages in the developing world. The idea is that education is the key motivator in order to break the cycle of poverty that exists in the developing world. Education is change.

Started out by Tom Stader in 2006, this project was a response to his experiences while traveling abroad and witnessing the lack of quality education for kids today. It started out small and continues to grow, today the project has already established over 200 libraries in China and Vietnam and plans on establishing more. The Library Project would like to encourage you to do the same.

Ingredients:

- 1 or more people burning to spread the initiative.
- 1 community: school, orphanage, youth club etc. that need educational material.
- A handful of local stakeholders who wants to be involved.

Steps:

1. Gather your team and explore the initiative together.
Ask yourself why it is important for you to do this project, what is your motivation?
2. Contact the community that you want to work with. Investigate the need with the community; remember that the community itself knows what it really needs.
3. Activate local stakeholders and involve them in a collection of the needed materials. Go knock on doors, hang up posters, do an event, be creative, spread the word and ask for help.
4. When you have collected the material that you need, involve the users of the community in setting the library up. This will create ownership for the users and promote a sense of responsibility for the initiative.
5. You give the users a crash course in how to use the library. Here you can involve local stakeholders such as teachers and students.
6. Optional: Write a contract with the community.
7. Celebrate the good initiative!

Variations:

For quite some years all cultures in the world have been preserving knowledge, creativity and inspiration in written form. This is a great way to spread these messages. Find out how it is relevant to your community and culture, and make sure you prototype early on in the process. This will accelerate your road to success.

Contact Information:

Tom Stader
tom@library-project.org



#09
Organizations
The Library Project
Type:
Organization

Category:
Education
China
Library
Organization

The Moving Café

The Moving café delivers food and basic supplies to the homeless people in the hustle and bustle of the city where it started, Copenhagen. This initiative helps the homeless cover their basic needs by delivering food and necessities directly to them. If you can help a homeless person cover one of their basic needs such as food, they can then focus on other issues and it just might be what they need in order to pull themselves out of poverty. It is extremely easy to implement as long as you just keep it simple.

The initiative promotes interaction among different levels of society as well as providing the volunteers with a valuable opportunity to get a new perspective on life in urban settings.

(Although the founders are unknown, we felt this was an initiative worth including in our collection.)

Ingredients:

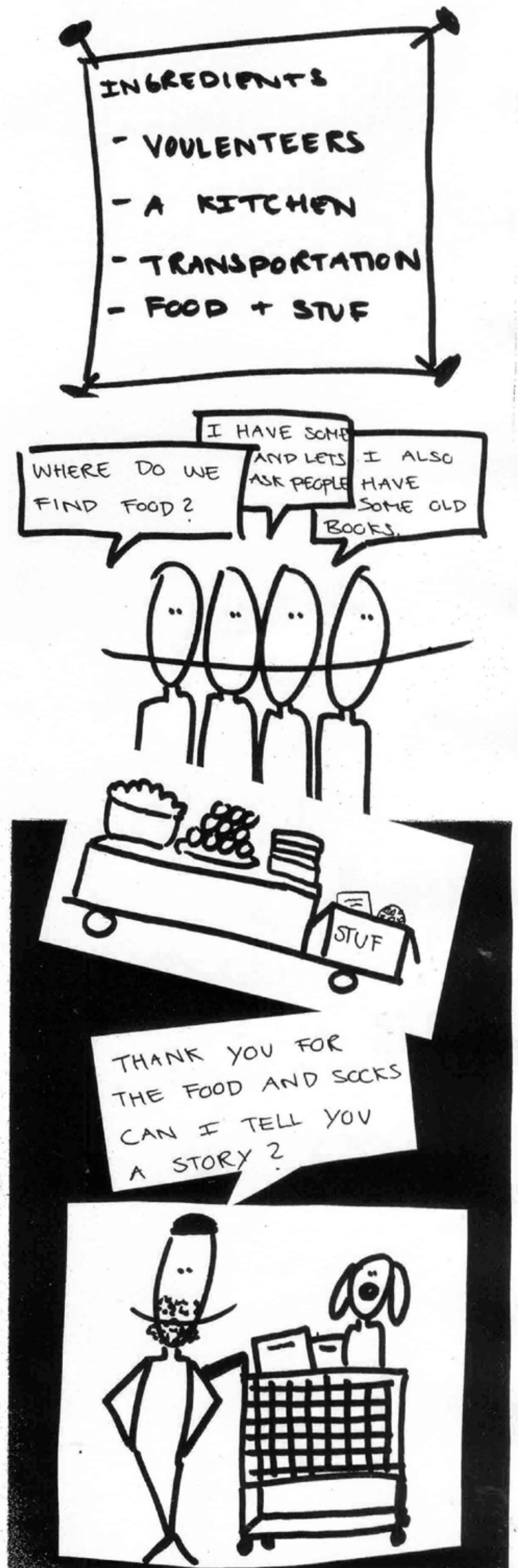
- Volunteers
- A Kitchen
- A car or a bike
- Food
- Stuff that homeless people can use (warm socks, blankets, etc.)

Steps:

1. Gather some friends that are up for helping the homeless people in your city.
2. Find, get, dumpster dive some food.
3. Prepare healthy food. Make it taste good. Make it look good.
4. Find stuff that you think would be nice to have if you haven't got a home.
5. Load it onto your bike, your car, or horse drawn carriage and get it out there on streets.
6. Move around in the city, find the homeless, offer them food and the donations and remember to talk to them. This is where the real benefit lies for you and the homeless.
7. Start exploring where you can go next time so that the initiative keeps growing and the impact gets bigger.

Variations:

We recommend that you ask homeless people what is nice to have if you do not have a home. This way you can avoid giving people things because you think it is what they need, and actually give them what they really want.



#10
Organizations
The Moving Café
Type:
Organization

Category:
Care
Food
Organization

Transition Towns

Transitions Towns are created when a small collection of motivated individuals within a community comes together and share a concern: how can our community respond to the challenges, and opportunities of the world?

Started by Louise Rooney in Ireland, it spread to the United Kingdom with the help of Rob Hopkins and is now a worldwide concept. This is a comprehensive process with available literature and training to help the procedure of making a transition group in your town. Transition town promotes a community-oriented process that will help tackle environmental, social and economical issues.

The key benefits of this initiative are its participatory nature and the concrete methods and tools. Currently there are initiatives running to reduce energy consumption, educational challenges in urban settings and promoting locally grown produce.

Ingredients:

- Motivated members in your local community
- Questions to ask such as: how can our community respond to the pressing issues facing society?
- Energy and passion to work with these questions.

Steps:

1. Form an initiating group with the intention of engaging a significant proportion of the people in their community to kick off a Transition Initiative.
2. Adopt the Transition Model (you can read much more about the Transition Model at www.transitionnetwork.org)
3. Create community awareness around issues such as peak oil, climate change and community involvement.
4. Engage the local municipality and get their support
5. Engage the community in creating an "Energy Descent Action Plan" over a 15 to 20 year timescale.

Variations:

The concept is already very international, and with the existing organization you have a lot of help and access to inspiration when starting this.

Contact Info:

www.transitionnetwork.org



#11
Organizations
Transition Towns
Type:
Organization

Category:
Collaboration
Organization
Sustainability

Urban Initiatives

Urban Initiatives believes that all children should have the opportunity to achieve their potential. By believing in empowering children at a young age with a “can-do” spirit, impeccable character, and overall wellness, Urban Initiatives provides them with the values, fitness, and ambition necessary to become productive members of society.

Established in 2002 by Jim Dower and Daniel Isherwood in Chicago, the vision is to provide preeminent programming to at-risk youth giving them the tools, resources, and life-skills necessary to succeed in today's global workplace.

Urban Initiatives' mission is to work with schools, teachers, and parents to boost the physical fitness, health education, academic performance, and character development of children from Chicago's under served communities. It aims to actively engage them in safe and structured extracurricular activities through soccer programs www.urbaninitiatives.org/about/

The initiative is still going strong today and is a great example of how you can engage the young people who would otherwise not have the opportunity in constructive activities.

Ingredients:

- One or several motivated adults
- A group of under served children
- 20x40 meters of free space
- One Football
- Some fruits and snacks

Steps:

1. Find a group of children in need of attention and hope
2. Agree on a weekday and timeframe with them and their stakeholders (parents, teachers, caretakers)
3. Invite them to a space you've created for playing soccer (the amount of space depends on the number of kids)
4. Have some foods and snacks ready and start playing the lovely game of soccer.

Variations:

Soccer isn't the only way to go about this. Exchange the ball and the space for a weekly trip, a cooking class or working with wood. Anything goes, as long as it heightens the children's motivation and creates a shared feeling of happiness



#12
Organizations
Urban Initiatives
Type:
Organization

Category:
Education
Health
Organization
Sport

Vertical Gardens

Vertical gardens are just like the name; gardens at 90 degrees to the ground. They can be as simple or as complex as you choose but the main thing is that they offer another dimension to growing plants and can become living works of art and creating tranquility in public spaces. Other benefits of vertical gardens it that they contribute to cleaner air, attract birds and insects, and cool the surrounding temperature. The vertical garden has absolutely no dependency on the ground. In fact, vertical gardens exist quite separately from soil.

Although the originator of this idea is unknown, perhaps the best contemporary vertical gardener is Patrick Blanc and Le Mur Vegetal. Vertical gardens are a growing trend and are bringing a bit of nature indoors everywhere from Tokyo to Paris.

Ingredients:

- The Frame - for longevity a metal frame is possibly the best option but treated wood can also outlast the effects of running water.
- The Backboard - PVC sheets are the preferred option but can be substituted with fine, rigid wire mesh (preferably stainless steel).
- The Holding Sheet - a thick sheet of felt will give the best results.

Steps:

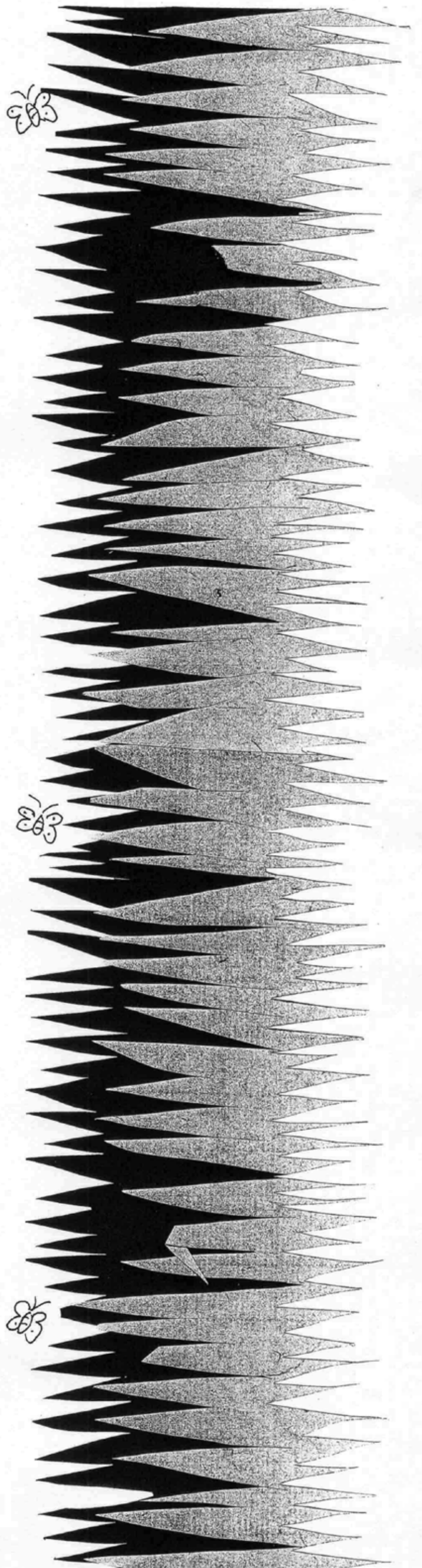
1. Fasten the frame to the wall.
2. Adhered, fasten or rivet the backboard to the frame.
3. Staple the felt holding sheet on top of the backboard. Basically, the principles of hydroponics are used in this technology so no soil is used for plant growth. Plants are neatly embedded and suspended into the felt, which becomes its growing medium.

Variations:

For indoor applications, you can make a well at the bottom of your garden with a continuous feed pump moving the water back up and then filtering down through the plants via gravity. The water is usually filled, and refilled with nutrients, which sustains the plants. It is highly recommended to use indigenous plants in your own context. Indigenous plants are more accustomed to local growing conditions and this promotes the local flora as well.

Inspirational Links:

www.verticalgardenpatrickblanc.com



#13
Installations
Vertical Gardens
Type:
Installation

Category:
Installation
Nature

Appreciative City Signs

Enjoy the secret spots and small pleasures that come with living in a city. This is what this initiative is all about. By creating signs that point out the things we don't normally notice, the appreciative signs give city inhabitants an opportunity to experience new things, where they live and work.

When was the last time that you noticed the beautiful architecture at your local train station or the view from one of the major intersections in your city?

Appreciative city signs was started by a small group of design students from Krabbesholm in Denmark, who decided to put up signs that direct people to all the hidden gems in their city. This is a reminder to look for the things that already exists in our community.

Possibilities of signs are endless. They could be pointing to a nice backyard, directing pedestrians to a passage or a little green oasis, or they could point to a particularly cool piece of street art or graffiti. They can be as complicated as directing people to a specific destination or they can be as simple as a little reminder to just stop and look up as long as the agenda is to appreciate your community more.

Better cities are not just about physical environments; they are about creating positive attitudes as well. By increasing the appreciation of the surroundings in cities, the more we appreciate living there.

Ingredients:

- Hard materials for the signs like wooden planks or plywood. Card board is also an option (but be aware that it might not last that long).
- Paint and whatever else you want to create your sign with.
- Screws and/or string for hanging up the signs.
- Screwdriver

Steps:

1. Get a small group of people together who are inspired by the idea
2. Hold a brainstorm about places or things in the city you want people to notice
3. Select a few of the best ideas
4. Get the materials needed and create the signs
5. Go out into the city and hang the signs so they are visible and look beautiful in their environment

Variations:

Depending on where you do this initiative, you might need to check if it will have any legal implications - you don't want to get fined for doing good.

If you're hanging up the signs on someone's private property, ask them if it is OK.



#14
Installations
Appreciative City Signs
or explore the city
with creative city signs
Type:
Installation

Category:
Art
Exploration
Installation

Free public Outdoor gyms

This pro-active initiative increases the lifespan and health of an urban population who cannot afford to pay for a regular gym membership.

It is said that these gyms originated in China before the Olympics in 2008. The concept is now expanding at a tremendous rate all over the world, from China to the Middle East to England. In China the level of physical activity has steadily increased since the Outdoor Gym concept was introduced.

To have an outdoor gym in your area gives the local population a pro-active reminder to stay healthy and exercise. Working out and keeping your body fit is generally a good way for you to stay healthy. This idea makes it more fun to workout since you can do it in groups or just by yourself. The machines are easy to use and invites for a simple and fun way of exercising. They give you more alternatives than just going for a run or taking a walk.

Ingredients:

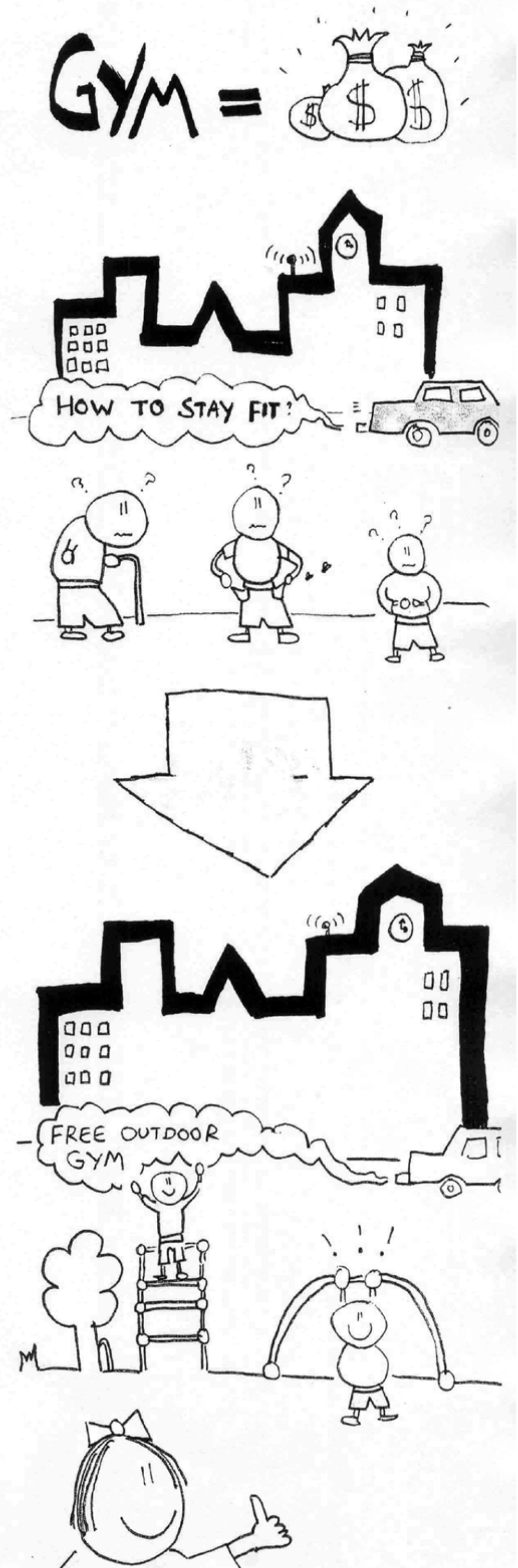
- A population of people who want and need exercise
- A willing municipality
- Public or private sponsorship
- A company that can install the outdoor gyms

Steps:

1. Find a group of people that would benefit from the outdoor gym i.e. elderly communities, financially underprivileged living compounds. These are the people that would not have the ability financially/physically to go to a regular gym.
2. Find companies that make outdoor gyms and implement the idea. There are several companies that provide fun and interactive outdoor gyms.
3. Install the gyms in the communities that you have targeted.
4. Enjoy a fun healthy workout!

Variations:

In China it is widely accepted to exercise outdoors and in public. One thing to consider in your own cultural context is whether or not it is culturally acceptable and/or appropriate to exercise publicly.



#15
Installations
Free Public outdoor Gyms
Type:
Installation

Category:
Free
Gym
Installation
Sport

Guerrilla Gardening

From Melbourne to Montreal, from Calgary to Camberwell, an underground urban movement has grown through the world's cities. Sowing seeds of subversive environmental pro-activism in the most beneficent of ways, brightening up our public spaces with the power of plants, and allowing flowers to flourish where otherwise there would be only grey; in short, taking disused pieces of land that are going to waste and greening them up for the good. And the name of this movement? Guerrilla gardening.

The artist Liz Christy first coined the term back in 1974. Since then people all over the world living in cities are claiming back the unused space for the greener good. Whether it is a pothole in the road filled with flowers, a drain growing sunflowers, or an empty lot turned into an urban garden, there is room to be inspired by nature and not let any surface or space go to waste. You can fly solo and do this over night or engage entire communities for a longer process. Either way you are guaranteed to make the world a greener place.

www.environmentalgraffiti.com/green-living/news-greatest-works-guerrilla-gardening

Get out there and literally get your hands dirty! Clean up a trashy lot or prepare a wall and create moss graffiti. This initiative is about getting out there and using a bit of artistic inspiration to reclaim the concrete jungle and take it back to its roots.

Ingredients:

- A location in your city that has potential for a garden
- Plants
- Soil
- Seeds
- Water

Steps:

1. Find a location in your city that has potential for a garden. If it needs cleaning in order to plant then do so
2. Take existing plants and soil and simply put them into your location or plant seeds and nurture them until they grow.

Variations:

Remember to investigate if you need permission to use the space you want. Think about the design of your garden and how you would like it to look when grown. Select local plants that have the best chance of survival and beauty factor.



#16
Installations
Guerrilla Gardening
Type:
Installations

Category:
Installation
Nature

Painted Football Fields

By transforming a public square into a soccer field and offering new interpretations of that specific environment, artist Maider López changes the relations between different people and their relations to the space.

Because pre-existing features such as benches and street-lamps were not altered, the square became a strange new site for football matches where spectators relaxed on benches inside the pitch at all hours.

The idea grew from experiencing the city and how people use public spaces and enjoy the same space in different ways. By capitalizing on the power of people's energy, this is a perfect example of people's capacity to maximizing the use of spaces in urban settings.

The founder of this initiative is Maider López, started in Sharjah, Arab Emirates

Ingredients:

- A public space that is asking to be used in new ways
- Durable paint
- Support from the appropriate authorities

Steps:

1. Get to know the place, observe how people live in it.
2. Get permission from the municipality or government, and work out technical aspects.
3. Paint the space.
4. Enjoy how people interact with the painting in different ways.

Variations:

The cultural context is basic, and the initiative was intended for that specific context. If you don't have a space or interest to paint a whole soccer field, use your creativity to come up with other sports or activities that fit that space and paint away. The project is for people who live in the area and people using the urban space in their daily lives.



#17
Installations
Painted Football Fields
Type:
Installation

Category:
Play
Disruptive
Installation
Share
Soccer
Sport

Rooftop gardens

Think about it. No seriously, think about it. Think about the amount of surface area that is doing nothing but expanding and contracting due to heat. Rooftop gardens have been around for centuries, now it's a matter of getting creative with them and making them into something productive and useful.

Rooftop gardens are a way of using a building that is partially or completely covered with vegetation and a growing medium (anything a plant can grow on), planted over a waterproofing membrane (something you put underneath that does not allow water to get through). It may also include additional layers such as a root barrier and drainage and irrigation systems (highly recommended but it depends on your budget).

A few of the benefits are that it supports urban food production, promotes community engagement, improves air quality, reduces CO2 emissions and insulates buildings.

Ingredients:

- A reasonably flat roof with unused space
- 1 community of people creating, using and maintaining the garden flowers, plants, garden furniture etc.

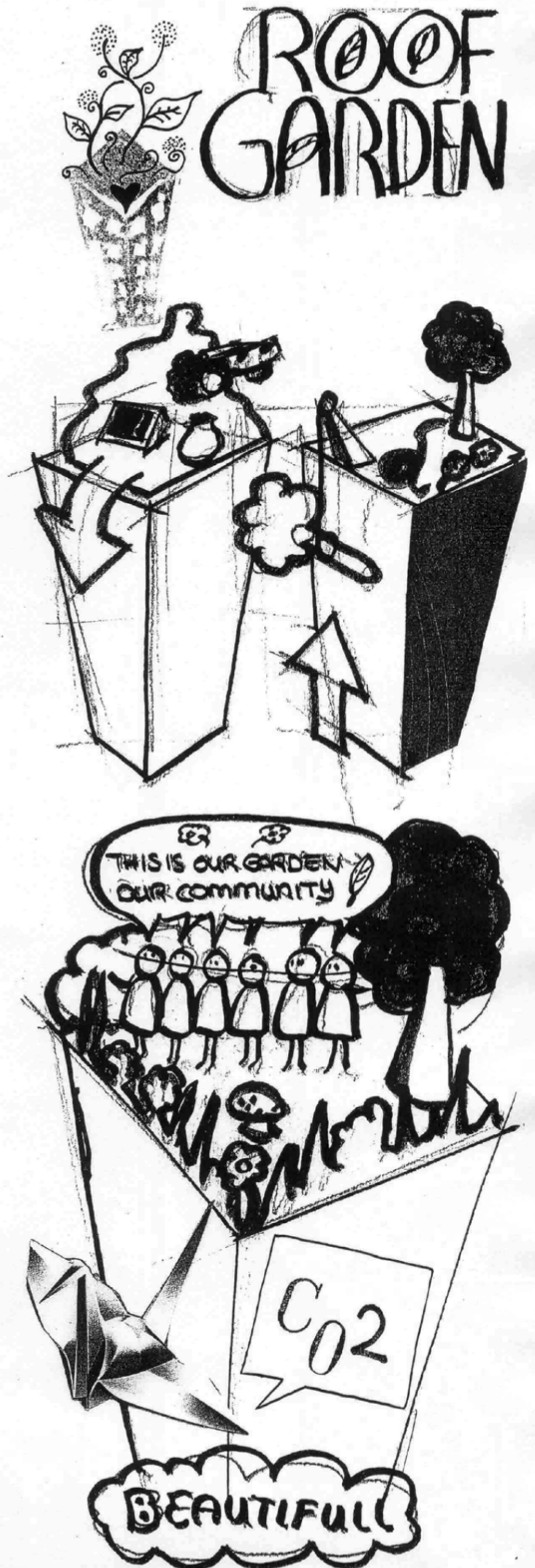
Steps:

1. Make sure that your roof is capable of supporting a garden
2. Clean off your roof and make the necessary preparations for a garden
3. Build the garden.
4. Enjoy and use the garden
5. Make sure to maintain it so you can continue to enjoy it.

Variations:

You may want to consider which kinds of plants you put on your roof. Do you want to make it a bee magnet or the envy of your friend who is a chef with fresh herbs, or just a great place to be with people?

For inspiration check out:
www.urbanroofgardens.com



#18
Installations
Rooftop Gardens
Type:
Installation

Category:
Installation
Nature
Sustainability

The Story of Creation

(skabelsesberetningen)

Every city has hidden local creative talent, but often they don't have a lot of places for sharing and getting inspired by others. However, when they do interesting and inspiring things happen that often benefit not only the underground creative, but also the rest of the city.

Skabelsesberetningen is a two-day festival of creativity. The first time it took place was in Aarhus, Denmark in November 2009 with the creative networking organization "Ska' vi lege?" ("Want to play?"). With over 50 workshops, events and installations exploring and combining the areas of architecture, dance, design, film, media, photography, performance, art, music, poetry, literature, theater and fashion, it is a celebration of the creativity and potential of a city's underground talent. Everybody participates on a voluntary basis both organizers, workshop hosts and participants. The outcome of the first Skabelsesberetningen was a lot of cross-disciplinary collaborations, new projects ideas and event companies starting up.

Ingredients:

- 1 small group of dedicated people for organizing
- 1 venue where you're allowed to mess around
- A lot of talented people motivated to show and share what they're all about
- Workshop ingredients as tables, chairs, couches, pens, paper, post-its, play dough, Lego, ironing boards, hammers, paint and whatever else you think is either fun or needed
- Room dividers if it's a big room (to stop sound from traveling)
- Programs of the day, on the walls so it's visible for everyone
- Plants or giant palm trees to set the atmosphere. Grand entrance so people can see where all the fun is

Steps:

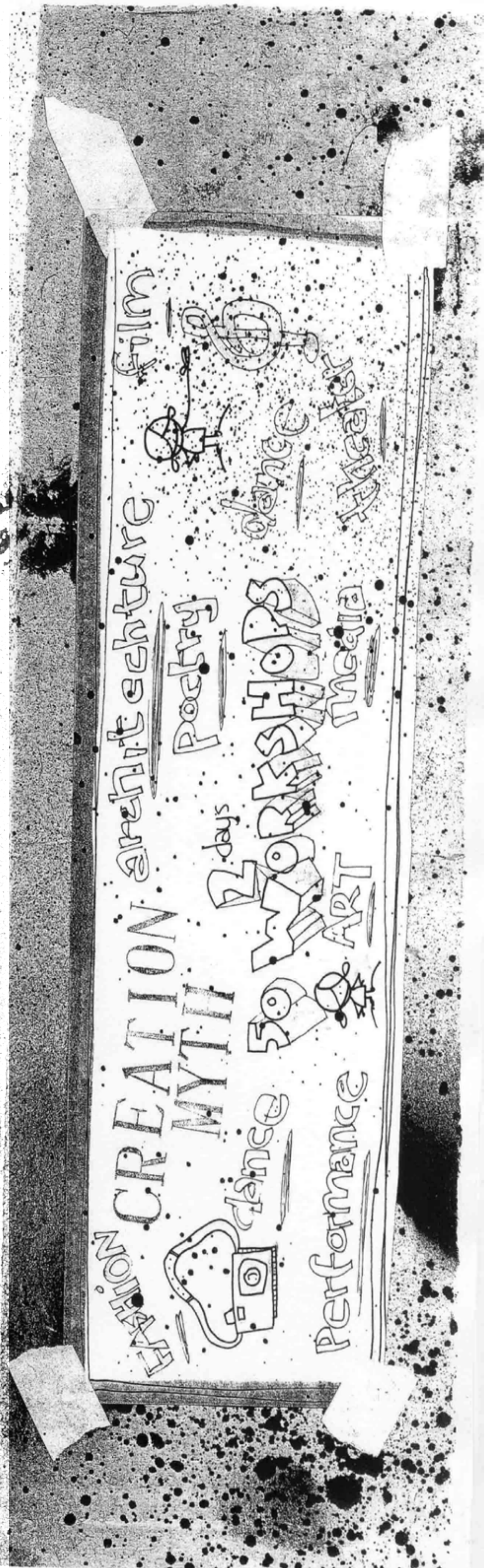
1. Make sure the organizing group, you're part of, is dedicated and capable.
2. Develop the concept and shape so it matches the local community and resources.
3. During this process, you research on what possible workshops or installations would be interesting to include in your event - that also means that you start contacting and involving people now.
4. Get sponsors on board.
5. Deal with any legal issues.
6. Spread the word in the press and local community.
7. Divide responsibilities so everybody knows what to do.
8. Check that all materials and furniture is in place or will be delivered.
9. Make sure somebody will be there once the whole thing is over to help clean up.
10. Make a script for how the event will progress; working with so many stakeholders, you need something to help you keep the overview and communicate to others what will happen. Be aware though, when working with creative people things will happen and you will need to adapt.
11. You're now ready to serve a big creative mess of talent, inspiration and fun to your city. Remember to have fun for yourself!

Variations:

Your event will only be as fun and inspiring as the people who contribute to it. Local talent mass is everything here. However, creativity is not exclusive to some parts of the world, so just grab the people around you that inspire you and get moving. This event can be scaled to any proportion you like.

Contact Info:

hrrigtrup@gmail.com



#19
Events
The Story of Creation
(skabelsesberetningen)
Type:
Event

Category:
Art
Creativity
Design
Education
Event
Festival
Fun
Music

Critical Mass

The movement started in 1992 in San Francisco. It was first introduced in order to establish equal rights for bicycles and cars. The term “Critical mass” comes from a documentary titled “Return of the scorcher” about Chinese cyclists overwhelming intersections. When the backlog of bikes and motorbikes is big enough, they can move through the traffic as a critical mass, forcing the cars to wait. The movement “Critical Mass” now exists in over 300 cities all over the world.

Traveling through the cities, interrupting the automotive traffic, the “critical mass” creates attention to how unfriendly cities are towards bicycles. And everyone can take the initiative to make this bike event. It is simply an open event for everyone to make and everyone to participate in. Make this event into a day of being with friends and family, bring food, music, flowers and all the things you can come up with in order to make this a cozy and enjoyable experience.

Of the many benefits included in an initiative like this one, perhaps the most important is that this global movement is forcing the issue of sustainable mobility in society today through disturbing the natural flow of automotive traffic. On a lighter note, it is also a great way to meet new people, experience the city you live in and spend a day outside.

Ingredients:

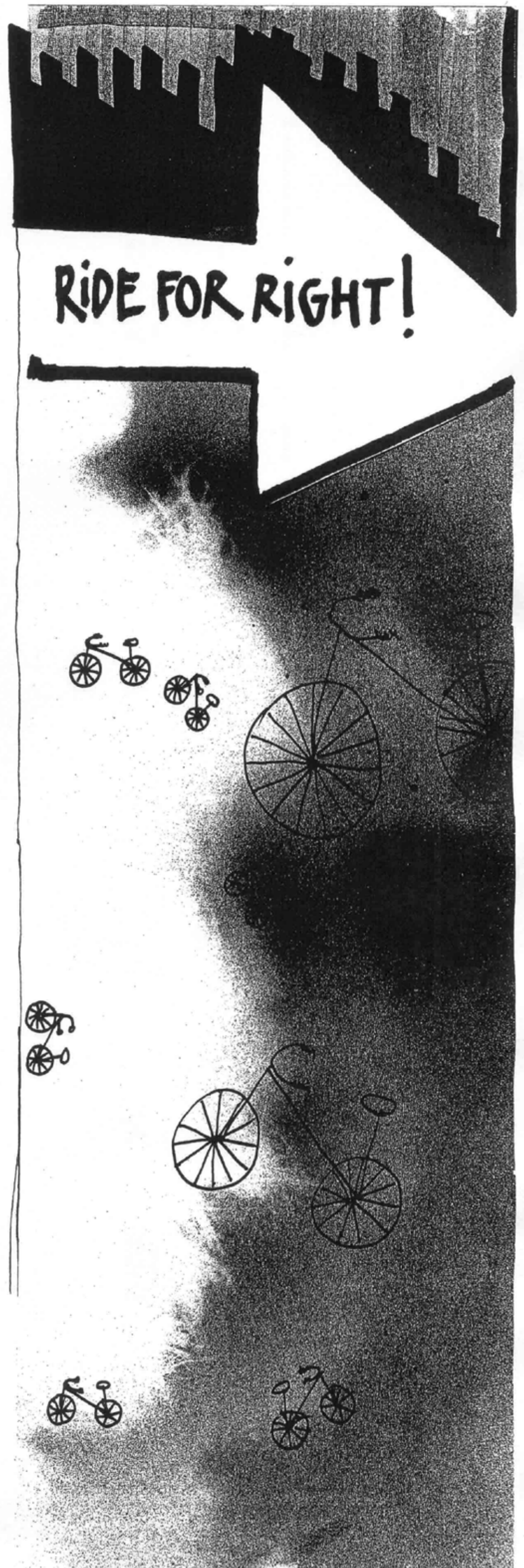
- People with bikes (a minimum of ten)
- A route through the city
- A willingness to break the traffic laws
- One pair of big speakers (optional, but a great add-on)

Steps:

1. Find a time and place to start
2. Make a route
3. Gather people
4. Start biking
5. Have fun

Variations:

In some cities it is recommendable to understand how breaking the traffic laws are looked upon by the authorities and what the potential consequences for doing it is.



#20
Events
Critical Mass
Type:
Events

Category:
Events
Bikes

Flash Mob

A flash mob is a large group of people who assemble suddenly in a public place, performing an unusual act for a brief time and then quickly disperse. The first known example happened in 2003 in Manhattan and was organized by Bill Wasik, senior editor of Harpers Magazine.

The flash mob culture is now evolving and there are many new and creative solutions on how to make a flash mob. This is an effective way to create a lot of attention around a particular event or issue. Videos of flash mobs often spread virally on the Internet. It can be done everywhere, by everyone. Let your imagination run free while putting the spotlight on a need you find worthy of attention.

Ingredients:

- A group of people (preferably big, but smaller groups can work if the flash mob is thought through)
- A purpose (combining people with a purpose is a potent mix)
- A common plan of action that all the participants are aware of.
- A location where you will get a lot of attention.
- A film crew (optional, but recommended)

Steps:

1. Find out what you would like to bring attention to in your surrounding society. (What needs attention, what would you do differently?)
2. Find a group of people, who share your point of view. (This can be friends, family, colleagues, your soccer teammates or an internet forum.)
3. Create a plan of action to highlight what you want to give attention to. (It has the greatest effect if it puzzles the surrounding people. Create something remarkable that sticks out and makes people stop and look.)
4. Do it!

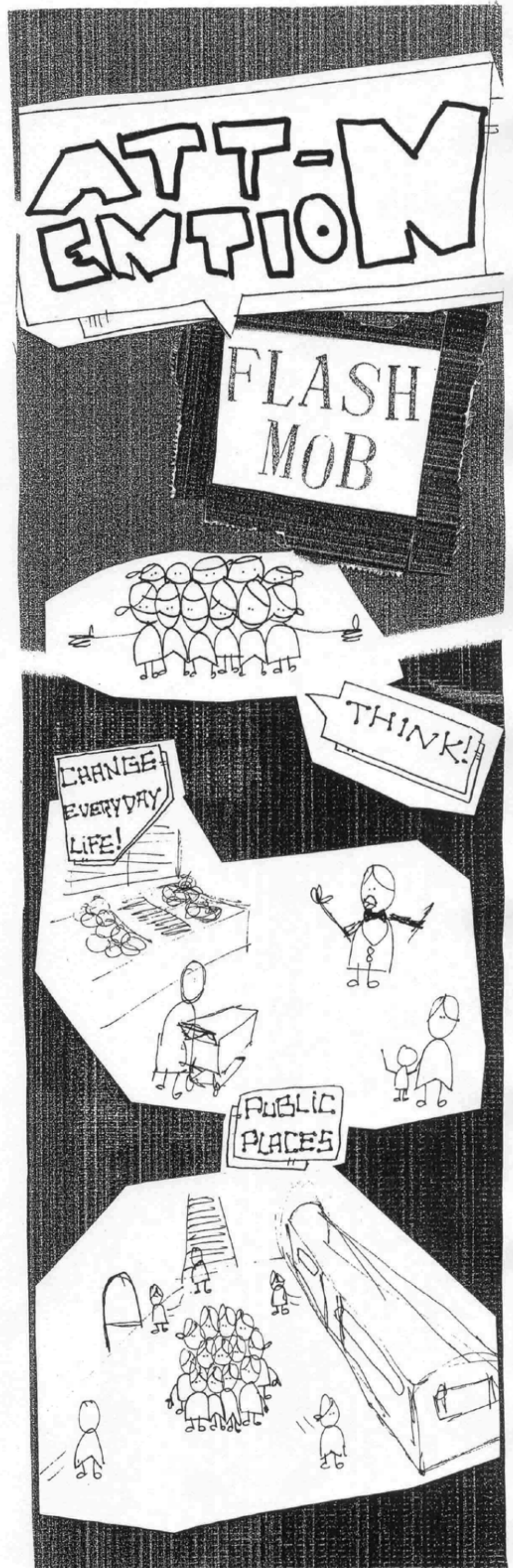
Variations:

Some examples of earlier flash mobs for inspiration to your own: The purpose was to draw attention to stress in the western world so a big group "froze" in the middle of Central Station in New York, standing completely still and therefore creating a massive contrast to all the people in a hurry.

The purpose was to draw attention to global warming so people spread out on the city hall plaza in Copenhagen during COP15. It was in December and freezing cold outside. They took off their clothes, spread out their towels, and started sunbathing.

Contact info:

We recommend you search the internet for flashmobs and get inspired. There is no one contact person for an initiative like this one.



#21
Events
Flash Mob
Type:
Event

Category:
Event
Play/Fun

LungA – art festival

LungA Art festival is a yearly event held in a small bohemian town on the east coast of Iceland called Seyðisfjörður. It is first and foremost, a festival that strengthens awareness and knowledge about art and culture. It is a platform for young people to be creative, meet other people with similar mindsets, learn about art, share their experiences, and have fun.

It was started ten years ago when Björt Sigfinnsdóttir was sitting in her kitchen with her mom, complaining that there was nothing to do in her hometown. The only recreation that was available for young people at that time was dancing and other night-time musical hobbies that became tiresome in the long term. Her mom suggested that they could create something together to meet the needs of the community and started brainstorming on ideas. Together with three other inhabitants they created the concept of LungA.

Through out the years LungA has grown and has now become one of Iceland's biggest art festivals for young people. Going from having only 20 participants in the first year to being completely sold out in the last several years. In 2010 they celebrated LungA's 10 year anniversary with workshops, art exhibitions, concerts and more off venue activities than ever. LungA is a terrific venue for those who are thinking of further art studies or teaching at art schools.

The founder of this initiative is Björt Sigfinnsdóttir, started in 2000, in Seyðisfjörður, Iceland.

Ingredients:

- Young, creative people interested in gaining knowledge about art and music
- A few dedicated people who are inspired to organize the event
- A place to host the festival
- Sponsorship to reduce the cost for young participants

Steps:

1. Establish a group to conceptualize and organize the event
2. Host several conceptual meetings to plan the festival
3. Make sure that the core team around the initiative is communicating in a good way
4. Organize the musical education, synchronization and concerts
5. Start planning the next festival as soon as the last one is finished.

Variations:

Make the concepts based on your neighborhood needs. It might be a sport festival, food festival, book festival or a festival where people have a place to meet and hang out. The most important thing is that you are doing something for and with the community.

Contact info:

www.lunga.is



#22
Events
LungA – art festival
Type:
Event

Category:
Art
Event

The Big Lunch

The Big Lunch is a one-day get together with your local neighbors that takes place on the 18th of July every year. The event promotes a sense of community by encouraging dialogue and interactions with your neighbors. It can be anything from a simple lunch to a full-blown street party with DJs and a hog roast. The Eden Project started this initiative because they believe the world would be better when people get to know the people in the local area they live.

By gathering people over peaceful conversations you promote communication, interaction and understanding of each other. All of these elements help generate a healthy community with connected individuals. Having good conversations over good food is not reinventing the wheel, but taking these elements to the streets makes a difference.

Ingredients:

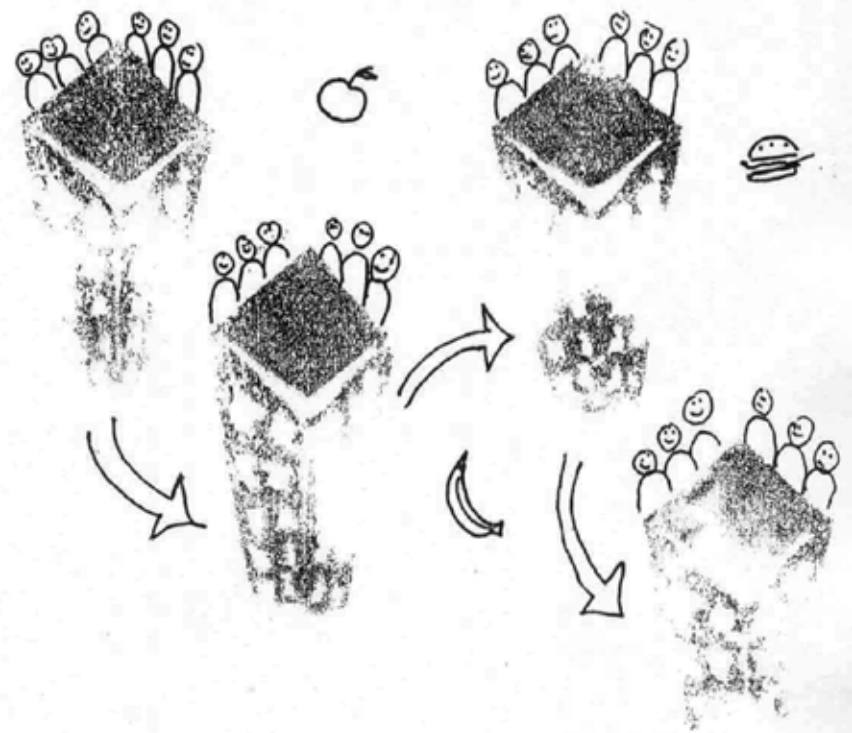
- People
- Food
- A location to have dinner

Steps:

1. Find a Big Lunch or host your own. A good starting point for ideas and tips and tricks is the Big Lunch website
2. Stir up interest and get the word out use facebook, twitter, couch surfing or good old door to door for getting the message out.
3. Close your street (ensure that you can close your street through legal means and do this well in advance). If this isn't possible, any common ground will do.
4. Establish the necessary roles and responsibilities in order to make this a success
5. Think about the weather and plan accordingly
6. Do it for charity. Decide if you want to raise money or volunteer time for a community charity and put someone sensible in charge.
7. Get everyone involved (especially kids)
8. Mash up the menu. The more cultures you have on your street, the more cuisines you get to try.
8. Mix up the entertainment. The more diverse the activities, the better your Big Lunch will be.
10. Record the day so people will remember the day for a long time.

Variations:

For more inspiration, tips, and best practices or to host one please visit www.thebiglunch.com



#23
Events
The Big Lunch
Type:
Event

Category
Event
Food

PechaKucha Night

The concept was invented in Tokyo, in February of 2003 as an event for young designers to meet, network, and show their work in public. It has turned into a massive celebration, with events happening in hundreds of cities around the world. Drawing its name from the Japanese term for the sound of “chit chat”, it rests on a presentation format that is based on a simple idea: 20 images, 20 seconds per image. It’s a format that makes presentations concise, and keeps things moving at a rapid pace.

The concept was invented by the 2 architects Astrid Klein and Mark Dytham who have recently teamed up with Architecture for Humanity on a project, which aim to raise \$1,000,000 for rebuilding Haiti. Besides the beauty, humbleness and pride shown by the presenters, the truly inspirational aspect of PechaKucha is the opportunity to share and be inspired by creative people out of your own area of practice. Besides the overload of inspiration, ideas and understanding of different work processes, it is a great opportunity to network with all branches of creative industries.

(<http://www.pecha-kucha.org>)

Ingredients:

- 1 small group of passionate committed people
- 1 handshake agreement with the PechaKucha foundation
- 1 location
- The willingness and capacity to arrange 4 events per year.
- You will need a good network of people in your city in order to invite presenters, and also a good crowd to come and enjoy the presentations.
- You will need a team of supporters (the broader and more diverse the network, the better)
- You will need to find a venue. Bars and clubs are usually happy to have 200-400 people rocking up and drinking on a dead night like Monday or Tuesday, so it’s often not that difficult to find.

Steps:

1. If possible, try to attend a PechaKucha Night in a city near you, this is the best way to get a sense of what it’s all about, and you can also have a chat with the organizers and presenters.
2. Get in touch with PechaKucha foundation and tell them about yourself.
It normally takes PechaKucha a month or so to grant PKN “handshake” agreements. PechaKucha sometimes say yes and sometimes say no – so be prepared for both answers.
3. PKN “handshake” agreements are free, but PechaKucha asks for a donation to the PechaKucha Foundation to cover our running costs.
4. Fill in the form on PechaKucha’s home page and get started

Variations:

Already all over the world, this initiative is achievable in almost any social context.



#24
Events
PechaKucha Night
Type:
Event

Category:
Art
Culture
Design
Event
Sharing

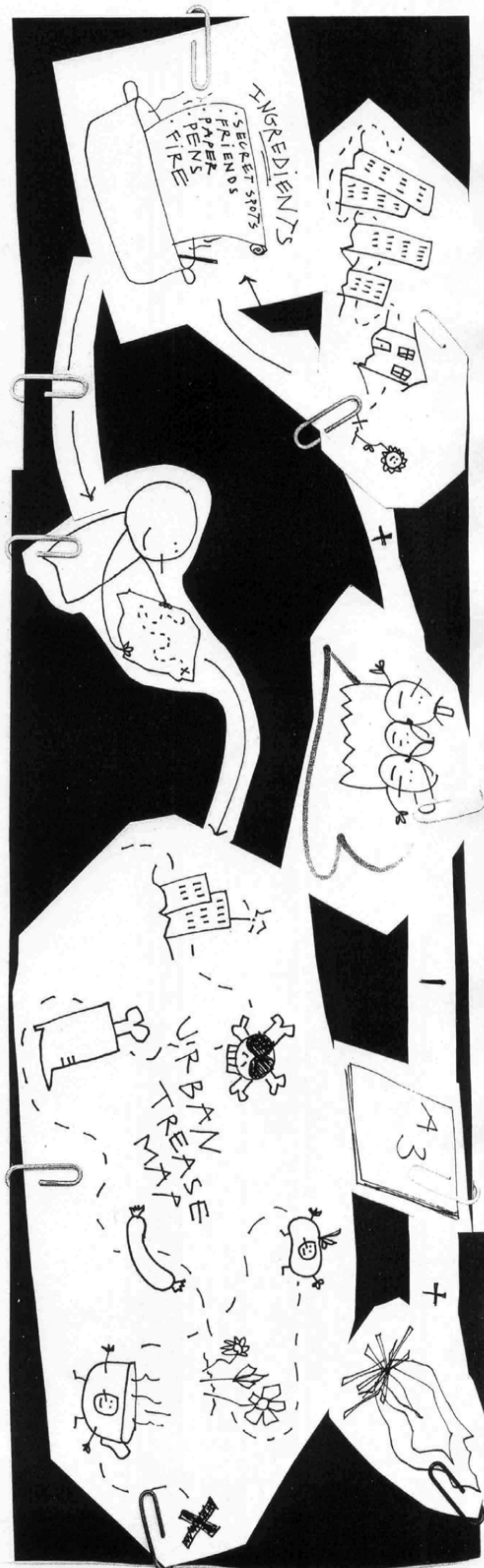
Every town has its secret spots and every citizen knows some of them. Some are supposed to stay secret, but some would be even better if more people enjoyed and co-created them. If you want to share your favorite spots and make new friends at the same time, you can make a treasure map of your city and share it with those living or visiting the city.

Although small and easy, this is a great and personal way to re-awaken the people in your community and help them see what is great about where you live.

- A group of people that know your city like the back of their hand
- As many pieces of A3 paper as you would like to make into treasure maps
- A photocopy machine
- Pens
- Fire

1. Gather a group of people that know the city like the back of their hand. This can be your childhood friends or your grandparents, who knows?
2. Brainstorm on all the cool and secret places your city has that deserve to get more attention.
3. Choose the top 10 of them and draw them into a map.
4. Photocopy the map and burn the edges of each map so they have the antique treasure map touch.
5. Pass them on (the amount depends on how many people you want to let in on the secrets. You can put them in bars, give them out as personal invitations or only make one map and make rules that the receiver can only have it for 1 day before it has to be passed on)
6. Keep on discovering your city and find new secret and nice spots - or create your own.

The treasure maps can be made for any city and distributed as part of a campaign of any scale, whether it's just something for your friends or part of a big tourist campaign. For more inspiration on how to explore your city, also see Appreciative City Signs.



#25
Events
Treasure Maps
Type:
Event

Category:
Event
City
Play

**SHARE
ACT
IMPROVE
LIFE IN CITIES**