



CULTURE GARDEN

Organisational Overview



Introduction



Our Short Story

Here at Culture Garden, we are passionate about healthy group cultures.

We have seen first-hand the ways that the interpersonal realm can be a group's life blood, nourishing, inspiring, and invigorating it throughout its lifespan. We have also seen the ways that - when unsupported - this same phenomenon can undermine a group's success, keeping it mired in problematic interpersonal dynamics from past systems even as it struggles to evolve.

We support youth leaders, communities, and world-changing organisations to develop the cultural skills they need to release old patterns; to connect, create, and collaborate; and to fully embody their life-sustaining values as a foundation for their work in the world. All of our programs are “community engaged,” meaning that they support participants’ learning both in “the classroom,” as well as in their home cultures and communities.

Business Name & Symbols

We chose the name "Culture Garden" to describe our practice of creating time-bound, nutrient-dense, intentional environments (our consulting, facilitation, and training programmes) in which we support individuals and groups to test out and learn new cultural tools, to practice and play with them in real-world contexts, and to grow a diversity of healthy cultures that best meet their needs.

The Mother Tree





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1. WHY CULTURE GARDEN EXISTS

a. Vision: What We Hold Dear

We envision a life-sustaining civilisation for future generations in which human actions express an ethos of partnership and mutual empowerment, informed by healthy group cultures rooted in connection, growing in collaboration, and flowering in creativity.

b. Mission: What is ‘Ours to Do’

To accelerate the development of connective, creative, and collaborative group cultures worldwide.

c. Objectives: Goals We Have Set

1. **MODEL:** To cultivate our team and our own internal culture in a way that allows us to embody what we teach and to lead by example;
2. **TEACH:** To deliver cutting-edge workshop series for youth leaders, communities, and world-changing organisations which convey the key practices and paradigms for connection, creativity, and collaboration in group cultures, and which scaffold and support the process of integrating these practices and paradigms into group systems over time;
3. **INSPIRE:** To make our programs accessible to youth, communities, and organisations worldwide, based on their readiness to engage and their position to widely inspire others to do the same;
4. **SYNERGISE:** To foster synergistic partnerships with related organisations and groups worldwide.

d. Context, Beliefs and Assumptions

We believe this is a pivotal moment in human history.

“Old Story” systems based in control, hierarchy, and dominance are no longer tenable in a world evolving towards greater flexibility, interconnection, and mutual empowerment. And yet for many of us, they still shape the social and political world around us. Capitalism, colonialism, patriarchy, and Neo-Liberalism are just a few of the ways these principles manifest on a grand scale; more subtly, they show up in group dynamics such as bullying, scapegoating, perfectionism and burnout.

We believe that changes must be made to both large- and small-scale human systems in order to shift human relating towards a more collaborative global ethos.

At Culture Garden, we focus on the latter: on the small-scale personal and interpersonal level of “group culture.” In this subtle arena, we support groups to unhook Old Story paradigms at their essence, invoking instead the practices that give rise to connection, creativity, and collaboration at all levels of scale. In so doing, we enable world-changing individuals and groups to fully embody their life-sustaining values, becoming grassroots anchor-points for wider systemic change; and, we support them to increase their wellbeing, resilience, and effectiveness in a changing world.

e. Impact: Change We Want to See

We aim to see a proliferation of individuals and groups of all shapes and sizes worldwide, equipped with the cultural skills they need to release old patterns and to bring to life vibrantly healthy internal cultures. These cultures enable them to connect, create, and collaborate and to fully embody their life-sustaining values as a foundation for their work in the world. We want these groups to become living examples of what’s possible, inspiring and informing others, anchoring wider cultural conversations in practical applications, and accelerating the momentum of global change away from dominance-based human systems and towards a more collaborative global ethos.

2. WHAT GUIDES US AND MAKES US DISTINCTIVE

a. Our Values

Connection is the invisible root system, which links each individuals' inner journey of self-actualization with the interactions and activities of the whole. Practicing connection ensures that a group's outer activities and initiatives support its members' inner wellbeing – and vice versa – which invokes the powerful synergy of mutual benefit. We've seen the ways that this synergy is an invaluable source of energy, inspiration, and guidance for any group.

Collaboration is growing strong, resilient stems & branches by sharing intelligence, effort, and leadership. This doesn't mean that every decision or action must be taken collectively; rather, it means we believe that every member of a group has valuable input which can be engaged in different ways in different contexts. We believe that groups are more alive and make better decisions when they use flexible, collaborative systems which draw from the intelligence of the whole.

Creativity gives shape, energy, and intention to the vast field of possibility that exists within and around us. By attending to how it nourishes, receives and directs its creative energies, a group ensures that what it creates is well-formed, rooted in its deepest intentions, and responsive to the ever-evolving needs of the world. It can also include its partners, community, and the other-than-human realm in its creative process, unleashing the joy and generativity of a co-creative flow.

Community Engagement All of our programs are "Community Engaged," meaning that they support participants' ongoing learning and development both in the classroom, and in the learning environment of their home communities. As a core part of each program, participants are given customised mentorship support between modules to synergise and engage with local partners, to put into practice their new learning, and to make real changes in their home systems.

b. Working Principles

"To go fast, go alone; to go far, go together"

It takes time and effort to change culture. It can feel painfully unfamiliar to develop new ways of being and doing together; given the millennia of cultural programming that created our current status quo, we believe it is only natural to put some sweat into changing course. One of the biggest gifts we bring our clients is our strong commitment to stand beside them while they find their way forward, encountering the inevitable ambiguities and twists and turns in the road - together.

"Structure and flow are complementary - not opposing - forces"

We are absolute devotees of the life-bringing interplay of opposites. One of the primary polarities we engage with in Culture Garden is structure/flow: we continuously assess our programs and services, our clients, and the material arising in every present moment, and either bring more structure or allow more flow, depending on what we believe will most serve. As with much of our work, this is an art rather than a formula!

"Safety first"

When a system is stuck, the first question we ask is: "where can we bring more safety?" We believe that human systems grow towards health as surely as a tree finds the Sun; however, sufficient safety must exist in order for them to dare the vulnerability of change. Our programs and services – as well as the way we bring and offer ourselves as facilitators – convey the interpersonal, intra-personal, and systemic safety that naturally awakens bravery and innovation.

c. Our Distinctive Approach

We like to use the metaphor of the “*Mother Tree*” to describe our culture-building work. A Mother Tree is a large, often very ancient tree which acts as a central hub in a vast underground forest network. Through their extensive root systems, Mother Trees supply the other trees around them with extra nutrients when they are sick, send messages about environmental changes or threats, and enculturate seedlings with the fungal cultures they will need to thrive in their particular soil.

Similarly, we see ourselves as a hub and distribution point for cultural nutrients. We make information available on many levels at once in our programs, so that what arises in the held space of our programs and services can be shaped by the needs of the moment. And, we provide sustained support over time. Our “community engaged” approach creates a supportive environment in which both participants and the communities and systems they are a part of can learn and grow.

3. OUR COMMUNITY, FRIENDS AND ENABLERS

a. Our Business

We provide community-engaged consulting, facilitation, and workshop series to support youth leaders, communities, and organisations to develop the core skills and practices for *connective*, *creative*, and *collaborative* cultures, and to integrate those skills and practices into their group systems over time.

b. Who We Are

Our work is led by two Directors, and supported by a group of highly-experienced and specialised Associates.

James Wood, MA, CED (*Director: Community Engagement*)



James is a Community Development specialist and a gifted partnership-builder, engaging in international & multi-cultural settings with governments, charities, businesses and community groups since 1998. He uses strength-based and collaborative approaches to find common-ground solutions to local, regional, and global economic challenges. He has an Interdisciplinary Master's Degree in Sustainability and Public Policy and a Bachelor's Degree in Cultural Anthropology and Community Economic Development from [Simon Fraser University](#) (Vancouver, Canada). James has held senior and advisory positions in the Canadian and American governments, and since moving to the UK in 2016, has been consulting to support healthy group cultures, and facilitating “*Dynamic Wholeness Circles*”, while being an active Board member of 2 community development networks in Scotland. James is a founding member of Culture Garden, where he brings his Economic Development, Planning & Project Management, and Partnership-Building expertise to support the groups we work with.

www.JamesWood.ca

Madelanne Rust-D'Eye, MA, RSME/T (*Director: Programmes & Facilitation*)



Madelanne is a skilled facilitator, consultant, experiential educator, and Body-Informed mentor. She has worked extensively with both grassroots and corporate organisations in the UK as a leadership consultant and group culture specialist, to enable their transition to more collaborative leadership forms. She has a Master's degree in Somatic Counselling Psychology from [Naropa University](#) (Colorado, USA), with specialisations in Dance/Movement Therapy and Body Psychotherapy. She believes passionately in the transformational

potential that body- and movement-based group paradigms hold for global culture. She developed and teaches Body-Informed Leadership. www.BodyInformedLeadership.org

Deborah Benham, PhD (Associate: Curriculum Design, Consulting, Facilitation)



Debs engages the vibrant meeting place between whole systems design, organisational governance and group culture. During her 6-year term as Managing Director for the Newbold Trust sustainability centre she introduced sociocratic governance systems, social permaculture, and nature-connection practices — giving her first-hand experience of transforming a complex organisation’s governance and group culture. She holds a PhD from the [University of Nottingham](#) in sustainable tourism, with a specialisation in stakeholder engagement and collaboration. Deborah is a [Sociocracy](#) trainer, a community building practitioner, [Gaia Education](#) lead facilitator, and is currently part of the core team at [Transition Network](#), leading on organisational culture and practices of change. Deb specialises in supporting transformative change and regeneration in eco-social organisations and community based projects, using a living systems framework and co-design approaches.

Reuben (Root) Cuthbertson, MA (Associate: Curriculum Design)



Root designs experiential opportunities for learning by creating strong containers for the graceful facilitation of group energy. He holds a Master’s Degree in Environmental Education, and certificates in Sustainable Curriculum Design, Participatory Facilitation, and Ecopsychology. He has co-led short courses on regenerative cultures and cultural mentoring for [Schumacher College](#), [Findhorn College](#) the [ALT program in Thailand](#), and is a certified trainer in [Gaia Education](#) eco-social design. With his wife Deborah Benham, he has delivered trainings on [Sociocracy](#), Designing for Peace, Positive Leadership, Social Entrepreneurship, and Culture Repair. He is part of several teams offering [weekend programs introducing 8 Shields](#), and the [8 Shields Institute](#) online courses: “Introduction to Regenerative Community Building,” and “Pathways to Village Building.” With [Jon Young](#) and Deborah, he is co-authoring a new book on regenerative community design. He is currently the Training Coordinator for [Transition Network](#), accompanying an international community of practice to articulate and offer learning opportunities and skillshares for facilitating community engagement. He delights in assisting groups trying to present complex information so that anyone can understand. Practically, this can look like governing documents, policies & bylaws, operations manuals, organisational handbooks, orientation guides, or training materials. With his ear to the ground, Root’s guiding question is: “What is most needed here now?”

Inez Aponte (Associate: Creativity, Play & Youth Engagement, Facilitation)



Inez is a facilitator, educator and consultant in the Human Scale Development Approach, working with individuals and communities seeking to improve their quality of life in balance with the Earth’s ecology. With a background in art and performance, she focuses on the interplay between language, storytelling and behaviour change to help groups cultivate their ‘radical collective imagination’ - a capacity she believes is vital for the creation of a socially and ecologically just world. She has worked with a wide range of international audiences, including refugees, business leaders, community organisers and students from institutions such as Schumacher College, the Centre for Alternative Technology, London School of Economics and Lille Institute of Political Studies. Most recently, she founded the youth engagement project Crazy Beautiful World. She is an accredited Trainer for the Transition Network and a fellow of The Schumacher Institute. www.GrowingGoodLives.com
www.CrazyBeautiful.world

c. Audience: The Folks We're Here For

Culture Garden works with youth leaders, communities, and world-changing organisations who are committed to creating a thriving, life-sustaining civilisation for future generations.

Specifically, we partner with individuals and groups that:

- Are working alongside each other to create a better future for coming generations:
 - Seeking to transition towards more collaborative, partnership-oriented systems
- Want to cultivate a healthy culture as a supportive foundation for their actions in the world:
 - committed to changing their internal structures, before looking to change the outer world
- Are exhausted by repetitive, destructive cultural patterns:
 - such as bullying, gossip, scapegoating, and burnout
- Are seeking greater group engagement and an evolutionary orientation:
 - able to discuss internal Power & Authority, openly
- Are ready to disrupt existing personal, interpersonal, and cultural patterns to stimulate profound changes:
 - willing to let go of control, and engage with deep curiosity towards an emergent — not prescriptive — process
- Have capacity for deep self-reflection and are prepared to challenge the old patterns of dominance based behaviour — in themselves:
 - with the aspiration to be actively engaged in their inner work
- Are positioned to inspire and support others to do the same:
 - willing & ready to [*Connect, Create & Collaborate*](#)

d. Partners, Allies and Funders

We have long-standing friendships and collaborative partnerships with:

- Transition Network
- The Findhorn Foundation
- 8 Shields Institute
- Naropa University
- RISE Beyond Consulting
- Community Development Association of Scotland (CDAS)

4. WHERE WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

a. Where You'll Find Us

We are based in Findhorn, Scotland. We work all over the UK, with connections in the EU, Canada and the US.

b. Our Programs & Services

We provide community-engaged consulting, facilitation, and workshop series to support youth leaders, communities, and organisations to develop the core skills and practices for *connective*, *creative*, and *collaborative* cultures, and to integrate those skills and practices into their group systems over time.

Our Programs & Services Include:

- **Consulting**
We provide specialised programs of support which combine cultural expertise and consulting with experiential education, project management, and facilitation to allow the groups we partner with to integrate new cultural paradigms and practices into their group systems over time.

- **Facilitation**

We are experienced facilitators, and can be hired individually or as a team to collaboratively design and facilitate your event in a way that supportively engages the phenomenon of group culture and that optimizes connection, creativity, and collaboration.

- **Training & Educational Programmes**

All of our programs are comprised of a series of in-person modules, with online discussion, support, and project-based work in-between. Tailor-made to meet the needs of communities, youth leaders, and organisations, they provide an orientation to the key elements of healthy group cultures, and they support participants to test out and experientially unpack current best practices, and to invest their learning back into their home cultures and communities.

5. HOW WE ARE ORGANISED

a. Structure and Decision-Making

We are a self-employed business with 2 Directors:

- James Wood: Director of Community Engagement
- Madelanne Rust-D'Eye: Director of Facilitation

And 3 Associates:

- Root Cuthbertson (Associate: Curriculum Design)
- Deborah Benham (Associate: Curriculum Design, Consulting, Facilitation)
- Inez Aponte (Associate: Creativity, Play & Youth Engagement, Facilitation)

Our Advisory Council is a non-legal entity comprised of leaders and mentors in related fields, which informs and advises us in our work at regular intervals.

We use Sociocratic governance, meaning that we value the 'wisdom of the whole' and believe that the best creativity and solutions arise when we work collaboratively, honouring everyone's contribution and gaining everyone's consent. Sociocracy allows us to do this in an efficient and enjoyable way.

