



THE DANDELION is a resilient wildflower that is both edible and medicinal. It grows everywhere and spreads its seeds far and wide on the wind. As a symbol for cycles of praxis, or action and reflection, it reminds us that our work isn't over after the main project has finished. On the contrary, if "grown" well, it should seed not just one other project - but many.

FLOWER OF PRAXIS

We use this "Flower of Praxis" as a tool to remember the various steps and stages of any popular education process - that starts where people are at (the roots) and ends with action (the flower) and reflection (the seed, leading to another cycle). Participatory Action Research in general, and Coliberate in particular, is simply a super methodical and detailed Popular Education process.



STAGE 1 CONNECT ROOTS & SOIL

The roots of a dandelion are strong and deep. They are very difficult to pull and will grow in just about any kind of soil. However like all plants, it requires some basic minerals, regular watering and light to grow. This first stage involves “nourishing the soil” and “growing deep roots”.

Inspired by the ongoing needs that soil has, we remember to nourish relationships between people - which is the foundation of any group project - throughout the process with activities that build and maintain people’s connections to each other and to the project.

“Growing deep roots” reminds us that the project needs to be “rooted” in what people care about: their personal experiences and issues. Like cut flowers in a vase that eventually wilt - if a project is not rooted in people’s connections with their experiences, each other and the broader movements for change they are a part of - it too will eventually “wilt”.

STAGE ONE INVOLVES:

- Connecting people to each other
- Connecting people to issues they are personally impacted by and have in common
- Connecting to relevant information about the issues to develop a shared understanding
- Connecting to the broader movements for change

STAGE 2 INQUIRE LEAVES

As the dandelion begins to grow, it unfurls leaves to catch the sun’s rays. In stage two, the group designs a research project and goes out to “catch” information from their community.

STAGE TWO INVOLVES:

- Developing broad research goals
- Learning more about the issues and context through interviews, secondary research and workshops
- Designing and conducting research in the community, and then analyzing what you learned





STAGE 3 PLAN STEM

Stems are often overlooked. You don't generally eat stems or put stems in a vase without flowers. They are a means to an end. Without a long and strong stem, however - the flower would never reach enough light to blossom. In a dandelion, the long stems give the seeds just enough height to catch the wind. The stem is our symbol for the action plan. It's often more fun to jump into action right away, but with a strategic and thoughtful plan your action will be able to really "blossom".

STAGE THREE INVOLVES:

- Deciding your main audience and designing a report for them
- Deciding which recommendations from your research you will implement
- Developing materials and preparing for action

STAGE 4 ACT FLOWER

Just as the whole purpose of a plant is to flower, fruit and then go to seed, the whole purpose of this process is to take action. People often think of research as something that can be completed and put on a shelf. Not PAR! In this process the entire point of stages 1-3 is to prepare you to take informed action, or to share new knowledge that empowers others to take informed action. In a community-driven planning process, it might involve sharing a presentation of your research with decision-makers or building a campaign to have your community's priorities respected, resulting in the development and implementation of a city plan that is informed by its residents.

STAGE FOUR INVOLVES:

- Taking action! This can look like so many things. We leave this part blank for you to fill in because it depends entirely on what you find through your research and what you plan to do

STAGE 5 REFLECT SEEDS

Dandelion seeds are spectacular. They are often used as a symbol of hope stemming from the idea that you can wish on a dandelion seed ball, and if you can scatter all of the seeds with one big blow of your breath, your wishes will come true. In this final stage, we reflect on what the project has been and dream into the future.

STAGE FIVE INVOLVES:

- Assessing the entire process with your larger community and allies
- Identifying lessons learned that can be applied in your next steps
- Deciding next steps and preparing another cycle to build on your work and involve more people
- Closing out with appreciation for this particular group of individuals

