

High-Impact Course Development Lab

A course offered by Biodynamic Federation-Demeter International and the Section for Agriculture and developed and taught by Dr. Ambra Sedlmayr.

The course has been successfully completed in March 2026. Following a general online announcement in June 2025 which attracted over 50 interested participants from around the world, a registration and selection process has been conducted. As a result, 23 participants have been admitted, from which four dropped out during the course for various reasons.

12 online sessions on the course content and a final unit (either participation in the live finale in Dornach or in two online sessions) have been carried out. Additionally, three group coaching sessions were offered. The video recordings were made available in the course library along with the materials.

The feedback indicated that there were various reasons for participating. Among others, a desire to learn more about adult education and to understand learning processes and thereby to make courses more engaging, appealing, and effective. Participants were highly motivated and engaged and therefore the results and learnings were significant and different changes of perspectives could be achieved. For example:

- **Implementation of 7-fold learning process:** Moving from "delivering content" to facilitating a process; participants learned how to inspire insights and support the self-discovery journey of the student.
- **Experiential Learning:** Participants learned how to create learning experiences and allowing their students to find their own answers through phenomenological inquiry.
- **Student-centred approach:** Focusing on the students' journey, their specific needs, and existing experiences.

The feedback was overall very positive, and a high level of general gratitude has been expressed. Expectations were met to a very high degree and participants appreciated the teacher's professionalism, communication and dedication. The "live" finale meeting was essential for many participants to understand the entire 'arch' of adult learning better and dive deeper. Now the participants are very eager to put what they have learned into practice.

Action research results:

In general, it can be said that this pilot project led to a "proof of concept," meaning it clearly demonstrated that the learning content provided is something that biodynamic trainers are not familiar with, and that knowledge of it enables them to solve some pressing problems.

It was possible to identify some of the core challenges of teachers of Biodynamic Agriculture:

- Lack of student interest, engagement and practical application of what they are taught;
- Biodynamic educators not knowing how to activate participants' intrinsic motivation to learn;
- Overwhelm, lack of confidence and insecurities by Biodynamic teachers.

In the lab these problems were largely solved as participants developed:

- greater self-confidence and a new sense of identity as adult educators;
- The perspectives and skills to engage, motivate, and involve their participants, and to make them responsible for their own learning;
- An understanding of how people naturally learn and how to apply this knowledge to course development;

- The willingness to shift from largely ineffective content- and teacher-centered teaching to participant- and learning-centered facilitation of learning processes.
- Enthusiasm for their role as biodynamic trainers;

General conclusions and next steps:

The ‘High-Impact Course Development Lab’ developed within this project is a promising approach to help biodynamic educators solve their most urgent problems in reaching participants and causing real learning, thereby developing a new level of self-confidence and competence as facilitators of adult learning. The materials developed in this project are a solid foundation for further offerings for biodynamic trainers.

Future collaboration on local training programs can develop particularly in regions from which several people have participated (Latin America, Australia, Indonesia). It is already possible to see and anticipate that the know-how taught in the lab is gaining a life of its own and begins to be spread among Biodynamic educators. Several spin-offs from the Lab are already happening in groups of trainers, especially in Latin America and Asia. The topic has been included in the upcoming workshop and training initiatives of existing train-the-trainers networks, and study groups on the topic have already been formed or will be formed in the near future. There will be different ways in which the knowledge will spread and bear fruits.

Participants were asked to apply their learning on the lab immediately on the courses they were being taught and in developing a small course based on the new approach. Most participants were able to try the new approach in their courses, but only a few developed a stand-alone course during the lab. Since it became clear that it is a big challenge for participants to develop a course at the same time as they are learning this new approach to adult education, the aim is to create a new edition in which the content of the ‘Course Development Lab’ becomes a foundational course in Anthroposophical Andragogy and a second level course focuses on Course Development mentoring and coaching, to support initial implementation.

We believe that this course, through its positive impact on biodynamic trainers, provides an essential impulse for the renewal of the biodynamic movement worldwide. With a human-centred approach like this, more and more people gain skills to “awaken” a desire for biodynamics in others, including both farmers and consumers.