



ECOVILLAGE EDUCATION PROGRAM MOVES CENTRE STAGE

Two major education meetings drew ecovillage educators from around the World to Findhorn at the end of May.

The first, attended by 23 people (with participants from 13 ecovillages across Europe, Australia, Africa, India and North and South America) had the aim of exploring the formalisation of an ecovillage education, potentially along the lines pioneered by the permaculture movement. Considerable progress was made generating agreement on the range of subjects to be covered in a common curriculum and preliminary steps were taken to explore the issue of providing formal accreditation of ecovillage training programmes. A steering committee has been established

to take forward curriculum development, accreditation and fundraising. Funds permitting, a further get-together, mutual learning experience and teach-in

involving most of those involved in this meeting will take place during 2005.

The second meeting, which followed directly on from the

first and involved a number of the same participants, gathered together faculty, staff, and supporters of Living Routes, a US based non-profit organisation that directs college-level programs in ecovillages around the world. Approximately 20 participants from Brazil, India, Mexico, Senegal, Scotland, and the US met for the first time to share 'best practices' and ideas for program development. The next Living Routes Faculty Training is being planned for the Summer of 2005 at the Sirius Community in western Massachusetts.

For details, please visit the website at www.livingroutes.org or contact Daniel Greenberg at daniel@livingroutes.org or on +1 888 515 7333.



Italian Ecovillage Enjoys Local Successes

The Damanhur community, situated north of Turin, has achieved significant successes on two fronts. First, in recent local elections, it has increased to 21 the number of councillors elected to local government. In

Valchiusella voters chose Con te per il Paese, electing 21 councillors; 3 councillors were elected in Lugnacco together with individual councillors in Issiglio, Traversella, Trausella, Pecco, Baldissero and Alice.

Further to this, the greatly anticipated 'Damanhur Crea' initiative has been launched. This is a multifunctional space, created inside a former Olivetti factory bought by the community, where ideas and



the constituency of Vidracco, the Damanhurian party, Con te per il Paese, (Together for the country) took 77% of the vote. This means that even without counting the votes of the Damanhur community members, local residents chose to elect a Damanhurian administration. This trend was echoed in the other valley councils: 18% of

dreams are translated into artistic objects, cultural events and ecologically sustainable projects. President of Turin Province, Mercedes Bresso, cut the tape at the inauguration watched by 3,000 visitors. The centre will be a major venue for the arts, serving the Damanhur community and the population of the Valchiusella valley.

New Turkish Ecovillage Pioneers Appropriate Technologies

Güneköy ecovillage, located some 60km (40 miles) from the Turkish capital, Ankara, is turning into a busy laboratory of appropriate technology and social experimentation. Over the last year, a village-scale biodiesel project has been established using canola oil, with limited funding from the Middle East Technical University. The pilot plant, with a 150 litre (33 gallon) capacity reactor, will generate fuel for tractors. A small-scale biogas reactor is also being developed for use with cow dung but with a more efficient design than is traditionally used in the Turkish countryside. The project will generate gas as a heat source and as a valuable fertilizer for agriculture.

Angora rabbit wool will be produced by the inhabitants of six neighbouring villages, the wool will be hand spun, and the long fibers hand knitted by women as luxury wear in great demand on the world market. The short fiber wool will be used for sports and health products.

There is a need to generate new rural income-generating opportunities and there is a great deal of hope that the introduction of Angora production, along with other employment opportunities, will help stem the flow of rural-urban migration. For details, contact Ali Gokmen: agokmen@metu.edu.tr

The education of women, young people and children is also a very important aim of Güneköy. A proposal has been submitted to the EU to support projects that will improve the employability of people through vocational training based on locally-determined needs. In this project, the world famous



NEWS IN BRIEF

CHINESE ECOVILLAGE PLAN
The National Environmental Protection Agency of China has confirmed that the first ecovillage in the country is to be built in Baiyangdian, Hebei Province. The project has attracted much support from all levels of government. The announcement comes as a response to a loss of forest cover in the area, and it is hoped the development will counteract this trend.

PEOPLEFINDER LAUNCHED
Ecovillage Network-UK's new PeopleFinder is a contact point for anyone who has ecovillage visions in the UK. Over 70 people and groups have registered, with the service being provided by post or internet. To register send an SAE to PeopleFinder, PO Box 1410, BRISTOL, BS99 3JP; or visit the website: www.evnuk.org.uk

RUSSIAN NETWORK BORN
Meetings in Moscow and at Kitezh orphanage, 300km to the south, have seen the birth of a Russian national ecovillage network. Both the founding members, Grishino ecovillage and Nevoecoville, are located in the north-west, not far from St Petersburg. There is plenty of interest elsewhere in the country and meetings over the next year will build the membership of the new network. For details, please contact Vasudeva at grishino@greenlab.ru

PHILIPPINES GO GREEN
A 2,000 hectare site, about two hours away from Manila, is being investigated for its suitability as a site for an ecovillage. Max Lindegger, from EcoLogical Solutions in Australia, has been invited to visit the project and help with the assessment. The development, if considered feasible, is expected to become a model site for the region. For details, contact Max Lindegger: office@ecologicalsolutions.com.au

Tamera To Launch Reforestation Project

Tamera ecovillage in Portugal is about to launch an innovative reforestation project. With co-funding from the EU, the project aims to plant 20,000 trees in around 200 hectares (500 acres). While the EU will principally support the planting of cork oaks and stone pines, ecologists from Tamera will also plant fruit and forest trees, creating a good mix.

The team has already begun to reveal the 'dream of the landscape' in recent years by developing acupunctural 'green oases'. The vision is to create a balanced, edible landscape with

wooded areas and extensive vegetable and fruit cultivation, in line with the teachings of permaculture and agroforestry. For more intensive cultivation of vegetables, and the further development of permaculture projects, the community are looking for experienced, co-operative specialists who can advise on suitable methods or who would like to work and live with them permanently. There are also opportunities to join the 'ecological autumn' and olive harvest in Tamera. For details email: ecology@tamera.org

EV Seminar, Bangladesh

An ecovillage development seminar was held for villagers of Piprashoir, Harikhola and Chorokhola in Bangladesh. Mr Boniface Subrata Gomes, the organiser of the seminar, invited the ecovillage pioneer Dr M.A. Hakim to conduct the seminar. The villagers decided to develop environmentally friendly clubs which will work with farmers towards ecovillage development. Bangladeshi villagers have recently suffered poor weather conditions, and village women with their hand woven fabrics find it hard to compete against cheaper imports. It is hoped that with close co-operation between the villages a more secure and sustainable future is possible. For details contact Boniface at basd@pradeshta.net

Forest Pride Festival Features Ecovillages

Over 5,000 people representing tribes from the north of Thailand participated in the 'Forest Pride Festival' in Chiang Mai recently. Ms. Jonggon Duangsri organised a display showing ecovillages from around the world. She said the grass roots movements are very involved in managing and restoring forests and that villagers must act responsibly with the resources which are so essential to them if they wish to continue with their ecovillage lifestyles.

The opening ceremony was conducted by the former Prime Minister of Thailand, Mr. Anan Panyarachun. For more details please contact Ms. Duangsri at info@chiangmaigreen.com

EGYPT'S FIRST ECOVILLAGE LAUNCHED

A new model community, Tamr Henna Ecovillage, has been created in the Sinai Desert. Nominated for an Equator Prize as a model of sustainability and alleviation of poverty, the project has made 300 acres (120 hectares) of desert land into olive orchards and palm tree oases. The farm is aiming to grow and pickle organic olives as a working demonstration of sustainable



agriculture in the desert, whilst restoring the natural heritage of the region. The ecovillage will also be promoting ecotourism as an important source of income. For more details email: sdselwanes@yahoo.com

POLISH-FRENCH ECOVILLAGE YOUTH EXCHANGE

21 schoolchildren along with three teachers associated with the Polish ecovillage, Dbrówka, made exchange visits with students from the Saint Yves agriculture school of Gourin in Brittany, France (the French boys had experienced Polish hospitality in September 2003). The visit helped create strong bonds of friendship and cross-cultural understanding and was co-financed by the EU's Youth Programme and fundraising by the students.

This is just one of several 'ecovillage twinning' initiatives being promoted by GEN in an attempt to build international solidarity. Recent years have already seen a visit by members of an Italian ecovillage (Torri Superiore) to a sister ecovillage in Guinea, West Africa; while GEN Senegal is actively seeking European ecovillages to twin with Senegalese counterparts. For more information on the Franco-Polish exchange, please contact wasicole@wp.pl and for details of ecovillage twinning in Senegal, visit www.cresp.sn/gensen/genseneng.htm

Australian Shires get into Ecovillage Zoning

The council of Tumbarumba Shire in New South Wales, Australia, has been looking into the possibility of incorporating the option of ecovillages into their planning scheme.

Meanwhile Bryon Shire, in the same State, has already set aside a zone specifically for the development of ecovillages.

In Perth, many miles away on the opposite side of the continent, another council has been investigating the use of land capability studies, rather than zonings, to determine the most appropriate use for a given plot of land. The use of land capability studies has been popular for several years with ecovillage designers in many parts of the world. For more information, you can contact Max Lindegger. Email: office@ecologicalsolutions.com.au