



GAIA UNIVERSITY ANNOUNCES INTERNATIONAL MASTERS DEGREE PROGRAMS

Gaia University, founded in 2004 to offer accredited Bachelors and Masters degrees to regeneration students worldwide, has announced the first International Masters degree programs scheduled to begin in 2006.

Gaia U is leading the formation of a confederated, global campus and has recently been endorsed by GEN-Europe and the Ecovillage Network of the Americas. Bill Mollison and Declan Kennedy will act as senior academic advisers. Gaia U has international academic accreditation through IMCA/Revans University.

Using an action-learning, student directed methodology based on the ground-breaking UK Permaculture Diploma Worknet (which has delivered over 160 Diplomas in Applied Permaculture Design since 1992) Gaia U International programs are the fore-runners of a raft of Regional programs which will be offered through the confederated ecovillages, permaculture

and holistic health centres. Student/associates will be able to study in their own language supported by an international web of tutors and advisors. The first Regional Center is Gaia TN at the Farm in the USA. Gaia TN opens as of 2006. Other centres in Mexico, Brazil, Europe, New Zealand, Australia, Africa and the US are at the planning stage and some will begin offering programs in 2006/7.

Focused on integrated principles of Earth Regeneration and the 3 Ethics of Permaculture, the first International Masters programmes will have specialisations in:

1. Regional Development of Gaia U: for people who wish to focus on the strategic development of a Gaia U Centre in their (bio) region.
2. Ecovillage Design: integrated community design, urban and rural.
3. Permaculture Design: Advanced applied permaculture design for those who have



experience in the field.

4. Transitions: for people or organisations making paradigm shifts who seek support in making these important and challenging changes.

Gaia CERTN will also host classes or apprenticeships in sustainable agriculture, ecovillage design, natural health, appropriate technology, soy technology, sustainable business management, fine arts

and alternative education. Many of these areas will be fully developed as Bachelor degree pathways by 2007. Gaia CERTN hopes to also offer Masters degrees in select subjects at this time.

To find out more and to register for 2006 courses, contact Gaia CERTN at gaia@thefarm.org as well as Gaia University's website at gaiauniversity.org

Gaia Education - A New Global Educational Initiative Is Launched



Gaia Education, a new global educational initiative that aims to distil international ecovillage experience into a common curriculum, has been launched following a meeting of senior ecovillage educators at Galgafarm ecovillage in Hungary in May.

This initiative has been welcomed and endorsed by UNITAR and UNESCO as an important contribution to educational efforts under the umbrella of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

Gaia Education is the product

of a process of consultation between leading ecovillage educators on every continent over the last several years. Its purpose is to formalise and make available to a wide public the experience garnered by ecovillages internationally in pioneering successful models of sustainability. Over the next two years, the ecovillage educational package designed by Gaia Education will be run as pilot programmes in UNESCO's Biosphere Reserves in Cuba and Slovenia and in numerous ecovillages affiliated to the Global Ecovillage Network in Australia, Italy, Germany, Scotland, Mexico, USA, Brazil, Denmark and Senegal.

May East, Gaia Education Programme Director based at the Findhorn Foundation

community in the north of Scotland, summed up the importance of the new initiative in the following terms: "What this programme offers – uniquely – is an educational package based on the experiences of communities around the world in designing and implementing sustainability-related initiatives. It offers both a conceptual road-map to a more sustainable society and the tools for achieving this – through community-level renewable energy generation, organic food production, ecological building techniques, biological waste management, sustainable transport systems, community governance and so on."

For more details, contact May East at mayeast@findhorn.org

NEWS IN BRIEF

RIVE MEETING

The 9th RIVE (Rete Italiana Villaggi Ecologici) meeting was held in July at Il Forteto, near Florence, a socially engaged community founded in the 1980s. Over 150 people, including the representatives of 13 ecovillages, gathered to discuss some of the central topics of ecovillage life: how to start an ecovillage and avoid common mistakes, how to communicate effectively making decisions by facilitation and consensus, how to accept that "ecovillages are not paradise"...

The Italian network was started in 1996 in Alessano (Puglia), and it has now been formally founded as a non-profit association. The newly elected Wisdom Council is formed by members of La Comune di Bagnaia, Torri Superiore, Il Popolo degli Elfi, Ecovillaggio Basilico and AAM Terra Nuova. In September, Basilico (Prato) organised a regional congress on "Ecovillage: the ecological footprint of those who walk on tiptoes", and a members' meeting, open to ecovillage representatives, will be held in January. For further details, contact Lucilla Borio at Lucilla@gen-europe.org

CAR-FREE ECOVILLAGE CREATED IN FRANCE

A 500 strong march which was held to campaign for a world with a much reduced role for the private motor vehicle has created a temporary car-free ecovillage.

The site of the village is the new eco-site of Passerelle Eco, France's ecovillage network and magazine. The marchers decided to create it as an experiment in co-operative and sustainable living. They also participated in local eco-building, carpentry, permaculture gardening, solar cooking, wild plant cooking and Tai Chi Chuan.

Contact: Jean Luc Girard, jeanlucgirard@online.fr or passerelles.eco@free.fr

Global Ecovillage Forum, China



The Great People's Hall of Beijing, China was host to the recent First Global Forum on Standards for Ecovillages and Ecoregions in China. It was organized by the Ministry of Forestry, GERDF (a GEN partner in the EcoEarth Alliance) and other government and private partners.

More than 300 guests heard an address by Liora Adler, long-time GEN activist. She highlighted the achievements of ecovillages worldwide and stressed their importance in a global strategy of Earth Regeneration. Andy Langford of GEN-Europe Council presented a talk to the Ministry of Forestry about the importance of integrated ecovillage and permaculture design. Valerie Seitz, of the Ecovillage Training Center in

Tennessee, US presented on Ecocities.

The Forum was part of a 14-day trip in which the presenters also held meetings with the government of Shaowu City, Fujiang province. A Memo of Understanding was signed with the Mayor and other government officials to work toward the building of a model ecovillage in their region and the restoration of an ancient town as part of their vision for economic sustainability through ecotourism.

Also, through an NGO contact in Taiwan, the Community Sustainability Assessment of GEN has now been translated to Chinese and this will be posted on the GEN website.

For further information, contact Liora Adler: Lioraadler@aol.com

GEN-Europe's 2005 AGA



GEN-Europe's Annual General Assembly was hosted by the Galgafarm ecovillage near Budapest, Hungary. It was attended by 43 people from 18 countries.

For the first time the Network has no significant source of external funding and much of the discussion was devoted to considering how to continue to operate in the future.

Despite the current funding squeeze, the tone of the meeting was decidedly up-beat and optimistic, with the members resolved to continue providing many of the current services, even if on a voluntary basis.

All present were very impressed with the achievements of the Galgafarm ecovillage, winner of the 2004 Ecovillage Excellence Award and delighted with the traditional Hungarian dancers who helped end the event on such a high note.

GEN Education Breakthrough in Brazil



By the shores of the South Atlantic, at the recently inaugurated Gaia Village Training Centre in Garopaba beach, Brazil, a Memorandum of Understanding and Partnership has been signed between GEN (the Global Ecovillage Network), ENA (Ecovillage

Network of the Americas), the Findhorn Foundation and UNESCO-University of Extremo Sul Catarinense.

This is the result of a synergistic year of curriculum development involving Brazilian sustainability educators and

practitioners plus UNESCO teachers led by May East, Programme Director of Gaia Education.

Over the next 12 months UNESCO will be aligning financial and institutional support for the first Brazilian University-led Ecovillage Training to start in July 2006. The new Gaia Education Ecovillage Design Education curriculum will be offered in 2007.

For the last three years Gaia Village has been the focal point for the annual Brazilian ECO-SUST & ENA Brazil meetings. It has a permaculture design by Max Lindegger and is one of the ecovillage hosts of the forthcoming Ecovillage Training.

For further info, contact May East: mayeast@findhorn.org