



GEN CELEBRATES TENTH ANNIVERSARY

What a birthday party! 130 people from 22 countries from every continent came to the Findhorn Foundation in the first week of October 2005 to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) and left enthused and full of inspiration and energy for the next decade to come.

The event, which opened with a panel of ecovillage elders reflecting on the successes and lessons of the last decade and ended with a phalanx of young people declaring themselves to be the 'Next GEN', truly straddled the generations and struck a fine balance between reflection and ambition.



Pracha Hutauwatr at GEN+10

Centre stage for much of the week long conference was Gaia Education, an initiative to create and disseminate an international ecovillage curriculum (Ecovillage Design Education – EDE) that was launched during the conference. The four key themes of the curriculum –

spirituality, ecology, economy and the social dimensions of sustainability – defined the core shape of the week.

A Network that began life just a decade ago has today developed into a rich and diverse worldwide movement with multiple growing points. During the tenth anniversary conference, we looked into the mirror of who we are and come away impressed. We also come away with many new contacts, challenges and projects to foster and develop.

For more information, on GEN and the conference please contact Jonathan Dawson jonathan@gen-europe.org

GAIA UNIVERSITY OFFERS DEGREES

Gaia University, founded in 2004 to enable a worldwide confederation of organizations to offer accredited learning for a post-petroleum future, has announced the launch of its first degree programmes for 2006.

Courses offered: BSc and MSc degrees in Integrative EcoSocial Design with specializations in Permaculture, Ecovillage Design, Life Transitions, Social Communication, Appropriate Technology and other areas of sustainability and regeneration. Also in May an MSc degree and Diploma in the Regional Development of Gaia University is offered at the Gaia Center for Education & Research, Tennessee.

Gaia University's website is to be translated into Spanish and Portuguese so expect training for Regional Center Development in Latin America, Brazil and Europe.

The main threads common to the workshop content of all programmes are Permaculture design, design by the removal of limiting factors, multi-disciplinary and larger scale designs for town and watershed energy descent, designing for conscious ecosocial evolution and designing as a synergistic, leaderful, group-based action-learning process.

Gaia University provides peer, tutor and adviser support to encourage the associate to develop, so they become potent, ecosocial, actionist designers concerned with meeting the needs of all life forms in the context of evolving post-oil human cultures. Credit allowance is available for PDCs and Diplomas, Ecovillage Education, as well as some prior learning and experience.

Andy Langford and Liora Adler, Gaia University designers and founders expressed heartfelt thanks to everyone in the GEN and Permaculture movements who are helping in the development of Gaia University. For further details visit Gaia University's website www.gaiauniversity.org or email info@gaiauniversity.org



Carlos on Acandi beach, helping la Caravana make safe nests and tag sea turtles for the Dept. of Marine Biology of Colombia.

NEXT GENERATION

One of the most exciting outcomes of the GEN+10 conference at the Findhorn Foundation community was the creation of GEN Youth Council, also known as "NextGEN".

This new body evolved out of a challenge thrown down by one of GEN's visionaries, Robert Gilman: "Who exactly is going to take this movement forward?" Sprinkled throughout the audience were several dozen young people who responded to the challenge by considering their role in the ecovillage movement. For the remainder of the week long conference, they gathered to discuss how they might serve to re-ignite people's ability to dream.

Next GEN's mission is to ignite in youth a desire to change the world, providing a mechanism for channelling their passion into

GREEN GATHERING

Portugal's first green gathering, Encontro Vida Verde, was organised by the Eco-village Network of Portugal, 26 - 28 August 05. Over 200 people, including children and families, came together for the event.

Over the three days, local people – who still retain the old skills – became teachers, and showed how to build "taipa" rammed earth walls, "xisto" stone/slate foundations, "barro" a bit like adobe but a cement like mix of clay + earth, and "cal" lime plaster. People were shown how to use traditional agriculture methods and plough with the burro, the Portuguese donkey.

There were demonstrations, practical hands-on activities and self-development workshops. Bread was baked from an earth oven each day. Local organic food was prepared in a refitted kitchen, some cooked in solar ovens. Yoga, Tai Chi, Meditation, non-violent communication, traditional dancing took place alongside natural spinning, paint-making and soap making.

There are plans to make this an annual event. For information, contact Jonathan Evelight ola@rainbowcommunities.org



actions that will meet the needs of the human community without degrading the environment. Within the Global Ecovillage Movement, Next GEN will create a network that will empower youth who, alongside their elders, can be effective architects and authors of a sustainable and just world. Specifically, the group hopes to increase youth participation in the Global Ecovillage Movement, to facilitate training opportunities, as well as to coordinate a robust intergenerational dialogue within the Movement.

They have already posted a Next GEN wiki (<http://ecovillage.wikicities.com/wiki/nextgen>), with a web site forthcoming, and have begun planning a Global Ecovillage conference for 2007.

For more info on the Global Ecovillage Network, visit their site at <http://gen.ecovillage.org>

NEWS IN BRIEF

SUSTAINABLE SUMMER SCHOOL ITALY

Links between the Italian 'sustainable contraction' (decrecita felice) movement and the ecovillage movement were strengthened further during this summer school.



The GEN team at Sustainable Contraction

It was an extremely well attended event with over 200 people of all ages. The school was organised as a think-tank on various topics, including sustainable economics, how to reduce consumption, complementary currencies and right livelihood. Ecovillages attracted a lot of interest as evidence that another lifestyle is possible, leading a debate on how to put contraction into practice in the short term.

Serge Latouche, the French philosopher and writer on contraction, attended and expressed an interest in visiting Torri Superiore ecovillage.

The contraction philosophy challenges the myth of sustainable development and eco-efficiency with perspectives for rural and urban communities.

For further details, please contact Lucilla Borio at lucilla@gen-europe.org

ECOVILLAGE PETITION SENT TO THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

A public petition has been sent to the Scottish Parliament requesting that planning legislation in Scotland be amended to facilitate the development of ecovillages. The petition was heard in December 2005.

For further information please contact the petition's sponsor, Eurig Scandrett eurigscandrett@rediffmail.com

Italian Ecovillage Meetings

Two major gatherings in Italy in the summer of 2005 have put the ecovillage movement firmly on the map in the country. The first was the annual general assembly of the Italian Ecovillage Network (RIVE), which was held at il Forteto, Vicchio, Firenze in July. Il Forteto is a community of about 100 people, founded in the mid '70s on a 500 hectares property on the hills of Il Mugello, north west from Florence. During the meeting, it was agreed to register RIVE as a non-profit association which will enable the organisation to move forward in terms of fundraising and activities.

The second gathering was hosted by the new ecovillage Basilico in Vicchio di Prato, Tuscany and was aimed at communicating the ecovillage experience to local government administrators in Italy. The conference was attended by over 150 people, including the mayor of Vicchio and two officers of Prato County. Workshops offered included one on facilitation and consensus offered by Lucilla Borio and Permaculture and Ecovillage Design by Massimo Candela (both of Torri Superiori ecovillage). The ecovillage concept in Italy is now attracting many people from all walks of life.

OSLO PERMACULTURE PARKS

Ecovillagers in Norway, led by Claudio Madaune, have been involved in a programme to take permaculture design principles into the public parks of the Norwegian capital, Oslo. Young people worked with the theory and practice of landscaping and gardening, with permaculture approaches to consensual decision making, conflict and team building, work and social integration.

The project was undertaken in two of Oslo's public parks: Johan Sverdrups and Gråbeinsletta. Features include pyramids, spirals, circular gardens/flowerbeds and beds planted with a mixture of vegetables, flowers, medicinal plants, fruits, herbs, berries and vine plants. Recycled materials like car tyres, organic and construction waste were used. Info: changetheworld@world-changers.org

8th Gathering of Iberian Ecovillages



Morning circle at the three day Spanish Ecovillage gathering

In September 2005 over 450 people, interested in conscious and sustainable ways of living, gathered at Sierra de Gata, Extremadura for the annual three day Ecovillage gathering, hosted and organized by the ECOTOPIA Foundation under the umbrella of the Iberian Ecovillage Network.

The natural surroundings were magnificent. People camped next to the river, or stayed at the Molino Parador de Ti Mismo, community and homebase of the ECOTOPIA Foundation. During the gathering experts of all fields offered workshops. Eco-building pioneers and participants built a strawbale and bamboo arch, a solar oven,

and a window out of recycled bottles. The newly formed Network of Straw-bale Building met and presented a showcase of strawbale building.

Different sustainable living projects in Spain and Portugal gave presentations. Water was omnipresent, with water dances, water sculptures and presentations on Living Water. The children had games, puppets, learnt Brazilian capoeira, and made tons of friends. The gathering was a great experience and inspiration and we all felt part of something bigger than us. UTOPIA is alive.

For further details, contact Maria Vazquez of the ECOTOPIA Foundation maria@ecotopia.es

GEN AT THE WEEC

GEN was represented by a small team of European ecovillagers at the third World Environmental Education Congress (WEEC), held in Torino, Italy in October 2005. Around 1500 people from 180 countries took part in four days of work.

The GEN panel comprised: Drazen Simlesa, Andy Langford, Massimo Candela and Lucilla Borio. The team's presentation was "Ecology and economy: a union to forge" and it was received with keen interest.

On the final day President Gorbachov was the guest of honour and gave a vibrant speech on the urgency of positive actions at all levels, political, educational and practical.

The next WEEC will be held in Durban, South Africa, in 2007 and GEN has been invited.

Brazilian Urban Regeneration

A team of ecovillage educators delivered a training programme, Ecovillages: New approaches to Urban Regeneration to local government officials from across Latin America and the Caribbean within the framework of CIFAL, a programme of the UN agency, UNITAR, in which GEN is a participating partner.

The session was hosted by CIFAL Curitiba Brazil and presented a model for sustainability, encouraging environmentally responsible design and development of Latin American cities.

Findhorn ecovillage is in the process of accreditation as a member of the CIFAL network.

For further details, visit <http://dcp.unitar.org/spip/article/185.html> or contact May East mayeast@findhorn.org