



A True Greening Of Education

There is a real and growing hunger for education that integrates head, heart and hands. People of all kinds are voting with their feet for a more satisfying and holistic educational experience. This is where ecovillages come in.

These GEN pages relate stories from across the world of new educational frontiers being breached in an ecovillage context. Gaia Education, whose flagship curriculum – Ecovillage Design Education – has been endorsed by the UNESCO Decade of Education for Sustainable Development – launches an international online service and is chosen to exhibit at the upcoming UNESCO DESD exhibition.

At Findhorn a seminar discussed the building of a resilient



A student learning about bees.

bioregional food economy and its Moray Arts Centre has won a major award to create an educational ecological garden.

A number of ecovillage-based educational programmes not mentioned in this issue also continue to go from strength to strength. Gaia University, the decentralised, action-learning institution has consolidated its two 'real-time' Regional Centers in the US and Germany. It is now offering accredited Masters and Bachelors degrees in Integrated EcoSocial Design, Green Business, Sustainable Money Design, and Re-localisation. And Living Routes, which offers students at US universities the opportunity to study accredited semesters in ecovillages in nine countries worldwide, continues to grow.

What we are witnessing is nothing short of a revolution in educational ethics and practice. In growing numbers, students are saying loud and clear that the conventional education to which they are subjected is not fit for purpose for the age into which we are transitioning. To navigate the rough waters ahead will demand of us the full expression of all our gifts – that we be the biggest and most powerful we can be. The holistic education provided by ecovillages is leading the way in showing a different and better way.

Written by Jonathan Dawson: jonathan@gen-europe.org

Award For Sieben Linden Ecovillage

The German ecovillage, Sieben Linden, has been given a special award for active citizenship at the German Energy Concept awards. The jury expressed their appreciation for Sieben Linden's commitment to building an ecological and social model settlement.

It further raises the profile of Sieben Linden following the issue of a professionally made

film about this year's Ecovillage Design Education International course, run in conjunction with the nearby ZEGG community. The film beautifully describes the bonds developed between 23 people from 17 countries, who are all deeply committed to worldwork.

For more information, please contact Kosha@siebenlinden.de or ateuchert@web.de

Alternative Graduate Education



All smiles – Ann and Alison have designed their own education.

Two American women will embark upon a voyage to Auroville, India in the fall of 2009 where they will carry out their self-designed, independent education programme.

The journey of Song Anh 'Ann' Nguyen and Alison Jean is in response to the increasing inability of recent graduates to afford independent living and post-graduate tuition while managing undergraduate debt.

They will base their education in India through working with the Auroville Centre for Scientific Research, an international voluntary organisation working towards a sustainable future with renewable energy systems, appropriate architecture and building technologies, waste water recycling and sanitation, and the use of these technologies through training programmes.

They plan to live and work outside Auroville in Sadhana Forest where there is an ongoing

effort to restore a near-extinct drytropical forest and revive the dried land and its waters.

After college the two women felt compelled to find an inexpensive arena for continuing education, "one in which a person can develop strong intellectual ideas and technical skills, while simultaneously being of service to the global community." However, financial costs were not their only concern. "It was clear to us that whatever the solution may be, our entire approach needed to be holistically low in cost – low in energy use as well as finances", says Alison. So, they decided sailing from Boston to India would be the best travel option. "Sailing might sound idealistic", says Ann, "but it fits into our curriculum."

To discover more about the upcoming endeavours of Ann and Alison visit their website: www.alternativegradschool.org

Six week residential at Crystal Waters offers skills for survival in a time of peak oil, climate change and economic stress – Ecovillage Design Education with emphasis on food sustainability & design. For info visit: www.ecologicalsolutions.com.au/courses/crssum.php?crsid=29





Moray Arts Centre Wins Funding Support



Moray Art Centre's garden will employ permaculture principles.

The Moray Art Centre at the Findhorn Foundation has won £53,000 from The People's Millions competition in the UK for the construction of a bio-diverse, ecological garden.

The garden will be open all year round and will include several themed areas to stimulate play, arts and crafts and horticultural activities and will increase the biodiversity of the area.

In line with the best permaculture design principles, the garden will serve multiple functions – food production, hand-built clay ovens for making bread and pizzas surrounded by specially designed outdoor seating heated by the ovens, kilns for firing clay art items made in the centre and a wood-turning area where visitors can learn to make wooden plates for their pizzas!

Environmental learning tools like feeders for bees, insect and bat boxes and bird box cameras will allow people to get closer

to wildlife and bat detectors and microscopes will bring a different view. The garden will also have a fun element in the style of *Alice In Wonderland* with mazes, hidden areas and lots of surprises.

The Moray Arts Centre is a highly energy-efficient building – equipped with photovoltaic and geo-thermal energy and lit with LED technology – whose purpose is: "To put beauty back as central in the study and achievement in drawing and painting and to question, explore and find the highest beauty of our time; a beauty that touches people as a visceral, body experience of upliftment, an aesthetic orgasm, the anti-depressant with no side-effects". The centre opened in July 2007 and has already welcomed over 16,000 visitors, international artists and exhibitions.

For further details, please contact Randy Klinger randy.klinger@hotmail.com

Children Take Friendship Theatre On Tour

The children of Tamera, Portugal have fulfilled a long-held dream to create a piece of theatre and then tour it internationally.

In the piece the children discover the transformative secret of friendship. The idea arose after seven of the children participated in a pilgrimage through Israel-Palestine. The children have learned to perform the piece in English.

Their first tour led them to Germany and Switzerland where they performed in many schools.



Tamera's children in rehearsal

One of the children, Naila, 12, said: "We want to go on travelling and get to know the world and also become ambassadors for the idea of peace and community."

Food Security Solar Tamera

Flavour of the moment at Findhorn is the drive to promote greater bioregional food resilience.

The community has a food footprint just 39% of the national average (according to a 2006 study) due to the predominantly local, seasonal, organic and vegetarian nature of its diet.

With the growing vulnerability of globally-based food production and distribution, the community is aiming to further strengthen local food networks in Moray and the north of Scotland.

The community's gardens are already used for training and demonstration purposes by the Soil Association, Britain's primary organic agricultural body. It now plans to develop a local food hub, with the community's wholefoods shop, the Phoenix, acting as a core distribution node for local and organic food producers and processors in the region. A bid has been submitted to the Scottish Government's Climate Challenge Fund to pay for a Local Food Education Officer to work with consumers and producers.



Mr Lochhead, Scottish Minister.

In November 2008 it held the CIFAL Findhorn seminar, Food Security: A Bioregional Response. It brought together growers, processors, educators, cooks, planners and policy-makers to discuss how a stronger local food network can be built.

Scotland's Minister for Rural Affairs and the Environment, Richard Lochhead, was the keynote speaker, he said: "We want to ensure Scotland maintains the capacity for food and drink production and that we have access to affordable food. With food security at the top of the global agenda, there is an opportunity to make sustainable use of our natural resources."



Children learn about solar power.

Tamera, in Portugal, which has not been connected to the electric grid to date, has decided to get connected and to sell back to the grid the solar energy it generates.

"A new law regulating the sale of solar energy to the grid made this decision easy for us," said community member, Martin Schindele, "since both financially and ecologically it is better than our previous approach."

Tamera will install 22kW of new photovoltaic generating power (6 installations at 3.68kW each) for solar energy and 12 square meters of solar panels for warm water production. Martin said: "We want to feed at least the same amount of solar energy into the grid as we will take from it. Should the public grid ever fail, we can revert to our 'island system' as it exists now."

Under present conditions, the energy expenses for the production of the photovoltaic modules will be amortised over three years.

Tamera is looking for investors for this project. Please contact: solar@tamera.org

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To contribute to the Global
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