



GEN Meeting Marks Turning Point

The board of the Global Ecovillage Network met at EcoArt Village in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado in the US, February 2009. The meeting marked a turning point in GEN's history. With two new representatives from Asia: Sajini Pathiraja from Sarvodaya, Sri Lanka and Penelope Reyes from the Happy Earth project in the Philippines, and with the formal admittance of NextGEN representative Ali Rosenblatt as a full member, the board now has (for the first time) a majority of female members and almost half (three out of seven) from the global South.

The board reaffirmed its commitment to upgrading its website and database, with the aim of creating a highly visible and accessible international information sharing hub. It also reiterated its intention to build stronger links with the sustainable communities movement worldwide, both in intentional and more conventional communities.

GEN is also employing staff for the first time in many years and an ambitious fund-raising initiative has been launched.

For further details, contact the new President of GEN, Giovanni Ciarlo sircoyote@aol.com

Women Pursue Dream Professions

In Tamera, Portugal, eight women, most of them over 60 years old, are working together to build a new village, the Aldeia da Luz. While most of their contemporaries prepare to retire, these women are creating their own home bases from which they can pursue their dream professions.

The women decided to build with straw bales and adobe as it keeps the rooms cool in the hot summer temperatures, is ecologically friendly and produced in the region. These materials are also easy to work with, which means the women can help the builders with the construction.

Alice Lindstedt, now 74, is the oldest of the group. She spent a long and often hard life as mother, grandmother and as a sewer and textile worker. Now, in her old age, she is making her dream come true. In her textile studio,



Alice and apprentice Paul Voigt

old clothes will be repaired and recycled. Alice says: "I am aware of the conditions under which clothes are being produced. Clothes and other textiles should be used as long as possible, by changing, or repairing them and using what cannot be worn as insulation in construction."

The studio will not only be a workshop but also a gathering place for women of different ages. There will also be a herb house for processing wild herbs with an adjoining herb garden. Here, seminars for the use and processing of medicinal plants will take place. "We are a part of Tamera University" says Alice, "and we aim to pass our old female knowledge about plants and crafts on to the youth."

For more details, contact Leila Dregger: leila.dregger@snaflu.de



Sandra sculping at the studio

Swedish Permaculture Forest Garden



Apple harvest at Suderbyn ecovillage's developing forest garden

Suderbyn Permaculture Ecovillage on the Baltic Sea island of Gotland has begun construction of what may be a unique forest garden design-inspired by the ideas of Bill Mollison and Robert Hart.

The forest food garden, with its own ecovillage integrated in the centre, is to cover several hectares of crop and pasture lands on the Swedish island. A 640 metre long, two metre high chain of seven earthen sun traps are being built to create a more hospitable microclimate for the forest garden. To meet the soil requirements for building these suntraps, some 2,000m² of ponds will be excavated on site.

"While this scale of excavation would make any permaculturist a bit uneasy, we see it as a

necessary adjustment to create an enabling environment where both flora and fauna will thrive" says Robert Hall, one of the initiators. "The wooded sun traps will protect us and more sensitive plants from the occasional icy northerly winds as well as from noise emanating from the nearby coastal road." Hall hopes that volunteer efforts will suffice to get the sun traps planted with hundreds of fruit and nut trees and berry bushes.

Even with the addition of these suntraps, the ecovillage sees a number of specially designed solar heated glasshouses as the crucial next step to complete the forest garden and achieve greater food self-sufficiency.

For further details see web: www.ekobogotland.se/48.html

A One-Week Conference at the Findhorn Foundation, Scotland 3-9 October 2009

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"A crisis is a terrible thing to waste..."
Hazel Henderson, green economist

For more information visit www.findhorn.org/positiveenergy2



Flanders First

Kasteel Nieuwenhoven, an historic castle and farmhouse complex with a 20 hectare estate is the site of a new ecovillage, the first such project in the province of Limburg and also in the whole Flemish part of Belgium.

Over the past two years a lot of work has gone into creating permaculture gardens and food forests, renovating the buildings, restoring the woodland and lakes and creating spaces for guests and visitors to share the magic of this historic place. The second permaculture training is about to start. A recent open day on transition and permaculture attracted 30 participants, most of them from the surrounding region.

For further information about the project and volunteering visit www.kasteelnieuwenhoven.be



The stunning castle ecovillage!

NextGEN Award

GEN's youth wing, NextGEN, has been chosen as one of four organisations to receive the Interdependent Project Award of Excellence in recognition of their "inspiration, support and action". The award grants each organisation a high profile and free advertising space on the project's main website.

The Interdependent Project connects ecovillages and sustainable communities through a social networking platform. Since its beginnings the mission of this youth-led project has expanded to become a multimedia endeavour with the launch of Interdependent Project Radio which focuses on solutions and a brand that aims to be a "fear free solution sphere."

For further details contact communitysphere@interdependentproject.org or visit www.interdependentproject.org

Inner Change



Spiral dynamics in the Americas

ZEGG and GEN stalwarts, Ina Meyer-Stoll and Achim Ecker, are on a seven-month journey covering five countries across the Americas, from Brazil to the USA. They are offering workshops about communication training, community building, spiral dynamics and deep ecology.

In permaculture terms, their work focuses on Zone Zero – raising inner awareness of one's self. In this liberating process, much energy can be freed for work in the world. "Abundance was always there" said IPEC founder André Soares, "we humans created scarcity! And as we created it and are the problem, we can also solve it. We need to become conscious of the necessary changes in us."

View their travel blog at: www.public-silence.de/achim-and-ina.phtml

Peace Research

The core group of a Peace Research Village in the Middle East is making a four-month visit to Tamera in Portugal. Fifty participants are preparing the project for its further development. One of these, Aida Shibli, a Bedouine from Israel, says: "In our country, which has been shaken by conflict for many decades, it is a crucial step to develop ecological techniques. Love for nature and need for resources are things we all can agree on, be we Palestinians or Israelis."

The main task is finding the deep ground of community in the core group. "Every Israeli and every Palestinian is involved in the conflict in some or other way" says Aida. "And everybody has a point where he or she has to learn forgiving."

For further information view: www.the-grace-foundation.com

Affordable Homes

The third neighbourhood at New York's Ecovillage at Ithaca (EVI), TREE (third residential ecovillage experience), has passed a major milestone with the hiring of an architect and development manager.

The TREE neighbourhood aspires to build small, affordable, very green homes, suitable for both families and elders. Like other homes at EVI, the design will be passive solar, super-insulated, densely clustered duplexes. However, TREE aspires to use even less energy than either of its sister neighbourhoods, and to come as close to carbon neutrality as possible given the cost constraints. In



Plans for green homes at Ithaca

addition, EVI's agricultural education programmes are taking a step forward with the launch of a new programme, Groundswell: The Center for Local Food and Farming. This initiative will be based at EVI's West Haven Farm, and will tap the expertise of local farmers, Cornell researchers and others who want to create hands-on learning experiences for prospective farmers.

For further information, contact Liz Walker: liz@ecovillage.ithaca.ny.us and visit www.ecovillage.ithaca.ny.us

Ecovillage Radio

Ecovillage Radio has been launched: www.blogtalkradio.com/Ecovillage-Radio

Topics include food security issues and interviews with experts like Ross Jackson PhD and co-founder of GEN, who recently offered his views on the crisis of the world's economy. The online Archive is always there.

To share news about your ecovillage contact Russ at: info@kakwaecovillage.com

Findhorn 350



GEN to run London marathon

Findhorn ecovillage community is diving into a wide range of activities associated with the 350 campaign www.350.org

This inspiring international campaign aims to encourage our political leaders to reach an agreement to keep greenhouse gases below 350ppm (or the CO₂ equivalent).

Activities include participation in the Holyrood 350 campaign that will bring together members of the Scottish Parliament, community groups and scientific experts at Scotland's Parliament in June. There will also be a series of pilgrimages, educational events, concerts and direct actions.

One fun(d) and awareness-raising event will be the participation of Jonathan Dawson, former co-ordinator of GEN-Europe and President of GEN, in the London Marathon on 26 April 2009. Jonathan will be raising funds both to help fund the participation of GEN in the UN Climate Change talks in Copenhagen and to provide bursaries for young people to participate in Findhorn's October conference: Positive Energy 2: Building Bioregional Resilience, www.findhorn.org/positiveenergy2

For details, contact Jonathan at jonathan@gen-europe.org

SUBMISSIONS

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To contribute to the Global
Ecovillage Network pages
contact:

David Yekutiel

Email nartan@argayall.com

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