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Ecovillage Design Education

» A four-week comprehensive course to the fundamentals of Ecovillage Design for Urban and Rural Settlements

» An official contribution to the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development

» Curriculum conceived and designed by the GEESE-Global Ecovillage Educators for a Sustainable Earth

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Preamble

"What makes a community? What binds it together? For some it is faith. For others it is the defence of an idea, such as democracy or the fight against poverty. Some communities are homogeneous, others multicultural. Some are small as schools and villages; others as large as continents. What binds us into an international community? In the broadest sense there is a shared vision of a better world for all people. Together, we are stronger."

- Kofi Annan- UN Secretary General

We live in a rapidly changing world that is transforming before our very eyes. Humanity is now being challenged as never before to grow in wisdom, maturity, and understanding. A plethora of deep and pressing concerns is calling for our immediate attention, concerns such as: Earth's environmental degradation, including the loss of precious topsoil and forest cover, the encroachment of deserts, the depletion of fisheries and aquifers, the loss of habitat and the extinction of species, etc.; the glaring and increasing disparity between rich and poor leading to exploitation, poverty, and the associated regimen of malnutrition and over-population; the disintegration of families, communities, even entire cultures; unrestrained urbanization resulting in social alienation, displacement, and feelings of disconnection with the natural world; the dimming of a sense of spiritual awareness and purpose; global warming and ozone depletion; etc. And now, looming on the horizon is "peak oil," with its coming adjustments and retrofits, including the probability of ongoing conflict over access to the remaining energy reserves.

All of these problems are quite real and, by now, well-documented; but gaining awareness of the extent of the problems is only half the project of becoming educated these days.

Amidst these intense challenges, and largely catalyzed by them, lies the prospect for tremendous growth in human potential and consciousness. People and communities all over the globe are coming together to reclaim responsibility for creating their own living situations – at local and regional levels. In the process, they are overcoming prior limitations and developing new talents, skills, knowledge and approaches. Paradoxically, many of the most innovative solutions rely on a timeless, perennial kind of wisdom that seems to have been disregarded recently. The potential for a refreshed, renewed, revitalized humanity goes hand-in-hand with meeting the challenges of our present Age.

The Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) believes the most promising and effective way to deal with all these issues is through *education* – not a typical education but a new kind of

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global education, specifically designed to meet the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century:

This is an education where a thorough and objective assessment of the state of the planet is followed by regional, community, and place-based solutions; an education that empowers individuals and communities with the knowledge for shaping their worlds and becoming more self-reliant; an education that is universal in scope but local in application, directed toward preserving precious cultural diversity; an education where investigating theory is followed by practical application; an education that imparts useful and instrumental life-skills as part of the curriculum; an education relevant to peoples of both developed and developing countries, rural and urban regions; an education focused on the complexly interwoven, transdisciplinary issues pertaining to the transition to sustainable culture; an education promoting and facilitating healthful planetary evolution; an education exploring and expanding the perceived limits of human potential; an education identifying and reconnecting all these essential considerations to a meaningful, dignified, high-quality life for all the world's people...

This is the Ecovillage Design Education (EDE) – an education preparing the way for a sustainable future.

The EDE is being introduced to the world at this time to complement, correspond with, and assist in setting a standard for the United Nations' "Decade of Education for Sustainable Development – 2005-2014."

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Purpose

The Ecovillage Design Education (EDE) is intended to serve the purpose of educating for the transition to comprehensive sustainable culture – broadly global in scope yet determinedly local in application. What sets this education apart as being distinct from the numerous other 'sustainability educations' appearing at this time is that the context for this education – the setting or active campus – is right there in the world's quintessential, prototypical, sustainable community models: the ecovillages. While all existing ecovillages already have instituted various educational programs according to their temperaments and capabilities, the EDE is being designed to serve as a standardized format or template applicable to all. As such, it focuses on fundamental principles, themes, and aspects needing to be addressed in any comprehensive introduction to sustainable community design and development. The EDE is just that: a four-week introductory course that provides participants with an overview of the full spectrum of design considerations for implementing truly sustainable communities – ecovillages by definition.

The EDE is a project of Gaia Education, a component of the Global Ecovillage Network. Gaia Education – officially founded in July 2005 – is a consortium of experienced ecovillage educators from around the globe, united in their effort to make accessible to a wide audience the valuable lessons learned from ecovillage design and development over the past several years.

The EDE is systemically organized as a mandala of what we perceive to be the four primary, intrinsic dimensions of human experience: Ecological, Social, Economic, and Worldview. Each of these four dimensions, in turn, contains five modules each – thus twenty subject areas total. While the four-fold mandala of over-arching 'dimensions,' representing an archetypal structural model, will remain constant, the actual titles and contents of the individual 'modules' may evolve and fluctuate over time. The curriculum is thus designed to be inherently flexible, to be adapted to meet the unique needs of specific projects or circumstances. Likewise, the time-frame of four weeks is recommended but not fixed, and the material can be condensed into smaller workshops, spread out over a longer period, or distributed in blocks at different times and locations. The inherent flexibility also makes the EDE applicable in more traditional settlement settings, those that have yet to assume 'ecovillage' status, as well as in Academia, professional circles, urbanized contexts, and beyond.

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The EDE curriculum can be described as 'holistic' – meaning that it endeavors to cover and present the many-faceted, diverse spectrum of ecovillage design considerations as a comprehensive, interdependent *whole*. The EDE can also be described as 'integrative' – meaning that all the various essential considerations in a genuine ecovillage design are given equitable attention and representation, especially as they exist *in relationship* with one another, and to the whole. Finally, the EDE can be described as 'holographic' – meaning that the essence of the curriculum is distributed throughout and can be reconstituted from any of the parts; thus, understanding the purpose of the whole can be ascertained from any partial participation or exposure.

The worldwide Gaia Education team is committed to creating a pool of competent, informed, practicing Ecovillage Designers. These graduates will be introduced to the tools, skills, and knowledge necessary to participate in any sustainable community development context, or to initiate ecovillage projects of their own. And so, the EDE is visionary but also highly functional – application-oriented and solution-based – and is meant to respond to the needs and desires of real people in real circumstances in a rapidly changing world that could use some guidance. Graduates will be like seeds scattered in the wind – some will find fertile ground in which to recreate the very organic, holistic, integrative, holographic process that is genuine ecovillage designing.

As an introductory course to a very complex subject, the EDE format will be experimented with for some years, improving and refining its various deliveries until it can be accessible, intelligible, and usable to all who are interested. The EDE can be implemented as a valuable educational approach of its own, or used to supplement and complement existing sustainability education programmes; in fact, academic and community partnerships are actively encouraged.

As envisioned, this whole venture has the potential to expand into a full-featured, transdisciplinary, *accredited* ecovillage design education – as a four-year degree with diploma. This type of formal education will become increasingly relevant as the 21st century progresses; the EDE is uniquely positioned, as a worldwide player, to begin now creating the prototypes for such a degree.

In closing, the EDE is consistent with and representative of key values in the greater ecovillage community, values that include: honoring unity through diversity; celebrating diverse cultures and creeds; practicing racial, cultural, and gender equality; promoting social justice and environmental awareness; striving for peace and local self-determination; raising consciousness and human potential; and, generally, respecting the living Earth as our planetary home.

May this Ecovillage Design Education help to restore broken communities, create new communities that are working models of sustainable viability, regenerate damaged ecosystems, renew a sense of optimistic purpose, and, generally, revitalize Life on Earth – for ours and the many generations to come.

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Social

1: Building Community & Embracing Diversity
2: Communication, Facilitation & Conflict Resolution
3: Personal Empowerment and Leadership
4: Health and Healing
5: Local, Bioregional and Global Outreach

Worldview

1: Holistic Worldview
2: Listening to and Reconnecting with Nature
3: Awakening & Transformation of Consciousness
4: Celebrating Life: Creativity & Art
5: Socially Engaged Spirituality

Economic

1: Shifting the Global Economy to Sustainability
2: Right Livelihood
3: Social Enterprise
4: Community Banks & Currencies
5: Legal and Financial Issues

Ecological

1: Green Building & Retrofitting
2: Local Food
3: Appropriate Technology
4: Restoring Nature and Rebuilding After Disasters
5: Integrated Ecovillage Design

WORLDVIEW OVERVIEW

It has become convention to describe sustainable development in terms of three over-arching themes: economic, social, and ecological (sometimes called environment). These are considered to be the fundamental areas of human experience that need to be addressed in any sustainable development scenario. The EDE recognizes and adds one other dimension to these fundamental areas of concern – a dimension we've chosen to call "Worldview." This is in recognition that there are always underlying, often unspoken, and sometimes hidden patterns to culture that strongly influence and may, in fact, predetermine economic, social, and ecological relationships.

Each culture, each sub-group, each wave of history seems to be guided, informed, and directed by particular interpretations about the nature of reality. Although originally reserved for the scientific establishment, the term 'paradigm' is now commonly used to describe this interpenetrating mix of beliefs, philosophies, and myths that together comprise the widely accepted cultural 'lens' through which one perceives the world. Paradigms, of course, are subject to change as new knowledge is discovered or created, and as human beings grow and become ready for deeper and fuller realizations.

By all indications, according to the writing and thinking of so many, those of us in the West are in the midst of a paradigm shift today – a new worldview is indeed emerging, a worldview that is complementing and merging with long-held philosophies of the world's wisdom traditions. This new worldview, this evolution in consciousness, will prove to be of unprecedented and unparalleled proportions because of the unifying effects of cultural globalization. We can now experience humanity as one big family, one people, an earthly unity; and similarly, we can experience our planetary home, as revealed from photos taken by astronauts, as a living, respirating super-organism – Gaia. The new worldview is being defined as an evolution from *mechanistic* to *holistic*, or from *material* to *spiritual,* interpretations about the nature of reality: Consciousness precedes physicality; ideas create form. The purpose of the Worldview dimension of the EDE, therefore, is to articulate the parameters of this evolution as it pertains to the design and implementation of sustainable community models.

Spirit, the Great Mystery, the Absolute – whatever your preference – is enigmatic and infinite, ineffable, yet everywhere and within everything. Countless are the names of the Divine, the spiritual practices and religious beliefs that exist on this small planet. The Unity loves variety. Therefore, it is not our purpose as ecovillage designers to define, much less prescribe, personal or group spirituality. Rather, we are privileged to simply

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facilitate an ongoing exploration of spiritual realms – individually, collectively, and syncretically. We engage ourselves and the group in a spiritual quest, remaining as humble as possible, and always with an eye toward applying our insights and revelations to the design of thriving sustainable communities – for the benefit of all. We position ourselves firmly in the center, where meaning is emerging, between the unseen implicate and manifest explicate orders, using the temporal to entice inspiration and guidance from the primordial, and thus aligning with evolution, or rather, *becoming* the evolution itself.

Spirituality is the core essence, the sustaining life-force infusing and giving direction, meaning, and purpose to a cultural system. Comprising the ultimate in shared values and ethics, the spirituality of a culture forms the basis for legitimating its socio-economic structure and its relationship with the greater-than-human world – its cosmic ecology. While there may be universal values and ethics common to all spiritual traditions (e.g. – love, compassion, forgiveness, mercy, reverence for that which nurtures and sustains life, etc.), each unique culture practices and celebrates its spirituality in a manner reflective of its unique situation in the world. Before the mono-cultural triumph of economic globalization, diverse spiritual-cultural traditions arose and flourished as elaborate, multi-purpose meta-solutions to the challenges and opportunities of living in a place; thus, in addition to offering numinous explanations for the vast, unseen, sublime dimensions of life, spiritual-cultural traditions the world over have had distinct practical and instrumental value in sustaining their peoples over time.

And so, in contrast to most other educational programs that prefer to sidestep or ignore this sensitive issue, the spiritual dimension to life's existence is an integral component of the Ecovillage Design Education. Spirituality – and its multifarious cultural expressions in/as art, music, ritual, ceremony, pageantry, mind-body awareness, and various practices designed to develop expansion of consciousness and attunement to the needs and wishes of the greater whole – is infused throughout the EDE curriculum. The ecovillage is seen as a place consciously created to allow for the spiritual dimensions of life to unfold in all their wonder and splendor. Each ecovillage, depending on its particular locale and eco-cultural environment, may accentuate one spiritual tradition or practice more than another; but, in general, the ecovillage vision fosters, tolerates, and encourages diverse, ecumenical spiritual perspectives. Ideals of mutual-respect, trust, cooperation, harmony, beauty, inter-connectedness and wholeness are foundational and intrinsic to ecovillage living. Having these ideals materialize in day-to-day life through disciplined yet celebratory spiritual practice gives the ecovillagers a deep appreciation of human nature and insights into the greater mystery of which they are an active part.

As a global educational program, the intent is to create a comprehensive yet adaptable curriculum that can be implemented easily by peoples of all cultural backgrounds. As such, this curriculum attempts to delineate and focus on themes and values common to *all* spiritual traditions. At the same time, particular emphasis is placed on individual and *personal transformation*: it is at this level that we are attempting to influence and prepare

ecovillage designers. Human beings – more precisely the species *Homo sapiens sapiens* – as a whole have made a big mess on this planet but the solution lies in the heart and soul of each individual: there is where real change will take place. The transition to a sustainable future is the expansion of so many individual consciousnesses. We believe that everybody taking this course will benefit immensely from an open-hearted, objective evaluation of the spiritual dimensions to life, particularly as they relate or have relevance to the design and implementation of ecovillages and sustainable community models. And so, as an integral component of this education, each student will be encouraged to initiate or engage in some sort of personal spiritual practice.

The Worldview dimension of the EDE addresses these vital aspects to human existence in the following five modules: Module 1 – Holistic Worldview – is an articulation of the nature of the transition we are currently living through, re-integrating science and spirituality, as a new worldview is emerging; Module 2 – Listening to Nature – is a guide for reconnecting human beings with the natural world, as a spiritual practice; Module 3 – Awakening & Transformation of Consciousness – is an almost poetic account of the consequences of a commitment to the spiritual journey; Module 4 – Celebrating Life: Creativity & Art – reminds us all that in community there is celebration, and in creative artistic expression there is re-unification with the source; and finally, Module 5 – Socially Engaged Spirituality – expounds on the view that a spiritual life well-lived is a life of active social service, and in these times the two cannot be separated.

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Module 1: Holistic Worldview

Goals
- Formulating a comprehensive worldview that accounts for both scientific and spiritual dimensions of interconnectedness and interrelationship at multiple levels – from personal to planetary
- Elucidating discoveries in the 'new science' that point to a definite spiritual basis underlying reality
- Introducing students to a new vocabulary to describe this holistic worldview
- Helping to heal the divisions between spirituality and science, and simultaneously between Eastern and Western cultural paradigms
- Instilling an instinctive awareness that the interconnectedness of life is not mere metaphor, but a living truth for which we humans must take responsibility

Content
Traditional education has conditioned us to believe that the world and the cosmos are comprised of distinct, isolated, material objects – all separated from one another and collectively operating according to rational, deterministic, mechanistic laws. Yet this worldview is now being uprooted, supported by remarkable discoveries in science. As Thomas Berry summarizes this shift in understanding, "The universe is not a collection of objects, but rather a communion of subjects." A new paradigm is emerging in which the universe is experienced as a unified pattern of living systems, all fundamentally inter-connected in a complex network of relationships. This ushers in a new 'holistic' or 'integral' worldview.

Evidence for this integral worldview is mounting in many scientific disciplines simul-taneously. In physics, biology, psychology, systems theory, physiology, complexity theory – a common theme has emerged: beyond the observable physical realm, there exist in-visible patterns or principles that somehow organize or influence the world we observe and experience. Science is learning that something transpires behind that which appears.

These discoveries are rapidly shifting our understanding of reality. Science is uncovering profound new levels of interconnection between matter and consciousness. Physical reality is now understood to be based on a web of dynamic *relationships* – not atomistic parts. The new science demonstrates that what appears to our senses as concrete, stable and inert is, on the contrary, comprised of interrelationships of a myriad of elements in motion: energies, particles, and charges animated by powerful internal dynamism. The lesson becomes very simple: Human society and its relationship to the natural world must reflect this dynamic interconnected Web of Life if we are to thrive.

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Exciting new discoveries are also revealing that consciousness definitely influences matter; the physical world and our mental human world are interlinked and overlapping in profound ways we don't yet fully understand. Discoveries in physics and the life sciences are leading us to a remarkable convergence between the new scientific understanding and spiritual teachings through the ages. Nonlinear dynamics and complexity theory are revealing that the cosmos is constructed something like a huge hologram. The resulting structure, sometimes called a fractal or holarchy, entails a vast and intricate tapestry of interpenetrating matter and consciousness, in which each fundamental part (or "holon") contains the essence of the whole: "As above, so below."

Despite the exquisite grandeur and intrinsic appeal of this Holistic Worldview, it can easily remain vacuous intellectual abstraction unless grounded in palpable real-life applications. This is where ecovillages come in as inspiring prototypes of the future: Just as an individual holon replicates a vast holarchy, so too, the ecovillage represents a concentrated, human-scale focal point for the auspicious possibilities of interconnected global society at large. Ecovillages not only treat the myriad symptoms of unsustainable civilization, they also foster systematic healing.

Ecovillages today provide the best living experimental laboratories for incubating new models of sustainable human culture. The ecovillage model promotes a 'systems' perspective, emphasizing the connections between activities, processes, and structures, and developing a broader, more comprehensive understanding of 'sustainable community.' In ecovillage living and ecovillage design, *the interconnections and interrelationships are highlighted,* and become more visible to all. For example, seeing how organic food production relates to complementary currencies, which in turn relates to sustainable modalities of economics, which in turn relates to inclusive decision-making procedures, which in turn relates to integrity in human interaction, which relates to love, which relates to wilderness and nature, which relates to ecological building, and so on...

In closing, lest the inspirations and aspirations outlined above be dismissed as fanciful notions of dreamy mystics or utopian ecologists, let us recall the words of Albert Einstein, who tells us quite unequivocally:

> *"Human beings are part of the Whole...We experience ourselves, our thoughts and feelings, as something separated from the rest...a kind of optical delusion of our consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures, and the whole of nature in its beauty."*

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Resource and Reference Materials
DVD
* *What the Bleep Do We Know!?* – 2005, Fox

Books
* *A New Science of Life* – Rupert Sheldrake, 1995, Park Street Press
* *Chaos: Making a New Science* – James Gleick, 1988, Penguin
* *Complexity: Life at the Edge of Chaos* – Robert Lewin, 2000, U. of Chicago
* *Global Healing: Essays and Interviews on Structural Violence, Social Development and Spiritual Healing* – Sulak Sivaraksa, 1999, Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development
* *Spiral Dynamics: Mastering Values, Leadership and Change* – Don Edward Beck and Christopher Cowan, 1996, Blackwell Business
* *The Web of Life: A New Understanding of Living Systems* – Fritjof Capra, 1996, Anchor
* *Zoence – The Science of Life: Discovering the Sacred Spaces of your Life* – Peter Dawkins, 1998, Weiser Books
* *Evolution: The Grand Synthesis* – Erwin Lazslo, 1987, New Science Library
* *Revelation: The Birth of a New Age* – David Spangler, 1976, The Rainbow Bridge
* *Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth* – J.E. Lovelock, 1979, Oxford University Press
* *The Revenge of Gaia* – James Lovelock, 2006, Allen Lane
* *Gaia: The Human Journey from Chaos to Cosmos* – Elisabet Sahtouris, 1989, Pocket
* *The Universe Story* – Brian Swimme and Thomas Berry, 1992, HarperSanFrancisco
* *The Great Work: Our Way into the Future* – Thomas Berry, 1999, Bell Tower
* *A Brief History of Everything* – Ken Wilber, 1996, Shambhala
* *A Theory of Everything: An Integral Vision for Business, Politics, Science and Spirituality* – Ken Wilber, 2001, Shambhala
* *At Home in the Universe: The Search for the Laws of Self-organization and Complexity* – Stuart Kaufmann, 1995, Oxford University Press
* *Chaos, Gaia, Eros: The Three Great Streams of History* – Ralph Abraham, 1994, HarperSan Francisco
* *Synchronicity: The Bridge between Matter and Mind* – F. David Peat, 1987, Bantam

Experiential Learning Activities

* Visualize the ecovillage as a hologram. What are the elements of the larger society that you want embodied in your ecovillage? Small group discussion.

* Visualize the body as a hologram. The ear, the hand, the foot, the iris of the eye, all contain the essence of the whole body. Try receiving a foot massage and feeling where the various parts connect to the whole body.

* Test for water with willow sticks or locate energy points with bent metal rods

* Imagination Exercise: Perceive the body as attuned to the center of the Earth. The center of my body and the center of the Earth become as one in a flash of intuitive Gaian awareness.

* Imagination Exercise: Perceive the body as attuned to the galactic center: The center of my body and the center of the galaxy become one as in a multi-dimensional connective cosmic awareness.

* Expanding atom visualizations: Perceive the body as a multitude of vibrating atoms. These atoms become energized and begin to expand until they cover the entire universe.

* Speculate in small groups what kind of scientific research will result from this worldview.

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Module 2: Listening to and Reconnecting with Nature

Goals

- Developing the sensitivity and receptivity to Nature required to do the work of competent and inspired ecovillage designing
- Realizing that attending to the health of Nature is fundamental to any discussion about sustainability
- Learning to listen to Nature as a teacher and guide
- Making a commitment to begin taking active steps now to honor and restore Nature, beginning with our own bodies
- Ultimately, reconnecting with Nature, in mind, body, and spirit

Content

The perceived or imagined disconnection from Nature is at the root of the most serious problems we face in our present era. Civilization, the culture of cities, seems to have had as one of its goals replacing Nature with an entirely human-made environment – witness the dull, square, concrete blocks of the mega-cities, virtually devoid of non-human life, engineered abstractions completely burying the once living ecologies beneath them. After many generations of manufactured urban living, philosophies and religions began to appear speculating that human beings were somehow separate or distinct from Nature; and indeed, it got to the point where human beings were actually considered to be *superior* to Nature. How could this ever be? Human beings are, always have been, and always will be, an integral part of Nature, a rather recent appearance in the 3.5 *billion year* trajectory of evolutionary biology that is the saga of Life on Earth. This humanistic hubris of claiming to be superior, thus degrading Nature as exploitable and expendable, has set in motion unruly destructive forces that may (and this is no exaggeration) eventually terminate human life on Earth.

Given the scope of this predicament, Listening to and Reconnecting with Nature would appear to be a matter of the most vital importance; so what is the most effective way to go about teaching that?

Without intending to subscribe to the 'noble savage' myth, indigenous cultures living close to the land are generally recognized as being connected with Nature – this is because they develop intimate reciprocal relationships with the life-forces of the places wherein they dwell. Indigenous peoples living close to the land tend to co-evolve with their environments in mutually-beneficial and mutually-defining ways, over long periods of time. This is the key to sustainability – this intimate, perennial commitment to a particular life-place, where it's to the people's obvious advantage to maintain the health

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and integrity of their local Nature. Under these conditions, with survival at stake, the people are going to stay tuned and stay connected.

The ecovillages are in a unique position for teaching about this theme: Listening to and Reconnecting with Nature. Whether urban, suburban, or rural, one of the defining characteristics of an ecovillage is that it is a settlement "in which human activities are harmlessly integrated into the natural world." While that may sound a bit idealistic, it is a worthwhile starting point, for re-integration is what is necessary. Here are some principles and practices employed by ecovillages around the world to accomplish this re-integration:

- The use of ritual and ceremony to honor such natural functions as the cycling of the seasons, the phasing of the moon, and the four (or seven) directions
- The use of Feng Shui, Vastu, Sacred Geometry, and other geomantic disciplines to auspiciously place constructions in the built environment – often in alignment with energy points or ley lines
- Setting aside significant percentages of the land for natural functions
- Identifying and preserving special places – such as groves, hilltops, promontories, water features – as sacred sites
- Creating meditation nodes and sanctuaries
- Constructing earth temples, shrines, and altars
- Using architectural and siting practices that blend buildings into the landscape
- Regenerating previously damaged tracts of land so they can thrive again
- Bringing Nature right into the ecovillage and making it highly visible wherever possible

With the use of these principles and practices, and more, the ecovillages are healing that split between humanity and Nature, and creating conditions of optimum co-existence. In creating these conditions, listening to Nature becomes possible once more and reconnecting with Nature can be achieved simply by going about one's daily affairs.

This module interfaces the Spiritual and Ecological dimensions of the curriculum. With the expansion of consciousness and identity that comes from a sustained spiritual practice, it becomes easier, even obvious, to accept responsibility for healing the Earth. Reconnecting with Nature becomes part of the spiritual practice because Life can be perceived as an indivisible whole, a unity whose integrity depends on the health and vitality of all its parts. Untouched, undisturbed wilderness can become a source for spiritual renewal, where solace can be sought and deep questions answered. Planting and tending lush gardens, respecting and regenerating the life-force of a place, healing the wounds of separation in ourselves and others – these are all acts of a spiritual nature because planetary evolution and the living potential of all beings concerned, human or otherwise, is enhanced thereby: The human being as conscious regenerative agent in the biosphere...could this be the spiritual mission of the next species of humanity?

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Three and a half billion years is a very long time; there is something inherently sustainable about the ways of Nature. When human beings can drop their hubris and approach Nature as a teacher and guide, then many important lessons will be revealed. The human body is a magnificent cellular orchestration, the product of this full evolutionary tenure; therefore, our own bodies are the most intimate context for reconnecting with Nature. Go and find a relatively undisturbed natural setting – it could be a park or your own backyard. Sit still and quiet for a moment. Open up all your senses. Does Nature have something to reveal to you?

A quote from David Holmgren, co-originator of Permaculture, a design system modeling human systems after systems found in Nature, echoes our sentiment:

> *"Part of the problem in the current psychology that prevails in our [Western] culture is that we are separate from Nature and not constrained by its limits. Clearly, energy peak and descent will smash once and for all that mistaken view. What is also necessary is to realize that we are not some contradiction of Nature, a destroyer of it, but that we have a place in Nature, and can reclaim that place."*

Resource and Reference Materials
Books
* *Coming Back to Life: Practices to Reconnect Our Lives, Our World* – Joanna Macy, 1998, New Society Publishers
* *The Hidden Connections: A Science for Sustainable Living* – Fritjof Capra, 2004, Anchor
* *Deep Ecology for the 21st Century* – George Sessions, 1995, Shambhala
* *Ecology, Community, and Lifestyle* – Arne Naess, 1989, Cambridge
* *In the Absence of the Sacred* – Jerry Mander, 1991, Sierra Club Books
* *Indigenous Traditions and Ecology* – John A. Grim, ed., 2001, Harvard
* *Reweaving the World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism* – Irene Diamond and Gloria Feman Orenstein, 1990, Sierra Club Books
* *The Way: An Ecological Worldview* – Edward Goldsmith, 1998, U. of Georgia
* *The Sacred Balance: Rediscovering Our Place in Nature* – David Suzuki, 1998, Prometheus Books
* *The Chalice and the Blade* – Riane Eisler, 1987, HarperSanFrancisco
* *The Dream of the Earth* – Thomas Berry, 1988, Sierra Club Books
* *The Fifth Sacred Thing* – Starhawk, 1994, Bantam
* *The Practice of the Wild* – Gary Snyder, 2004, Shoemaker and Hoard
* *Thinking Like a Mountain: Toward a Council of All Beings* – John Seed, et al., 1988, New Society Publishers
* *Sacred Land, Sacred Sex: Rapture of the Deep* – Dolores LaChapelle, 1988, Kivaki
* *The Taoist I Ching* – Thomas Cleary, trans., 1986, Shambhala
* *Dharma Gaia* – Allan Hunt Badiner, 2005, Parallax Press

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Feng Shui: The Ancient Wisdom of Harmonious Living for Modern Times – Eva Wong, 1996, Shambhala

Sacred Geometry: Philosophy and Practice – Robert Lawlor, 1982, Thames & Hudson

Experiential Learning Activities

There is room for much creativity and flexibility with this module. Learning could be as simple and enjoyable as taking a mindful walk through Nature. It could include poem or story writing and written personal reflection. It could involve a "close encounter with a tree", seeing it as more than a log and branches and perceiving its total function within the landscape. It could mean creating a ritual or ceremony in honor of Nature or ourselves, either individually or in a group. It could mean sitting still for a while at the forest edge and practicing observation skills. It could mean taking on the voice of another living creature, say a frog or a river, and telling the group what the world looks like from that perspective. It could mean doing a Feng Shui or Vastu analysis, or setting up an earth altar to the four (or seven) directions. In all cases, an emphasis on fun and celebration, food and fire as the center of the hearth, will help to consummate the experience.

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Module 3: Awakening & Transformation of Consciousness

Goals
- Venturing into the perspective of seeing our planetary life in relation to the cosmos
- Exploring our deeper missions and purposes in life
- Initiating or strengthening practices that can lead to a transformation of consciousness
- Conjecturing on destinations of the spiritual journey

Content

There comes a time in many people's lives when, through a 'peak experience' of some kind, they are exposed to a non-ordinary state of reality whose intensity shakes their very foundations. The feelings often accompanying this exposure can be: an incomparable bliss, a sense of being connected with the entire Universe, a sense of unrequiting peace and contentment, a kind of intuitive understanding about the nature of reality that doesn't require explanation, a sort of loving kindness that is freely given to all creatures. The tendency is to want to hold onto these feelings, to remain in that state forever; but alas, the feelings soon fade, and as the density returns the initiates are left with only the experiencing of a vision far vaster and more magnificent than the ones they have known. For some, this peak experience can be an 'awakening' that sets them firmly on a spiritual path.

The story is told of Lieh-Tzu, who wanted to know enlightenment, the 'goal' of the transformation of consciousness. So great was his desire that he traveled far and wide, searching for the greatest teachers with the wisest teachings. Lieh-Tzu was a sincere and committed student so he practiced diligently all that he learned. One day, after a couple of decades on his journey, Lieh-Tzu experienced that flash of insight, that spontaneous merging with the ineffable Infinite, that sudden immersion into the sea of the unconscious, that is known as enlightenment. And what did he do with his transformation of consciousness? He got right up off his cushion, said goodbye to his peers, and went straight back home to the family farm to help his wife with the chores – feeding the pigs, chopping wood, weeding the garden. And there he stayed for the rest of his noble life.

It turns out that the journey is not a continuous ascent but rather a spiral that seems to be sometimes going up and sometimes going down. The journey *is* the destination. There is nothing to strive for – only life to be lived. Trying to hold onto the bliss is likely to lead to disappointment; it is far more fruitful to *create the conditions* from which the bliss can

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emerge, continuously, spontaneously, of its own accord – for the benefit of all. This is the way of Nature; and this is one of the functions of the ecovillage.

But something has indeed changed. The center of gravity *is* different. The thought of going back to the old, narrow, egocentric way of life seems thoroughly degenerative. The transformation of consciousness is an *expansion* of consciousness. My identity begins to include more and more of the world around me. I am no longer an isolated 'unit' but rather an integral part of a community; and this human community is co-evolving with a natural community in an ecological niche; and this ecological niche is just one ecosystem among a multitude of others on our larger host Gaia; and Gaia is a member of a solar system – just one solar system among a multitude of others in our local galaxy. This galaxy has a well-defined galactic center from which new worlds seem to emerge, spontaneously, of their own accord. As my identity becomes more inclusive, so my responsibility grows. My thoughts and actions *do* have consequences: they can influence the emergence of new worlds.

A common attribute of those who have been on the path for awhile is a deep and genuine humility, a sincere and respectful awe for the unfathomable vastness and scintillating magnificence that is the Great Mystery. All spiritual and religious traditions seem to lead to service: this is service to the greater whole, service to alleviate some of the suffering of those who are less fortunate; this is service out of pure love and compassion, service for atonement and forgiveness; and finally, this is service because I have gazed into the eyes of the beloved, and what else can I do but try to help?

Resource and Reference Materials
DVD
The Four Noble Truths – H.H. The XIV Dalai Lama, 1999, Mystic Fire Productions

Books
* *Sayagyi U Ba Khin Journal* – Vipassana Research Institute, 1994, Carto Prints
* *The Life Divine* – Sri Aurobindo, 1985, Lotus Press
* *The Phenomenon of Man* – Tielhard de Chardin, 1959, Wm. Collins Sons & Co.
* *The Planetarization of Consciousness* – Dane Rudhyar, 1970, Aurora Press
* *The Kali Yuga Odyssey* – J. T. Ross Jackson, 2000, Robert D. Reed
* *Essence & Purpose of Yoga* – Raphael, 1990, Element
* *The Book of Lieh-Tzu* – A. C. Graham, 1990, Columbia University Press
* *A Path with Heart: A Guide through the Perils and Promises of Spiritual Life* – Jack Kornfield, 1993, Bantam
* *After the Ecstasy, the Laundry: How the Heart Grows Wise on the Spiritual Path* - Jack Kornfield, 2001, Bantam
* *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior* – Chogyam Trungpa, 1988, Shambhala
* *The Prophet* – Kahil Gibran, 1962, Alfred A. Knopf
* *The Way of the Shaman* – Michael Harner, 1990, HarperSanFrancisco

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Living in the Heart: How to Enter into the Sacred – Drunvalo Melchizedek, 2003, Light Technology Publications
The Power of Now: A Guide to Spiritual Enlightenment – Ekhart Tolle, 1999, New World Library
The New Earth: Awakening to Your Life's Purpose – Eckhart Tolle, 2006, Dutton

Experiential Learning Activities

- Time will be set aside each morning for optional silent meditation, using whatever techniques are preferred by those who come. This will occur in an appropriately suitable place reserved for such activity. There will also be guided meditations as part of the course material, experienced by all students during regular course times.
- Positive visualization techniques will also be practiced as part of the course material.
- Hatha Yoga, Tai Chi, Chi Kung and other body movement disciplines are highly encouraged and will be made available to the students as instructor's knowledge permits; these activities may also be student led.
- Various reminders to be 'mindful' will be instituted throughout the day.
- Dream-sharing is a positive way to attend to personal and group processes.

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Module 4: Celebrating Life: Creativity and Art

Goals

- Presenting Art as a wonderful medium for personal growth, healing, and transformation that can be used by people of all skill levels
- Recognizing and reclaiming unbounded creativity as our true nature, as a flow from a universal source, as natural as the blossoming of a flower
- Creating beautiful and stimulating environments in which inspiration and intuition are enhanced, and in which creativity may flow unencumbered, as a celebration of Life
- Designing and performing community celebrations as an expression of group Art, feeling the bonding that occurs, and learning from experience that living in community allows members to develop a culture of celebration
- Teaching that the highest form of creativity, both individually and in community, is for our lives to become works of Art

Content

Art is not only for artists: it's a way of adding beauty, grace, and festivity to everything we do. Practicing Art is a means for people to explore and tap into a universal source of creativity – the source of Life itself. As people become more comfortable expressing their dreams, hopes, wishes, and visions through artistic expression, then life becomes as a colorful celebration, issuing forth from an ever-renewing creative core. This active artful connection to the creative source of Life is a powerful way to effect personal growth, healing, and transformation.

In a community setting, creative opportunities exist for becoming immersed in a vision and purpose greater than the individual self, allowing one to dissolve personal, self-inflicted limitations. If the artist works in isolation, a wider movement will not result; the artist must know how to participate in and enjoy other people's art, becoming perceptive to elements arising from the collective unconscious – messages, information, or symbology for the group as a whole.

The notion of 'collective creativity' stands contrary to the practice of exalting singular creative talents, and thrives on the accumulated benefits of the synergy of all those who can contribute to the work. Given the right conditions, such synergy can reverberate throughout a community, uplifting all in a rising draft of collective creative outpourings. This is similar to the awareness that swelled in the rustic workshops of the first Renaissance, which were animated by the vigorous exchanges of many 'maestros.'

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This uplifting phenomenon can also be intentionally seeded into the fertile creative ground of today's ecovillages. When Art is no longer just a part-time hobby but grows instead into a full-time attitude towards life, then the growth of crafts, cottage industries, guilds, and related studios, workshops, and classes of many different kinds of artistic expression can provide a source of material sustenance as well as spiritual sustenance. Ecovillage-based art will strive to embody evolved concepts of beauty, harmony, and grace consistent with deep ecological and spiritual values, and expressions of cultural diversity that are unique celebrations of a particular place.

Celebrations are important social glue in any community. They are group-identity activities that we need to relearn, reshape, and revive in accord with the new worldview that is emerging. *They are a group expression of art and creativity.* Celebrating seasonal, cosmic and global events, and days or rites of passage are collective art-forms facilitated by living in conscious community. Celebrating the joy being alive with music and dance doesn't need a special occasion; every ecovillage needs a stage! For years now, the ecovillages have been developing features of a common global culture that have much to offer as they weave ancient timeless ideas into modern new contexts.

Go to any ecovillage in the world and there you will see an array of artistic creative expression: singing, chanting, dancing, theatre and musical performance, and all forms of ritual, ceremony, and celebration. Art as therapy, art as personal transformation, art as collective symbolism, art in the environment, art as architecture, art as employment, and art as a means for giving expression to the creative life-force that flows within: there, the ecovillages are bringing forth a culture of celebrating life through creativity and art.

Each of the various aspects of creative artistry and celebration will be selectively integrated into every Ecovillage Design Course. Art will focus on individual as well as group expression. We want to emphasize that all people are inherently creative; for some, creating a dynamic and colorful life is their preferred art-form. With its focus on innovative, progressive, self-reliant life-styles and life-ways, sustainability and creativity go hand-in-hand.

Honouring the Different Phases of Life – Life is constant change: a perennial flow of cycles, seasons, and stages of development. In traditional cultures, rites of passage were celebrated at the major transitions – birth, death, maturation – to empower individuals and to pass on accumulated group wisdom. There seems to be a close correlation between cultures that allow these deep junctures to be honored and cultures of peace and sustainability. Many say that the loss of these rites in modern times is one major factor for the chaos our world finds itself in: there are not many adults and even less elders around to pass on this knowledge – thus, there is no longer any continuity. The sterile mono-culture of consumerism wants us to long for and invest in an 'eternal summer,' a perpetual youth. In community, learning from timeless traditions and redesigning our

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own, we reinvent rites of celebration and mourning and commemorate the passages of life. As we witness and support each other through the alternating pain and joy of our lives, we find in ourselves a greater capacity for loving and giving than we ever knew existed, and this is very creative.

Resource and Reference Materials
Videos + CD's
Sacred Dances – Findhorn Foundation
May East, Songs

Books:
* *Damanhur: The Real Dream: The Story of the Extraordinary Italian Artistic and Spiritual Community* - Jeff Merrifield, 1998, HarperCollins
* *Timeless Beauty*: *In the Arts and Everyday Life* – John Lane, 2004, Green Books
* *The Beauty of Craft*: *A Resurgence Anthology* – Maya Kumar Mitchell, ed., 2005, Green Books
* *Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention* - Mihalyi Csikszenmihalyi, 1997, Harper Perennial
* *Creativity: Unleashing the Forces Within* – Osho, 1999, St. Martin's Press
* *Freeing the Creative Spirit* – Adriana Diaz, 1992, HarperSanFrancisco
* *The Artist's Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity* – Julia Cameron, 1992, Tarcher/Putnam
* *Higher Creativity: Liberating the Unconscious for Breakthrough Insights* – Willis Harman, 1984, Jeremy P. Tarcher
* *Taize* – a booklet from Findhorn with wonderful circle songs

Experiential Learning Activities
- Dances: Circle dancing, free-form dancing, African dancing, and other modalities to loosen up the body and gain whole body awareness
- Rituals/ceremonies: Creating rituals around the cycles of the moon, the sun, the place, or whatever is brought to the course to learn the process of designing and creating rituals and ceremonies as tools for celebration, healing and group bonding
- Singing: Taize songs, Native American songs, African-American songs, contemporary songs, Canons, songs of the heart, Earth songs, Rainbow songs
- Workshops on future visioning, a creative method for uncovering the personal and common group vision
- Selected games and plays that may enhance and complement the learning and allow the whole person to be present
- Improvisational theatre and performance
- Painting, sculpture, or free-form drawing
- Game of Life (See *Damanhur: The Real Dream* for explanation)

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Module 5: Socially Engaged Spirituality

Goals

- Linking together the paths of "inner" spiritual transformation and "outer" social change
- Placing spiritual awakening and transformation of consciousness on the social change agenda
- Placing social change activism on the spiritual agenda
- Facilitating creative collaboration between spiritual groups and social change groups, thereby synergistically furthering the goals of both
- Inspiring and empowering new practitioners of socially engaged spirituality with potent examples from groundbreaking pioneers

Content

For thousands of years there has been a time-honored tradition that spiritual seekers and ascetics must go "up the mountain" or into the desert or forest to escape the bustle and clamor of society and the marketplace. Secluded in the pristine beauty of nature, seekers could find the requisite quiet to immerse themselves in spiritual reverie, free from the problems of the world. But in recent decades the noise and pollution from the world have followed them right up the mountainside! The pristine blue sky adorning the mountain monasteries is now tainted with acid rain and encroaching climate change, while the nearby lush forests are increasingly felled by the logger's sawblade. The intractable problems of human society have expanded to touch every corner of the Earth.

The spiritual seeker is therefore compelled to come down from the mountain top, and engage in the world as part of her spiritual discipline. The crisis of modern civilization has reached such extreme proportions that radical transformation is necessary for humans to survive, much less thrive, and a major part of the spiritual seeker's task now is to take part in facilitating this transformation.

A parallel long-standing pattern in secular social change leadership has also long held sway: exclusive focus on social and economic reform while steering clear of the more subtle spiritual or philosophical dimensions of life. Prominent social change leaders and institutions have taken great pains to maintain their distance from any religious affiliation or spiritual association. Social change was deemed to be practical cultural innovation, fueled by social necessity and grounded in legal, corporate, and scientific frameworks. Spirituality and transformation of consciousness were viewed as irrelevant because they entailed private values and practices that were presumed to have little impact on "real-world" pragmatism.

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But social change leaders have discovered their task is impossible without a sea change in human consciousness and values. As an example: dedicated advocates of solar energy fought long and noble battles to support developing countries around the world to adopt clean, decentralized solar energy, rather than dangerous nuclear energy and polluting fossil fuels—only to discover that when their cherished solar policies were finally adopted by the World Bank or the IMF, they were used to install solar-powered television sets in remote indigenous tribal societies for the purpose of beaming down Western corporate advertising, MTV, Dynasty, and Dallas. In the span of a few short years, the shock and awe of this technological invasion decimated the social fabric of these few remaining sustainable cultures on earth. The extreme irony was that the very ecological virtues of solar energy made it possible to foist Ronald McDonald on the African Bushman, and for MTV smash hits to begin usurping the songlines of the Australian aborigine.

The lesson is simple and cuts two ways: spirituality without social change is lame, and social change without spirituality is blind. Spiritual transformation in the absence of fundamental social and ecological change is ultimately futile, "as if the soul could be saved while the biosphere crumbles" (Theodore Roszak). And social or ecological reform in the absence of a spiritual awakening is proving to be fatal, as if the biosphere could be protected while the soul of humanity perishes.

"Spiritual awakening" ultimately means inculcating love and wisdom in the hearts and minds of humanity. Without this transformation, even the most promising social and ecological innovations will be quickly outstripped by the spread of consumerism and rapid population growth across the globe. Transformation of consciousness and values is no longer a luxury reserved for the few, but has become an imperative for the masses.

Fortunately over the past decade, a groundswell of new initiatives has emerged for bridging the gulf between social change and spiritual practice. Innovative forms of "socially engaged spirituality" are springing up from many directions at once. Buddhist and Hindu groups that were previously devoted only to contemplative disciplines are taking to the streets, while social change leaders are taking to the meditation cushion in ever greater numbers. Socially engaged spirituality is hardly new, though it is receiving fresh attention. The Isha Upanishad, an ancient Hindu scripture, warns of the perils of a life devoted solely to meditation, or solely to action, and extols the virtues of a life devoted to both action and meditation.

Today new pioneers in socially engaged spirituality are inspiring millions across the globe. Buddhist master Sulak Sivaraksa revolutionized social reform and Buddhist practice in Thailand, Laos, and Burma. Vietnamese Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh was an instrumental peace activist during the war in Vietnam. Swami Agnivesh liberated thousands of bonded slave laborers. B.R. Ambedkkar brought Buddhism to the "untouchables" of India, and Vandana Shiva facilitated major ecological reform in India. Aung San Suu Kyi is a female Gandhi in Burma. Nicanor Perlas is from South African roots. In every tradition, there are inspiring pioneers.

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A quintessential example of socially engaged spirituality is the Sarvodaya movement in Sri Lanka. Founded by Dr. Ariyatne, now with his son Vinya at the helm, Sarvodaya philosophy is a practical combination of Buddhist and Gandhian principles. Sarvodaya worked to give the "gift of labor" to poor villages, establishing camps to facilitate the construction of buildings, roads, wells, and other needed infrastructure. Yet the chief objective of Sarvodaya was not economic improvement, but "awakening." Sarvodaya teaches how to engage with the world, as well as how to disengage from it – a perfect illustration of socially engaged spirituality.

The roots of socially engaged spirituality are equally strong in Western traditions. The Jewish prophecies articulate perhaps the greatest cry for justice and human dignity in any scriptures. The Christian faith has a long tradition of spiritual service. The mission of Mother Teresa has been highly visible; and equally inspiring is Dorothy Day, who founded the Catholic Worker movement that created 185 "houses of hospitality" to provide for the poor and challenge social oppression. Thomas Merton and the Berrigan brothers were pioneers in opposing the war in Vietnam.

The Quakers have been trailblazers in social activism for centuries, and established the Underground Railroad to rescue slaves. Believing that God dwells in all people, Quakers regard every human being to be of infinite value. Quakers oppose war and violence in all its forms, promote racial and ethnic integration, and have supported women spiritual leaders in their ranks since the 1700s.

The Islamic activist Badshah Kahn was a devout Muslim who became known as the "Frontier Ghandi." Kahn organized the world's first and largest non-violent army in the 1930s – a force of 100,000, trained in non-violent tactics. Known as "Servants of God," this force followed Kahn's non-sectarian teachings of Islam as a moral code, with pacifism as its center. Bearing no arms, Kahn's army courageously challenged the British military. Many died before the British finally capitulated.

Sikh master Tara Singh once remarked: "Humanity has survived poverty, but I wonder if we can survive affluence." Socially engaged spirituality holds great promise not only for humanity to survive, but to flourish. As we learn to replace material acquisition with spiritual treasures, we move away from incessant mining of finite outer resources, and turn to the infinite wellsprings within our own hearts. Thus can the curse of unbridled affluence be dissolved in the cure of unbounded love.

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Resource and Reference Materials

Video
* *Entertaining Angels: The Dorothy Day Story* - 1996

Books
* *Culture, Conflict, Change: Engaged Buddhism in a Globalizing World* – Sulak Sivaraksa, 2005, Wisdom Publications
* *Buddhism at Work: Community Development, Social Empowerment, and the Sarvodaya Movement* – George Bond, 2004, Kumarian Press
* *How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas* – David Bornstein, 2004, Oxford University Press
* *Shaping Globalization: Civil Society, Cultural Power and Three-folding* – Nicanor Perlas, 2003, New Society Publishers
* *Freedom from Fear and Other Writings* – Aung Sun Suu Kyi, 1995, Penguin
* *Principles of Socially Engaged Spirituality* – Satyana Institute, www.satyana.org
* *Socially Engaged Spirituality: Essays in Honor of Sulak Sivaraksa* – David W. Chappell, ed., 2003, Kumarian Press
* *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology, and Development* – Vandana Shiva, 1994, Zed Books
* *The Power of Nonviolence: Writings by Advocates of Peace* – Howard Zinn, 2002, Beacon Press
* *Creating True Peace: Ending Violence in Yourself, Your Family, Your Community, and the World* – Thich Nhat Hanh, 2003, Free Press
* *The Path of Compassion: Writings on Socially Engaged Buddhism* – Fred Eppsteiner, ed., 1988, Parallax Press
* *Alternative Conceptions of Civil Society* – Simone Chambers, 2001, Princeton University Press
* *A Quaker Book of Wisdom: Life Lessons in Simplicity, Service, and Common Sense* – Robert L. Smith, 1999, HarperCollins
* *Contemplation in a World of Action* – Thomas Merton, 1999, Notre Dame
* *Nonviolent Soldier of Islam: Badshah Kahn, A Man to Match his Mountains* – Eknath Easwaran, 1999, Nilgiri Press
* *Quaker Spirituality: Selected Writings* – Douglas V. Steere, ed., 1984, Paulist Press
* *A Penny a Copy: Writings from the Catholic Worker* – Tom Cornell, Robert Ellsberg and Jim Forest, eds., 1995, Orbis

Internet
• Catholic workers home page – www.catholicworker.com

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Experiential Learning Activities

- Guided meditations on ways we are attached to material possessions, and social values of fame and reputation. "Experiments with truth" practices to release these attachments
- Introducing Satyana Institute's "Principles of Engaged Spirituality", and other systems of engaged spiritual principles such as Findhorn's "Statement of Common Ground." Exploring how these specifically apply in our lives
- Experiential exercises in class identity and conditioning based on degree of affluence (following the work of Jenny Ladd, Arnie Mendel)
- Fostering practical group projects in socially engaged spiritual activism, where we commit to working on a particular social or ecological issue with the principles of socially engaged spirituality
- Cultivating contemplative practices (meditation, prayer) as ways to bring transformative energy and insight to a specific conflict or social affliction
- Practicing the power of bearing witness to social or environmental injustice (e.g. Women in Black)

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SOCIAL OVERVIEW

"The next Buddha will not take the form of an individual. The next Buddha may take the form of a community; a community practising understanding and loving kindness, a community practising mindful living. This may be the most important thing we can do for the survival of the earth." — Thich Nhat Hanh

The archaeological evidence shows that the primordial social pattern for human beings is to gather together in relatively tightly-knit, egalitarian, clan-sized 'bands' closely coupled with Nature. Today, we need to consciously reinvent cooperative and harmonious ways of living together. Therefore, seeding, growing, and rebuilding meaningful communities and networks of communities are vital steps towards a more liveable, sustainable future. As prototypical "living and learning centres," in which people from a variety of cultures, spiritual pathways and economic backgrounds explore the synergistic communion of embracing diversity together, the ecovillages inspire a new global culture of peace and prosperity. Through stepping into an ever widening field of mutual-accord, respect, and loving kindness, we can set human potential and ingenuity free to work for the benefit of all. If we can create peace amongst ourselves, in our local social groupings first, then benevolent qualities of courtesy, trust, and goodwill will have a chance to breed and multiply.

Industrialisation and the global economic system have brought with them over-consumption and a sense of independence, but these have also come with unpleasantly pernicious side-effects – such as predatory individualism, social alienation, rampant addiction, and family breakdown. The global South – where much of the traditional social fabric is still intact – will yet have lessons to teach the North. The social organization of the traditional village, still alive in many parts of the world, may prove to be *the* most sustainable model to emulate. Perhaps much of the lesser-consuming segment of our world's population will skip past the industrialized, hyper-individualized stage of development and jump right into the post-industrial, knowledge-based, cooperative and interdependent ecovillage future. This is a good reason to emphasize education and global exchange as a strategy for sustainable development.

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A life of expanded social opportunities is a big attraction to ecovillage living, and this may be the ecovillage's greatest asset. Within the context of community that the ecovillage provides, residents enjoy numerous benefits not available to the rugged individualist, benefits such as: a safe and protected place to raise their children, where a variety of adults may serve as role models; more time for family and friends and less time spent at stressful jobs or commuting to them; more opportunities for home-grown business or cottage industry, perhaps as a collaborative venture with friends in the community; parents find the possibility for integrating professional activities with childcare at home; opportunities exist for creative pursuits such as music and theatre with your neighbors; shared meals can become a regular feature; shared office, shop, and recreational space means less purchasing, reducing the need to earn; political associations are often centered in the ecovillage setting; through the fulfillment of our longing for meaningful relationships, consumerism, addiction and crime are dramatically decreased; ecovillages also provide the possibility for integrating the differently-abled, the elderly, and other challenged groups in a way that gives them a richer, fuller life.

No wonder our ancestors spontaneously organized themselves into small, manageable, accountable social groupings: basic human needs are met much easier and there's more leisure time. This is not to say that community living is without work; indeed, it requires a constant vigilance of behavior – a heightened awareness of the needs and idiosyncrasies of others. Especially for people raised within the hyper-individualized paradigm, learning the subtleties of constructive, respectful, and mutually-beneficial interaction within a community setting may take a major effort – at first, until it becomes second nature; that is, until these qualities are recognized to be part of human heritage, part of the human condition.

Building socially healthy, harmonious, cooperative community in a non-traditional setting is an endeavour whose immense challenges should not be underestimated: Reconnecting with one another across barriers and borders of misunderstanding and miscommunication calls for clear, calm, firm intention. One of the most cited common reasons for the break-up of ecovillage or other intentional community projects is conflict. And so, propagating successful community will necessarily entail a healing process in which we step out of the cycles of pain and violence that have run through human history and take responsibility for initiating new patterns; the fact is, this healing process is needed, and healthy, constructive social skills can be taught and learnt! Peaceful, productive relation-ships can be a conscious, deliberate choice rather than left to capricious, random chance.

And so, the Social dimension of the EDE introduces these vitally important issues and offers the tools and skills necessary to effectively manage them. Ecovillages, as quintessential models of sustainable community, offer unique opportunities for developing and implementing language and techniques for bringing the subtleties of human inter-action to the surface, where they can be examined, worked with, and elevated. Through this part of the curriculum, we want to share as much as possible of the

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body of wisdom that has been gathered, and is still growing, from all these experiences. Our goal is to facilitate the creation of new communities and the renewal of existing ones.

Communities flourish as the people that live within them flourish!

The Social dimension begins with Module 1 – Building Community and Embracing Diversity – which discusses the basics of building community, and teaches values and skills that help foster an atmosphere of trust. Module 2 – Communication Skills: Decision-Making and Facilitation – is a journey into learning the art of decision-making and the facilitation of groups. It talks about redirecting the energy of conflicts towards growth, inspiration and a deeper mutual understanding. Module 3 – Personal Empowerment and Leadership – offers lessons in distinguishing between 'power from within' and 'power over,' and developing leadership skills that serve the group and the world as an important part of taking responsibility. Module 4 – Health and Healing – describes how communities are integrating the issues of health and care for one another. Finally, Module 5 – Local and Global Outreach – helps to broaden our perspective and see the value of net-working. Looking at the dimensions of time and space, an awareness is strengthened of the threads that connect us to past and future generations, as well as to communities all around the globe.

Module 1: Building Community and Embracing Diversity

Goals

- Appreciating the immense power for social change that lies in the building of community
- Learning about starting a community, including: organizing a core group, forging a common vision, creating community glue, and instilling an atmosphere of trust and goodwill
- Learning to incorporate the issues of the human heart into everything we do
- Acquiring the qualities of forgiveness, empathy, and reconciliation in our relationships with others
- Embracing diversity and being ready to witness the richness it brings to our lives

Content
The Power of Building Community

"Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world; indeed it is the only thing that ever has." – Margaret Mead

Building community can make all the difference! There is a 'group mind' that is far wiser than any individual; there is a group potential far vaster than any solo effort. We live in community as part of the Web of Life anyway; so it is our conscious choice whether we acknowledge this fact and take responsibility for creating a well-knit, positively expressed form of community.

In essence, respecting Life means consciously caring for community on all levels. Although we concentrate on the building of community within the human world in this part of the curriculum, the qualities required to do this are basically the same for our relationships with all the natural worlds as well. Connective thinking and acting is needed in every realm. Developing an ever finer capacity for sensitive observation and communication are the stepping stones. Climbing out of a space of inner judgement, in which we feel that we already know it all, allows us to perceive freshly. This will bring out the true individuality of everybody's special gifts. Cooperating and sharing then become possible. Building a new global culture is the accumulated product of so much individual and collective work.

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Starting: The Glue of Community

Strong communities grow from strong individuals. It is often easiest to start a new project with a small but dedicated core group. Communities find cohesive glue in a common vision that is simple, clear and authentic. Articulating and recording this common vision is one of the first goals to be accomplished when starting a community. Once the collective purpose and deepest values are delineated and embraced by all, this provides healthy soil for growing as a group. As Diane Leafe Christian says, the vision needs to express something each of the group can identify with, is inspired by and committed to. Different techniques can be used that make sure everyone contributes to the vision (e.g. Future Workshops).

Friendship, caring, mutual support: these are the qualities of human relationships that bind a community together. In an atmosphere of trust, communal processes flow with ease, laughter and lots of fun. But trust needs to be cultivated. Trust grows from deep heart-to-heart communication. If we allow ourselves to be seen by others authentically, with our weaknesses *and* strengths, if we speak our minds and our hearts, trust naturally arises. A sense of group well-being is created. It is a fascinating journey of discovery that we go on together. A community is much like a garden: if the field of human interaction is well tended and taken care of, it grows abundant fruits.

Incorporating the Issues of the Human Heart

In community, a social structure and even architecture is needed that mirrors the different aspects of human nature. We need to integrate our hearts, emotions, soul and spirit *with* our minds to find solutions that embrace Life. We need time and space for visionary work, for practical talk and decision-making, for the creative expression of feelings in the larger group but also with intimate friends, for celebration and silence, and, last but not least, for working together.

In many groups, the content (what is being said, the matter under discussion) is concentrated upon, while the process (the feelings that arise within the group depending on whether deeper needs are being met) is neglected. This tends to happen because people fear getting lost in unproductive emotional expression. However, feelings can under-mine the efficient workings of a group if they become stagnant, or contrarily, propel a group forward if they are expressed with beauty, dignity and power.

For this, different techniques have been developed, and it is important to find the "right fit" for the social and cultural contexts we find ourselves in. Story-telling and daily times for sharing and reflection are excellent ways to connect on a heart level. Dreams shared or acted out may illustrate the unconscious stirrings of collective issues. Non-violent Communication, Co-Counselling and the "Forum" are more methods that encourage a self-enquiring atmosphere of communication to arise. Music, games and laughter are invaluable in the process of allowing our hearts to open up and become playful once again amongst our fellow human beings.

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The Qualities of Reconciliation and Forgiveness

"The bigger you are, the easier it gets for you to acknowledge when you have made a mistake" – Desmond Tutu

In the building of community, growing together will be painful at times. There is a deep art to be learned in forgiving and asking for forgiveness. It is as if a continuous cleaning up process needs to be happening, intertwined with our everyday life, so as not to end up in a state of bitterness. There is the small-scale pain of a harsh word, impatience or anger. It is linked to the big-scale pain of human history that comes from abuse, torture, rape, murder... In many countries, communities and individuals that stand for peace are heavily threatened. Looking into the abyss of human evil can be horrifying, and we tend to shy away and deny it, keeping it hidden from view. In communities, we can create a space between us that is able to hold the expression of deep pain. Simply listening to the stories of victims and perpetrators alike allows tears to start flowing and healing to begin. The "truth and reconciliation process" that South Africa has gone through after the trauma of Apartheid shows the way to peaceful transformation.

"Forgiveness makes it possible to remember the past without being held hostage to it. Without forgiveness there is no progress, no linear history, only a return to conflict and cycles of conflict. This is a very old lesson." (From the introduction to "Forgiveness and Reconciliation")

Embracing Diversity

Ecovillages focus on the idea of 'unity in diversity', which combines the growth of strong individuals with the ability of synergizing their unique gifts, so that they may realise dreams together. In order to arrive at synergy (where the result is more than the sum of its parts), we need to bring out the best in one another. We need to be as curious about the needs, visions and talents of others as about our own. We need to practice the art of rejoicing in the beauty of others. In a community, every being has its unique place and task. Like in Nature, every part of a living organism is interconnected and communicating with all the other parts.

Throughout history, we have used our ethnic, religious, and cultural identities to separate ourselves from others. Today, as monoculture is narrowing down the diversity of species by the day, we appreciate our differences as treasures of experience and wisdom to draw from. Sharing in circles, we symbolize the manifold rays of expression and viewpoints that can be held, while centering on the same goal. Everyone potentially holds a part of the greater truth.

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After the core group has been established, attracting a larger group can be facilitated by the following process:

- Learning from the precedent of existing communities: Visiting, communicating with, and adopting the processes of existing communities can help to establish a clear, concrete vision and a tried-and-true methodology for success.
- Once land has been acquired, hosting an Ecovillage or Permaculture Design Course will produce multiple actual site-plans, full of creative ideas. These Design Courses also help to infuse positive energy and celebration into the land. Some participants may stay over to help with the implementation.
- Courses in facilitation and conflict resolution will help to establish effective decision-making structures.
- The next step seems to be the organization of working groups and the delegating of tasks.
- Appointment of a secretariat and the commencement of regular meetings for all are next on the agenda.
- It seems to be important early on to set up a monthly 'dues,' to ensure that those participating are serious about a commitment.
- During this whole process, it is very important to maintain a sense of celebration, to continually re-energize the motivations of a group who may experience a long and time-consuming course of development that could take years.

Resource and Reference Materials

Videos

* *Learning from the NAAM Movement in Burkino Fasso* – Dola Bonfils, Denmark
* *Visions of Utopia* – Community Catalyst Project, 2002
* *The Future of Paradise* – David Kanaley
* *Straight from the Heart* – Findhorn Foundation, 1995

Books

* *Buddhism at Work: Community Development, Social Empowerment and the Sarvodaya Movement* – George Bond, 2003, Kumarian Press
* *No Future without Forgiveness* – Desmond Tutu, 2000, Image
* *Builders of the Dawn* – Corinne Mc Laughlin and Gordon Davidson, 1986, Sirius Publishing
* *Cohousing: A Contemporary Approach to Housing Ourselves* – Kathryn McCamant and Charles Durett, 1994, Ten Speed Press
* *Creating a Life Together* – Diana Leafe Christian, 2003, New Society Publishers
* *Creating Community Anywhere* – Carolyn R. Shaffer and Kristin Anundsen, 1993, Jeremy P. Tarcher
* *Ecovillage Living: Restoring the Earth and Her People* – Hildur Jackson, ed., 2002, Green Books

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* *Eurotopia: Directory of Intentional Communities and Ecovillages in Europe,* Volker Peters, 2005, Verlag
* *Forgiveness and Reconciliation* – Raymond G. Helmick, S.J. and R. Petersen, eds., 2002, Templeton Foundation Press
* *From Utopian Dreaming to Communal Reality: Co-operative Lifestyles in Australia* – Bill Metcalf, 1995, UNSW Press
* *Tomorrow's Children: A Blueprint for Partnership Education in the 21st Century* – Riane Eisler, 2000, Center for Partnership Studies
* *Relational Learning for a Sustainable Future: An Eco-spiritual Model* – Mary Westfall
* *Sitting in the Fire: Large Group Transformation Using Conflict and Diversity* – Arnold Mindell, 1995, Lao Tse Press
* *Towards a New Culture* – Dieter Duhm, 1993, Verlag Meiga
* *Wisdom of the Communal Elders: Ecospirituality and Social Experimentation -* Bill Metcalf
* *Ecovillage at Ithaca: Pioneering a Sustainable Culture* – Liz Walker, 2005, New Society
* *Communities Directory* – Fellowship of Intentional Community, updated regularly

Experiential Learning Activities
Many of these can be found in other Gaia Education publications. See link at
www.ecovillage.org
- Talking Stick Circles
- Dream sharing and story-telling
- Sharing of personal histories
- The Forum (from ZEGG in Germany)
- Co-counseling
- Sharing and analyzing our observations of what is going on in the group
- Reading vision papers of other communities: case studies
- Creating a common vision
- Holding a "Futures Workshop," as developed by Robert Jungk (See *Ecovillage Living)*
- Arranging the group into a healthy organism: who would do what?
- New Games (see website

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Module 2: Communication Skills: Conflict, Facilitation, and Decision-Making

Goals

- Discussing the range of definitions of "consensus" and why consensus is the decision-making process preferred by ecovillagers
- Understanding the role of the facilitator in participatory processes and how it differs from traditional, autocratic leadership
- Investigating the basics of compassionate communication and how to deal with conflicts
- Considering the relationships between planning, feedback, reflection and evaluation in community life
- Experiencing the making of a facilitated, consensus decision

Content

All human settlements, including ecovillages, need to figure out how to govern themselves. Since ecovillages are explicitly trying to explore new ways of bringing people together that encourage the expression of their open creativity and natural leadership capacities (see Module 3), they require governance processes that support this intention. This Module will focus on the internal socio-political organization of ecovillages, including some of the difficulties commonly encountered, and the skills that promote smooth processing. Participatory techniques give people a voice in the decisions that affect their lives. We need to learn the skills of effective communication in order to be effective members of an ecovillage, or any other group for that matter.

Consensus Decision-making Processes

Consensus decision-making goes beyond the rule of majority in an attempt to reach a decision that all members of the group can support. The process rests on the fundamental belief that each person holds a piece of the truth. Therefore, each member of the group must be given space and time in which to be heard. Single individuals are not permitted to dominate the group. In consensus, as in ecosystems, each individual rules and is ruled by the lager community in a web of reciprocal relationships.

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In order to invoke the power and magic of consensus, the following values and elements must be in place: a fundamental informed commitment to the consensus process, the willingness to share power, a common purpose and effective facilitation, including the use of agendas and ground rules. We will explore these and how they work. Also, groups need to create spaces not just for planning, but also for feedback, reflection and evaluation. (What went well? What could be improved? How are we doing as individuals and as a group?)

Since most people have little experience with listening to their own, sometimes conflicting, inner voices, much less the voices of others with whom they might not agree, "consensus" can be hard to reach. To avoid unnecessary friction in meetings the group needs to adopt some basic ground rules. Each group must choose the norms which best meet its needs and values. Universally applicable rules might include the use of a facilitator, the necessity for everyone affected to participate, to speak only for yourself, not to interrupt and to focus on the solution.

In consensus process, no votes are taken. Ideas or proposals are introduced, discussed, and eventually arrive at the point of decision. In making a decision, a participant in a consensus group has three options:

- To give consent: When everyone in the group (except those standing aside), say «yes» to a proposal, consensus is achieved. To give one's consent does not necessarily mean that one loves every aspect of the proposal, but it does mean that one is willing to support the decision and stand in solidarity with the group, despite one's disagreements.
- To stand aside: An individual stands aside when he or she cannot personally support a proposal, but feels it would be all right for the rest of the group to adopt it. If there are many stand asides on an issue, consensus has not yet been reached.
- To block: This step prevents the decision from going forward, at least for the time being. Blocking is a serious matter, to be done only when one truly believes that the pending proposal, if adopted, would violate the morals, ethics or safety of the whole group.
- Alternatives to consensus can be: consensus-minus-one, 75% majority, or whatever feels appropriate for the situation

Facilitation
"To facilitate" means "to make easy." The facilitator does whatever possible to make the group's task easier. She/he is a "servant-leader," serving the group by providing leadership regarding the group's decision-making process. The responsibilities of a facilitator include:

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- having an awareness of the needs and goals of the group as a whole
- preparing the meeting location; bringing necessary equipment (markers, etc.)
- creating an atmosphere of trust and safety
- equalizing participation
- ensuring that the agenda contract is honoured
- keeping the energy of the group focused and on task
- exposing conflict and suggesting processes for resolving it
- collecting agreements; testing for consensus
- bringing closure
- orchestrating appropriate follow-up activities

With some training most of us can learn to facilitate well. It's good to exchange roles within the group playfully. Qualities of a good facilitator include patience, emotional balance and physical stamina as well as the ability to listen well and to formulate and condense thoughts into concise, articulate speech. We need flexibility and the willingness to experiment, holding a positive attitude towards problem solving and people. Cultivating integrity, humour and personal warmth as well as our capacity to integrate criticism are important qualities in making sure that we grow in our capacity to serve the group well.

Communication Skills

The skills described here are strongly related to non-violent communication (M. Rosenberg) but also inspired by Buddhist teachers like Thich Nhat Hanh and others. To communicate from the heart is essential in building community. The purpose here is to strengthen our ability to respond compassionately to others and to ourselves even, and especially in, situations of conflict. Our personal responsibility for how we act and respond to others is emphasized. Practicing deep listening fosters respect, attentiveness and empathy. Through using words mindfully, with loving kindness, we practice generosity and create trust amongst people.

In resolving conflict learning the art of expressing careful observations free of evaluation is a good starting point. Next, we need to become aware of our feelings and learn to read them as indicators that show whether our needs are being met or not. We can express our feelings without blaming or attacking others. This helps to minimize the likelihood of facing defensive reactions in others.

Through training to identify our own deeper needs and those of others we can clearly articulate what we wish for. This means making clear requests without demanding them to be met. All human beings have the same basic needs - this makes it possible to connect with each other and to find mutual understanding on a deep level. Focussing on the clarification of what is being observed, felt, and needed, rather than on diagnosing and judging, we discover the beauty of our own compassion. This is the key to creating a flow between ourselves and others based on a mutual giving from the heart.

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Once we become able to receive critical and hostile messages without taking them person-ally, giving in, or losing self-esteem we know we're on the right track.

Dealing with Conflicts

Conflicts are inevitable. They belong to our life like storms to the variety of weather. In fact, in groups that are truly diverse, differences are both a sign of health and an invitation to creativity. The most important lesson is to change our attitude from avoiding conflicts to looking at them with interest and openness. This means stepping out of a "winner-loser" and into a "win-win" perspective. Win-Win solutions become possible after all involved parties of a conflict have been heard and understood.

Often, when we regard a situation as "conflictual", this means that we have lost our sense of connectedness, of belonging, or of being understood. Before agreeing or disagreeing with anyone's opinions, try to tune in to what the person is feeling and needing. Instead of saying "No," say what need of yours prevents you from saying "Yes." If you are feeling upset or angry, become aware of the deeper need that is not being met and of what you could do to fulfil it, instead of thinking about what's wrong with others or yourself.

Obstacles to harmonious interaction include: emotional allergies, rank and privilege, cultural and structural roots of conflict, gossip, personal attacks and cynicism.

Resource and Reference Materials

Books

* *Facilitation and Consensus Manual* – Beatrice Briggs www.iifac.org
* *Creating Harmony: Conflict Resolution in Community* – Hildur Jackson, 2000, Gaia Trust
* *A Manual for Group Facilitators* – Brian Auvine, et al, 1977, Center for Conflict Resolution
* *Building United Judgment: A Handbook for Consensus Decision-Making* – Michel Avery, et al., 1981, Center for Conflict Resolution
* *Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making* – Sam Kaner, et al., 1996, New Society Publishers
* *Great Meetings! Great Results* – Dee Kelsey, 2004, Hanson Park Press
* *How to Make Meetings Work: The New Interaction Method* – Michael Doyle and David Straus, 1993, Jove Books
* *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Compassion* – Marshall Rosenberg, 1999, PuddleDancer Press
* *On Conflict and Consensus: A Handbook on Formal Consensus Decision-Making* – C.T. Lawrence Butler and Amy Rothstein, 1998, Foods Not Bombs Publishing
* *The Skilled Facilitator: Practical Wisdom for Developing Effective Groups* – Roger Schwarz, 2002, Jossey-Bass
* *The Deep Democracy of Open Forums* – Arnold Mindell, 2002, Hampton Roads
* *The Art of Mindful Living: How to Bring Love, Compassion and Inner Peace into Your Daily Life* – Thich Nhat Hanh, 2000, Sounds True

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* *Communicating in the Small Group: Theory and Practice* – Beatrice G. Schultz, 1989, Harper & Row
* *Damanhur – The Real Dream: The Story of the Extraordinary Italian Artistic and Spiritual Community* – Jeff Merrifield, 1998, HarperCollins
* *How to Mind Map* – Tony Buzan, 2002, HarperCollins
* *Six Thinking Hats* – Edward Debono, 1999, Back Bay Books,
* *Handbook of Group Facilitation* – Sandy Schuman, ed., 2005, International Association of Facilitators
* *The Fifth Discipline* – Peter Senge, 1994, Currency
* *Warriors of the Heart* – Danaan Perry, 1995, Findhorn Press

Internet
* Center for Nonviolent Communication – www.cnvc.org – Books, tapes, courses, etc.
* Community at Work – www.communityatwork.com – Workshops on facilitation skills, organizational development, and more
* Institute for Cultural Affairs – www.icaworld.org – Facilitation and group process trainings around the world
* International Association of Facilitators – www.iaf-world.org – Sponsors an annual conference, group facilitation listserv, publications
* International Association for Public Participation – www.iap2.org – Trainings and publications related to effective citizen involvement
* International Institute for Facilitation and Consensus – www.iifac.org – Beatrice Briggs, director. Website, electronic monthly publication, courses
* Process Work Center – www.processwork.org – Trainings based on the work of Arnold Mindell

Experiential Learning Activities

Facilitation skills may be taught, modelled and practiced throughout the training, including as appropriate: agenda planning, meeting site preparation, process ground rules, meeting evaluation, creating a co-operative environment, dealing with multiple facilitator roles, tools for building self-awareness, creating a "thinking" environment, group dynamics, and building facilitator skills in community. Every course will use a facilitator that will help guide the group in daily "check-ins" and "sharing" with/among participants. Module instructors will also meet daily to integrate community-building opportunities into the curriculum as they present themselves.

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Module 3: Personal Empowerment and Leadership

Goals

- Exploring the differences between 'repressive power' and 'creative power'
- Embracing the concept of self-empowerment and the empowerment of others
- Learning how a group of powerful individuals can work together in organic patterns of shared and interdependent responsibility
- Fostering awareness around the issues of rank, power, and privilege
- Taking on leadership in groups: integration of leadership skills

Content

The status quo of power relationships in our global system today has not led to peace or justice or wealth for most inhabitants of this planet. Human power has come to be associated with cruelty and alienation. However, power in itself is neither good nor bad. We humans are conscious beings, gifted with free will and free choice, and as such, to do away with our power would be to deny our responsibility. Power is here defined as our ability to create, sustain, change and *influence* people, groups, systems and life. It is our ability to consciously contribute to the process of evolution. To be able to take a positive stance towards self-empowerment, we need to distinguish between two types of power: repressive power, as domination over life; and creative power, as an integral part of the creative life force itself.

Repressive Power suppresses the life force in individuals, society and nature. Repressive power has its roots in a worldview based on fear and distrust. There is a set of assumptions prevalent in global culture which makes opting for repressive power seem sensible:

- There is not enough for everybody on this planet
- The world is made up of separate entities (i.e. I am separate from what is around me)
- In the Darwinian struggle for survival, only the strongest will win; therefore, human beings will always act for their own benefit
- Being sensible means doing things we do not wish to do
- Defences are needed for us to survive in this hostile environment; others will take advantage of any weakness we show

However, protecting ourselves against unwanted feedback from our environment on a large scale is making us miss out on vital information. We need to open up in order to become healthy parts of a healthy environment.

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<u>Creative Power</u> implies a gift of our individual wisdom and beauty to enhance the process of life. Creative power is not a property we own, but rather processes that we open up to. Assumptions that benefit the growth of creative power are:

- Our planet is, in essence, a place of abundance and plenty if wisely managed
- Life is continuously offering us best opportunities for growth
- Viable solutions are those that satisfy the needs of all those involved, leading to win-win situations; Win-win solutions are always possible
- Viable solutions are necessarily based upon respect for the needs of all beings that live on our planet
- Humans have the same basic needs all around the world (food, shelter, meaningful work, love and respect)

Regaining our Power

The global system generates a feeling of hopelessness and despair in many. Many of us have "given up", sometimes quite subtly so, on ourselves and our survival as a race on this planet. Mass Media are feeding us with misinformation and a cheap imitation of real life, and we are letting this happen. Yet, if we look at the state of affairs, it seems that the time is more than ripe to wake up and reclaim our personal power and our hope.

Receptivity combined with alertness to perceive reality will give us invaluable information on what we need to do. Creative power awakens when we then allow our natural talents to express through us as best we can. Community can play a key role in this process. Feedback of those around us is vital. Where do others perceive our strengths and weaknesses to lie? Also, Ecovillages offer us ample opportunities for original self-expression in new and unknown areas of life. We feel strongly motivated when we trust that the gift we bring is being seen, appreciated and is generating well-being for all that we love.

Grassroots Power

There is more than enough responsibility for everyone to take on his or her share. Taking on leadership in any area primarily means taking on much needed work. Once we experience the challenge of leading a group ourselves, we become thankful for the leadership of others. Wild Geese present us with a powerful expression for this idea: always one goose flies up front, to wind-shelter all those behind and show the direction. Then, as soon as the leading goose tires, another takes its place. The lesson: as a group we are stronger. In community, all are invited to take on leadership roles in their natural fields of expertise.

In building community, the border between repressive and creative power remains a fine line, and one main cause for dispute. Leadership patterns need to change in tune with the needs of the group and situation as well as the evolving natural authority of its members. It is very important to create transparency on rank and privilege issues. People with rank have to be especially able to integrate and work with criticism.

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In many societies, authority does not grow naturally and with flexibility out of talent and individual wisdom; instead it is determined by factors like language, sex, cultural up-bringing, grades and colour of the skin. We need to acknowledge and overcome these boundaries to reap the fullness of human potential! The real key to 'grassroots power' is the highest possible expression of compassion and friendship.

Creative Leadership Qualities
- Serving our personal destiny as well as the destiny of the community and sharing our gifts of beauty and excellence
- Being clear about the intention we have in leading
- Knowing we are in service, we offer ourselves without expecting return
- Self-knowledge, being transparent about our weaknesses and strengths
- Seeing the troublemaker as a possible teacher
- Being able to see the larger picture, taking only a second to grasp what is happening
- Trying to show the truth in all points of view within the present framework
- Encouraging others to become leaders
- Knowing that change is continuous, we let things be and study the moment, following the events of the natural flow of life
- Bringing awareness to all situations; accepting rather than judging

Resource and Reference Materials
Books
* *Power and Sex* – Scilla Ellworthy
* *Mit Sanfter Macht* – Scilla Ellworthy
* *Das Weibliche Prinzip* – Scilla Ellworthy
* *The Tao of Leadership* – John Heider, 1985, Humanics New Age
* *Change the World without Taking Power: The Meaning of Revolution Today* – John Holloway, 2002, Pluto Press
* *Despair and Personal Power in the Nuclear Age* – Joanna Macy, 1983, New Society
* *Return to Creation* - Manitonquat
* *War Prevention Works, 50 Stories of People Resolving Conflict* – Dylan Mathews, 2001, Oxford Research Group
* *Sitting in the Fire: Large Group Transformation Using Conflict and Diversity* – Arnold Mindell, 1995, Lao Tse Press
* *The Parable of the Tribes: The Problem of Power in Social Evolution* – Andrew B. Schmookler, 1984, University of California
* *Ritual: Power, Healing and Community* – Malidoma Patrice Some, 1995, Gill & MacMillan
* *Welcoming Spirit Home: Ancient African Teachings to Celebrate Children and Community* - Sobonfu Some, 1999, New World Library
* *Leadership and the New Science. Discovering Order in a Chaotic World* – Margaret Wheatley, 1999, Berrett-Koehler Publishers
* *Sex, Ecology and Spirituality: The Spirit of Evolution* – Ken Wilber, 2001, Shambhala

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Experiential Learning Activities

- Sharing and analyzing our observations of what is going on in the group: how would "society" rank this group? how is the group itself ranked?
- Arranging the group into a healthy organism: who would take on leadership in which context?
- Vision Quest/Tree Ceremony: reconnecting to nature in order to find out more about who we are and why we are here
- Taking time to mirror the archetypal qualities a person impersonates
- Exchanging 'Power-Stories': relating incidences of when we felt powerful and accomplished extraordinary feats
- Creating art to express personal power, what it feels like, what it looks like
- Practicing leadership roles within the group setting

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Module 4: Health and Healing

Goals

- Becoming aware of the human being as a holistic being – a union of mind, body, soul and spirit
- Understanding how we heal ourselves by healing our relationship with the Earth
- In a healing scenario, directing attention not towards illness but towards the needs of the entire person, including those on an inner level
- Acknowledging the wisdom of traditional healing methods and balancing these with modern medical knowledge
- Recognizing that every human being is unique, and for each one the path to wellness is specific and personal
- Affirming that prevention is the best method of cure

Content

Health is Being Whole

Health is not simply avoiding sickness; health is a way of life. Optimum health involves not only the physical body, but also the mental, emotional, social, and spiritual planes of existence. In modern societies there is a tendency towards segregation of the different strands of life; for example, at our job it seems OK for us to push ourselves, build up tensions and burn out because on our vacations we can buy the 'wellness' time to make up for it; or it seems OK to be cool, detached, and impersonal in the world because relationship and intimacy belong to the 'private' realm. In ecovillages, all these aspects are re-integrated into a fully holistic (i.e., not compartmentalized) life, where wholeness is the conscious goal. Living within a net of meaningful relationships is fundamental to health and healing; feeling accepted, loved, and needed incites a hopeful joy in living and a welcome openness towards the new.

In these kinds of situations, illness can be seen as an indicator, a message bringing us information about the status of our surroundings – community, society and nature – as well as about our individual states of being. We can learn to understand, rectify and amend disease instead of hastily trying to get rid of the condition as quickly as possible. In the global system, people lose their economic value once they get sick or old and are not able to work and care for themselves anymore. In communities, we have an opportunity to create a new precedent of solidarity and caring for one another.

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In these times, with natural disasters becoming more and more frequent, community solidarity and caring are the front-line means of survival during times of shock and trauma. Health is a collective issue, not only an individual one.

Healing Our Bodies
If my body is part of the social body, then healing my body will help to heal the social body. Sustainable health begins with reconnecting the mind-body split that has been the concomitant of industrial civilization. We do not merely *have* bodies, we *are* bodies; mind is not a separate 'substance' but rather the co-arising noetic interface between a body and its environment. Tending to the needs of the body – fresh air, pure water, nutritious food, regular exercise, touch and affection – is the foremost strategy for maintaining optimum individual health. How would you rate your relationship with your body? Could it be improved? There are numerous 'body awareness' exercises that have been designed to re-cover intimate knowledge about this relationship, and we'll experiment with some of those. There are also meditations whose purpose is to explore the body and its sensations; a result of regular practice is often the capacity to perceive the body as an energy field, noticing blocks or dense areas.

On this energetic level, it could be said that we are all created as spiritual beings, with the divine light radiating within – there is an ethereal spiritual body superimposed upon and progenitor to the material body. Emotional blockages such as judgment, resentment, or craving all dim our light, and these need to be transcended and cleared away. Ultimately, it is all about vibration and removing the hindrances and encumbrances to free vibratory circulation. From a chakra perspective, we need to restore the free movement of prana throughout all levels of our energy body-system; only then can we move with a dignified autonomic grace and reclaim our essential being as radiants of the divine effervescent light.

Sexual energy is the natural expression of a healthy body. The creative life-force stirs, then vigorously surges and seeks an outlet. The passion aroused is a passion for life itself. Joining with another in warm, loving, affectionate sexual embrace is a manner of reaching completion, fulfilment, and of reuniting the primordial polarities – Yin and Yang. In this sacred dance of Shakti and Shiva, the human being is re-united with, merges with, and soon becomes consumed by the very creative energies that spawned the birth of the Universe. Living in community will present many opportunities for the stirring of sexual energy. If we act as mature, responsible individuals, we can consciously harness and channel this potent life-force in productive and healing ways; we can infuse the social body with a warm, loving, caring, life-giving light. Or, on the contrary, if we let our passions run wild, if we unconsciously act out sexual fantasies without regard for their consequences, we run the risk of releasing destructive forces into the social body. The choice is ours. Repressed sexual energy is a big problem in the world today.

Healing Our Relationship to the Earth

In healing our relationship to the Earth, we heal ourselves. The old tribes used to show reverence for the dynamic interconnectedness of life on this planet. For too long now, Western civilization has treated the Earth as an exploitable reservoir of 'resources' and as a dumping ground for the poisonous residues of industrialization. The pollution of our air, water, earth and food is making us sick. The rich countries have consumed and are still consuming far above what is their sustainable share, and we know that this kind of gluttonous life-style is narrowing the chances for a prosperous, healthful future for all the world's children.

We know a lot more about the effects of our actions and the responsibility that we carry than we like to admit. Of course we feel the pain of our fellow beings; it reverberates within us. If we do not act upon this knowledge, if we do not take steps to heal the wounds, we carry around feelings of guilt, fear, and anger, and this makes us sick. Instead of succumbing to this denial, our lives could be like a love relationship with Nature and with Life itself – this would be the path to optimal wellness. Wherever we recreate sustainable ways of living, this helps us to step back into that love and begin the healing: It heals us to know that we are searching whole-heartedly for solutions that benefit all; it heals us to tread softly and respectfully upon the Earth; it heals us to know that we are looking out for the well-being of our fellows and leaving behind a healthy legacy for our young ones.

Acknowledging the Wisdom of Traditional Healing Methods

Restoring a respectful, honourable relationship with the Earth naturally invites us to re-connect with the wisdom of traditional healing methods. Beginning with the basics of eating healthy foods that grow around us, and collecting the herbs that smile at us on our walks, we maintain healthful bodies by assimilating the life forces of our life places. The modern health system, relying on synthetic manufactured pharmaceuticals, denies a living relationship with Nature. The techniques of modern medicine may be helpful in some more radical intervening cases; but the foundation of health rests squarely in a regimen of holistic prevention, the so-called 'soft' approaches. In the ecovillages, we see a partnership of complementary medicines and therapies. Each human being is unique and for each one the path to health and wellness is specific and personal, so all options should be explored.

Communal Alternatives to Health Insurance

Creating a new precedent of community solidarity and care has definite financial con-sequences. In times of distress and disaster, our interdependent reliance upon one another becomes apparent. Replacing the lost social care networks of the functioning communities of a bygone era, most modern societies have developed pension and health insurance schemes. These institutionalized structures, however, with their inherent anonymity and indifference, are totally incapable of meeting the most urgent requirements, nor of satisfying the long-term need for a sense of belonging.

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Furthermore, this coupling of an individual's care provision to the global economic system is leading to an increasing dependency upon avaricious transnational corporations to meet local needs, which is completely contradictory. Capitalism is a system de-signed to exploit natural and cultural capital as quickly and as efficiently as possible – it has no business in the realm of care. In most countries, social solidarity has been systematically dismantled, especially at the community level, while the poor are becoming poorer. The ecovillage is a solution for reclaiming responsibility for care at the local level. In the coming years, we may see ecovillage design principles applied ubiquitously to retirement communities, as aging baby-boomers discover that government and corporations are not prepared to help.

One example of an alternative grassroots solidarity fund is found in the Artabana-Net-work. Artabana Solidarity Communities are small groups of people averaging 20-30 members. The first groups were founded in 1987. Currently more than 100 groups exist in Germany and Switzerland. They try to create the best conditions for individual health care through providing financial and other means of support to enable members to follow their individual path toward health with a free choice of health care methods. All members basically take care of their own health and financial needs in cases of illness. At the same time, payment is made into local Artabana solidarity funds which are available in times of financial distress due to health emergencies. If the local fund is insufficient or de-pleted, regional and national funds within the Artabana network are accessible. Coming from a place of mutual support amongst people who know each other, experience has shown that the necessary funding has always been available when needed.

Resource and Reference Materials
Books
* *Gesundheit: Bringing Good Health to You, the Medical System, and Society through Physician Service, Complementary Therapies, Humor, and Joy* – Patch Adams, 1998, Healing Arts Press
* *Medical Marriage: Partnerships between Orthodox and Complementary Medicine* – Cornelia Featherstone and Lori Forsythe, 1997, Findhorn Press
* *Perfect Health: The Complete Mind/Body Guide* – Deepak Chopra, 1991, Harmony Books
* *Wellness Workbook* – John Travis and Regina Sara Ryan, 1988, Ten Speed Press
* *Integrative Medicine* – Benjamin Kligler, 2004, McGraw-Hill Professional
* *The Complete Book of Chinese Medicine: A Holistic Approach to Physical, Emotional and Mental Health* – Wong Kiew Kit, 2002, Cosmos Publishers
* *Textbook of Ayurveda* – Vasant Lad, 2001, Ayurvedic Press
* *Holism and Beyond: The Essence of Holistic Medicine* – John Diamond, 2001, Enhancement Books
* *Manifesto for a New Medicine: Your Guide to Healing Partnerships and the Use of Alternative Therapies* – James Gordon, 1997, Addison-Wesley
* *The Healing Power of Humor* – Allen Klein, 1989, Tarcher
* *Body: Recovering Our Sensual Wisdom* – Don Hanlon Johnson, 1992, North

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Atlantic Books
* *Body, Spirit and Democracy* – Don Hanlon Johnson, 1994, North Atlantic Books
* *Body Awareness as Healing Therapy* – Moshe Feldenkrais, 1994, North Atlantic Books
* *The Spell of the Sensuous* – David Abram, 1996, Vintage Books
* *The Mind of the Cells* – Satprem, 1982, Institute for Evolutionary Research
* *Beyond Tantra: Healing through Taoist Sacred Sex* – Mieke and Stephan Wik, 2005, Findhorn Press

Experiential Learning Activities
* Setting up an ecovillage-scale model for a preventive health care system
* Designing an on-site health clinic for participants and visitors, addressing each other's health issues, and offering prescriptions for remediation
* Designing and constructing a medicinal herb garden, after some research; preparing and sampling herbal teas
* Preparing tinctures and salves
* Practicing healing techniques such as: chi gong, polarity therapy, acupressure, rebirthing, breathwork, releasing stress through prana, etc.
* Massage circles
* Awareness through the body meditations and games
* Aerobic exercises
* Frisbee and volleyball
* Open, inter-gender communication about sexuality; no practical application necessary!

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Module 5: Local, Bioregional and Global Outreach

Goals

- Learning to respect the community of those that have lived before, those that live now and those that will live
- Learning to build friendly relationships with our neighbours and visitors: overcoming the concept of "us" and "them"
- Designing for a social ecology, balancing public and private space
- Seeing ways of catalysing sustainability in our region: bioregionalism
- Broadening our scope: networking, exchange and education, support and solidarity on a global level

Content

Community through Time

The strands of history run through the Web of Life. Wherever we start building community, delving into the history of that place can help us to understand more of the present. Landscapes have been repeatedly altered and transformed by human hands. There might be sublime wisdom and ancient local experience embodied in, say, the location of a road or the shape of a roof. Deeper meanings do not necessarily disclose themselves on first sight; but after some careful observation, profound patterns may begin to emerge. Becoming absorbed in the lines and curves of a cultivated landscape can be likened to the reading of a book: the information is there if we can only learn the local dialect.

When we enter a certain territory, we enter a certain culture, a special way of seeing and being in the world, a distinct manner of expressing ourselves that might be very different from where we come from. All that people have experienced in this particular place: the wars, the hardships, the ethnic diffusions, as well as the times of simple peace and happiness, give rise to the present mood and mentality. It takes time to become accustomed and acculturated to a place – watching, listening, and immersing ourselves into the flow of local life.

We also live in times when cultures are changing rapidly and drastically as Neoliberal globalization continues to take its toll, melting the richness of diversity down to a dull, bland, uniform consumer monoculture. In many countries, due to the massive displacement of native customs and traditions, the overall life patterns befitting the place

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need to be rediscovered. In other countries, indigenous cultures desperately need support and assistance in order to survive.

Large bodies of knowledge are lost when cultures are wiped out, knowledge precisely adapted to the bio-geographical conditions of the region at hand. We can help revive and preserve this precious knowledge by listening to the stories of elders, delving into local myth and folklore, researching archeological sources, and honoring local language and celebrations.

Living in cross-generational communities brings an age-old quality back to life. The young ones bring meaning into the life of the old ones and vice versa. Reintegrating the wisdom and experience that the elders carry, we benefit immensely; watching the children grow, we remember who we are doing all this work for. Our community is always one that embraces those that have lived, those that are living, and those who have yet to come – community is a space-time continuum.

Building Friendly Relationships with Neighbours

Running vertically through time, the Web of Life spreads horizontally into the here and now. For our ecovillages to become sustainable, they need to be connected to both these dimensions. Nature works with permeable cell membranes and open systems; we need to initiate and maintain open communication and exchange with the larger community of which we are a part.

Sometimes it seems easier to communicate with a worldwide network of like-minded friends than with our very own neighbours. Classically, community builders wish to create change, to experiment with new models that address problems in the society at large. Many of these idealists have been in some way uprooted or displaced, which is partly why they have committed themselves to effecting transformation. The traditional surrounding population in this classic tableau are people who may have been rooted to their place over generations, are thus fixed in their ways, but who are nonetheless also living in the unsustainable present. It remains a challenge to balance future-oriented, progressive idealism with more conventional, conservative perspectives. The community-builders may be bringing inspiration for positive change, but they can only carry through with their vision if they release their insistence on knowing what's right Humility, reciprocity, and *humour* are needed in the process of creating language that can be understood and welcomed. We find support for our visions as improvements become tangible and benefit all. This might be a slow process, but through it we can bring hope to a region while establishing a secure foundation for ourselves.

Hospitality

Generous hospitality is a central quality in all cultures of peace. As intentional communities, if we want to build friendly neighbourly relationships and become an inspiration to the world, we need to make ourselves transparent and easy to visit; we need to overcome exclusion and isolation tendencies. But how to receive guests with open care

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when they come streaming in week after week, eager to witness community lifestyles? Part of the answer lies in site design and architectural solutions. Thoughtful planning for the influx of visitors, respecting the privacy and well-being of residents, is an important criterion in the design process.

CoHousing

Here is a fairly moderate way of introducing social idealism into an existing community. CoHousing facilitates compact housing form, efficient land use, and reduces household consumption. It encourages human interaction and lends support to disadvantaged members of society. CoHousing is a new type of cooperative housing which integrates autonomous private dwellings with shared utilities and recreational facilities such as kitchens, dining halls, workshops, offices, and children's play facilities. CoHousing residents comprise an intentional community. They choose to live together and to share property and resources. They develop a rich social life that includes regular shared meals. They aspire to meaningful social relations and a strong 'sense of community.' For many purists, CoHousing is only a step in the right direction; but as a means for enabling ecovillage principles and practices to be grasped and accepted by more 'mainstream' proponents, this model holds a valuable place in the overall evolution to sustainable community. Full-featured ecovillages will incorporate CoHousing clusters into their residential infra-structure.

Bioregionalism

Learning how to develop solutions at the level of the whole biosphere may be too far a reach for most people, but at least we can find out what needs to be done in the particular places where we live. Work to become compatible with local life systems – social and eco-logical – in a home place. Each person lives in a specific bioregion, a life-place that is an essential component in the planetary Web of Life. Even small outlays of effort to improve conditions locally can genuinely benefit some aspect of the mutual whole. These efforts result in tangible outcomes that are there to live with and watch while their impact on other social and natural features grows. These are both comprehensible and realistic goals.

We need to gain knowledge about our local life places with an emphasis on social and cultural implications. The following focal points can help identify the basic starting points for maintaining and restoring life where we live:
- Give priority to active projects – learning by doing essential work to achieve natural health in our life-places
- Restore and maintain natural features to whatever extent is possible – the health of the social fabric will be improved with this restoration
- Develop sustainable means to satisfy basic human needs - food, water, energy, shelter, materials, and information are essential
- Support living in place in the widest possible range of ways from economics and culture to politics and philosophy – this involves both proactive

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> undertakings that create positive alternatives as well as protests against ecological devastation and disruption, and social injustice
> • Heighten awareness of issues pertinent to the bioregion through public media, involvement in local politics, and education, both local and global

As the years pass, the intermingling will increase as local people become involved in the community, and community members disperse throughout the region. As a result of the ecovillage's presence, innovative educational methods may be introduced into local schools; networks of local economy may be strengthened opening up new markets; ecological awareness and restoration programs may be instituted; sustainable technology solutions may be spread around; with the ecovillage as a nexus of global communication, the infusion of ideas and customs – as well as people – from around the world will interact with local culture. Many ecovillages receive a large amount of attention from local, national, and global press. The establishment of a healthy, functioning ecovillage will reverberate its sustainable influence throughout a bioregion. Involvement in local politics is once again emphasized as an important factor of sustainability.

International Networking

There is a definitely positive side to the globalization process. When the first cosmonauts visited the moon they reported back about the dramatic experience of seeing our beautiful blue planet as such a vulnerable home in the vast universe. As inhabitants of this Earth we breathe the same air, we watch the same starry skies and as humans we share the same basic needs. Every single one of us can choose to become a part of the solution instead of part of the problem; and we can support one another in opting for simple beauty and walking our talk. In working for a sustainable future, we can profit immensely from inter-national exchange and support. Through the work of networks like GEN and many others, we can draw a map of our Earth before our minds eye that is slowly but surely filling up with nodes and points of light and hope, with people that are working together for a livable and peaceful future.

As consummation to this Module, the work and accomplishments of many international networks and organizations working for social justice, solidarity and sustainability will be reviewed and documented.

Resource and Reference Materials
* *In the Tiger's Mouth: An Empowerment Guide for Social Action* – Katrina Shields, 1994, New Society Publishers
* *Promise Ahead: A Vision of Hope and Action for Humanity's Future* – Duane Elgin, 2000, Quill
* *Images of Organization* – Gareth Morgan, 1986, SAGE Publications
* *Ecovillages: A Practical Guide to Sustainable Communities* – Jan Martin Bang, 2005, New Society Publishers
* *Subcoma* – P.M., Paranoia City, 2000, Verlag
* *Sustainable Community: Learning from the Cohousing Model* – Graham Meltzer,

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2005, Trafford
* *Senior Cohousing: A Community Approach to Independent Living* – Charles Durrett, 2005, Ten Speed Press
* *Discovering your Life-Place: A First Bioregional Workbook* – Peter Berg, 1995, Planet Drum Foundation
* *Home! A Bioregional Reader* – Van Andruss, Christopher Plant, Judith Plant and Eleanor Wright, 1990, New Society Publishers
* *Boundaries of Home: Mapping for Local Empowerment* – Doug Aberley, ed., 1993, New Society Publishers
* *Sustainable Communities: A New Design Synthesis for Cities, Suburbs and Towns* – Sym Van der Ryn and Peter Calthorpe, 1986, Sierra Club Books

Internet
www.gen-europe.org
www.ecovillage.org

Experiential Learning Activities

- In sub-groups, students can create a 'local market,' trading products with each other from their places of origin
- Students can create a 'cultural festival' to be performed in an act of sharing with the local village or town
- Students can go out to interview old-timers in the area, sharing local stories
- Visiting ecovillages, cohousing projects or other intentional communities in the region will be a very valuable way of practicing local outreach
- Compiling a resource list of international organizations working in a particular field of interest will give students a head start in forming their own global network
- Within the group, share in-depth about differences in worldview
- Observation walks in the nearby area to read the language of the landscape
- Guided meditation or visualisation of the landscape 100 yrs, 200 yrs and 500 yrs ago and in 20, 50 and 100 yrs ahead. See the landscape and life of people changing.

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ECONOMICS OVERVIEW

Today, economics rules supreme as the 'master discipline', with all other subjects and values subordinated to it. Critically, ecology is seen as a sub-system of economy rather than vice versa. Consequently, the 'environment' is seen primarily as a bank of resources for the undertaking of human activities. Our task as we move towards sustainability is to reverse this equation, with economy properly understood as a sub-system of ecology. Within this new paradigm, the scale and nature of economic activities will be limited by the carrying capacity of the Earth's various eco-systems.

To begin to shift towards the new paradigm, however, we need to develop a clear understanding of how we managed to get into this mess in the first place. Only thus can we move beyond the fatalism of our leaders who insist that there is no alternative to neo-liberal globalisation and develop a mature understanding of the various policy choices that have created this very unnatural and unsustainable system. In so doing, we can begin to see what alternatives we need – and are able – to take to create a more just, sustainable and biocentric society. The Economics curriculum, thus, begins with an exploration of the forces and interests that shape the current global economy, and of the types of policies that are required to set it on a more sustainable course: this forms the basis of the first module – Analysis of Global Economics.

While noting that structural changes are required at the global level, we note that there is also a need for the emergence of vibrant, locally-based alternative economies – so that the shoots of the new burst forth, even as the old system crumbles in on itself. This is where ecovillages have a key role to play in researching, demonstrating and teaching new, alternative approaches to economic life.

Current economic structures and incentives make it generally less profitable to produce on a small scale for local needs using local raw materials – exactly the kind of production systems required if we are to live within the Earth's carrying capacity. Until those structures and incentives begin to change, our economic behaviour needs to be strongly in-formed by values-based choices: how much is enough?; what is the relationship between levels of material consumption and human well-being?; is our wealth dependent on the poverty of others?; is our wealth dependent on the degradation of the other-than-human world?; in what cases might one choose to consume less or to pay more than strictly necessary? Such values-based questions form the subject of our second module – Right Livelihood.

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Ecovillages and other communities that are seeking to become more sustainable have identified a number of ways of growing their own economies, even within global economic structures that favour the large-scale over the small, and we explore this in our third and fourth modules – Nurturing Local Economies.

Module 3 looks in particular at Social Entrepreneurship, which has greatly grown in significance in recent years. This is a form of entrepreneurship in which financial return is only one (and often not the most important) motivation of those involved. Social enterprises, a growing feature of many ecovillages, are engaged in providing employment to the marginalised and disadvantaged, restoring degraded ecosystems and providing for community needs, including child-care, care for the elderly and the supply of healthy, organic food. The module explores both the theory and practice of social entrepreneurship and helping course participants understand how, in practical ways, they may become more involved in creating or supporting such enterprises in their own communities. We will also look at the range of goods and services that appear to be appropriate for eco-village enterprises.

Module 4 explores the other principal dimension of Nurturing Local Economies: the creation of community banks and currencies. Community banks have enabled communities to channel the savings of members and supporters into local enterprises and initiatives, while local currency systems have helped to retain money within the local economy rather than haemorrhaging out into the wider speculative economy.

The final module in the Economics curriculum looks at the Legal and Financial aspects of creating ecovillages and social enterprises. This includes how we can create a climate of abundance and distinguish between different types of finance. Emphasis is laid on the importance of aligning the ownership and legal structures chosen for ecovillages and social enterprises with the types of finance to be mobilised to create and grow them. Participants are encouraged to visualise how they can use all of the tools acquired in the Economics curriculum to create their own projects back in their home communities.

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Module 1: Shifting the Global Economy to Sustainability

Goals

- Developing an understanding of:
- the way in which the global economy currently works
- the consequences of the way the global economy works for people, society and ecosystems
- why the global economy has developed in the way that it has
- how the global economy could be more just, resilient and sustainable
- the kinds of changes required for it to be so

Content

The last 250 years has seen an unprecedented increase in the levels of economic activity, consumption, resource depletion, growth in human population and CO2 emissions. Over the last 50 years, these trends have increased exponentially: we have moved from a situation where for the majority of the world's population (even in the industrialised countries of the North), most production and consumption was locally-based to one in which goods are increasingly flown and shipped thousands of miles across the globe. Remarkably, this is true even of produce such as food, which is perishable and has distinctive cultural and geographical characteristics: many countries export and import near identical quantities of the same foods, including meat and dairy products.

The result has been a huge increase over the last century in the 'ecological footprint' that humans leave on the Earth. That is, as consumption has increased and as we have shifted to more resource- and energy-intensive means of production and distribution of goods, so the ecological impact of our economic activities has increased dramatically. It has been estimated that since the mid-1970s, we as a species have been eating into the Earth's natural capital rather than, as previously, consuming the annual self-regenerating interest. Moreover, if everyone on Earth were to consume at the level of the typical North American (the logical – if generally unspoken – aim of the dominant 'development' paradigm) we would need the resources of five planet Earths to make this possible.

Three questions arise:

1. Why has this happened? What economic, political, cultural and spiritual factors underlie the progressive globalisation of the economy? What specific decisions have created an economic system that works as this one does?
2. What are the consequences of conducting our economic affairs in this way?
3. What can we do about it?

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These questions lead us into small group and plenary discussions of causes, consequences and solutions. (Generally, small groups will be organised during the whole Economics curriculum along regional/cultural lines – the following categories are often effective: North/urban, North/rural, South/urban, South/rural.) The aim here is to encourage critical, systemic thinking rather than to spoon-feed one particular line or interpretation.

The principal topics to be covered here include the following:

What is globalisation?
A discussion of the various different dimensions of globalisation: Often, these discussions will help the students to distinguish between 'cultural' globalisation (which is often considered to be a broadly positive development) and 'economic' globalisation (which has been accompanied by more troubling social, economic and ecological consequences).

Why has the shift towards globalisation happened?
How and why has economic globalisation emerged? Participants are encouraged to see the process not as being in some sense inevitable, but rather as the result of specific (and reversible) policy choices. Key subjects include:
- coming to terms with the limits to growth on a finite planet
- the consequences of the Newtonian reductionist paradigm
- de-regulation and liberalisation of product, service and financial markets
- substantial subsidies offered to large-scale concerns
- a taxation system that encourages capital-intensity at the expense of labour-intensity
- externalisation of many social and environmental costs
- the workings of the principal international economic organisations – World Trade Organisation, World Bank and International Monetary Fund

Consequences?
When exploring the consequences of economic globalisation, participants are encouraged to think systemically – with use of mind-maps to record new ideas and insights – through all the various impacts, in terms, for example, of:
- concentrations of political and economic power
- global equity and workers' rights
- health of the habitats for other species
- biodiversity
- resource depletion
- health of soils and of the atmosphere
- the creation and management of wastes
- community coherence and integrity
- quality of life, mental health, etc..

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Having each of the groups speak to the others about conditions and impacts in their own cultural/geographic contexts is an important mutual learning.

What can we do?

What would a more just, equitable, resilient and sustainable global economy look like? What kinds of policy changes would be required to bring this about? Among the most interesting of these to have been suggested in recent years are the following:

- paradigm shift to a holistic worldview of connectedness
- Contraction & Convergence – a model created by the Global Commons Institute which seeks to give all adults on the planet an equal entitlement to greenhouse gas emissions at a sustainable level
- restructure taxation away from people (taxes on income, employment, profits, value added and capital) towards resource use and pollution (energy taxes, water charges, traffic congestion charges, taxes on the creation of waste, etc.)
- end state subsidy of environmentally wasteful and unsustainable activities (subsidies on large-scale energy generation, large-scale and inorganic agriculture, fossil fuel exploitation, research and development for the benefit of large corporations, tax incentives for large corporations, etc.)
- introduce subsidies to promote environmentally favourable and sustainable activities (small-scale and organic agriculture, small-scale energy generation, energy conservation, public and low energy-using transport, etc.)
- introduce a tax on land
- create a citizen's income
- form networks of sustainable communities
- write off international debt
- promote fair trade
- reform, abolish or replace key international economic bodies – the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organisation
- introduce a global tax (payable as rent payments, to all countries) on
  - activities that pollute
  - activities that use the "global commons", i.e. flight lanes, sea lanes, ocean fishing areas, sea-bed mining
  - military expenditures and the arms trade
  - world trade
  - international currency transactions

Resource and Reference Materials

Video/DVDs

* *Ancient Futures: Learning From Ladakh* – International Society for Ecology and Culture
* *Peak Oil: Imposed by Nature* – Tropos Dokumentar, troposdoc@hotmail.com
* *The End of Suburbia: Oil Depletion and the End of the American Dream* – The Electric Wallpaper Co., www.endofsuburbia.com

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The Battle for Seattle – Independent Media, seattle.indymedia.org

Books
* *The Case Against the Global Economy* – Jerry Mander and Edward Goldsmith, 1996, Sierra Club Books
* *The Limits to Growth; The 30-Year Update* — Donella Meadows, Jurgen Randers and Dennis Meadows, 2004, Chelsea Green
* *Beyond Globalisation: Shaping a Sustainable Global Economy* – Hazel Henderson, 1999, Kumarian Press
* *Ancient Futures: learning from Ladakh* – Helena Norberg-Hodge, 1992, Sierra Club
* *Globalisation and it Discontents* – Joseph Stiglitz, 2002, Penguin
* *Steady State Economics: The Economics of Biophysical Equilibrium and Moral Growth* – Herman Daly, 1977, W. H. Freeman and Co.
* *Transforming Economic Life: A Millennial Challenge* – James Robertson, 1998, Green Books
* *The Growth Illusion* – Richard Douthwaite, 1990, Green Books
* *Our Ecological Footprint* – Mathis Wackernagel and Bill Rees, 1996, New Society Publishers
* *Sharing Nature's Interest: Ecological Footprints as an Indicator of Sustainability* – N. Chamber, et al., 2000, Earthscan
* *Eco-economy* – Lester Brown, 2001, Earthscan
* *Contraction and Convergence* – Aubrey Meyer, 2000, Green Books
* *Natural Capitalism* – Paul Hawken, Amory Lovins and L Hunter Lovins, 1999, Little, Brown & Company
* *The Post-Corporate World: Life after Capitalism* – David Korten, 1999, Kumarian
* *The Party's Over: Oil, War and the Fate of Industrial Societies* – Richard Heinberg, 2003, New Society Publishers
* *Resource Wars: The New Landscape of Global Conflict* – Michael T. Klare, 2002, Metropolitan/Owl
* *Confessions of an Economic Hitman* – John Perkins, 2004, Berrett-Koehler
* *The Final Empire: The Collapse of Civilization: The Seed of the Future* – Wm. H. Kotke, 1993, Arrow Point Press

Internet
* World Development Movement – www.wdm.org.uk
* Third World Network – www.twnside.org.sg
* Global Ecovillage Network – www.ecovillage.org

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Experiential Learning Activities

Ecological Footprint Analysis (EFA) – a tool that permits the measurement of the resource consumption and waste assimilation requirements of a defined human population in terms of a corresponding area of productive land. Use the 'Global Steps' cards created by Best Foot Forward (www.bestfootforward.com) to calculate individual footprints

* Have members of the group from different parts of the world hold hands to create circles outside (on the grass, perhaps) representing the size of the ecological footprint of their country (North Americans would have a very large circle; Europeans a comfortably large circle; people from middle-income countries would be a little cramped; those from the poorest countries would be tightly cramped.) A slow drum-beat can be played through this exercise. The groups should spend time to watch each other. This exercise is NOT aimed at generating guilt among those in the large circles. This is a meditative observation exercise – just watch outside and inside in a non-judgmental manner. Then, return to large and/or small groups and discuss what you are feeling. (There will be plenty of time later to discuss potential solutions: the role of the facilitator is to ensure that discussions and reactions at this stage remain at the level of feelings.)

* Following on immediately from the previous exercise (i.e. before group discussions), prepare beforehand a large circle (to represent the Earth) on the grass or sand-pit. Have the people from the poorest countries enter this circle and have time to enjoy walking around in the spaciousness. Eventually, the other members of the group will join them until there is not so much space within the circle. The drum-beat continues uninterrupted from the previous exercise. While they are walking, read the following passage (a number of times) from Oren Lyons, Faithkeeper of the Onondaga Nation (1993 Earth Day pledge):

"In our way of life…..with every decision we make, we always keep in mind the Seventh Generation of children to come…..When we walk upon Mother Earth, we always plant our feet carefully because we know that the faces of future generations are looking up at us from beneath the ground. We never forget them".

Product biographies

The teacher/facilitator should provide some case study material and examples that illustrate the long distances, and often multiple sources, that most of the foods and products we consume have come from. (Newspapers, magazines and educational materials have many such examples). The students are then invited to develop their curiosity about the biographies of the items that surround them. The researching and presentation of a pro-duct biography can be set as a homework exercise.

Transition visualization

In a guided meditation, encourage the students to envisage their own home places as they currently are. Have them note the various ways in which the lives people lead are

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dependent on cheap and easy access to fossil fuels. Encourage them to imagine how things might be different if we were to live within our ecological footprint. Have them visualise how the food would be produced, where and how people would travel, what the buildings and settlements would look like, how power would be generated, how entertainment would be provided, etc. Then, have them reflect on what key changes might need to come into force to set the transition in motion.

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Module 2: Right Livelihood

Goals
- Facilitating an integration of heart and soul into economic and lifestyle choices
- Helping participants develop a greater connection with their life purpose
- Promoting livelihood choices that contribute to rather than detract from planetary health and well-being

Content

"Today's luxuries become tomorrow's necessities". This ancient maxim has perhaps never been truer than it is today. As recently as 50 years ago, the proportion of a family's income in the industrialised world spent on food was around 22 per cent; today it is half that amount. Yet, the idea of spending more on good-quality, locally-grown food – in order to promote human and ecological health – is hard to imagine for most, as many of their other expenditures now seem essential – foreign holidays, entertainment, televisions, out of season fruit and vegetables and all manner of material 'things'.

Yet, there is much research to suggest that beyond a certain level of material prosperity (a level that we have long passed in the industrialised world), greater material wealth, far from adding to the sum of human happiness, may well erode it. This seems to be a difficult lesson for us to learn; levels of consumption in the West continue to grow from year to year.

Accordingly, this module will introduce the concept of 'sustainable abundance'. This implies that there is much wealth that is not material in nature (but that tends to be under-valued in a market economy). This includes social capital (built up through service to and deep connection with one's community) and ecological capital (living as part of a healthy and self-sustaining eco-system). This links in with the recent emergence of alternative indicators of well-being (alternative, that is, to the conventional use of purely monetary-based systems such as gross domestic product, or GDP).

Values will have a key place in the transition to a more just, sustainable and fulfilling world. This is because: i) structural changes have never been enough to effect transformation – inner, values-based transformation is always also required; and ii) no amount of technological innovation can possibly bring us back into sustainable balance with the carrying capacity of the Earth – in the industrialised world, we will need to find a way towards a redefinition of quality of life de-linked from levels of material consumption.

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At the heart of this module is exposure to communities, initiatives and individuals within the ecovillage context that have succeeded in effecting such a redefinition in their own lives:

- people who have chosen to downsize and simplify their lives in order to gain more creative or family time
- the community farmer who works longer hours for less remuneration than would be considered acceptable for many
- the helpers and caregivers working on a voluntary basis for the pure pleasure of serving their community
- community artists creating acts of reckless and enlivening beauty for their own sake
- the consumer who pays more for locally-produced or fairly-traded goods because of the social and environmental benefits to his/her community and/or those of communities on the other side of the world
- networks of villages in the developing countries, such as Sarvodaya in Sri Lanka

This will inevitably be a highly experiential module that will be very difficult to teach outside of the ecovillage context. It is more addressed to the heart and the imagination than to the intellect. The aim is to seek to effect a transformation in the heart and mind of the participants based on a thorough-going calling into question of the assumed link between material consumption and happiness.

Participants will be encouraged to engage their heads, hearts, hands and souls in growing and preparing food, creating their own entertainment and art, caring for others, developing a greater understanding of the many gifts they have to offer and defining their life's purpose in ways that fulfill their whole being.

On a more conceptual level, participants will be introduced to some of the recent attempts to develop alternative indicators for measuring economic and social progress that try to move beyond conventional measures of money flows and growth to broader-based indicators based on access to services, quality of life, happiness and ecological well-being.

Truly, growing food for the community and caring for the young and elderly are the most honorable and vitally necessary of occupations; yet, in the distorted rationale of capitalist economics, these occupations are marginalised. Local, small-scale agriculture, in particular, has always been the basis of community economic life; and we expect that in the reduced carbon future, this manner of 'right livelihood' will once again assume its pre-eminence.

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Resource and Reference Materials

Video
* *Ancient Futures: Learning From Ladakh* – International Society for Ecology and Culture

Books
* *Small is Beautiful: A Study of Economics as if People Mattered* – E.F. Schumacher, 1973, Harper & Row
* *The Post-Development Reader* – Majid Rahnema, 1997, Zed Books
* *Living Lightly: Travels in Post-consumer Society* – Walter and Dorothy Schwartz, 1988, Jon Carpenter
* *Standing on Earth* - Wendell Berry, 1991, Golgonooza
* *The Power in Our Hands* – Tony Gibson, 1996, Jon Carpenter
* *The Reinvention of Work: A New Vision of Livelihood for Our Time* – Mathew Fox, 1994, Harper
* *Voluntary Simplicity: Toward a Way of Life that is Outwardly Simple, Inwardly Rich* Duane Elgin, 1993, William Morrow
* *On Right Livelihood* – J. Krishnamurti, 1992, HarperCollins
* *Mindfulness and Meaningful Work: Explorations in Right Livelihood* – Claude Whitmeyer and Ernest J. Callenbach, 1994, Parallax Press

Internet
* E.F. Schumacher Society – www.schumachersociety.org
* International Society for Ecology and Culture – www.isec.org

Experiential Learning Activities

What is Wealth? – Invite the students to compile a list of the 10 things (including material 'things' and less tangible attributes, such as 'love') that most contribute to their quality of life and feelings of well-being. When they have finished, they can read out their lists – followed by a group discussion on how many and which of the things listed constitute material as opposed to other forms of wealth.

The Indicators Game – In recent years, communities around the world seeking alternatives to GDP have defined more biocentric and playful indicators for measuring the well-being of their communities and eco-systems. These have included the number of breeding salmon or hawks, the incidence of asthma among their children, how many trips to school are on foot or by bicycle...Ask the students to consider, and then discuss, indicators that they would like to see introduced in their own communities.

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Right Livelihood Inventory – Invite the participants to conduct an inventory of skills and resources that could be developed or converted into a means of right livelihood. (This could be on the level of either the individual or the community to which s/he belongs, or indeed of the group taking this module – whichever feels most useful.)

Right Livelihood Visualisation – Have the participants drop into a deeply relaxed, meditative state. Then ask them to envisage the following three scenarios, giving them plenty of time for each:

1) Picture in your mind's eye your community/campus/family/city/etc. (whichever situation feels most relevant). Look in detail – are there people in the landscape? Are they happy? What are people eating? Where is that food coming from? What kinds of building do you see? Modes of transport? Entertainment? etc., etc.

2) Now picture this scene as you would most like it to be – once again, the facilitator provides prompts to look at each of the areas examined previously.

3) What is your role (big or small; single or multiple) in helping promote transformation from the first to the second scenarios?

Commitments – Following immediately on from the previous exercise, have a round of commitments, with each participant explaining some change or action s/he will undertake, asking for the group's witness and support in this.

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Module 3: Social Enterprises

Goals

- Generating thinking on what kinds of businesses are best suited to the scale and characteristics of ecovillages and local neighbourhoods
- Exploring the concept and the experience of social enterprises
- Examining those types of social enterprise activities that tend to flourish in the ecovillage setting
- Helping participants envisage social enterprise activities that they could be involved in launching or supporting

Content

Currently, economic incentives are weighted heavily in favour of mass production and distribution and against locally-based production and consumption using locally-sourced raw materials. Nonetheless, there is much that ecovillages and other communities can do, even under current conditions, to nurture and develop their own local economies.

The first step often taken by communities seeking to wrest back some control of their economic destiny is to undertake a study of money and resource-flows into and out of the local economy. This reveals all of the many products and services that are brought into the community from the outside (thus causing money wealth to leave the local economy). The community can then explore which of these products and services it may be able to provide for itself. This exercise is called 'Plugging the Leaks' (see below in the 'Experiential Learning Activities' section for more details).

The 'social enterprise' model lends itself especially well to local communities seeking to develop their economies in ways that also satisfy ecological and social goals. Social enterprises are a key element of the growing 'third economy', lying somewhere between the private and public sectors and seeking to combine the best aspects of both. They cover a broad range of ownership structures and activities and can best be summarised as enterprises whose primary aim is to provide a social or environmental benefit, with the secondary aim of making a profit or generating a fair return to investors.

The social enterprise model is ideally suited to the emerging holistic paradigm and to the ecovillage context as it permits the achievement of what have often been competing goals:

- the delivery of social (employment, child-minding, caring for the elderly, etc.) and environmental (reforestation, restoration projects) goals while making a profit

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- serving the local community and investors (in the ecovillage context, often the same people)
- combining paid staff and volunteers
- creating goods and services while teaching others how to follow their lead, and dealing in both conventional and alternative currencies

Moreover, because of primacy of their social and environmental concerns and their generally communal ownership structures, social enterprises often have access to external funding that is not available to more conventional, private enterprises.

Some examples of social enterprises are provided – both within the host ecovillage and outside. In Findhorn, the Phoenix Shop was bought out in a community share issue; in Denmark, the Folk Centre for Renewable Energy was instrumental in promoting local citizen groups and farmers to finance the building of windmills; in Damanhur, Italy, over 30 local businesses were financed by a local currency system; in Hungary, Galgafarm financed the development of their ecovillage internally with an organic farm and local hotel project.

A visualisation exercise seeks to align participants with roles they could potentially play in helping to create or to support an enterprise within their own community (intentional or otherwise). They are invited to reflect on goods or services that could bring nourishment to their communities and on what contribution they could make to help ensure that these are provided.

Finally, we look at social auditing as a tool for ensuring that social enterprises remain in the service of their home communities. This tool comprises a 'triple-bottom line' analysis of enterprise performance, looking beyond the conventional measure of financial profitability to include also its social performance (how is the business seen by its clients, its staff and volunteers, its suppliers, its neighbours, etc?) and its environmental performance.

Resource and Reference Materials
Video
* *Creating Prosperous Communities: Small-Scale Cooperative Enterprise in Maleny* – Alister Multimedia, 2002

Books
* *Building a Life Together: Growing Ecovillages and Intentional Communities* – Diana Leafe Christian, 2003, New Society Publishers
* *Bringing the Food Economy Home: Local Alternatives to Global Agribusiness* – Helena Norberg-Hodge, Todd Merrifield and Steven Gorelick, 2003, ISEC
* *Living in the Cracks: A Look at Rural Social Enterprise in Britain and the Czech Republic* – Nadia, Johanisova, 2005, FEASTA
* *The Ecology of Commerce* – Paul Hawken, 1994, Harper Collins

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* *The Natural Advantage* – Alan Heeks, www.thenaturaladvantage.com
* *After the Crash* – Guy Dauncey, 1996, Green Print
* *The Emergence of Social Enterprise* – Carlo Borzoga and Jacques Defourny, 2004, Routledge
* *For the Common Good* – Herman Daly and John Cobb, Jr., 1994, Beacon Press
* *The Social Enterprise Sourcebook* – Jerr Boschee, 2001, Northland Institute
* *Enterprising Nonprofits: A Toolkit for Social Entrepreneurs* – J. Gregory Dees, et al., 2001, John Wiley & Sons

Internet
* FEASTA, Foundation for the Economics of Sustainability – www.feasta.org
* International Society for Ecology and Culture – www.isec.org.uk
* Redefining progress – www.redefiningprogress.org

Experiential Learning Activities
Plugging the Leaks – Have the students break into 'affinity groups'. (Depending on the composition of the plenary group, these affinity groups could separate, for example, rural dwellers, suburban dwellers and city dwellers in three different groups). The students should map the flows of money into and out of their local economies. Which goods and services are their communities buying from outside and which are they providing for themselves? Could they provide more for themselves? Which goods and services provide the best opportunities for import substitution?

Social Enterprise Slide-show (Jonathan Dawson, Alan Heeks) – A slide-show of eco-village and other local economies around the world provides many clues as to what kinds of goods and services can be produced on a relatively small scale by community enterprises.

Panel of Ecovillage Entrepreneurs – Question & answer session with a panel of locally-based social entrepreneurs.

Social Enterprise Visualisation – Invite the participants to envisage their home communities (intentional or otherwise). Have them meditate on the various goods and services being provided – or that they would like to see provided. Are there any (food retailing, food preparation, child care, entertainment, environmental restoration, etc.) that they feel especially drawn to? Have them explore, initially alone and then in small groups, what kinds of businesses they could imagine locally, and how they might contribute to the creation or operation of an enterprise providing these goods or services.

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Module 4: Community Banks and Currencies

Goals
- Promoting an understanding of what money is and how it works
- Providing information on how different ecovillages and other communities (intentional and conventional) around the world have managed to develop flourishing local economies
- Providing specific information on how to set up and manage community banks and currency systems

Content
The way that money is created and circulates is a principal driver of the current un-sustainable global economy. The great majority of money in circulation is created by banks in the form of loans with interest attached. This necessarily builds in a growth imperative as all borrowers need to increase their income to repay capital and interest. The interest payment mechanism also distributes money wealth from the poor (borrowers) to the rich (lenders), thus further exacerbating income inequalities.

At the international level, the deregulation of financial markets begun in the 1980s enables capital to move anywhere on the planet at the touch of a button: This has dramatically increased the vulnerability of global financial systems, local communities and fragile ecosystems alike as businesses can be rapidly transferred to new locations offering lower wages or environmental regulations.

One aspect of the global monetary system that creates social, ecological and geo-political dysfunction is the use of the US dollar as the world's principal reserve currency. This is used both to enable countries to trade among themselves in a common currency and to protect their currencies against aggressive currency speculation. This provides a huge annual subsidy to the US economy, enabling it, among other things, to sustain a military machine that dwarfs all others, while allowing it to keep the existing global economic architecture in place.

Much work has already been done to develop models for monetary systems that promote greater resilience, equity and ecological sustainability. These involve a number of different features:

- re-introduction of controls over capital mobility
- transfer of responsibility for the creation of money from banks to governments

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- the lending of money at low or zero interest rates
- the introduction of multiple currencies operating at different levels: community, city, national, regional, global, and
- the creation of an international reserve currency independent of all national currencies.

Money is to the local economy what blood is to the body. Currently, local economies the world over are hemorrhaging money at an alarming rate. This becomes a vicious circle: the fewer locally-provided goods and services there are, the more money leaves the local system and the less there is to circulate locally to buy from and invest in local businesses which will, in turn, find it more and more difficult to produce in order to satisfy local needs.

The importance of local control over money is well explained by economist Richard Douthwaite: "If people living in an area cannot trade among themselves without using money issued by outsiders, their local economy will always be at the mercy of events elsewhere. The first step for any community aiming to become more self-reliant is therefore to establish its own currency system."

Ecovillages have found two ways of addressing the problem of hemorrhaging: The first is by creating their own local exchange trading systems (LETS) or community currency systems. The history, strengths and weaknesses of the different types of systems will be explored. Students will also have the opportunity to see a community currency system at work and will be led through the process of creating a currency to suit the context of their home place.

The second tool for keeping money circulating within local economies is the creation of community banks or other legal structures to permit community members and their friends and supporters to invest in community enterprises and projects. We will explore the history of credit unions, micro-credit and other community banks. Students will also have the opportunity to see a community bank at work and will be led through the process of creating a similar body.

Finally, as a way of pulling together the threads of modules 3 and 4, best practice in the creation of vibrant community-based economies is presented, including material on the Sarvodaya movement in Sri Lanka, the Mondragon cooperative movement in Spain, Maleny community in Australia and the Damanhur ecovillage in Italy.

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Resource and Reference Materials
Video
* *Brave New Economy* – New Economics Foundation, London

Books
* *Short Circuit: Strengthening Local Economies for Security in an Unstable World* –
   Richard Douthwaite, 1996, Green Books
* *New Money for Healthy Communities* – Thomas H. Greco, Jr., 1994, self-published
* *Money: Understanding and Creating Alternatives to Legal Tender* – Thomas H. Greco,
   Jr., 2001, Chelsea Green
* *The Future of Money* – Bernard Lietaer, 2001, Century
* *Funny Money: In Search of Alternative Cash* – David Boyle, 2000, Flamingo
* *Going Local: Creating Self-reliant Communities in a Global Age* – Michael Schuman,
   2000, Routledge
* *Interest and Inflation Free Money: Creating an Exchange Medium that Works
   for Everybody and Protects the Earth* – Margit Kennedy, 1995, Seva
* *Localisation: A Global Manifesto* – Colin Hines, 2000, Earthscan
* *Bioregional Solutions for Living on One Planet* – Pooran Desai and Sue Riddlesdale,
   2002, Green Books
* *Shifting Direction: From Global Dependence to Local Interdependence* – Helena
   Norberg-Hodge, 1998, ISEC
* *The LETSystem Design Manual* – Michael Linton and Angus Soutar, www.gmlets.u-
   net.com

Internet
* New Economics Foundation – www.neweconomics.org
* Zero Emissions Research Institute – www.zeri.org – leaky bucket model

Experiential Learning Activities
* LETS Game – Illustrates how LETS systems work. Students are asked to list what goods and services they are able to offer and then they trade these things between themselves, with no exchange of money or any form of paper currency.

* Hands-on Sessions - With those who have created community banks and money systems to explore the specifics of design, creation and management of the schemes.

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Module 5: Legal & Financial Issues

Goals

- Developing an understanding of the various legal and financial options available for ecovillages and social enterprises, and to identify the one(s) best suited to specific contexts
- Making the participants familiar with feasibility studies and business plans
- Empowering participants to use the various tools provided in this and earlier modules in creating their own projects and social enterprises

Content

There are myriad different legal and ownership structures to choose from in the creation of both ecovillages and social enterprises. Moreover, the options vary between different regions – and even between different countries within the same region. (The teacher must be well versed, within reason, in the specific legislation prevailing in the region(s)/countries of the course participants.)

Two key points are of central concern in determining the appropriate legal and ownership structures:

i) That these reflect the core social and economic values of the group:
   - is income to be shared equally between all members of the enterprise/ecovillage or are some to be paid more than others?
   - is the income of those working outside the ecovillage to be put into the communal pot or are they able to retain all or some of this income?
   - are enterprises to be owned privately, communally or by share capital?
   - in the case of share ownership, are voting rights to be linked to the scale of investment, or will all investors have just one 'golden' voting share?
   - in the case of an ecovillage, is the land to be held privately or communally?; will increases in the value of land accrue to individuals or to the collective?; is special provision to be made for the housing of poorer members of the community who may not be able to afford to buy or build? – how?

ii) That these be related to anticipated sources of financing:
   - in most contexts, specific legal and ownership structures are required for ecovillages or enterprises to be able to receive government grants, charitable donations, raise share capital, etc.
   - in most countries, different legal forms exist for for-profit, not-for-profit, and social enterprises

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All of these questions will have a bearing on the appropriate legal and ownership structures to be chosen.

Thought is required in advance to gain clarity on what short- and long-term sources of financing are anticipated for the project to launch and move forward. There are four different types of capital that ecovillages and ecovillage-based enterprises may need to draw upon:

1) Seed capital – for feasibility studies and for planning, zoning and other permits and licenses
2) Share capital – money from investors, who usually share in the ownership and control as well as in the risk of the project
3) Borrowing/debts – that generally also involve interest payments
4) Gifts, grants and donations

There are, in turn, seven potential sources of capital:

1) Ecovillage or enterprise members/employees
2) Supportive individuals who may be either local to the project or part of the wider 'family' of shared interest
3) 'Business angels' – wealthy friends within the business community who share the values of the project
4) Non-profit organisations such as charitable trusts, foundations and various service providers (for example, the Epidaure ecovillage in Switzerland receives payments from the Swiss youth services ministry for the work it does in working with underprivileged youth and refugees)
5) 'Friendly bears', larger organisations that share in the interests of the project, including housing associations, organic food processors, etc.
6) Government – local, national or regional.
7) Foreign Aid Programs

A matrix is presented showing which of these sources is most likely to provide which type of capital and relevant examples are provided of each. Then, the favoured sources of funding are related back to the legal and ownership structures most suitable for attracting these.

All this information is set within a context of 'creating abundance' – that is, on helping participants understand that techniques for identifying and mobilising financing are rarely enough: success is generally dependent on creating a vision and aligning with it so fully that one becomes an agent in its smooth unfolding.

Participants are then guided through some of the principal issues relating to finance, including: risk-return ratios (strategies for fund-raising associated with risky projects); security (the kinds of collateral generally required by lenders and the associated risks);

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gearing (the ratio between share capital and loans); and fair returns (defining and negotiating fair rates of interest to the borrower).

Participants return to their regionally-defined small groups to discuss legal and financial options relevant to their own contexts.

Participants are also then guided through the theory and practice of creating feasibility studies and business plans. Relevant, concrete models are offered of each and the participants are given the opportunity, individually or in groups, to create their own documents.

In closing, a guided meditation takes participants back through the entire Economics curriculum, helping them to re-connect, in turn, with each of the tools that should now be in their community economics tool-kit – ecological footprints, 'Right Livelihood' commitments, Plugging the Leaks, community banks and currencies, ideas for social enterprises, knowledge about legal, ownership and financial options, etc. They are invited to focus in on a project – creating an ecovillage, establishing a social enterprise, supporting a social enterprise – and to consider how they can best use the tool-kit to turn their dreams into reality.

Participants can then either:
   i)   return to their regionally-defined small groups where each takes it in turn to describe and elaborate on their vision, requesting the support of the group to put it into practice; or
   ii)   create working groups around a smaller number of 'champions', participants who have clear ideas on specific projects they wish to develop.

The curriculum ends with one or more of the following, depending on the time available and what feels appropriate:
   -    presentations of the projects in the plenary group
   -    a round of commitments for future actions
   -    a short evaluation – what went well?, what could have been better?
   -    appreciations…

Resource and Reference Materials
CD-ROM
Brave New Economy – New Economics Foundation, London

Books
* *Building a Life Together: Growing Ecovillages and Intentional Communities* – Diana Leafe Christian, 2003, New Society Publishers
* *The Seven Rules of Spiritual Success* – Deepak Chopra, 1995, New World Library
* *Environmental Economics* – R. Kerry Turner, et al., 1993, Johns Hopkins Press
* *Designing the Green Economy: The Post-industrial Alternative to Corporate*

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Globalization – Brian Milani, 2000, Rowman & Littlefield

Experiential Learning Activities
* Creation of feasibility studies and business plans

ECOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

Ecological concerns are fundamental to the design and development of ecovillages and sustainable communities. The prefix 'eco' originally meant 'home' – not in the limited sense of 'house,' but rather referring to the surrounding and supporting local environment. An ecological village, or *eco*-village, then, is integrated into the landscape in a way that benefits both humans *and* their encompassing environs. Designers will take great care to ensure that life-supporting natural functions are not only preserved but *enhanced* whenever possible. The strategy here is one of working *with* Nature rather than against Nature. The ultimate goal of sustainable settlement design is the creation of self-reliant, self-maintaining, self-regenerating 'living systems' that can assume a life of their own.

Unfortunately, standard planning and development practices overlook the need for mutually-beneficial relationships between a settlement and its supporting local environment. Drawing on the mechanistic, reductionistic mindset of an outworn industrial era, simplistic uniform zoning, codes, and specifications are referenced, as if one 'blueprint' could apply to all situations. In many cases, especially in colonized parts of the world, an abstract grid pattern is arbitrarily overlaid *on top of* the local ecology, thus burying rich inter-relationships with the living natural world. The settlements produced by this mechanistic, reductionistic mindset are machine-like, and that's what makes them unsustainable. Eco-villages are built by the people who will be living there; they are not developer led, so they have a chance to grow into living systems. Sustainable systems – those that can be continued into the indefinite future – are modeled after natural systems; the ecovillage, by definition, is integrated into its surrounding and supporting local ecology in a way that benefits all.

When each new ecovillage or sustainable community development project is seen as a unique opportunity, as a novel creative challenge in integrating human habitat into a particular ecological niche, then ecovillage designing becomes an exciting and demanding natural art and science. A working understanding of the design disciplines – such as Permaculture Design, Ecological Design, and Whole Systems Design – is a pre-requisite. These disciplines complement one another and can be synthesized into an Integrated Ecovillage Design that includes social, economic, spiritual, as well as ecological parameters. Also required is a good understanding of natural laws and processes, and the way these can be applied to a settlement design scenario.

The accomplished ecovillage designer becomes a true transdisciplinary maestro, able to work with, conduct and communicate knowledge from such diverse fields as engineering to botany, landscape architecture to feng shui, renewable energy to cultural anthropology,

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etc. While all this is true, effective communication and social skills – as well as understanding people's deepest needs – may be the most meaningful knowledge a designer can cultivate and possess.

An effective ecological designer will also become highly skilled at observation – taking the time to develop a keen working relationship with a particular site, coming to understand gradually its unique qualities and attributes, its cycles, surges, and periodicities. Catching, channeling, and storing these energy flows are important aspects of the design. Standard developers generally rush right into a project – eager to maximize profit – giving little heed to the long-term consequences of their actions. Ecovillages are built by the people who will be living there, for generations to come, so naturally long-term consequences are considered very carefully.

Ecology, as a discipline, is the study of the dynamic, interdependent relationships in the Web of Life. No living system can stand alone as an isolated entity; each is intricately connected with all others in a complex network of energy, nutrient, and information exchanges. Scientifically speaking, Life moves in the opposite direction of entropy: the evolutionary trajectory is toward ever-increasing order, complexity, diversity, interconnectivity ... as well as *beauty*. Designers of sustainable human habitation systems will employ this kind of ecological understanding in all their work. The following modules are intended to instill an 'ecological literacy' – a functional knowledge-base influencing not only our thinking and critical design judgment but also our way of experiencing Life as a celebration of organic, evolutionary fullness and plenitude.

Module 1 – Green Building and Retrofitting – begins the teaching of how to construct or retrofit healthier, more ecologically friendly and energy efficient environments with a distinctly vernacular, regional flair. **Module 2** – Local Food – makes participants aware of the need to grow food locally, for reasons of personal health and planetary well-being. **Module 3** – Appropriate Technology – provides an overview of 'state-of-the-art' technologies with a realistic appraisal of their effectiveness. **Module 4** – Restoring Nature and Rebuilding after Disasters – describes the many ways in which one function of the ecovillage is to restore and regenerate the health of the local environment. An Integrated Ecovillage Design, then, is the most effective way to rebuild after human- and nature-caused disasters. Finally, **Module 5**, our capstone piece, is called just that – Integrated Ecovillage Design. This is an abbreviated and condensed introduction to the very holistic, systemic process by which designers integrate the ecovillage into its local ecology, thus creating a human-scale microcosm of the macrocosm, a focalized holographic representation of the cosmic whole. This is the culmination of all previous Modules in the EDE series, in both concept and practice.

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Module 1: Green Building and Retrofitting

Goals

- Evaluating objectively the problems inherent in 'modern' building and construction techniques
- Increasing familiarity with various 'green,' sometimes called 'alternative,' building techniques whose designs provide healthier, more energy efficient and less environmentally damaging structures
- Gaining awareness of the need to discriminate as to the choice of building materials and architectural styles depending on the region
- Covering the issues of retrofitting poorly designed structures, including the retrofit of poorly designed urban and suburban patterns
- Promoting the rehabilitation and re-inhabitation of partially or completely abandoned existing settlements, thus reconstructing lost cultural identity

Content

This module looks at the healthy building issue in some detail and offers a variety of solutions to improve it. Materials will be investigated one by one and assessed from the aspects of manufacturer and user health, environmental impact, costs, and user comfort. The concept of "embodied energy" will be explored at length. The learning will be focused to-ward providing students with the ability to design and build, or retrofit, a sustainable dwelling of their own.

This module strongly stresses the importance of insulation and the preservation of energy over add-on technology. It is far more effective, and cheaper in the long run, to emphasize energy efficiency from the very beginning of the design process than to have to retrofit later. The module also strongly advocates adapting vernacular designs and a local bio-regional approach, drawing on the traditional knowledge and techniques of an area.

Specific considerations include:

Siting of a Dwelling

- Aspect, Aspect, Aspect!
- The impact of the climate near the ground
- Fire! Flood! Designing for catastrophe
- Siting – relationship to supporting infrastructures and terrain

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Designing for Comfort
- Passive solar design principles
- Passive and active insulation
- The breathing wall
- The importance of cross flow

Designing for a Budget
- Size does matter
- Shared facilities/Shared costs
- Impact of materials on cost

Buildings Come in All Shapes and Materials
- Framed timber construction
- Brick/Brick veneer
- Concrete block
- Rammed earth/poured earth
- Adobe
- Cob
- Dome houses/Geodesic dome
- Straw Bale
- A-frame homes
- Pole house
- Building with stone
- Underground houses and earth shelters

Building for Health (including the ABC of concerns)
- Should we worry
- Warning signs
- Allergies
- Biological warfare
- Can you smell the stuff?
- Does your furniture stink?
- Electricity and magnetic fields
- Heating and cooking
- Lead poisoning
- Multiple chemical sensitivity
- Pesticides
- Radiation

What Can You Do About It (responding to pollutants)
- Heating
- Electricity
- Construction materials
- Timber and timber products
- Fabrics and fibres
- Paints, varnishes, stains
- Adhesives/removers
- Metal products
- Plastics
- Household maintenance
- Pesticides and fungicides
- Indoor pollutants and toxins

Many places on the planet have been intensively inhabited and farmed for thousands of years, yet partially or totally abandoned in the past few decades – the primary reason being exodus out of rural areas and into cities. A classic example of this phenomenon is foothills of the Mediterranean basin, but regions of Africa, Asia, and South America can also be cited. The principles of Green Building and Retrofitting apply equally well to whole settlements as to individual buildings. Restoration and re-inhabitation of abandoned or de-populated settlements will mean attentively considering the local laws, customs, economics, flora and fauna, history and traditions of a place in order to replicate and re-invigorate local culture. Communicating with the elders who have chosen to stay – people with deep, mature knowledge of their territory – will be an invaluable source of information. Further points to consider:

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- Observe the existing settlement: read its history, culture, and community life through the built architecture, in its main structures as well as in its details
- Research available oral and written sources, including aerial photos
- Identify patterns of chaos and order in the original settlement plans, where private and public spheres have in the past overlapped, thus maximizing 'edge effect'
- Decide on a few distinctive marks of the native vernacular (color patterns, door and window styles, motifs, partitioning, accessory buildings, etc.) and introduce them organically into the design

Principles of Ecovillage Design, as outlined in this and other modules, are also uniquely qualified to guide and inform the retrofit of existing (and usually quite dysfunctional) urban and suburban settlement patterns. We expect this kind of retrofit to become of increasing concern as the full effects of 'peak oil' are felt.

Resource and Reference Materials:
Books:
* *Building with Straw Bales* – Barbara Jones, 2002, Chelsea Green
* *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape* – John B. Jackson, 1984, Yale
* *Ecological Building Factpack* – Bob Pocock and Beth Gaylard, 1992, Tangent Design
* *Eco-Renovation: The Ecological Home Improvement Guide* – Edward Harland, 1999, Chelsea Green
* *Green Building Handbook* – Tom Wolley, et al., 2000, Brunner-Routledge
* *Natural House Book* – David Pearson, 1998, Fireside
* *Sacred Architecture* – Caroline Humphrey and Piers Vitebsky, 1997, Duncan Baird
* *Village Planning in the Primitive World* – Douglas Fraser, 1968, George Braziller
* *Simply Build Green* – John Talbott, 1993, Findhorn Foundation
* *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* – Christian Norberg-Schulz, 1979, Rizzoli
* *The Hand-sculpted House* – Ianto Evans, Michael G. Smith and Linda Smiley, 2002, Chelsea Green
* *The New Independent House* – Michael Potts, 1999, Chelsea Green
* *Whole House Book* – Pat Borer and Cindy Harris, 1998, C.A.T.
* *Your Home, Your Future, Your Lifestyle* – Australian Commonwealth Gov't
* *Architecture for the Poor* – Hassan Fathy, 1973, University of Chicago

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Experiential Learning Activities
Depending on the location and time of year, these may include:
- Drawing up plans for a cottage using local materials and vernacular style
- Evaluating the energy efficiency of existing buildings on site
- Combining the ingredients for a cob mixture and making bricks or a cob oven
- Participating in the construction of a straw-bale dwelling
- Taking an active part in the reconstruction or renovation of existing buildings
- Redesigning on paper new uses for existing spaces, public and private
- Taking an active part in restoring agricultural infrastructure

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Module 2: Local Food

Goals

- Instilling in participants an awareness of the benefits of growing, distributing, and consuming food locally
- Making the connections between personal and planetary health and well being
- Inculcating an awareness of existing unsustainable global production and consumption patterns
- Introducing various methods and techniques for organic food production
- Providing a context for direct, hands-on, body-based experience

Content

This is a huge field of concern; so, as with all the other modules in the EDE, this one can only be an introduction. On the one hand, there are very real and serious political and macro-economic concerns, such as: local vs. imported products, centralized vs. de-centralized power, total food miles from producer to plate, the deleterious effects of industrial, fossil fuel-based agriculture on the environment, the loss of family farms and whole farming communities, agribusiness, government subsidies and transnational trade blocks, the issue of local economic self-reliance, the disappearance of indigenous knowledge and genetic stocks, etc.

And then there is the productive, proactive, and indeed *fun* "how to" part: growing vegetables and fruits at both the home and community scales, integrating animals into combined food production systems, edible landscaping and integrating food into garden designs, creating value-added products – not to mention harvesting, storing, preparing and eating the food you have grown. This module attempts to strike a balance between important considerations at both ends of this wide spectrum.

Introduction to the Politics of Food

- What is the real cost of food?
- Food can cost the Earth
- The politics of food: developed and developing countries
- What can we do about it?
- What is a sustainable diet?

Growing Your Own

- An introduction to soil science
- Improving your soil organically
- What does NPK mean?
- Weed control
- Establishing a no-dig/biointensive garden
- The role of legumes in organic gardening/farming

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- Garden elements and planning: Permaculture Zones 1 and 2
- Gardens for small places/container gardens/crops for pots and balconies
- Introduction to Botany
- Integrated Pest Management
- Irrigation
- Berries
- Food forest: fruits, nuts, medicinals
- Orchard design: establishment and maintenance
- Seed saving
- Animals and aquaculture
- Community-scale food schemes such as Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs), share cropping, Co-ops, and Farmer's Markets
- Crop rotation
- Multi-layered, integrated horticulture
- Biodynamic gardening

Local Food is at the heart of supportive, nurturing, self-reliant community.

Resource and Reference Materials
Books
* *Designing and Maintaining Your Edible Landscape Naturally* - Robert Kourick, 1986, Metamorphic Press
* *Eat More Raw: A Guide to Health and Sustainability* – Steve Charter, 2004, Gardners Books
* *How to Grow More Vegetables than You Could Ever Imagine* – John Jeavons, 1979, Ten Speed Press
* *How to Make a Forest Garden* – Patrick Whitefield, 1996, Rodale Institute
* *Natural Garden Book* – Peter Harper, 1994, Gaia Books
* *Tools for Organic Farming* – George McRobie, ed., 1989, Bootstrap Press
* *Urban Permaculture: A Practical Handbook for Sustainable Living* – David Watkins, 1993, Hyden House
* *You Can Have Your Permaculture and Eat It Too* – Robin Clayfield, 1996, Earthcare Education
* *Forest Gardening* – Robert A. de J. Hart, 1996, Chelsea Green
* *Stolen Harvest: The Hijacking of the Global Food Supply* – Vandana Shiva, 1999, South End Press
* *Bringing the Food Economy Home: Local Alternatives to Global Agribusiness* – Helena Norberg-Hodge, Todd Merrifield and Steven Gorelick, 2003, ISEC
* *Gaia's Garden: A Guide to Home-scale Permaculture* – Toby Hemenway, 2001, Chelsea Green

Internet
* International Society for Ecology and Agriculture – www.isec.org – Local Food Toolkit

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Experiential Learning Activities

Depending on such variables as the season, location, student experience, and available time and resources, these activities could include the following:

- Making compost or liquid manure teas
- Canning, preserving, and storing a harvest
- Inoculating legume seed
- Collecting and applying mulch
- Pruning existing orchards
- Designing and installing an herb garden
- Designing an integrated food production system
- Designing and/or constructing a poultry shed or chicken tractor
- Designing a rotation and fodder system for an ecovillage with large browsers – cows, sheep, and/or horses
- Double-digging a biodynamic garden

In an ideal situation, students would be given a chance to create a small vegetable plot early on in the course, plant it with seedlings, and then harvest those seedlings to be eaten in a salad on their graduation day four weeks later!

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Module 3: Appropriate Technology

Goals
- Fostering a better understanding of "state of the art" technologies
- Appraising realistically what is possible now while searching for ever better solutions
- Evaluating energy issues at global, regional, and local levels
- Investigating a wide range of technologies applicable to ecovillage designing, not just energy technologies

Content
This module will look at appropriate technology techniques for: roads and access infra-structures, communications, energy, water, wastewater, and waste recycling.

What is Appropriate Technology?
- Low cost, long lasting
- Low embodied energy
- Low maintenance
- Legal
- Safe
- Locally produced
- Solutions are found and implemented at lowest possible energy-use levels

Expectations from designed infrastructure include "culturally and climatically appro-priate" choices: It is important that these techniques and solutions are "fitting the local conditions" and can be apprehended and maintained by the locals.

Roads and Access Infrastructures
This curriculum is designed to cover enough information to allow the apprentice-designer to be an active participant in decision-making. A basic understanding of engineering terms is thus communicated:
- Design Criteria (including cross sections/long sections, cut and fill, "standard" road design)
- Material choices
- Shoulders
- Maintenance
- Calculating catchment
- Designing stormwater infrastructure
- Bridges and other creek crossings

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Communications

This segment in the main will look at technical considerations. There is also a module in the Social dimension of the EDE curriculum that covers specifically transpersonal, inter-human communication.

- What is the status of the industry?
- Experience from ecovillages around the world
- Intra-net
- CENTEL
- Other medium- and low-tech possibilities
- Communications during design and construction

Energy

This segment will look at what is possible now and how we can design to bring new innovations into our ecovillages later, as they grow.

- What is energy? What is power?
- What is the status of the technology? – a comparison of mains power, solar, wind, bio-fuel, gas, hydro
- Can we store energy? – batteries, fuel cells, flywheels, water, gravity
- Reduce, conserve – design! What other ecovillages have done
- Energy and transport – multiple options
- Village-scale energy potentials and solutions

Water

There are very real global issues around fresh water availability, and these are liable to grow more acute: need/greed/fair-use. We need to understand the relationship between potable and non-potable water – how to collect, store, and distribute water reliably and safely for twelve months a year.

- Infrastructures for potable water
- Rainwater storage, including tank materials, calculating size of tanks, various gadgets for WH & S, and by-pass
- Reticulated systems
- Construction of dams – including associated infrastructures
- Construction of ponds
- Bores
- Wells
- What is "good" water – what is "bad" water? Testing water

Wastewater

"Wastewater" is a misnomer. A more descriptive phrase would be Nutrient Enriched Water (N.E.W.)

- Grey and black water – what's in faeces, what's in urine?
- Septic systems
- Direct drop systems
- Bucket systems
- Dry composting
- Wet composting
- Microphyte system
- Separating system (Mats Wohlgast)
- The Living Machine
- Comparison of systems
- Creating an assessment process

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Solid Waste/Garbage
- Introduction to the challenge: the facts
- Reject consumerism: reduce, reuse, recycle!

For the past 100 years or so, the human project of civilization has been enjoying a one-time energy bonanza in the form of easily exploited fossil fuels. An entire globalized socio-economic infrastructure has been created that is completely dependent on ever-increasing supplies of these cheap fossil fuels. Now, reliable analysts are predicting that the global production of oil and natural gas will soon reach its "peak" – meaning that, even as demand increases, supplies will begin to decline. This represents a re-structuring of unparalleled proportions: transportation, agriculture, urban densities, the relationships between nations, and the entire global economic system will be significantly affected. Implications for local conditions will need to be seriously assessed in any Ecovillage Design scenario. We may see worldwide adoption of Ecovillage Design principles, as outlined in this curriculum.

Resource and Reference Materials
Books
* *A Chinese Biogas Manual* – Ariane van Buren, 1981, ITDG Publishing
* *Energy without End* – Michael Flood, 1991, Friends of the Earth
* *Ferrocement Water Tanks and their Construction* – S.B. Watt, 1978, ITDG
* *Fertile Waste* – Peter Harper, 1998, Center for Alternative Technology
* *Groundwater Dams for Small Scale Water Supply* – Ake Nilsson, 1988, ITDG
* *It's a Breeze: A Guide to Using Windpower* – Hugh Piggot, 2000, C.A.T.
* *Living Energies* – Callum Coats, 1996, Gateway Books
* *Practical Photovoltaics* – Richard J. Komp, 1995, Aatec Publications
* *Solar Water Heating* – Paul Trimby, 2000, Center for Alternative Technology
* *Water for Every Farm* – Ken Yeomans, 2002, Eco-Logic Books
* *The Hydrogen Economy* – Jeremy Rifkin, 2002, Tarcher/Penguin
* *Powerdown: Options and Actions for a Post-Carbon World* – Richard Heinberg, 2004, New Society Publishers
* *Environmental Accounting: EMergy and Environmental Decision Making* – H.T. Odum, 1996, John Wiley & Sons

Experiential Learning Activities
- Evaluating and assembling a photo-voltaic system
- Designing and assembling a rainwater catchment system for a roof
- Assessing a hybrid energy system for the ecovillage under consideration
- Designing a greywater system
- Designing a constructed wetland

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Module 4: Restoring Nature and Rebuilding after Disasters

Goals

- Gaining knowledge of the fundamentals of ecology
- Learning practical techniques for restoring Nature and accelerating natural earth-healing processes
- Comprehending the magnitude of reparation for such human-caused disasters as salination, deforestation, desertification, depletion of aquifers, global warming, and pollution of all kinds
- Conceptualizing principles of ecovillage design that can be used to rebuild after disasters – both natural- and human-caused
- Making a commitment to begin acting now as agents of restoration and regeneration – for both natural and human communities

Content

The Earth is finite system, materially closed yet energetically open. After a couple hundred years now of reckless exploitation and poisonous industrialization, major life support functions of the biosphere are in a state of degradation and deterioration. From ecological, economic, social, *as well as* spiritual perspectives, the situation is quite serious and calls for our immediate attention. One of the best things you can do to heal the Earth, your communities and yourselves, is to begin taking active, practical steps today toward restoring Nature – with simple steps like planting trees, mulching an existing orchard, building topsoil, or restoring damaged ecosystems like riparian zones, etc.

The ecovillages are in a unique position for restoring Nature. Through thoughtful ecological and permaculture design, ecovillage projects can actually be used to *regenerate* damaged ecosystems. For example, the concept of 'urban village' is currently being employed as a strategy to infill brownfield sites. With the social, cultural, spiritual, and economic patterns that emerge from ecovillage living, preserving the health and vitality of the local environment becomes not only wise, not only an issue of long-term survival, but an actual creative function of human-in-the-biosphere – human beings can assume the role of conscious regenerative agents for planetary evolution. Thus, an ethic and practice of honoring and restoring Nature is easily incorporated into the ecovillage lifestyle.

Whatever the case, a commitment to honoring and restoring Nature will mean at times stopping just talking about it, putting on the boots and gloves, grabbing the tools, and going out to do the physical labor of actually helping restoration take place. For those who are ready for this level of engagement, here is a list of essential principles based on the premise that "Nature knows best:"

- Mimic Nature wherever possible

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- Work outwards from areas of strength, where the ecosystem is closest to its natural condition
- Pay particular attention to "keystone" species – those which are key components of the ecosystem, and on which many other species depend
- Utilize pioneer species and natural succession to facilitate the restoration process
- Recreate ecological niches where they have been lost
- Reestablish ecological linkages – reconnect the threads in the Web of Life
- Control and/or remove introduced species
- Remove or mitigate the limiting factors which prevent restoration from taking place naturally
- Let Nature do most of the work
- Love nurtures the life-force and spirit of all beings and is a significant factor in helping to heal the Earth

In these days, natural disasters seem to be becoming more frequent and severe: earth-quakes, tsunamis, hurricanes, flooding and fire are all inflicting massive destruction and incalculable suffering on human communities. Coupled with human disasters such as salination, deforestation, desertification, and industrial pollution – not to mention the pathetically ever-present human tragedy of war – a systematized methodology needs to be devised to effectively and efficiently rebuild after disaster. The principles and practices of an Integrated Ecovillage Design – as outlined in this curriculum – are an obvious solution.

As a case study, witness the revegetation and regeneration efforts of the community of Auroville, in the Tamil Nadu of India: over the course of thirty years, a once parched, baked-mud landscape is now thriving forest, viable habitat for a multitude of creatures – including human beings. Another case study can be drawn from the aftermath of the tsunami of December 2004, which devastated much of the Sri Lankan coastline. In immediate response, the Sarvodaya infrastructure, in consultation with experienced ecovillage designer Max Lindegger, was there to help with the rebuilding process. Vinya Ariyatne of Sarvodaya won an international award for his efforts.

One of the benefits of using an Integrated Ecovillage Design as a methodology for re-building after disaster is that sustainable, nature-encoded patterns of development can be inculcated and instituted at the ground level. Thus, further development has the advent-age of building upon the sustainable patterns that have been laid down at the outset. (As the Taoists say, how can you have a satisfactory conclusion if you don't get off to a good start?) In a curious and compassionate sort of irony, the clearing away that comes from disaster brings the opportunity for renewal at a higher level of integration. Life goes on.
Truly, experience has shown that government is incapable of responding to people's needs after disaster strikes. In order to maintain any sort of integrity and self-direction, communities must rely on themselves for the rebuilding effort. In the future, we envision

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teams of ecovillage designers being flown in to assist with laying the groundwork as the rebuilding begins.

Resource and Reference Materials
Books (There will be many locally-adapted manuals applicable. Here we provide a more general and philosophical background)
* *Ecology: A Bridge Between Science and Society* – Eugene Odum, 1997, Sinauer Associates, Inc.
* *Permaculture: A Designer's Manual* – Bill Mollison, 1988, Tagari
* *The Permaculture Way: Practical Steps to Creating a Self-Sustaining World* – Bill Mollison, 2005, Permanent Publications
* *A Pattern Language* – Christopher Alexander, et al, 1977, Oxford University Press
* *The Timeless Way of Building* – Christopher Alexander, 1979, Oxford
* *Coming Back to Life: Practices to Reconnect Our Lives, Our World* – Joanna Macy, 1998, New Society
* *Ecology, Community, and Lifestyle: An Outline of Ecosophy* – Arne Naess, 1989, Cambridge University Press
* *Natural Pattern Forms* – Richard L. Dube, 1996, Wiley
* *By Nature's Design* – Pat Murphy and William Neill, 1993, Chronicle
* *Metapatterns: Across Space, Time, and Mind* – Tyler Volk, 1995, Columbia
* *Field, Form, and Fate: Patterns in Mind, Nature, and Psyche* – Michael Conforti, 1999, Spring Publications
* *Dwelling, Seeing, Designing: Toward a Phenomenological Ecology* – David Seamon, ed., 1993, SUNY
* *Design for Evolution: Self-organization and Planning in the Life of Living Systems* – Erich Jantsch, 1975, Braziller
* *The Green Imperative: Natural Design for the Real World* – Victor Papanek, 1995, Thames and Hudson
* *Restoration Forestry: An International Guide to Sustainable Forestry Practices* – Michael Pilarski, ed., 1994, Kivaki
* *Earth's Insights: A Multicultural Survey of Ecological Ethics from the Mediterranean Basin to the Australian Outback* – J. Baird Callicott, 1994, University of California

Experiential Learning Activities
There is much room for creativity and flexibility when designing experiential learning activities for this module; the possibilities are almost endless. Practical restoration work like those described is essential to bring, body-based muscle memory into the experience. Engaging in these activities as a group will forge strong community bonds. Taking the work out into the greater community, accomplishing tasks required by the locals, will bring a sense of service to the learning.

Hopefully there will be no need to respond to disaster, but formulating an emergency action plan for the area will be a valuable theoretical exercise. Interfacing and consulting with local authorities in this matter will build trust and goodwill.

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Module 5: Integrated Ecovillage Design

Goals

- Presenting a comprehensive "Integrated Ecovillage Design" – a synergy of spiritual, social, economic, and ecological parameters in the design process
- Gaining a 'nuts and bolts' understanding of the technical considerations and ecological principles for designing and implementing truly ecological villages
- Stirring a sense of confidence and manageability in students when approaching the complex, multi-task process of ecovillage designing by demonstrating a clear and reproducible design process
- Practicing the use of design tools as modes of communication
- Introducing working in design teams, offering a sense of achievement and developing community 'glue' through collective group action

Content

The term 'ecovillage' is fairly new in our vocabulary but the concept actually has a long precedent, going back centuries. There are a few preferred definitions of ecovillage going around amidst even wider possible interpretations by the general public. This particular module forwards a more technical definition that places ecovillages within a human and settlement geography context. From this perspective, there are distinct variations of scale and function – and so different design criteria – between eco-villages, eco-hamlets, eco-enclaves, eco-aldeas, sustainability learning centers, and other variations of intentional community. Looking at the accomplishments of the Global Ecovillage Network over the past ten years will shed light on the tremendous work that's already been achieved in bringing the ecovillage concept credibility and acceptability to 'mainstream' decision makers.

What is it about an 'ecovillage' that makes it a 'village'? To answer this question it is important to review the history of traditional villages – both North and South – and to investigate the various types of villages found currently throughout the world.

Prior experience with Permaculture Design is a good pre-requisite for an Ecovillage Design course. As such, the following aspects of Permaculture will be reviewed in this module: ethics, principles, patterns in Nature, laws of Nature, laws of attitude, and the relevance of all these to the design and implementation of sustainable human habitation systems. Principles of Ecological Design, as tools in the design process, will be summarized with visual images of prominent examples from around the world. Various perspectives of Whole Systems Design will be introduced for their conceptual utility.

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The ecological aspects of the ecovillage design process will then be explicated in detail:

Design Approach & Methods
Here we are analyzing the land, the existing biotic and topological structures, to discover available and potential resources, energy flows, sources and sinks, etc. This is a very structured and systematic methodology, relying on as much field study as possible, inclusive of the greater watershed and bioregion.

Observation, Research & Recording
This is a vital phase of the design process that is too often neglected or foreshortened. Ideally, this phase would be ongoing through the full cycle of the seasons, gathering as much information as possible (information being "a difference that makes a difference.") The amount and quality of data that can be collected, recorded, and interpreted will have a direct bearing on design efficacy.

- Overlay Method, Method of Exclusion
- Creating a Base Plan
- Aspects and Micro-climate
- Hydrology – channels, storage, surges, fall
- Soil – arable/non-arable, suitable for foundation
- Vegetation – indigenous, exotic, invasive, economic
- Wildlife – there will still be some left; useful species?
- Slope – greater than '1 in 5' too steep for building

Integrated Design Considerations
What will be our frame of mind as we approach the design process and what criteria will be used for making decisions?

- Design Vision
- Limits of Design
- Values and Ethics
- Needs and Greeds

Layout Considerations
How will we represent our design ideas in communicable media?

- Size (numbers)
- Carrying Capacity
- SWOC Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Challenges)

Infrastructure Design Goals and Aims
The engineering aspects of the site plan.

- Roads and access infrastructures (bridges, drainage)
- Communications (new and retrofitting telephone, email infrastructures)
- Energy (transport issues, electricity, heating/cooling, ethics)
- Water (placement of dams, tanks, wells, ponds)
- Wastewater (history of flush toilet, principles of wastewater design)
- Waste and Recycling
- Common Trenching
- Soft Engineering

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Social Aspects of the Design Process
- Designing for getting around: a circulatory system of pathways, roadways, and parking for pedestrians, bikes, roller-skates, horses, etc. – as well as autos
- Creating the opportunities for spontaneous social engagement: social nodes
- Designing for placement of common facilities: community center, child-care, bath house/sauna, visitor accommodation, performance hall, cafe, educational facilities, medical/health center, meditation sanctuaries, recreation, etc.
- Allowing for balance and demarcation between public, semi-public, and private spaces: intimacy gradients
- Integration of seniors plus mobility and developmentally challenged

Economic Aspects of the Design Process
- Business Center: office space, technology, communications
- Production Facilities: cottage industry, light industry, certified kitchen
- Agricultural Infrastructure: processing, storage, animal shelter, irrigation

Spiritual Aspects of the Design Process
- Landscape temples
- Feng Shui, Vastu, Sacred Geometry
- Dowsing and probing for ley lines or energy centers
- Becoming familiar with the socio-cultural history of the place

Ecological Aspects of the Design Process
- Shelterbelts, suntraps, and windbreaks
- Swales, berms, and hedgerows
- Zone and sector analysis
- Accommodation for wild places and wildlife corridors
- Riparian zone enhancement and protection
- Remediation of degraded soils and re-vegetation
- Forestry, coppice systems, and renewable harvest
- Edible landscaping

Project Management
Specialized skills for implementation phase.
- What is a system?
- Uncharted waters – getting from idea to reality
- The building phase
- The people issue
- Project variables (somebody moved the goal posts)
- Project closure

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Including legal aspects that will vary from project to project.

- Creating team glue
- Dealing with councils/authority
- Preparing a document which 'sells' the project

- Presenting your proposal
- Environmental Impact Studies
- Re-zoning applications
- Development applications

The content of this module also includes a spot about selecting land for communities. This is a site assessment list that allows designers, through critical analysis, to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of Greenfield as well as Brownfield sites. This assessment is even useful for discovering weak aspects in existing communities.

Finally, we will look at the Site–survey Check List. This analysis follows when a site has been selected. It is a social-cultural as well as environmental-ecological tool.

Resource and Reference Materials
Videos
* *Crystal Waters Permaculture Village* – GENOA
* *Futures of Paradise: The European Ecovillage Experience* – Light Source Films
* *Ecological Design: Inventing the Future* – The Ecological Design Project

Books
* *A Pattern Language* – Christopher Alexander, et al., 1977, Oxford University Press
* *A Permaculture Designer's Manual* – Bill Mollison, 1988, Tagari
* *Design Outlaws on the Ecological Frontier* – Chris Zelov and Phil Cousineau, eds., 1997, Knossus Publishing
* *Design with Nature* – Ian McHarg, 1992, John Wiley & Sons
* *Designing Ecological Settlements: Ecological Planning and Building* – Profs. Declan and Margrit Kennedy, 1997, Reimer
* *Designing Sustainable Communities: Learning from Village Homes* – Judy and Michael Corbett, 2000, Island Press
* *Ecological Design* – Sim van der Ryn and Stuart Cowan, 1995, Island Press
* *Ecological Design and Planning* – George Thompson and Frederick Steiner, eds., 1997, John Wiley & Sons
* *Eco-Villages and Sustainable Communities* – Context Institute, 1991
* *Ecovillage Living: Restoring the Earth and Her People* – Hildur Jackson, ed., 2002, Green Books
* *From Eco-cities to Living Machines: Principles of Ecological Design* – John and Nancy Jack Todd, 1994, North Atlantic Books
* *Permaculture: Principles and Pathways beyond Sustainability* – David Holmgren, 2002, Holmgren Design Services
* *Site Planning* – Kevin Lynch and Gary Hack, 1996, The MIT Press
* *The Earth Care Manual: A Permaculture Handbook for Britain and Other Temperate Climates* – Patrick Whitefield, 2004, Chelsea Green Publishing

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Ecological Literacy: Education and the Transition to a Postmodern World – David
   Orr, 1992, SUNY

The Nature of Design: Ecology, Culture and Human Intention – David Orr, 2002,
   Oxford University Press

Internet

* Ecological Solutions – consultancy and education – www.ecologicalsolutions.com.au
* Village Design Institute – collecting, organizing, researching, and disseminating
   knowledge for a sustainable, village-based future – www.villagedesign.org

Experiential Learning Activities

Site Analysis – Students will be guided through a comprehensive site survey. Then,
working in design teams, students will create a site analysis. This will entail mapping
existing features and energy flows onto a base map.

Overlay Method – The overlay method, first articulated by Ian McHarg, will be
experimented with, affording students the opportunity to create multiple thematic over-
lays on tracing paper, providing rich depth to their site analyses.

Sketches and Creative Expression – Creating rough sketches of the site plan will be an
excellent demonstration of learning. Students generally will be encouraged to freely
translate and communicate design ideas into creative visual expression, which might also
include modeling.

Integrated Ecovillage Design – Using all the knowledge gained in their exposure to this
Ecovillage Design Education, students will begin conceptualizing a fully integrated eco-
village design – synergizing spiritual, social, economic and ecological parameters into a
systemic whole. Students are then invited to return to their home communities and re-
create this very holistic, organic, holographic process.

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THE LIVING AND LEARNING PEDAGOGY

The way we learn is equally important to what we learn; process is just as important as content; theory is meaningless without practical applicability in real people's lives. A revolution is underway within learning communities, a revolution with many new names: Liberational Pedagogy, Relational Learning, Partnership Education, Transformative Learning, Experiential Learning, Action Learning, Earth Pedagogy... And now there are the Living and Learning Centers of the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN). One central motive that all these pedagogies – that is, principles and methods of instruction – have in common is an effort to make the educational process directly relevant to people's lives, to focus learning on the solutions to real problems that people are experiencing.

Within ecovillages lie special and unique opportunities for offering an immersion experience in living what you are actually learning. We call this the "Living and Learning Pedagogy."

At a conference in Thy, Denmark in 1998, fifty-five educators and enthusiasts from ecovillages around the world forged the following significant statement:

> *"Learning needs to return to its roots in the whole community of people and no longer exist in separate institutions. In this way, context, methods and personal development will happen all at the same time for all ages. This is a living, evolving learning system that embraces global considerations alongside local concerns. This system is geared to plant seeds for the next seven generations."*

For the past seven years, in response to this statement, GEN has been formulating the concept of "Living and Learning Centers" in the developing global South. Now, many GEN education centers and ecovillages in the developed North have also chosen to call themselves Living and Learning Centers.

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A GEN brochure states:

LIVING AND LEARNING CENTRES are powerful catalysts for change. They are places where people can come and learn about sustainable living through practical experiences that can be replicated throughout the world. They are local planetary models. See it, do it, take it home, share it with others, and recreate something new. It's about training trainers through inspiring on-the-ground programmes. Because what works in one part of the world often works in another. Because it's not about re-inventing the wheel, but creating effective new ways of working together. Because the challenges ahead of us require real co-operation, fast action, and deep insights. — GEN-Europe

Important elements in the Living and Learning Pedagogy include:

1) Living and Learning means you go and live in an actual ecovillage as part of the education. You immerse yourself in a new world of community living. Each ecovillage is unique, so you will have varying experiences according to the choice of ecovillage, but in all cases you will eat, work, celebrate with, and learn from the pioneers that are actually making it happen.

2) The purpose of this pedagogy is to educate the whole person. People do not learn only with their brains – the whole body and all the senses are involved. This is what is meant by holistic learning. The use of what are called "seven intelligences" or "multiple intelligences" has become a popular way of conveying our intention. Different people learn in different ways. We use:
- Hands-on experience, body-based memory
- Theory, reading, discussions, reasoned dialogue
- Dance, song, creativity, play, games, performances
- Quiet time, reflection, meditation, connecting with nature
- Workshops, symposia, seminars
- Interactive group process, participating in decisions
- Café, bar, open time

3) Shared work, for the purpose of accepting responsibility for community maintenance, is a component of the Living and Learning Pedagogy:
- Garden
- Workshop
- Kitchen
- Cleaning
- Care-giving

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4) Creating intentional community and a sense of trust in the learning group is also part of the Living and Learning Pedagogy:
- ✖ Attunements
- ✖ Time for sharing
- ✖ Open communication
- ✖ Transparency in the motivations of facilitators
- ✖ Creating a safe, supportive environment

5) The contexts we create in which to teach reflect ecovillage values:
- ✖ Non-hierarchical
- ✖ Rotation of responsibility
- ✖ Everyone has something to share
- ✖ Everyone is a designer
- ✖ Cherishing diversity in ages, cultures, abilities
- ✖ Respecting different, even contrasting, points of view
- ✖ Emphasizing the needs and health of the whole

Here is the suggested organization of a typical day at a "Living and Learning Center":

8 hours of sleep and rest; 16 hours of activity
The 16 hours of activity will typically be used like this:
5 hours theory (including slides, video, symposia, discussions)
3 hours practical work (applying theory, community maintenance)
4 hours optional (meditation, dance, song, yoga, private time, etc.)
3 hours for meals and casual conversation

Each and every day of education in a Living and Learning Center will integrate all of these distinct elements into a truly holistic, multidimensional learning experience. Learning will occur on many different levels simultaneously and will be influencing the *whole* person – mind, body, spirit, emotions. As an immersion experience, learning will be transpiring twenty-four hours a day, and this has the potential to make it deeply transformative. Transformed and freshly educated individuals can then return to their communities of origin and begin the process of recreating all they have lived and learned – this is the essence of the Living and Learning Pedagogy.

Resource and Reference Materials
Books and Articles
* *Sustainable Education: Re-Visioning Learning and Change* – Stephen Sterling, 2001, Green Books (Schumacher Briefing, No. 6)
* *Tomorrow's Children: A Blueprint for Partnership Education in the 21st Century* – Riane Eisler, 2000, Center for Partnership Studies
* *Nizhoni: The Higher Self in Education* – Chris Griscom, 1989, Light Institute
* *Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on Education* – Aurobindo Ghose, 1960, Auroville

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* *Pedagogy of the Earth: Education for a Sustainable Future* – Carlos Hernandez and Rashmi Mayur, eds., 2000, Kumarian Press
* *Earth in Mind: On Education, Environment and the Human Prospect, 2nd Edition* – David W. Orr, 2004, Island Press
* *Ecological Literacy: Education and the Transition to a Postmodern World* – David W. Orr, 1992, SUNY
* *Relational Learning for a Sustainable Future: An Ecospiritual Model* – Mary Westfall, 2001, University of New Hampshire
* *Ecological Literacy: Educating Our Children for a Sustainable World* – Michael Stone and Zenobia Barlow, eds., 2005, Sierra Club Books
* *Transformative Learning in Action: Insights from Practice* – Patricia Cranton, ed., 1997, Jossey-Bass (New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education)
* *It's Time to Change Our Minds: An Introduction to Transformative Learning* – D. Elias, 1997, ReVision, Vol. 20, No. 1, pp.2-6
* *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* – Paulo Freire, 1970, The Continuum Publishing Corporation
* *Education for Critical Consciousness* – Paulo Freire, 1973, Seabury Press
* *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development* – David A. Kolb, 1984, Prentice-Hall, Inc.
* *Experiential and Simulation Techniques for Teaching Adults* – Linda H. Lewis, ed., 1986, Jossey-Bass
* *The Action Learning Handbook* – Ian McGill and Anne Brockbank, 2004, RoutledgeFalmer
* *An Update on Adult Learning Theory* – Sharan B. Merriam, 1993, Jossey-Bass
* *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning* – Jack Mezirow, 1991, Jossey-Bass
* *Action Learning: A Holographic Metaphor for Guiding Social Change* – G. Morgan and R. Ramirez, 1983, Human Relations, Vol. 37, No. 1, pp. 1-28
* *Action Research: Second Edition* – Edward T. Stringer, 1999, SAGE Publications, Inc.
* *In Defense of the Lifeworld: Critical Perspectives on Adult Learning* – Mark Welton, ed., 1995, State University of New York Press
* *Democracy and Education* – John Dewey, 1938, Free Press
* *Ecological Education in Action: On Weaving Education, Culture, and the Environment* Gregory Smith and Dilafruz Williams, eds., 1998, SUNY
* *Educating for an Ecologically Sustainable Culture* – C. A. Bowers, 1995, SUNY
* *Beyond Ecophobia: Reclaiming the Heart in Nature Education* – David Sobel, 2005, The Orion Society
* *Participatory Action Research: International Contexts and Consequences* – Robin McTaggart, ed., 1997, SUNY
* *The Learning Wheel: Ideas and Activities for Multicultural and Holistic Lesson Planning* – Annabelle Nelson, 1998, The WHEEL Council
* *Theoretical Framework for the EDE* – E.C. Mare, 2004, Village Design Institute

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EPILOGUE

In preparation for the emergence of a new worldview, 'seed' people will begin to appear, inoculating the collective consciousness with new ideas and concepts – evolved interpretations about the nature of reality. Initially, these seed people will be perceived as a cultural 'fringe,' an idiosyncratic minority whose new interpretations can be easily discounted and disregarded because of their incongruity with established, officially sanctioned interpretations of reality. Eventually, however, as the precepts of the old paradigm are revealed to be increasingly inept at managing and providing a meaningful context for the evolving, emerging situation, the seed people will gain in credibility. At some imperceptible 'tipping point,' the ideas, concepts, and models of what used to be a cultural fringe will suddenly be accepted whole-heartedly by the majority of people as *the* most viable interpretations of reality. At that point, the new paradigm will be adopted and institutionalized as status quo, defended by the establishment, and the next generation of pioneering seed people will look elsewhere.

Ecovillages are the 'seed' communities of a not-too-distant future. They represent the cultural edge of a new worldview that is in the process of emerging. For many years now, the ecovillages have been experimenting with models of sustainable design and living that have been described as "a revolution in human habitat." The Ecovillage Design Education, as outlined in this curriculum, attempts to define, highlight, and provide a context for features and qualities of this epochal paradigm shift that is occurring in our times. The ultimate nature and implications of these features and qualities are so sublime as to rightly be called *spiritual;* and so the EDE is the first comprehensive, transdisciplinary, multidimensional education in the world to frame solutions within a broadly spiritual context – thus setting a precedent for educations to follow.

May users of this education find joy in living in the present just as it is; and with the knowledge they have acquired, go on to seed ecologically viable, economically productive, socially just, and spiritually transforming solutions into their home communities. May peace, love, and compassion guide your every action.

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SUPPLEMENTS:
EDE ADAPTED TO PARTICULAR SITUATIONS

The EDE is intended to be accessible to any group or initiative around the globe working on issues of sustainable community design and development – that is, solutions for sustainable human habitat. In order to achieve this broad flexibility, the curriculum is purposely written as a dense compendium of fundamental principles and practices applicable to any context. As the EDE goes on to be tried and tested over the next several years, accompanying instructional materials will be developed relevant to diverse particular situations. In order to begin that process in this Version 4, please find below important considerations for the EDE when being adapted to the following specific contexts: Urban, South, Academia, Virtual.

Urban

Is the term "Sustainable City" an oxymoron? Perhaps, yet in varying degrees, the urban pattern can be shaped and molded to assume a more sustainable, self-reliant form. The key here is *decentralizing* in every conceivable way – politically, economically, socio-culturally, topologically – from the densely packed urban core. The decentralization process will coincide with 're-localization:' identifying numerous sub-nodes spread throughout the urban fabric. These sub-nodes become multiple new centers for village-scale spatial organization. Once these village-scale spatial units have been delineated, a multitude of steps can be taken to transform each one into a self-organizing, self-maintaining, self-regenerating *living system* of its own – degrees of autonomy here being equated with levels of effective sustainability.

Attempting 'sustainable' solutions at the scale of the city-as-a-whole is ineffective, because the 'city,' by definition, has grown way beyond a manageable human-scale and has become, in a very real sense, a faceless abstraction, or a calculated approximation. The 'city' is a mechanical system, prone to entropy, detached from the principles and laws that govern the evolution and maintenance of the Web of Life. It is this very detachment that makes the 'city' inherently unsustainable. The EDE will not work if applied to the city-as-a-whole; the respective principles involved are fundamentally incompatible.

Approaching sustainable solutions within the amalgamated cellular pattern of the village-scale sub-spatial units – let's call them "urban villages" – will bring visible, affordable, and replicable results quickly; and what's even better, once the large-scale amendments have been resolved, the residents will be able to implement the sustainable solutions all

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by themselves! The EDE will prove to be very effective at this scale of application; all twenty modules are pertinent. Process will facilitate an "action learning" whereby residents assume responsibility for localized urban renewal that will foster their own self-reliance and self-direction. Consolidated, centralized power structures are de-emphasized in this strategy.

Most cities already contain a semblance of identifiable neighborhoods, districts, or quarters. Once these existing spatial patterns are more sharply delineated – with well-defined centers and well-defined boundaries – then a true "urban village" pattern will have a chance to emerge and begin to take form. As a matter of clarification, the planning profession has been playing with the concept of "urban village" for some time now; however, we believe their applications lack the interdisciplinary depth and diversity needed to inform comprehensive, long-term solutions.

Indeed, what good is a sustainability education if not capable of addressing the severity of urban problems? With deep compassion for all the squatters and slum-dwellers and pa-rent-less children wandering the streets, on the edge of survival, let us not forget that there is a direct correlation between the availability of cheap oil and massive urban densities. Once oil peaks, urban densities will begin to decline. A colossal relocation could be on the horizon as the recent flight to the cities reverses direction and heads back to the villages. Overall population will most likely find steady-state equilibrium at a level of impact much lower than today.

South

Wealthy social elites living Northern consumer lifestyles rule most Southern countries to-day, while the majority of their citizen's live in poverty. The poor in these countries struggle to survive in an increasingly degraded environment controlled by global market forces. Many rural villagers are in the process of abandoning their indigenous livelihoods, values, ecological and community practices and invaluably diverse cultures. Many of their young people dream of immigrating to the North and are uncommitted to improving local living conditions that they view as hopeless and temporary.

Against these negative forces, there exists a groundswell of yearning to preserve the best of the past. The past of this "dream" strongly resembles ecovillage living, in terms of human relationships with nature, protection of the environment, close community bonds and solidarity based on positive values, shared spirituality, etc. Therefore, the ecovillage movement comes to many in the South as an answer to their prayers. The South is indeed a fertile ground for the creation of new dynamic ecovillages.

Based on these observations and understandings, this proposal suggests that the EDE curriculum develop the following topics for adaptation to countries in the South, often referred to as the "less developed countries" or the "Third" or "Fourth World."

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Ecovillage Types in the South
- Modern ecovillages of choice on the Northern model, developed in collaboration with the Southern elite (e.g. Auroville in India)
- Traditional ecovillages of necessity, based on preserving, enhancing and retrofitting the existing village, its values and lifestyle, while introducing selected modernization
- Mixed modern and traditional ecovillages in which an urban elite group joins forces with a traditional village
- Networks of traditional villages reformed along an ecovillage model

Aspects of EDE more applicable to the South than to the North
- Spiritual, cultural, social, economic and environmental preservation and adaptation of indigenous ethnic traditions and lifestyles, and reintroduction of the best of these disappearing traditions
- Techniques for working with and fundraising through development assistance agencies, including national government, multilateral and bilateral agencies, NGOs and other donors
- Ecovillage pedagogy based on Freirian participatory principles and on action learning that creates the ecovillage in the process of teaching the curriculum
- Ecovillage training in basic literacy, book-keeping, management and other capacity-building skills
- Collaborative work exchanges and development activities between the Southern ecovillages, whose representatives form social groups that work together on the ground
- Policies of admitting to ecovillage network membership not only ecovillages but NGOs and other organizational partners of the villages that express an interest in working with the network
- Deep conflict resolution suited to people forced by poverty to live throughout their lives in the same community, with the same neighbors

Importance of knowledge exchanges between Northerners and the Southern ecovillages
- Wealth of lost indigenous and community knowledge available to Northerners who choose to live and learn in Southern ecovillages
- Basic technical and literacy skills that Northerners, even young students, contribute to Southern ecovillages
- Potential for ecovillages integrating Northerners and Southerners together to give birth to new forms of collaboration in community with the potential of achieving more than either type of ecovillage alone

Academia
At a time when academia's relevancy to the real world is being increasingly questioned, ecovillages are stepping forward to provide ideal "campuses" for students to experience and learn about sustainable living. Ecovillages are truly living laboratories for a sustainable future, and are now creating new models of education that can train leaders capable of addressing and transforming today's environmental and social challenges.

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As outlined in the Living and Learning Pedagogy, students and faculty experiencing the EDE create "learning communities" within "living communities," and apply new knowledge and skills to the creative solution of real life problems. Partnerships with Academia are natural complements, as the critical inquiry of theoretical constructs can find practical application within a community of learners. Students experience the thrill of translating conceptual material into results, right there as a process of learning. In the EDE, there is no artificial distinction between acquiring knowledge and using knowledge; they are part of the same flow. Knowing but not acting is tantamount to not knowing at all. Learning is the successful application of knowledge and the re-organization of lifestyles.

The inner structure of the EDE provides a richly transdisciplinary approach to the acquisition and assimilation of knowledge. Knowledge is not separated and isolated into little 'bits,' or reduced to some atomistic 'unit,' but has immediate relevance across the full spectrum of experience. What's more, knowledge is not presented simply for the sake of adding to the store, but is always focused and centered on one over-arching theme: the design and implementation of truly sustainable human habitat. Physics as well as plumbing can be approached in this way. Students from Academia will appreciate the release of their full creative potential directed toward an over-arching problem that affects them and their futures most intimately. Students from Academia will also appreciate being able to thread all they have learned – both in and out of school – into a richly colorful fabric that is a unique expression of their own special gifts and talents.

Here are a few insights about developing relationships with academic institutions:
- Prepare yourself: Call a series of meetings with all interested persons to develop a proposal for your community and, eventually, a potential academic partner.
- Choose your potential partner(s) wisely: Collect and study current materials such as mission statements, course catalogs, "State of the Campus" and Strategic Planning documents, and organizational charts of administrative and decision-making structures. Are these all compatible?
- Get to know key players: Talk with people in a wide variety of offices, including Study Abroad, Admissions, Accounting, Publications, Registration, and Communications.
- Consider your options: There are many ways to build bridges between an ecovillage and an academic institution. Here are a few ideas:
    - Thematic ecovillage tours
    - Collaborative research projects
    - Ecovillage-based courses
    - Opportunities to pursue internships
    - Joint educational and service programs
    - A set of ecovillage-based programs

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Virtual

There are a number of interesting possibilities of using the Internet and other developments in Information Technology to promote the EDE and the Gaia Education initiative.

One such possibility, which is not far off, is to offer on-line teaching videos over the Internet to interested parties, either individuals or classes. Written materials and references would supplement the teaching; for example, the Four Keys, which could be down-loaded. For the individual, the package would be self-contained as a kind of correspondence course. For classes, it would work best if a local teacher supplemented the video lecture with a question and answer period and on-location demonstrations and practices.

A major advantage of this approach is the ability to exploit the teaching abilities of the world leaders in different aspects of sustainability education, and thus achieve a high level of efficiency and quality. The real breakthrough for this approach will come when increased bandwidth permits more user-friendly broadcasting; but it is feasible already. The development of low-cost videotaping is a second factor that makes the approach economically viable. We should encourage ecovillages to produce with their leading teachers and begin to make them available on our website. Remember to make frequent use of charts, pictures and demonstrations wherever possible, so that it is not just a "talking heads" video that turns off potential users.

A second possibility is to produce and offer DVDs for sale with the same material. This may be preferable for some individuals and teachers.

In sum, Information Technology offers interesting and yet to be fully explored possibilities for creating a "virtual" dimension to ecovillage design education. This dimension will greatly assist the goal of making the EDE accessible to any group or initiative in the world working on issues of sustainable community design and development.

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**a four-week comprehensive course to the fundamentals
of Ecovillage Design for Urban and Rural Settlements**

Endorsed by UNITAR- United Nations Institute for Training and Research

Curriculum Coordination by Christopher Mare

Gaia Education Programme Director May East

**Curriculum conceived and designed by the GEESE-
Global Ecovillage Educators for a Sustainable Earth**

Massimo Candela is resident of Ecovillage Torri Superiore, near Ventimiglia, Italy, since 1993 (www.torri-superiore.org). He holds an Environmental Hygiene diploma (1990), and Permaculture Design and Permaculture Teaching diplomas. He is one of the founders of the Italian Permaculture Academy. Experience includes: Ecovillage Design Course and Practicum led by Max Lindegger at Crystal Waters (2001); Ecovillage Design Course at Torri, with Morag Gamble and Evan Raymond from SEED International.

Giovanni Ciarlo is co-founder of http://www.huehuecoyote.org/e Ecoaldea Huehuecoyotl, a centre for the exploration of the arts and ecology in central Mexico (www.huehuecoyotl.net). He helped form the Ecovillage Network of the Americas (http://ena.ecovillage.org) and serves on the Board of the Global Ecovillage Network (http://gen.ecovillage.org). He is also a professional Arts-In-Education Consultant and a trained group facilitator. He is an associate member of the International Institute for Facilitation and Consensus (http://www.iifac.org) and leads workshop trainings in Group Facilitation in the US and Mexico. Since 2003 he has co-directed sustainability programs in Mexico in collaboration with Goddard College of Vermont and Living Routes Ecovillage Studies of Massachusetts. He currently divides his time between the US and Mexico, linking community sustainable projects in both countries.

Jonathan Dawson is a sustainability educator and activist. He has spent much of the last 20 years involved in development work in Africa and South Asia, as a researcher, author, project manager and consultant, working primarily in the field of small enterprise and community economic development. He lives at the Findhorn Community (www.findhorn.org), where he teaches human ecology and applied sustainability studies. Jonathan is Executive Secretary of the Global Ecovillage Network for Europe in which capacity he is heavily involved in writing, representational and networking activities.

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May East is a Brazilian social change activist who has spent the last 30 years working internationally with music, indigenous people, women, antinuclear, environmental and sustainable human settlements movements. Since 1992 she has lived at the Findhorn Foundation ecovillage in Scotland (www.ecovillagefindhorn.org) where she is the Ecovillage Project Education Coordinator, the Director of International Relations between the Foundation, the Global Ecovillage Network and the United Nations, as well as a Trustee. May is a teacher of the International Holistic University and works internationally as an ecovillage consultant and educator. She currently is coordinating the actions of the Global Ecovillage Network and Gaia Education vis a vis the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development 2005-2014.

Daniel Greenberg, Ph.D., has studied and directed community-based educational programs for over 15 years. He visited and corresponded with over 200 U.S. intentional communities for his Ph.D. dissertation on children and education in community, and later spent a year at the Findhorn Foundation in Scotland working with children and families there. He is the founder and Executive Director of Living Routes (www.livingroutes.org), which develops accredited ecovillage-based education programs that promote sustainability. He lives at the Sirius Community in Shutesbury, Massachusetts, USA, with his wife Monique and their two daughters, Simone and Pema.

Maddy Harland is the editor of Permaculture Magazine, solutions for sustainable living (http://www.permaculture.co.ukwww.permaculture.co.uk) and a co-founder with her husband, Tim, of Permanent Publications, a company dedicated to publishing solution-orientated practical books. Maddy helped found the Sustainability Centre (http://www.earthworks-trust.com) in Hampshire, UK, a former military base, which hosts conferences, runs a varied non-residential and residential educational programme for adults and children, and has an award winning eco-hostel. The centre is also host to a Steiner school, woodland burial site and Permanent Publications. Maddy is a teacher with the International Network of Esoteric Healers (http://www.ineh.orgwww.ineh.org) and facilitates Subtle Energy Healing, meditation and deep ecology workshops.

Hildur Jackson was born in Denmark in 1942 and has been married to Ross Jackson for 40 years. She has three sons and five grandchildren. She is a lawyer, cultural sociologist, permaculture and ecovillage designer and writer. She initiated one of the three first Danish cohousings in 1970. Hildur is co-founder of Gaia Trust (www.gaia.org), the Danish National Network of Ecovillages (LOS) and the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN). Ross and Hildur have just initiated a new project: The Lavegaard project, where they will teach the EDE. She has authored several books including: *Ecovillage Living: Restoring the Earth and her People* (2002), co-edited with Karen Svensson; *Creating Harmony: Conflict Resolution in Community* (1998); and a video: *Rashmi Mayur: A Man of the New Global Renaissance*.

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Ross Jackson, Ph.D., was born in Canada in 1938, and is Chairman/founder of Gaia Trust, Denmark. He has an educational background in physics, management, and economics, specialising in operations research. Ross was for many years a management consultant and IT systems designer, working in various branches of the business world, eventually specialising in international finance, where his foreign exchange know-how provided the financing for Gaia Trust's programmes to support a more sustainable and spiritual world. He now devotes more time to writing. His books to date include: *And We ARE Doing It: Building an Ecovillage Future*; *Kali Yuga Odyssey: A Spiritual Journey*; and, hot from the presses this summer, *Shaker of the Speare: The Francis Bacon Story*. Ross is a member of the GEN Advisory Board and is a board member of the recent Gaia Education initiative. (http://ecovillage.wikicities.com/wiki/Gaia_Education)

Anja Kosha Joubert is a German and South African community builder and mother of two children. At the moment she lives in the Ecovillage of Sieben Linden in former East Germany (www.oekodorf7linden.de), where she focalises courses on empowerment of the self and the building of community. She specialises on communication for deep understanding between humans and humans and nature. She is part of a consultancy team that takes the knowledge gained in community out to support other projects in the wider society (www.gemeinschaftsberatung.de). Also, she is part of the team that edits the European Directory for Intentional Communities and Ecovillages (www.eurotopia.de). And last but not least, she has been working as a goldsmith for the past 15 years with the father of her children, creating jewelry with gold, silver and gemstones that come from the earth to humans via a fair trade network (www.schmuck-und-stein.de).

Will Keepin, Ph.D., is President of the Satyana Institute, a non-profit organization founded in 1996 to integrate spiritual wisdom into social change leadership (www.satyana.org). Will's passion is to bridge the inner mystical journey with an outer life of service. He has been a colleague and friend of the Global Ecovillage Network since an early planning meeting in 1994. Originally trained as a physicist, Will's advocacy work on sustainable energy influenced environmental policy in several countries. Will is a certified practitioner of Holotropic Breathwork, and has founded training programs for social activists including Leading with Spirit and Gender Reconciliation. He has published widely, and is Adjunct Faculty at the California Institute of Integral Studies. He leads retreats on interfaith mysticism in India, and supports interfaith projects for battered women in India.

Max O. Lindegger is a designer of ecological communities and sustainable systems of international repute (www.ecologicalsolutions.com.au). He is a respected and sought-after teacher in the disciplines of sustainable systems. His reputation is born of 20 years of hands-on experience and leadership in the design and implementation of practical solutions to the challenges of sustainability. As the creator and Director of the Oceania/Asia secretariat of the Global Ecovillage Network, Max participates in and contributes to the international flow of current thinking and best practice in the fields of sustainable systems design and education. Max was a primary partner in the design and development of the Habitat Award winning Crystal Waters Permaculture Village, where he lives. This is a

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robust ecovillage situated in south-east Queensland, Australia, and is the site of the award winning EcoCentre learning facility – the venue for many of his courses. He has designed and consulted on numerous community developments including the Spiers Project (S. Africa), Gqnubie Green (S. Africa), Living & Learning Centre (Sri Lanka), Vatukarasa Village (Fiji), Garopaba Project (Brazil), and China Walls (Australia). Max was awarded the (Australian) Prime Minister's Centenary Medal in 2003 for "distinguished achievement in the field of developing sustainable communities".

Christopher Mare, M.A., has been pioneering comprehensive, transdisciplinary, multidimensional, fully accredited education in the emerging field of Ecovillage Design since 1994. Lacking a precedent in Academia, these studies have been exploratory, producing curricula that are prototypical. Mare founded and currently directs an educational nonprofit – Village Design Institute (www.villagedesign.org) – whose purpose is to collect, organize, research, and disseminate a knowledge base promoting sustainability at "village" scale. Mare lives in the Cascadia bioregion of North America, where he conducts workshops and courses in Ecovillage and Urban Village Design.

Ina Meyer-Stoll is one of the two executive secretaries of the Global Ecovillage Network of Europe (www.gen-europe.org). She has lived in intentional communities since 1984 and is a founding member of the ZEGG ecovillage in Germany (www.zegg.de). She is a communications trainer and supervisor, specialising in the process of building community, and is a networker, a peace activist, and has visited many ecovillages in Europe.

Marti Mueller from Auroville, South India (www.auroville.org), vision keeper for GEN and Gaia Trust, has 30 years of experience in the field of education, 20 years of community experience, and is former professor at the Sorbonne University in Paris. She is co-founder of "Children and Trees Research" with UNESCO and the Indian Government. Marti is the author of *Indigo Spirit for a Child Friendly Planet*. She has also worked on the Earth Restoration Corps curriculum and The University of the Streets and Alleys. Her current concerns: Establishing a wildlife sanctuary to protect a UNESCO World Heritage site in central India, editing a spiritual anthology on new curricula for communities, and researching a book on Himalayan tribal people and the protection of their indigenous customs.

Géza Varga graduated with degrees in agronomy + professional management, specializing in organic agriculture and alternative technologies. He is the founder of the first Hungarian ecovillage project called "Galgafarm" since 1988 (www.gaiaalapitvany.hu). Geza is also director of the "Gaia" Ecological and Rural Development Foundation since 1990. This Foundation has run a Research and Education Centre since 1996, which is a residential school with 36 beds and a restaurant for adult rural people.

Liz Walker is co-founder and executive director of EcoVillage at Ithaca, Inc. (www.ecovillage.ithaca.ny.us), a non-profit educational organization which created and continues to nurture the development of a mainstream ecovillage community in Ithaca, NY,

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that includes multiple cohousing neighborhoods, organic farms, open space preservation and hands-on educational work. Since its inception in 1991, EVI has received national and international awards and media recognition. Liz is the author of the new book *EcoVillage at Ithaca: Pioneering a Sustainable Culture* (New Society Publishers, 2005). Liz has spent the last thirty years working full-time on social change work that promotes community, environmental responsibility and personal growth. She is a skilled writer, facilitator, mediator, trainer, public speaker, and project manager. Liz is a board member of the Gaia Education initiative.

Marian Zeitlin, Ph.D., has been living since 1996 in Senegal, as a member of the EcoYoff Ecovillage and director of the EcoYoff Living & Learning Center. Marian has first degree in mathematics from Oberlin College and Ph.D. in nutritional biochemistry and international nutrition planning from MIT. She taught and practised social science research and international development program design at Tufts University (Boston), and taught human ecology at Findhorn in 1995. Since 1996 she supervises ecovillage internships and organizes and teaches sustainable development courses in Senegal.

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Geneva, 10th January 2005

Object: Endorsement of the Ecovillage Designer Education Curriculum

Dear Ms. East,

I am pleased, on behalf of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), to convey our institutional support to the Ecovillage Designer Education curriculum, developed in consultation with leading educators from the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN).

The need for an integrated and practical approach to education and training is now crucial to meet the unprecedented challenges of the 21st century. We believe such integrated approaches to education can contribute to a better involvement of civil society in addressing effectively eradication of poverty, environmental sustainability and sustainable urban growth.
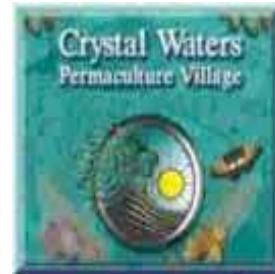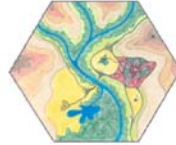
Let me take this opportunity to congratulate GEN on leading this initiative. The Ecovillage Designer Education curriculum will prove to be a valuable contribution to the dialogue and action undertaken in the context of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

I hope the brainstorming meeting to be held in May 2005, involving UNITAR, the CIFAL Network and GEN, would be a fruitful opportunity to plan for further common activities to build capacities for a sustainable future.

Christophe NUTTALL
Principal Programme Coordinator
Decentralized Cooperation Programme
UNITAR

Ms. May EAST
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