

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY of members of the
Global Ecovillage Network-Europe
CAT Wales, 10th- 12th of July 2003**

Opening ritual in the garden,
Circle, “human map”, singing, dancing

Insa Freese, President of GEN-Europe, led the official opening of the General Assembly.

Jonathan Dawson, Executive Secretary made the introduction and a brief overview for the following days of the assembly.

Presentation of council and staff members

GEN-Europe Council members:

- Insa Freese, President
- NicoleNicole GrosPierre, Treasurer
- Jean-Michel Pochat
- Lucilla Borio
- Jonathan Dawson, second President

GEN Europe Staff team:

- Jonanthan Dawson, new Executive Secretary, Findhorn
- Ina Meyer-Stoll, new Executive Secretary, ZEGG
- Gabriela Krauskopf, new office manager, ZEGG
- Kasimir Reichmuth, publication and web, Torri Superiore

Presentation of participants:

16 full members were present along with 3 'supporter' members. There were 11 participants from European and African ecovillages, 18 interested participants, 5 journalists from "Permaculture Magazine" and "Positive News"; all in all 61 participants from 18 countries!

Reports:

- Insa reported on GEN-Europe structural changes made in the last two council meetings (See minutes on the web)
http://www.gen-europe.org/archives/meetings/council/Council%203_2003%20Torri.pdf
http://www.gen-europe.org/archives/meetings/council/Council%2010_2002%20Torri.pdf

Discussion...

- Lucilla's report on last years activities (see report on web)
- Kasimir's report on last years activities (Integrated in Lucilla's report)
- Lucilla, Jonathan, Ina, Gabriela report on May to July (soon on the web)
- Lucilla reports on membership criteria:
Members:
 - National networks: contact between at least 2 projects, national network meeting, contact to the GEN-Europe office (14 European networks are members so far)
 - Ecovillages: see council minutes.

Vote:

- Full members approve the annual report and budget of GEN-Europe.

Introduction to working groups by Jonathan

Presentation of web database live online by Kasimir

GEN Domain & websites:

- www.ecovillage.org
- gen.ecovillage.org
- GEN IS database

Ecovillage Information services:

There is a newly developed database for all GEN websites which shows entries about:

- EV directory
- Events calendar
- Resource Listings
- Publications

Soon members can fill in their information by themselves, they get a name and password, up to now the office does the input. The database features also an internal part with contact information for office use.

Ceremony of transition

Nicole sings in appreciation for Lucilla's time as Executive Secretary, Imre plays the flute and we are all very touched. Nicole thanks Lucilla in the name of the whole network and gives her flowers and presents. Lucilla passes on two candles to Ina and Jonathan. We dance and sing.

Friday, July 11, 2003

Working groups

Reports of the working groups can be found on the web-site

July 11, afternoon session – 15.00 at Green Classroom

Plenary sessions on reports from National networks (5 minutes for each network)

POLAND – Nicole GrosPierre: the network held a meeting in September 02. This included a course on alternative economics; this year will be on permaculture. Our members are educational centres, three communities and many initiatives. ECEAT is running a centre like CAT. We have an Internet list to encourage exchanges, but when the Polish EVs are too far apart and it is

difficult to exchange. Personal exchanges are working better now, before it was mostly on the informal level. There is a project in the mountains that organizes yearly meetings with other organisations like Greenpeace etc.

GERMANY – Ina Meyer-Stoll: Come Together Network was founded in 1994, but last year we did not meet as the big communities did not register as they were too busy in July. This year the organised meeting will also not take place, but we still have the mailing list. The original idea was to help communities get to know each other, and this happened so groups are now in direct contact and exchange a lot. Good contacts are between “Sieben Linden”, ZEGG, Stamm Füssen (a new GEN-Europe member!) and the commune Niederkaufungen. The University in Kassel set up a footprint analysis with 3 very different communities and 3 families, for one year (we met in February with this research group and 8 other communes and communities), so it was possibly a new start, we will meet again in August. Lebensgarten Steyerberg has a complementary currency seminar right now, so no one could come to the GA now.

SWEDEN – Gunlaug Oystbye: the association is called Njord, with 24 ecovillages among which EKBO is the most recent one. There are some co-housing and permaculture groups. Axel Ruhe is the coordinator of the co-housing movement, and for the moment these two are separate. The Njord members question why they should have the Swedish association, when the GEN website already gives all the information. Perhaps organise a workshop? Njord Meetings not every year, co-housing every year. Open-house meeting every year, started at Lakabe, first Sunday in October for World Habitat Day. I dream that all ecovillages would do it all over Europe, and ask the UN to declare it the „Day of living in Ecovillages“ (possibly ask UNITAR). Perhaps we will take the Finnish idea to organise a travelling bus. (Ina) Holma College is interested in studying ecovillages, they work internationally.

CZECH Rep.– Max Vittrup Jensen: Czech Net includes 3 initiatives: Lunaria, “Eastern European model”, the windmill is finished - the progressive Mayer has purchased a German windmill that generated energy for the whole village; Mrkev, a group of friends of mine have started a farm and bought the land, without electricity; Permalot we follow W/European model

but have no houses. Krishna community is also there. We have translated GEN material and written articles on national papers, explaining the EV concept. Presentations at festivals and schools, I facilitated a study centre for Youth Environment Europe; travelled to Tamera, Zegg, Torri, Hjortsoj, Zajezova, Gyürüfü, Mrkev, LØS. We have a website at: www.ekovesnicky.cz

DENMARK LØS – Insa Frese: LOS works as an association, so we have 4 Council meetings and one GA a year. 55 communities and 360 individual members. We have very broad membership-criterias, as sustainable enterprises can also become members. It is a sleeping beauty – the networking job is not very strong, we have problems in engaging people. 7 Council members + 2 substitutes, it works well. The office, with two paid secretaries, is still at Herta. We have had a drastic reduction of Govt. funding and are cutting down to one secretary. 4 LØS –net Magazines are produced a year, one on a specific topic. We also made a video and 2 books; the latest –just published- is a 450 pages manual on “building community” based on direct experiences. We have a website too, several Agenda 21 meetings to attract politicians. A sad thing is that the municipality has rejected the Landsby 2000 development plan, but they will try again, there was some local resistance. Torup is still expanding (they now have also a visitors centre and a school) and they are now working more on the social part. They have lots of visitors.

About Christiania, they have a lot of support from the public; a poll on public opinion was 70% in favour of keeping it going. In December 2002, when there was a European Summit for the enlargement of Europe in Copenhagen, they arranged a 4 days „bottom meeting“ for NGOs with arts, lectures etc., together with LØS.

LØS celebrates Earth Day, 22 April, a proposal that can be extended to other ecovillages. On this occasion the Gaia Prize has been awarded 4 years in a row to people, who have done something special to promote the idea of EVs. In 2003 it went to Fleming Abrahamson, a pioneer in natural building methods. We also have launched a little education programme, a 3 week seminar, which is to be held this summer. (Unfortunately it was cancelled).

SENEGAL – Ismael Diallo GEN SEN – Marin Zeitlin: 4 Council meetings, one GA in 2002.

Future perspectives: improve the internet connectivity, produce a film on Senegal's EVs, reinforce the project management training, keep up with the existing activities, reinforce the individual EVs, also to enable the start of the Twin Villages (has been on website since March). We do not have a clear picture of this partnership yet, so we need to clarify it in this assembly. The 20 members are located in 10 out of 11 regions in Senegal.

FRANCE – Jean Michel Pochat RFEV: started in 1997, by people with ideas and projects and not by EVs, dividing the country in departments. 1st meeting we had 400 people! Then is gradually gone down, the magazine stopped (Vivre en ecovillage), there were just 2 or 3 eco-hamlets. In 2000, I got involved, a big meeting in south of France with Lucilla, Lepre from Damanuhr, and Demba Mansare. There we decided to become the eco-hamlet network, with Carapa, Tout Autour de la Terre, Biolopin. 4 structures are in charge of the network, it is very hard to really meet because they are very busy, we had a small meeting in Larzac, and Epidaure is a Swiss ecovillage that joined RFEV. Decided at the last meeting: we would like to be involve at the next ESF in Paris, we would like to have many GEN-E members. Longomai (the French one) is a very interesting structure but they are opposed to the word „Ecovillage“ – when the RFEV was born they had lots of disturbing visitors, and they got upset. They are also against spirituality. The Swiss Longomai is different. L´Arche was contacted asking them to join the RFEV, Jean Baptiste Libouban wrote that they were interested, but I have not heard from him since. The 2001 GA made a really good impression on them. JMP´ s project is now starting after 3 years, we have found the place and the funds, I will present it tonight. A very important movement in France around Pierre Rabin will hold a conference parallel to the French network meeting. Everybody is heartily invited.

HUNGARY: Robert Gerszany is giving a report on the network. The network decided to give a legal body to the network. At least 6 Ecovillages are included. There is an informal cooperation meeting twice a year and a newsletter. The formal establishing for the network is the fundraising that can be done. Robert is going to translate the GEN-Europe flyer into Hungarian. The network wants to cooperate closer with the neighbourhood countries.

ITALY – Lucilla Borio: RIVE has not been so active over the last few months, but in November 2002 several EVs presented themselves at the European Social Forum in Florence. Cristina called up all the Italian communities to come to the network meeting. There is a new book on the Italian EVs. Permaculture network is growing very much at the moment. Maybe the two networks can be combined; several members are members in both.

TURKEY – Demet Irkli: EKILAT

We have no meeting in 2003 but we did meet as eco-builders, on disaster resistant ecological building with many qualified presenters. In May 2003 the Ministry also attended the meeting; which was very well attended (30+). Two good projects: Gunesh Koy with Claire, in the Balaban area, fertile zone, plant all area surrounding the EV, I am also part of the project, also a centre for eco-living. Cooperatives are the best legal body for Turkey. Another one is Harman Eco Village, with Mete, we helped them to design the architecture; another initiative is in Istanbul E- coop, with Semih; Eco Foca is mostly related to ecotourism, Bugday is the related magazine. In November 14 / 15 we will have another conference, where EKILAT will present a module. The report on our 3rd meeting was published on the mainstream architecture magazine „Ekilojik ve Mimarlik“. We are in touch with Builders without Borders who built a straw bale house in 2001 with GEN-E support.

BRITAIN – Tony Gosling (EVNUK): on the website

<http://europe.ecovillage.org/uk/network> you can see what we are: populating the rhetoric of sustainability. We have a lot of low-impact settlements, with one or two dwellings, about 30 different initiative and projects. We met last year in Middlewood, where we helped build the tree-bog. We have meetings where one expert speaks, other come and stay a bit longer, often to do useful work. A lot of social networking happens there, we have lots of festivals in the summer, so people like to attend. A question we have: how can we help to birth new EVs, we came up with the concept of the people – finder, where you can input data about yourself, including skills and interests, so that people can find the right place and also find each other. We send out lots of links to similar organisations. We will be going to the Green Gathering in July / august, and making a link to the Permaculture people. EVNUK is networking with Diggers and Dreamers, and with Chapter 7

(small low-impact single family household, and agriculture). We have some documents to support people who want to do sustainable development.

FINLAND – Juha Pulkkila: the Finnish network has been officially created at the end of 2002. 10 years ago we had a lot of freedom on how to plan our settlements.

We have the circulating schools that holds meeting once a month in each village, between 10 to 15 EVs in the country, the biggest one being Keuruu. Half of the EVs are connected to the network. An idea is to create an internal market for our products, and to set up a fund to own the ecovillage land. Keuruu is having a festival on August 15. I was in Kyoto in last March at the Water Conference, and am now organising a dry toilet conference in late August, where lots of people from very different backgrounds of view will participate (govt, corporations etc) from 25 countries.

RUSSIA – Heikki Attila: this is about cultural giving, this CD is a symbol for the shaman, and protects me from the information. The cover of the Eurotopia book is from Grishino. Reads the letter from Grishino, with the start of the Russian community network, related to the book Anastasia. Grishino is asking for support for the nearby forest that is being felled by a Finnish company. Michelle mentions an agreement signed in Aarhus that is binding for EU countries. The Finnish ministry should be contacted and informed. A group will get together to specifically discuss how to best support Grishino in this.

Nevo was at -46 for two weeks, they have two families and a baby boom with two new born. Bee keeping is going well, and planting too.

SPAIN – Ulisses: presents a mental mind-map of RIE, or rather Spanish Ecovillage movement. RIE is not the leading element. There are some (8) existing EVs existing for some time, and are members of RIE. I do not see a future with many more EVs, for a number of reasons. On the other hand, the movement is becoming stronger and stronger, i.e. women's associations are working well to spread the ecovillage concepts. GEA has over 1500 members, Vida Sana has a yearly exhibition called Biocultura (20.000 people) where we give presentations on GEN and EVs; they also manage the Spanish edition of the Ecologist. The Selba association, of which I am a member, works on

permaculture, conflict resolution, and publishes Rehabitar (5000 copies). At least 2 articles on GEN appear on every issue.

The online newsletter is circulated to many members. Recent initiatives: articles about urban EVs on Rehabitar, how can it be done, there is a group in Barcelona who bought an old building and wants to convert it into a urban EV. We are co-operating with small villages (10 to 100 people) with unemployment problems; they need our support. So we will start to work with one of them to transform it into an ecovillage, as the residents are interested in sustainable development. Contacts with Universities are becoming stronger; we get frequent requests for information.

ICELAND – Gudmundur Petersson: Solheimar is a very old and a very established EV founded in 1930 and there is another initiative. The two are in contact. Solheimar opened the ecocentre on our founder's 100 birthday, with the aim of showing what ecovillage life is about. We are still developing the concept, and hope to support the birth of other EVs. It is very important for us to have international contacts. We have a very nice guesthouse with a restaurant and a cafe.

Presentation by Hildur

People are beginning to teach ecovillage Design. Hildur proposes to concept a group of Ecovillage Design with teachers from Ecovillages. Permaculture focuses mostly on green ideas but ecovillages are also about social and cultural aspects.

With what is there it would be easy to gather 30 people as teachers. We can develop a curriculum for it and give it a formal frame. The title „Ecovillage Designer“ could be set up. This would be a cross regional issue for GEN, and also a reason to network on the international level, but can be started also only for Europe. Consultation till October 7th. The document is available at hildur@gaia.org

Evening presentations

- Video by Jean-Michel Pochat of his new projects
- Sustainable developments in London
- Max Permalot presentation
- Ina and Achim show the ZEGG video, and share latest development

Saturday, July 12, 2003

Morning – working groups (report on the web-site)

Afternoon: Presentations, reports, news, next GA, evaluation

Presentation of the Permaculture Magazine

Maddy Harland from Permaculture Magazine (editor):

We have 40000 readers from US, Canada, Europe (specially UK).

Some of the editorial space from the readers will be for GEN (four pages for all GEN regions (ENA, GEN-Europe, and GENOA). Maybe also a page for events and courses, and a page for key conferences. It has to be bit flexible throughout the year.

The magazine is interested in permanent culture not only in growing mulched food, compost toilets etc.

They are interested in stories, what moves people, practical things, getting hands dirty, or an ecovillage that made a new building, what worked what didn't. Sharing this information on a fairly detailed level.

The theme is solution and testing and experiments.

For request of a gift subscription they want a formal application, and in return they want stories.

Permaculture Magazine

Permanent Publications

The sustainability Centre

East Meon

Hampshire

GU32 IHR

UK

Tel: 0044 (0) 1730 823311

Fax: 0044 (0) 1730 823322

inquiries@permaculture.co.uk

www.permaculture.co.uk

Positive news

Shauna Crockett Burrows, the editor, reports. 75,000 copies every quarter, distributed through networking. If people take the postage costs they can take as many as they like.

They have just been translated into German, and also a Spanish website exists. Positive news likes your stories and they like it short and sharp – and positive!

About 300 words, and a good picture!

Living Lightly is a subscription magazine. More concentrating on stories, not so much on the building side. Stories here can be up to 1000 words, and very good visuals.

shauna@positivenews.org.uk

www.positivenews.org.uk

European Social Forum – a new Europe is possible

Jean Michel reports: the next ESF happening 12th to 15th of November 2003. GEN-Europe will represent itself. It's interesting to have as many representatives from European EVs as possible, www.fse-esf.org is the website. We can organize workshops. We have the stands; last year we had the Exhibition there. Village Economie solidaire is an interesting lively event taking place also. Discussion will go on the euevforum@lists.gen-europe.org

Green Week 2004

We will take part also next year (It's around May /June). Think about what EVs can contribute. Please contact the German office for more information.

Annual EV excellence award

An annual EV excellence award was announced, to be funded by the Gaia Trust. This award will be worth 25,000 Danish Krone (about €3,500) and will be presented at Green Week in Brussels.

New full members of GEN-Europe:

Keuuru, the Association of sustainable Communities in Finland and Galgafarm in Hungary are accepted as new full members of GEN-Europe.

Next GA 2004:

ZEGG invites GEN-Europe for the next GA, the proposal is accepted by all. The office will circulate the exact time, we are still not sure at what dates we are going to have the Assembly (around August).

Evaluation of this year's assembly

Went well	Could be improved	Suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Being at CAT• Workshop• Evening	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two day workshop• Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Four days assembly, more time,

<p>presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation of meetings and working groups • Technical equipment • Intro to CAT • Geographical representation • Friendly atmosphere • We all met • Very good council meetings • Strategic self knowledge • Internet computer • Hildur and Ross being here • People from Permaculture Magazine came 	<p>on workshop preparation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disturbance during the meeting • Staying at the campsite was too far away • Transparency before the meeting, documents prepared and sent out before • Not meeting in a community • Better meeting space • Food • Detailed programme • Only members in workgroups • Involving the hosting community 	<p>socialising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More short breaks in sessions • Small trips or manual work • Yoga, Tai Chi, shiatsu • Name tags for everybody • Advance list of technical equipment • Bring local foods and drinks from your region! • Clothes line • Presenting materials • Introduction for guest community • Special workgroups for non-members • Goal setting, fundraising
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Thanks to everyone who attended and contributed by their presence, with action or with their thoughts, and not the least thanks to CAT and Joan Randle for all the effort they put into housing the GA!