



Global Ecovillage Network of Europe e.V.
 Sieben Linden 1
 D-38489 Beetzendorf
www.gen-europe.org

Minutes General Assembly 2010

The General Assembly was opened by president Kosha Anja Joubert. Representatives of 31 full members (out of 46) from 19 countries were present, as well as many supportive members, both individuals and representatives of organisations.

Schedule

| | Sunday July 4 | Monday July 5 | Tuesday July 6 |
|-------|------------------|--------------------|--|
| 9.00 | | Secretariat Report | Financial Report Change of Statutes Open Space |
| 13.00 | | Lunch | Lunch |
| 15.00 | Welcome Tour | World Café | Council Elections Closing |
| 19.00 | Dinner | Dinner | Dinner |
| 20.30 | Family Gathering | Presentations | |

Secretariat Report

The annual report on activities of GEN-Europe was presented by Ulrike Schimmel and members of the council. It is available on the website under 'archives'.

World Café

The question of the world café was *what do we want GEN to be?* The intention behind having this world café among the members was to hear many voices, and find some common ground concerning this question, in the face of all the challenges arising in the world and also around the

changes in GEN after the last office transition.

Toomas made an introduction elaborating on the opportunities GEN has today in a world that is asking for solutions that work, willing to listen to the ecovillage experience. GEN has been founded to connect like-minded people from different countries. This family aspect of GEN is working very well, at least for us here in Europe. There is a lot more potential there now, and already now GEN is involved in projects like the 'Transition to Resilience' Learning Partnership, linking up with the Transition Town movement and other organisations from the wider sustainability movement. GEN could do a lot more, the question can also be reframed like this: Do we want to enter into this rapid growth or concentrate on the family aspect of GEN, leaving things as they are?

During the harvesting of the World Café it became clear that there is lots of support for GEN to become more active and quite a few suggestions came up what this could include:

- An excellent, well functioning website
- A talent bank, common databank
- should have political, social, spiritual representatives for the entire EV movement
-
- A source for funds
- well-thought technologies should be used, e.g. for making it easier to pay in membership fees
- extra services for members could be added without raising the membership fee, those who use the extra offers pay extra for it
- a festival to let ecovillages be known and ideas extended
-

However, several times the wish came up (sometimes a concern rather) that GEN maintain it's core identity as a network of ecological communities, while opening up to collaboration with other groups and organisations.

Financial Report

Finances 2009

Ulrike presents the financial report of 2009 (see Annex 2).

Question: should there be an independent auditor?

It is not be requested by German law, unless prescribed by the statutes and our statutes do not foresee this. However, the general assembly decides with unanimity to introduce an auditor and receive a written auditor statement. Lone offers to step into this function on a volunteer basis. This will protect us and make us more credible on an international level.

This discussion has come up also because there is a mistake in the financial report related to the balance 31-12-2009 in either of the documents presented that could not be traced back easily (during the GA).

Decision: The financial report 2009 is accepted with unanimity with 25 votes.

Budget 2010

Ulrike presents an overview of the budget for 2010/2011 (see Annex 3).

Comments on changes suggested at last year's GA:

- The proposal from last year's assembly to change our financial year to July – June is not possible according to German law, therefore we stick to the calendar year.

- It was suggested at last year's assembly to work with a more long term perspective, therefore some planning for the first half of 2011 is included in the budget presented here.

Some explanations on income and cost budget lines:

- There has been a difference of balances between the GEN IS accounts and the GEN-Europe accounts on GEN IS money, probably due to mistakes in past years resulting in more money than we thought. It was resolved by dividing the sum between GEN Europe and GEN IS, in the end.
- Sieben Linden has donated money to GEN – they have made a surplus through some recent projects, thank you very much!
- Staff: We have seen that paid work on top of voluntary work is very useful at this stage for GEN, it means that we can invest in fundraising which is then paying back.
- There have been new lines added to activities, because we want to create the possibility to pay more money to people also from the network based on projects.
- There are no extra travel refunds foreseen because up to a few weeks ago we had a much less optimistic view on income through Grundtvig grants for the conference.
- We want to create tools for public relations and allocate 500 Euros for videos.

Members voices:

- Compliments for having done so well on a small budget and for having developed the budget in these two years.
- Some of the project money running through GEN should remain with the office for costs that are being sustained.
- Fundraising is an important topic to continue putting together all the expertise present in the membership.

Decision: The budget 2010 is accepted unanimously with 25 votes.

After the GA another Grundtvig Workshops application was accepted by the National Agency that was not mentioned then, but is included in the budget here.

Change of Statutes

1. Proposal: add to the statutes that invitations to the GA can also be sent via email, which at the moment is not mentioned.

Art. 8.1 then reads:

The ordinary assembly of members

- Shall gather once a year.
 - Shall be announced in writing (letter, **email** or fax) at least 21 days in advance of the Assembly.
- (changes evidenced in red)

Decision: the proposal is accepted with unanimity.

2. Proposal: According to German law, we need to specify whether or not the council can receive up to 500€ compensation per person per year. This needs to be made explicit in the statutes before the end of 2010. Proposal of the council: Council work will not be compensated, to keep it clear and clean.

To Art. 9.1 the sentence: 'Being a council member is voluntary work' is added.

Decision: the proposal is accepted unanimously.

Open Space and new initiatives

The Open Space filled rapidly with very different offers. Some groups kept meeting also during the conference that followed and have evolved into longer projects living on after the GA.

The issues addressed in the Open Space were

- **Meeting of National Network Representatives:** an exchange on structure and practices within the existing National Networks
- **Healers Meeting:** an exchange between the healers living in community
- **Children in Community:** an exchange about growing up in community and education. This group will follow-up on their meetings on a newly created [email list](#). Contact person: [Capra Carruba](#)
- **Website:** inspiring discussions about the new GEN-Europe website
- **Logo:** the idea of changing the GEN-Europe logo had come up within the council before and was further discussed in this group
- **Newsletter:** a group formed for making an online newsletter called e-connection. Others are welcome to join their new [mailing list](#). Contact person: [Kadri Allikmäe](#)
- **Exchange of goods and services between communities:** the idea of enhancing the exchange of anything we cannot get locally between members of the GEN family is picked up again. The creation of an online database is discussed. Contact person: [Macaco Tamerice](#).
- **NextGEN:** quite a few young people were around during the meeting and gave new energy to the vision of NextGEN. The possibility of organizing a meeting for young people parallel to next year's conference is discussed, possibly funded through the Youth in Action Program. Contact person: [Philipp Frank](#).
- **Geza Varga and the Jobbik Party in Hungary:** a group met to discuss the information we have and work out how GEN could best deal with a member engaging in such activities.
- **Transformation of Traditional Villages into Ecovillages:** A group met for discussion and exchange around this issue and worked on a draft for GEN guidelines, see annex 4. Work on this paper is to be continued also after the GA. Contact Person: [Kosha Joubert](#).

Council Elections

Current council members Deniz Dincel (Turkish National Network), Kosha Joubert (Sieben Linden/Findhorn), Macaco Tamerice (Damanhur) and Toomas Trapido (GEN-Estonia) all would like to continue their work in the council and step up for re-election.

Troels Dilling-Hansen (LOES) is stepping out of the council.

Proposal on process - the members voted on two options

1. First the members would vote on the four candidates from the old council as a team, after that a fifth person would be elected.
2. The members would vote directly for five council members.

Decision: Option 1 was accepted unanimously.

Decision – Council Election: members Deniz Dincel (Turkish National Network), Kosha Joubert (Sieben Linden/Findhorn), Macaco Tamerice (Damanhur) and Toomas Trapido (GEN-Estonia) were re-elected unanimously.

Other candidates nominated:

- Robert Hall (Suderbyn Permaculture Ecovillage)

Decision – Council Election:

Robert was elected unanimously as council member.

Excellence Award

Decision: Members vote on whether or not to continue the Excellence Award. There was full consensus among the members that they want to continue the award.

Who should be eligible for the Award? It is voted whether the award is to be open

1. only to full members
2. full and supportive members
3. everybody
4. only the ecovillages who are full members of GEN-Europe (not National Networks)

First round of voting:

1. only to full members – **3 votes**
2. full and supportive members – **7 votes**
3. everybody – **4 votes**
4. only the ecovillages who are full members of GEN-Europe (not National Networks) – **2 votes**

Second round of voting:

In the second round it is only voted to the options which got the highest votes.

1. Opening to full and supportive members – **11 votes**
2. Only full members – **3 votes**

Decision: For the coming years, the award will be open to both supportive and full members. This year it will be open to only full members as announced.

Proposal Open Space group regarding Geza Varga and the Jobbik Party in Hungary

Eva reported back from the Open Space group and read a letter (see Annex 5) they wrote together as a statement by GEN about this issue.

A few small changes were suggested.

Decision: The members endorsed this letter in its final form (unanimous). Kosha will send it to Geza.

Next GA

Candidates:

- Tamera, Portugal
- Krishna Valley Farm, Hungary
- Lilleoru, Estonia for 2012

Decision: 17 votes for Tamera, 1 vote for Krishna Valley farm.

Annex1: Members represented at the GA

| | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Association Epidaure | Keuruu Ecovillage |
| Association Mouvement des Oasis en Tous Lieux | Kibbutz Lotan |
| Austrotopia | La Comune di Bagnaia |
| Boyukkonuk | Lilleoru |
| Braziers Park | LOS |
| Cloughjordan Ecovillage | Munksoegaard |
| Damanhur Federation | NextGEN |
| Dyssekilde | Oekodorf Sieben Linden |
| Ecodorp Network | Red Ibérica de Ecoaldeas |
| Findhorn Foundation | RIVE |
| GEN Senegal | Schloss Glarisegg |
| GEN-Estonia | Suderbyn Ecovillage |
| GEN-Finland | Tamera |
| Gunes Koy | Torri Superiore |
| Hungarian National Network | Vlierhof |
| | ZEGG |

Annex 2: Financial Report 2009

| GEN-EUROPE FINANCES 2009 | Estimation | Real Income/ Costs |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| Income 2009 | | |
| <u>Balance 31-12-2008</u> | 11.939 € | 11.619 € |
| Membership fees | 6.000 € | 6.623 € |
| Course fees | 17.000 € | 16.352 € |
| other income | 400 € | 147 € |
| <u>Learning Partnership</u> | 14.400 € | 14.400 € |
| <u>Contribution Gaia Trust</u> | | |
| GEN-Europe | 7.100 € | 7.100 € |
| GEN-IS | 5.000 € | 5.000 € |
| European ecovillage excellence award | 3.300 € | 3.300 € |
| | 65.139 € | 64.540 € |
| Costs 2009 | | |
| Staff costs | | |
| Ulrike Schimmel | 6.360 € | 6.325 € |
| Capra Carruba | 0 € | 0 € |
| Benjamin Flegel | 600 € | 650 € |
| | 6.960 € | 6.975 € |
| Office costs | | |
| Stationery | 400 € | 228 € |
| software/hardware | 600 € | 652 € |
| Rent | 120 € | 140 € |
| Telephone | 700 € | 631 € |
| | 1.820 € | 1.650 € |
| Other expenditures | | |
| Administration/Consulting costs | 1.200 € | 18 € |
| Bank charges | 100 € | 11 € |
| Fundraising | 1.000 € | 746 € |
| | 2.300 € | 775 € |
| Activities | | |
| Annual assembly | 6.000 € | 9.074 € |
| Extra travel refunds | 2.000 € | 2.013 € |
| Council and staff meetings | 2.250 € | 968 € |

| | | |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|
| Representig GEN | 200 € | 166 € |
| National Network meetings & educational activities in Europe | 2.400 € | 2.400 € |
| Emergence of GEN-Africa | 3.000 € | 2.148 € |
| Printing costs | 1.000 € | 150 € |
| | 16.850 € | 16.919 € |

Sub-contracting and/or transfer of funds to partners

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| GEN IS - Information Services | 12.000 € | 1.901 € |
| Learning Partnership | 14.400 € | 236 € |
| Ecovillage excellence award | 3.300 € | 3.320 € |
| | 15.300 € | 5.457 € |

| | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| <u>Total Costs</u> | <u>43.230 €</u> | <u>31.775 €</u> |
|---------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|

| | | |
|------------------------------|---|------------------------|
| <u>Income - Costs</u> | - | <u>32.765 €</u> |
|------------------------------|---|------------------------|

Annex 3: Budget 2010/2011

GEN-EUROPE BUDGET 2010

Calculation

Income 2010

| | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <u>Balance 01-01-2009</u> | (3100 for GEN IS, 14.165 for LP) | 34.839 |
| Membership fees | | 6.000 |
| course fees | ? | |
| Conference fees | | 17.000 |
| Donation Sieben Linden | | 6.000 |
| LP | | 2.650 |
| Grundtvig Workshop (Dance and Games) | | 24.600 |
| Grundtvig Workshop (PDC) | | 24.882 |
| Other Income (Google Ads & Book sales) | | 150 |
| <u>Contribution Gaia Trust</u> | | |
| GEN-Europe | | 7.837 |
| GEN-IS | | 3.990 |
| European ecovillage excellence award | | 3.300 |
| Additional funds GEN-Africa | | 3.358 |
| <u>Total income 2010</u> | | <u>134.006</u> |

Costs 2010

Costs 2011

Staff costs

| | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|-------|
| Ulrike Schimmel | 6.325 | 3.000 |
| Capra Carruba | 2.200 | 2.200 |
| FÖJ volunteer | 1.800 | 1.000 |
| | <u>10.325</u> | 6.200 |

Office costs

| | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|-----|
| Stationery | 400 | 200 |
| software/hardware | 300 | |
| Rent | 420 | 210 |
| Telephone | 1.200 | 350 |
| | <u>2.320</u> | 760 |

Other expenditures

| | | |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Administration/Consulting costs | 1.200 | |
| Bank charges | 50 | |
| | <u>1.250</u> | 0 |
| Activities | | |
| Annual assembly | 5.000 | |
| Extra travel refunds | | 2.000 |
| Council and staff meetings | 2.500 | |
| Staff meetings | 400 | |
| GEN Outreach | 2.000 | |
| National Network meetings & educational activities in Europe | 2.700 | |
| Emergence of GEN-Africa | 4.400 plus 3358 | |
| Video | 500 | |
| Website | 5.000 | |
| Fundraising | 3.200 | |
| Payments 2009 | 3.000 | |
| Reserve 2010 | | 3.000 |
| | <u>28.700</u> | <u>5.000</u> |
| Sub-contracting and/or transfer of funds to partners | | |
| GEN IS - Information Services | 7.090 | |
| European ecovillage excellence award | 3.300 | |
| Learning Partnership | 16.815 | |
| Grundtvig Workshop (Games and Dances) | | 24.600 |
| Grundtvig Workshop (PDC) | | 24.882 |
| | <u>27.205</u> | <u>24.882</u> |
| <u>Total Costs</u> | <u>73.158</u> | <u>61.442</u> |
| <u>Sum Costs 2010 + 2011</u> | | <u>134.000</u> |

Annex4: Traditional Villages – Ecovillages Draft Paper

We stand at a critical moment in Earth's history, a time when humanity must choose its future. As the world becomes increasingly interdependent and fragile, the future at once holds great peril and great promise. To move forward we must recognize that in the midst of a magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms we are one human family and one Earth community with a common destiny. We must join together to bring forth a sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace. Towards this end, it is imperative that we, the peoples of Earth, declare our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life, and to future generations.

(Preamble Earth Charter)

Inviting traditional & indigenous villages into the Global Ecovillages Network (GEN)

– DRAFT for discussion

We envision **the village** to be a key-element in building solutions to the problems we face today. We can step into responsibility for our future and the future of our children on the level of the village. We can oversee and express our concern for healthy relationships within our ecosystem. We can build community and take action together. The most under-utilised resource we have is the good intentions and creativity of citizens, and their willingness to make a difference. Urban and rural villages alike are precious playgrounds for civil society engagement to come to the fore. Village networks can weave local solutions into a new tapestry for resilient societies.

If one person dreams alone, it remains a dream. If many start dreaming together it is the beginning of a new reality. (Dom Helder Pessoa Camara)

How can traditional & indigenous villages and intentional ecovillages relate to one another?

Thousands of traditional and indigenous villages around the world are in the process of losing their social, cultural, ecological and economic cohesion right now. The adverse impacts of globalisation are challenging. The surrounding forests and lands, the waters and natural resources are being bought up and appropriated, eroded and polluted at a frightening pace. As a result, entire communities are being threatened in their survival and searching for new avenues. Understandably, young people are increasingly leaving their villages,

attracted by advantages of modern society and longing to link up to global networks. Unfortunately, they seldom find what they are looking for. Much of value is being lost in this process.

GEN was set up in 1995 to support and encourage the evolution of sustainable settlements across the globe. The focus on community-led development and empowerment of the village leads to a healthy merging of wisdom from the past with innovative modern solutions, created and embraced by its inhabitants. **Ecovillages** are holistically and consciously designed for long-term sustainability in all four areas of the social and cultural, of economy and ecology. They become living and learning centres for a high value, low impact lifestyle. In the North they are geared towards radically lowering their ecological footprint and finding participatory responses to the pressures of fossil fuel depletion. In the South they might be more focused on preserving and honouring sustainable traditions while combining these with contemporary appropriate technologies. In the face of climate change and imminent depletion of so many of the natural resources exploited by a culture of consumerism, a network which **builds bridges** in a spirit of respect, true collaboration, exchange and mutual support deserves special attention.

GEN wishes to deepen its role as a platform for the mutually enriching South-North and South-South exchange of knowledge and experience. Through sharing of best practices within the wider network while honouring local traditions we move towards a diverse yet shared pool of wisdom for sustainable living on this planet.

GEN recognises a deep need for:

- Resurgence of *culture* and *identity*, of individuals and communities
- Meetings, both online and in real time, to build personal friendships and collaborations
- Respect for the deep wisdom inherent in every culture
- Empowerment of communities to design their own pathway into the future
- Reconciliation and narrowing the gap between North and South
- South-South dialogue and skill-sharing

In recent years a growing number of GEN members have encountered indigenous and traditional villages all over the world that are working to revitalise local wisdom and move toward sustainable future. Some of these have been approaching GEN with an interest in becoming part of this movement. In answer to this, local village network leaders from India, Thailand, Senegal, Congo, Peru, Malawi, Sierra Leone, Cameroon, Ghana, Tanzania and South Africa have met and are meeting with GEN-Europe representatives from July to September 2010 to open an initiative towards formulating guidelines and processes. These draft

guidelines are also being sent out to a wide variety of engaged individuals and networks for feedback.

In formulating these guidelines, we are enquiring into the existence of an internationally applicable pattern language while honouring the wide diversity and richness of local expression and cultural differences. In many cases, the initiation of an ecovillage-network can start with an educational program (like the EDE – Ecovillage Design Education, see www.gaiaeducation.net). Participatory design processes ensure that all change and introduction of new sustainable technologies are deeply rooted in and invited by the local communities. For instance, the Senegalese ecovillage network (see www.gensenegal.org) was so successful in following this strategy that the Senegalese government decided to transform 14 000 further traditional villages following the same process. Developmental aid should be led into these kinds of initiatives, which empower local populations to take ownership of their future.

Please see below the wheel of the Ecovillage Design Education as inspiration:



Guidelines to inviting traditional & indigenous villages to join GEN

Ecovillages are human-scale settlements, holistically and consciously designed for long-term sustainability in all four areas of the social and cultural, of economy and ecology. They are living and learning centres for a high value, low impact lifestyle and a place of inspiration to the wider society.

In an ecovillage we, the community of inhabitants, strive to:

1. Promote cultural identity and respect diversity
2. Revitalize and archive traditional local wisdom while integrating contemporary methods, technologies and insights where appropriate
3. Oppose and work to actively raise awareness about globalization and the privatization of the global commons
4. Engage in all stages of the process of design and implementation of our vision for our village
5. Offer a life of luxurious (in the sense of 'truly valuable') simplicity and value living in harmony with nature
6. Promote gender sensitivity, uphold human rights and build trust among our members
7. Honour the wisdom of the elders, the children and integrate the marginalized
8. Support solidarity between individual and community with each individual finding his or her natural way of serving the whole
9. Function as a community-based peace-building tool through promoting inter-village and inter-ethnic cooperation
10. Provide capacity building and education to empower all our members to actively contribute to sustainable living
11. Preserve and develop the knowledge and use of traditional and natural healing methods
12. Provide continuous access to clean water through sustainable water harvesting and careful use of water for all needs

13. Support organic local food production for local and bioregional consumption
14. Implement appropriate technologies and produce clean renewable energy for local and bioregional use
15. Use local traditional and low impact, innovative techniques in green building to provide high quality shelter
16. Take all possible actions to reduce waste or use it as a resource e.g. reuse, recycle, compost.
17. Continuously engage with sustainable use of natural resources, participatory restoration of eco-systems and conservation of biodiversity
18. Work to strengthen community-based economies that are ethical and transparent
19. Work towards overcoming the divide between rich and poor
20. Be open to collaborating with and accepting support from institutions, individuals and others providing this does not compromise our values
21. Consciously engage as a part of a wider network of like-minded villages and projects

Annex 5: Letter to Geza Varga

Statement considering Geza Vargas political activities for the Jobbik Party

We reaffirm GEN Europe's position against all forms of xenophobia and racism.

We ask all members to be vigilant to any racist or xenophobic tendencies appearing in the organisations they are working with.

Based on the values of GEN¹ regarding the social dimension, we support integrating marginal groups and encouraging unity through respect for differences. We have heard about the activities of Geza Varga within the Jobbik party. We strongly disagree with the decision of Geza Varga, (one of the founders & ex-leader of Gaia Foundation Hungary), to work as an elected representative for the Jobbik party, even though he is not a member. From what we know about him & his values, we can understand his intentions, but we firmly disapprove of the way he chose. Reading the Jobbik homepage gives sufficient evidence that this party is fostering racist tendencies – if it is not racist itself.

We strongly encourage Geza to work for the GEN values of integrating marginal groups and fostering cultural diversity in his political work.

¹ source: http://gen.ecovillage.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=119&Itemid=216

We want to maintain the dialogue with him and we will go on with following the development of his party and the situation in Hungary with concern. We encourage the Hungarian ecovillage movement to get in touch with Roma groups and to integrate Roma projects in the ecovillage movement.

As the GEN Europe network, we want to support Gaia Foundation Hungary in dealing with this delicate issue and we are willing to support them in the internal processes that are connected to this question. We understand that there are difficult problems in the Hungarian society. We feel that Gaia Foundation Hungary is and could increasingly be the catalyst for introducing positive change into Hungarian society, but we strongly disagree with cooperating with political parties that show racist tendencies.

Therefore the General Assembly of the Global Ecovillage Network Europe reconfirms that all members should reject collaboration with xenophobic and racist organisations.
Approved the 6 July 2010 on the General Assembly of GEN-Europe in Damanhur, Italy.