

# **GEN-Europe General Assembly 2004 Media & Communications Workshop**

by Maddy Harland

A group of nine people met facilitated by Liora Adler. The first task was to identify GEN Europe's audience, the messages the group wishes to communicate and the tools and techniques to achieve them. The group's findings can be summarised as follows:

## Priority Audience

- The mainstream, including all peoples from the North, South, East & West
- University students
- Youth
- Greens
- Clubbers
- Festival goers
- Officials
- Funders
- Mainstream news editors
- GEN's internal network

## The Message

The implicit task of GEN media is to raise the consciousness about ecovillage living: EVs are the most ecological way to live to mitigate climate change and create peaceful, harmonious human societies. We identified two explicit tasks:

- To transform consciousness into ACTION
- To communicate that EV living is about simplicity equating to abundance (rather than being about giving things up and poverty)

## The Tools

'Old': Print materials – flyers, books, newsletters, magazines.

Digital Materials – website, film, video, DVDs, photographs, TV & radio

'New': M-PEGS, new video styles, music, theatre, sculpture, festivals/carnivals

## Techniques

AIDA Principles (Activating the audiences... Attention, Interest, Desire, Action)

Language

Hooks

Marketing

Use of humour, sexuality

Trojan Horse – subtle, deeper message beneath a more obvious one.

To enable us to achieve a practical set of ACTIONS from the workshop the group divided into three subject areas to consult: website/print media, new forms, and infiltration of the mainstream.

## WEBSITE/PRINT MEDIA GROUP

MEDIA

WEB

PRINT

### General

Making multifunctional media, not focus on specific targets:

- Cost
- Essential message: Can be made simple and general to everyone
- Work efficiency: Less time required
- Easier to brand

GEN-EUROPE brand image presented consistently in all media

Website to be presented LARGE & everywhere, because it's memorable and the main information container

Honesty in information

### Leaflet

Current leaflet ok, but can be redesigned using less paper, less folds, less texts, iconographic pictures: cheaper, easier to produce, easier to read and be inspired by

### Newsletter/Print

To provide six monthly updated information for general use/seminar attendees etc.

### Newsletter Internet

To provide PDF newsletter, internal use

### Other Media

Postcards

Bookmarks

### Website

Good already, and concept is well thought over by GEN IS team, exciting developments, feedback very welcome.

## ACTIVATING THE MAINSTREAM GROUP

We identified that there is already huge potential interest in EVs in the mainstream and that we need to strategically capture this interest and take all opportunities to communicate the EV message far and wide. People are motivated by satisfying their basic needs. Subjects like Food (GM, food scares – i.e. salmonella – Foot & Mouth disease, factory farming), Waste (loss of landfill, composting (especially toilets!), recycling, limited water and fossil fuel energy resources), biofuels & biogas and wind farms are examples of current headline grabbers. Subjects like climate change and its economic and social implications as well as environmental will become increasingly high profile. People are also concerned with the erosion of their economic well being and personal freedom. So how do Evers take advantage of this growing consciousness and become a press hub for information?

Priority

Targets – Youth, Mainstream, Editors, Film Producers

Consciousness – Action

Simplicity – Abundance

Diversity – North/South/East/West

### ACTIONS

Web Press Page	To feed Editors/TV Researchers (see below for details).
Funded Press Post	To feed Editors/TV Researchers with specific stories. Liora has an existing funding application that could be adapted. The post could be accommodated at PM offices.
Books (in Partnership)	Use existing publishers to publish material and seek funding from appropriate agencies (i.e. the translation of Geza's manual into English with Oxfam as a partner, for example).
EV Music – World CD and/or Napster release with 'Radio Ballard' ingredient.	Evers are musically creative – get the message over with a downloadable CD of songs and include brief explanations about each song. Also make available a CD version that can be sold at Evs and farther afield.
M-Peg Clip for Website	a short, snappy clip with EV message and examples of best practice which can be downloaded and circulated on the net – 'guerilla marketing'.

Collaboration with Video Activists

i.e. UNDERCURRENTS release an alternative movie for the Festival Circuit and alternative movie houses. Develop a script and specific funders with an existing video makers (rather than make a film from scratch without partners). Use existing film networks.

Formalise a GEN-Europe Media/Communications Committee (or integrate with GEN-IS?)

Create standards for best practice & right to veto substandard or inappropriate material.

Flyer Partnerships i.e. Bugday, Permaculture Magazine produce flyers to attract subscribers. Integrate GEN-Europe information and contact (esp. website) into their flyers and turn it into a promotional opportunity for GEN-EUR for a small percentage of overall print costs i.e. 10%?

A PRESS PAGE – FOR THE GEN-Europe WEBSITE

Press button on every page

Mission Statement  
- Paragraph only

Unique 'selling' point of each Ecovillage mentioned.

Contact name & number of Ecovillage  
Spokespeople – provide press guidance for Ecovillagers (avail. from Tony Gosling)

National Directory of contacts

Languages?

- Spanish
- English

National  
Networks  
\  
Links  
\  
Own language pages  
Articles  
Contacts  
Events

Press Qs  
Locations? 1/month  
Contacts? periodic  
Press releases? actions  
E-list/contacts  
Proactive/research  
Archive  
Releases  
Articles

Invitation  
for 'News' tips  
to Maddy

E-book of PDFs  
from all translated  
GEN articles in web archive.

### NEW FORMS

The third group discussed the potential of new forms, specifically punk video, as a way of communicating the GEN message. They want to attract a younger audience and get away from standard documentary-type approaches.

### FOLLOW UP STRATEGY – SHORT TERM

- 1) Liora to provide existing funding application to adapt for Press Officer post. Liaise with Jonathan and Maddy
- 2) Kasimir to create a press page on website as per format above
- 3) EVers to be proactive in passing on examples of good practice, news stories to Jonathan and Maddy to feed out to the mainstream media as well as use in house
- 4) Design a new, simpler, more 'iconic' flyer for GEN-Europe.
- 5) Request that GEN-Europe Board empower a media committee to ensure actions are taken and media strategy is coordinated efficiently and professionally.