



ECOVILLAGE DESIGN EDUCATION GLARISEGG

2019

JANUARY 14 - FEBRUARY 16

SWITZERLAND



Overview



The Glarisegg community on the Swiss side of Lake Constance has been in existence since 2003 at Schloss Glarisegg, a “place for encounters and awareness”, with more than 50 community members. The community uses the Scott Peck method of community building, and welcomes methods such as Forum and Possibility Management for continuous community development. The place also includes a free school, a permaculture garden, a food cooperative, lake bistro, meditation house, seminar center with guesthouse and campsite. A wide range of courses and seminars are hosted throughout the year.

This year, for a fourth time, the five week Ecovillage Design Education (EDE) program was hosted at Schloss Glarisegg. Based on the Whole Systems Design for Sustainability including the dimensions of social, worldview, ecology and economy we learnt how to create, develop and maintain eco villages and eco projects. We welcomed a total number of 55 participants from 21 different countries. Brought together by organisers Elisabeth Schrag, Jashana Kippert and Sonja-Vera Schmitt we practiced "Creating a Transformative Culture". This year the EDE was again structured with Sociocracy 3.0, allowing participants to self-organise and make decisions through the Community Care Council. Other highlights on the learning journey were Possibility Management, Deep Ecology, Dragon Dreaming, Deep Democracy, Spiral Dynamics, Forum, Reinventing Organisations, Economy of the Common Good, Conflict Resolution and Transparent Communication. Sessions were facilitated by the team, community members and external facilitators who brought specialised topics.

Participants formed ten projects groups to implement all lessons learnt in project work time. Ranging from concrete community projects in Romania, France and England, Education and Eco Center in Malawi, Social Agriculture in Italy, a sacred movie about the course life, empowerment seminars for Eritreans in Switzerland, a plant-based nutrition business, Acts of Kindness Campaign, a summer caravan learning journey - participants were fully engaged in creating a transformative culture together.



The EDE in Glarisegg each year adds on an extra fifth week named “Growing Together Days” with the intention of connecting old and new family members. This year a total of 35 alumni returned to Glarisegg to unite, exchange, form project connections and celebrate life together. New ideas were born and strong bonds formed, planning for a follow up summer gathering of this kind has started.

Organising and Assistant team



The organising team (also lovingly called “The three witches”) from left to right: Elisabeth Schrag, Sonja-Vera Schmitt and Jashana Kippert.

Elisabeth Schrag

Elisabeth loves humans and life and supports as Psycho-, Biodynamic Craniosacral-therapist, with Group- dynamic, Movement Medicine, Middle earth medicine way and Shamanic Trance dance work wounded souls to find healing, stillness and their purpose of life.

Sonja-Vera Schmid

As a project mother of Glarisegg, Sonja-Vera got to be an entrepreneur and a process moderator. As musician, singer, flutist and dancer she is connected to holistic ways of creating an ecovillage. Her daily meditation is my foundation to amplify her connection to different truths.

Jashana Kippert

A lover of learning, Jashana has degrees in Environmental Science, Anthropology, a Masters in Social Ecology and Phd. in Philosophy. In her twenties, she was involved as an activist in attempting to stop the war in Guatemala. That struggle brought her to the alternative community movement with a commitment to become part of the ‘solution’.



The organisers were supported by 7 assistants, all EDE Glarisegg Alumnis from the years 2016, 2017 and 2018, who helped with kitchen management as well as administrative tasks and facilitation. From left to right: Manuel, Katharina, Jasmijn, Tobias, Balz, Sonja-Vera, Elisabeth, Jashana, Teodora, and Roos.

Participants

We welcomed a total number of 55 participants from 21 different countries; Spain, Germany, Australia, Romania, Ireland, England, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Hungary, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, France, Switzerland, Austria, Hungarian, Netherlands, Italy, Malawi, Eritrea, Egypt and Brasil. The youngest participant was 20 years old, and the oldest participant 48 years old. Similar to the year before, nearly two thirds of participants were female. Participants either joined through friends, Facebook advertising, the Gaia Education website or the website of Schloss Glarisegg. Some came from a more corporate and urban background, some had community and activist experience, some were coming from an academic background. With this diversity in age, nationality and background we gathered and formed our temporary community in Switzerland.

Course rhythms

until 8:00	Optional morning practice
08:00 - 09:00	Breakfast
9:30 - 10:00	Morning circle with community members
10:00 - 13:00	Morning session
13:00 - 15:00	Lunch break
15:00 - 17:00	Afternoon session
18:00 - 20:00	Dinner break
20:00 - 22:00	Evening session
After 22:00	Free evening program

Optional morning practice

This was filled in by participants and sometimes consisted of different kinds of yoga, Qi Gong, Thai Chi, free dancing, and a small committed group of the “Gefroerli Club” started their day with the Wim Hof breathing method followed with a swim in the cold Lake of Constance.

Session times

The total average session time per day would be about 8 hours of session per day, keeping into account break times. On days on which evening slots were dedicated to home groups or other extracurricular activities, the total session time would add up to 5 hours. The four dimensions were combined and so in any one day participants could be in sessions on ecology, economy, social or worldview.

Working Groups

Each day, participant groups were responsible for cooking and dishwashing in the mealtimes. The kitchen friends team designed a special ‘kitchen game world’, whose main goal it was to put into practice the paradigm shift from competition to collaboration in the daily common work experience. Each group had a focaliser with the responsibility to gather people and focus them around the task. Working times were opened by doing a check in and intention setting, and closed by a short reflection on the experience. Over time, participant groups got more responsible and independent and were hence less reliant on the kitchen friends’ support.



Evening program

After the evening session the seminar spaces were free for participants to organise themselves in dancing, play fighting sessions, movies, and music jams.

Our weekly rhythm

Cleaning parties



To keep spaces tidy and clean the so called 'Snowwhites and the Dwarf' working group initiated a weekly 1,5 hour Cleaning Party, in which all participants collaborated in cleaning the shared spaces as the Castle, Kitchen, Seminar Center and Guest House. This turned out to be a very effective and enjoyable way to organise ourselves.

Sundays

Sundays offered free time for participants and we scheduled a morning circle and brunch at 10:00, in which also the Glarisegg Community members took part. Most Sundays, participants offered a wide array of activities themselves, based on their individual talents and knowledge that we had previously collected on our skill-sharing board: Language Exchange, Workshops in Human Design, Biomimicry, or Lucid Dreaming, Permaculture, Playfight, Women and Men Circles, Musical Instruments, Nature Walks, and many more. One Sunday a visit to "Innana Family Community" was organised. Participants were fascinated and inspired to experience a real-life example of community life that has its roots in the EDE Glarisegg.

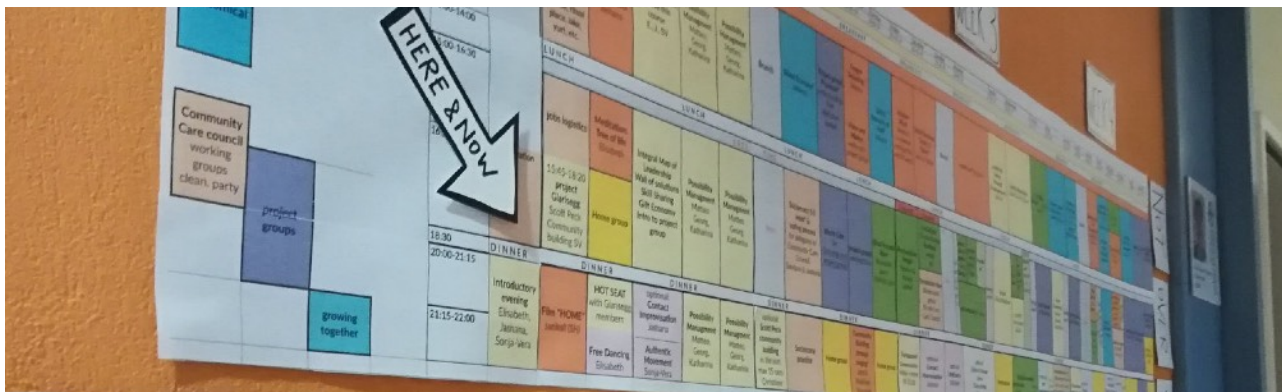
Homegroups

We regularly gathered in three homegroups, each held by one of the witches. This particular smaller setting (Forum, cuddling meeting, sharing circle, games,...) allowed us to connect and share about our experience in a deeper way.



Highlights of each dimension

In the four week EDE the curriculum was designed to cover all four dimensions in a blended way, so topics around social, economical, ecological and worldview were introduced from the beginning and put into practice within the project groups (Design Dimension).



Social Dimension

Within the social dimension we covered Sociocracy 3.0, Possibility Management, Scott Peck community building, Forum method, Deep Democracy, Transparent Communication and Conflict Resolution. We also learned about leadership, communication skills, and deep listening.



Economic Dimension

In the economic dimension we touched on the big topic of the global economy, the global economy of food, the Economy of the Common Good, Reinventing Organisations, Empowered Fundraising as well as personal relationship with money and privilege. For the more personal and project toolkit skills were shared around entrepreneurship, fundraising and business models. Newly introduced was a session on comparing existing communities economies.



Ecological Dimension

The ecological dimension consisted of Permaculture principles and design methodology, self-sufficiency and experiences with eco village design. Previous EDE participant Claudio Beretta introduced us to his PhD research on food waste in Switzerland. We also learned about global chocolate production, its impact on the environment and solutions for more sustainable cacao production.



Worldview Dimension

In the Worldview dimension we looked at Spiral Dynamics, Dragon Dreaming and alternative healthcare. Several rituals as well as community building through singing were held over time. Sweatlodges, men and women circles, and men and women reconciliation were offered. Practical Sessions of instrument building and experimenting with sound and silence were held in the “Klangwerk” Studio,. A session named “Us and Them” opened extremely valuable new insights on the dynamics between the global north and south.



Design Dimension

To kickstart the design projects we hosted a morning of project presentations in which everyone was invited to share their dream project, whether only a seed of a dream, or already active. We had nearly 20 project presentations. In the afternoon we followed up with World Café to help participants choose. They finally created 10 project groups and worked on applying all the lessons learnt throughout the four weeks. A short overview of each project group follows:



La Maison d'Etre

“We want to live communally and harmoniously on a shared land in nature, designed in a way to regenerate life in all forms. We aim at self-sufficiency and want to share and spread the joy of growing together.”

Emilien, Julia, Mariam, Loic, Buket, Guigui, Christoph and Nada



The EDE Caravan 2019



“Our moving learning community that will explore possible ways of living, authentic communication and many other learning fields.”

Ellen, David, Davis, Marcel, Ronja, André, Marian

— Visit the Website —

The Malawian Dream

“The Malawian Dream is a regenerative learning center that equips young people with the knowledge and skills to restore and revive their sense of self, communities, culture, and ecosystems.”

Kate, Renate, Chifundo, Peter, Anja, Desirée



Löwekost



LÖWEKOST

by Andrea, Alina,
Marielle, Petra and
Leon

“Löwekost developed out of the already existing project Löwebrot and is a brand that stands for local, seasonal and organic foods, based in Basel, CH.”

— Visit the Website —

Social Agriculture

“We are a project of Integration and Education Center in Lugano, CH. The starting idea behind this project is to create a community that is connected through farming. Giving importance to agricultural education through social exchange, integration of diversity and guarantee of an ecological and sustainable approach of land management.”



Lizzie, Mélanie, Ema, Elin, Philipp,
and Anjali



Out of the Box Collective



Mara, Sterre, Mira, Anne Sofie, Noah, Vivi and Romea

— Visit the Facebook Page —

“Our vision is to create a movement that inspires people to connect and transform mindsets through sharing small creative acts. From leaving poetry on trains to setting up a pop-up skillshare, we believe that by introducing the unusual into the usual transformation can slowly begin. “

Film-making for a transformative culture / La Grande Coloc



“**La Grande Coloc**” extended project made a movie on the EDE experience and how to transform the way we relate to ourselves, others and nature to heal our culture of separation. The full documentary will be released in April.

— Watch the Trailer —

Lou, Diego, Kira and Judith

Entering the seminar center during the last two course days could have been compared to entering a beehive: 55 participants were busy preparing for their presentations, creating videos and finalising their project reports throughout the night. A whole day of project, which followed, gave insight into each of the groups work and space to celebrate each others achievements.

Key trends from the survey

While we already collected very valuable feedback during the EDE, The Gaia Education survey gave us some great insights on participants experiences.

The majority of participants stated that the course met their expectations, was very well organised and they would recommend it to others.

Particular **strengths** that were mentioned:

- "The focus on transformative culture."
- "The safe container to go through emotional processes."
- "Methods to strengthen and explore group dynamics."
- "The location, meeting the people and becoming part of an amazing community and network."
- "Practical community building. A number of communication tools. Being involved in the maintenance of the spaces, the cooking, ordering food, organisation of some sessions."
- "That we lived as a community for a month. The organisational team and the experience and knowledge they have."

Ideas for **improvement** that were stated:

- "More inputs / better overview over ecological and economic crisis and ways out of it."
- "It would be useful to explore more deeply the ecological and economic strands as this was lost due to the strength of the social component."
- "More practical, outdoors sessions."
- "More free time to connect in the group."

Participants sensed the social and worldview dimensions very strongly represented, while many wish for more content in the economic and ecological part. This will certainly be taken into account for the course design of the coming years.

Overall **gratitude** that was shared:

"Thank you to everybody who is making the EDE Glarisegg happen, this experience is beyond words, my heart found its way back home and my intimacy with life is more beautiful everyday!"

"I still feel this course very fresh and whilst I feel how transformative it has been for me, I sense the full effects will unfold over the coming weeks or months. I'm really so happy for having had the privilege and opportunity to take part. Thank you!"

“My deep gratitude for this huge gift!!! It was really an incredible journey that brought me so many insights about myself, the people around me and the world. Thank you a thousand times...”

Internal team feedback

Within the organising team of this year’s EDE, the fourth edition, there was a big contentment about the easy flow of holding the course together “because we already know, what we are doing and which position we have in the whole.” The assistants were of great support and the team as a whole shared beautiful dynamics over the five weeks.

Future outlook

As we shared incredible joy and love on the last day of our “Growing Together Days”, there was also the sadness of having to separate after this very intense time. Luckily it won’t be too long until we continue creating more magic together and there is already a set of dates for us to join forces again:

- **GEN Conference Italy**, July 2019
- **EDE Caravan 2019**, July/August 2019
- **Dragon Seed Camp** (EDE Skill-Sharing Gathering), August 2019
- EDE New Years Gathering, December 2019
- **EDE Glarisegg 2020**, 20th January - 22nd February

“Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing.” Arundhati Roy

