

GEN EUROPE 2015

Ecovillages & Communities | Collective projects | Sustainable initiatives

Hildur Jackson

GEN Mother - Hildur Jackson passed on after the GEN +20 Summit. All the GEN Regions shared the loss of such a great woman, a visionary who never lost her incredible energy and smile.

refuGEN

Our organization has made a giant step to fulfill a common vision, expressed by Hildur herself at the closing session of the GEN +20 Summit: to be part of the solution on the refugees issues in the mediterranean. Read more about it and collaborate with us...

New members.

GEN Europe has 5 new full members, 10 new aspiring members and two new National Networks wishing to join us!!!!

Read more about them at the end of this issue



Bienvenidas, Bienvenus, Welcome...

GEN Europe - the year 2015 has been challenging and full of surprises: our financial situation has not been a positive one and after supporting the GEN+20 Summit it was clear that we were facing bankruptcy. Happily, GEN Regions solidarity solved the problem with a 10.000 euros gift.

We also had many other positive happenings in our network: our headquarters moved to Spain, we elected a new Council and new Staff, we celebrated the GEN+20 Summit in Findhorn, we participated at COP21 and launched the "RefuGEN" initiative, bringing assistance to refugees in the mediterranean. Some of these successful stories are described in this special annual newsletter.



WHY?

GENEurope started off in 1996 in Germany at Lebensgarten, later moving to Torri Superiore in Italy. Then the office returned to ZEGG, in Germany, where our current German NGO was founded in 2003. From 2007, the legal seat and headquarters was transferred to Sieben Linden in Germany. We just moved our legal seat to ZEGG once again, where our administration has been for the past few years.

Since 2003, we have always had more than one office: Findhorn, with Jonathan Dawson, functioned as an outreach office; which was actually my first personal contact with GEN in 2007. This started a tradition that has continued, with a minimal presence in Damanhur to complement the Sieben Linden main office. Findhorn eventually replaced Damanhur a few years ago and this second outreach office grew into GEN International's headquarters.

In 2014, in conjunction with the resignation of Ulrike Schimmel in Sieben Linden, it was time to consider new locations. For me, as Advisor and former Council Member, it was clear that we needed to create a presence outside the three countries that always hosted GENEUROPE: Germany, Italy and the UK.

Finally, Arterra Bizimodu, a new, but dynamic, community in Navarra region which fit the criteria was selected and approved by GEN Europe General Assembly last summer."

Robert Hall (GEN Europe's President)

WHY a Network of Ecovillages? Here are some insights from our members:

Thomas Heuser (Council member)

"GEN gives the ecovillage movement a voice. As an individual community we can only act locally but GEN is building a network of networks including the permaculture movement, transition towns, communities and more. It unifies many levels of local solutions in a clear way for governments to see their potential impact. Living in community is one solution – what everyone in these networks has in common is the goal to look at sustainable ways of living and implement them in life."

Ina Meyer (former GEN EU staff):

"Imagine if each country had a ministry for sustainability, all universities could have an outside campus in an ecovillage. In ZEGG, we are starting to cooperate with schools and universities to bring the heart to climate science, bridging the connection between brain and heart in education! And then there is peacemaking – really experiencing the difference in attitude of living in cooperation instead of competition. There's so much potential for the next 20 years."

Achim Ecker (ZEGG)

"Up to 1995 we were mainly connected to communities on a German speaking level. But then we grew into an international family of ecovillages. At first the definition of an ecovillage was a big concern for me. If you call it an ecovillage does it still stay a community? What is the spirit? Back then I believed that only „intentional communities“ could change the world. Today I feel like anybody who wants to work towards transition is doing great."



WORKING WITH AUTHORITIES



Their production is very wide, potatoes, tomatoes, salads, aromatic herbs, beans, onions, garlic, Jerusalem artichokes and many other vegetables. The orchard offers a nice variety of summer and autumn fruits, and even a beautiful avocado tree. In the small henhouse, born as the initiative of a subgroup that shares the eggs in an organized way, live twenty chickens.



"The product is distributed in a "proto-socialist way": those who work, eat! We have three days of collective work per week plus one Sunday a month, all people present share the tasks, and at the end of the day share the harvest. There was an initial turnover of members, but all the founders are still participating. We supported the birth of other similar groups in other towns, as Vallecrosia and Sanremo. "



"In its 26 years, the Ecovillage Torri Superiore, in western Liguria, Italy, has always been committed to building positive relationships with the local communities."

Tells **Lucilla Borio**, founder and former GEN-Europe secretary: "The EU program "The Transition Journey, Sustainability to Touch" (2009/2011), conducted with four GEN-Europe ecovillage partners, encouraged us to look for new ideas and relationships with those who live near us. We organized a series of actions to involve the inhabitants of the town of Ventimiglia in sustainability related projects: courses, conferences, debates and some very lively evenings to meet each other and discuss important issues with the local residents."

In summer 2010, in one of these evenings the Ortinsieme (Gardening together) project was born. Debora Roncari proposed to the group "Recovery of fallow land and 0 km production" to convert some of her father's rose greenhouses, uncultivated for 11 years, into organic gardens to share with other people willing to get their hands dirty. The global market has killed the local, traditional flower production, and the "Riviera dei fiori" is now left with countless empty, rundown greenhouses scattered all over its beautiful landscape. Debora was joined by Giorgio, Gianni, Sisto, Daniela and many others, and they created the Ortinsieme Association, now involving 42 members, who also started the local food coop (60 families). One of the participants is the "senior member" Francesco, 87, who looks after the gardens with great love and has learnt to work collectively. The organically grown land is 1200 square meters divided in three greenhouses, plus a patch of land used as orchard and vegetable garden for permaculture "experiments".

The collaboration between Torri Superiore, Ortinsieme and other agricultural realities and local firms, united by the principles of sustainability and social responsibility, continues with the creation of the Network of Companies "Terre di Confine" (Borderlands), focused on the Val Bevera - Val Roya Bioregion. The first practical project will be the construction of a pilot aquaculture plant in large unused greenhouses, for the production of fish and natural fertilizers. The aim is grow more organic vegetables and that can be sold both to the Ecovillage and to the school canteens.

Giorgio concludes: "The most important added value is working together, at the beginning I knew no one and now I'm part of a fantastic group. Farming is an evolutionary path, we grow our vegetables as we grow ourselves. And our call is: Hasta la chicoria siempre! "

refuGEN

the second step



The island of Lesbos knows very well what does it mean to be a refugee, because they also have been refugees 2-3 generations ago. The local people try to support and help the refugees, who come to the island. They show solidarity and try to help. Some people live at the beach, watching the sea for the boats.



An warm human welcome is of great importance. The volunteers take care of fine things, like, for example, to stay calm, not to overreact when they see an overloaded boat coming, or to try to give to the people choices, so that they can gain again the feeling that they have the control of their lives.



“Together we aim to provide help on the ground in Greece and take responsibility for an issue that affects us all.”

The flow of refugees from war-torn areas continues and crossing into the EU is a dangerous risk many men, women and children feel forced to take to survive. The Greek Islands and especially the island of Lesbos is the main entry point where many arrive in need of help; others do not survive the crossing. As the colder winter comes, the situation will become even worse. As ecovillages we stand for social justice and a humane world where people should not be hindered to seek their legal right to asylum in the EU.

refuGEN is now ready to act. Our plan is to field a mission to the small city of Mytilini on the Greek island of Lesbos. We have already been there through our Team Member Anna of Skala and made connections with the local NGOs, municipality and university. Our mission will work seamlessly with local efforts and we aim to strengthen local capacities in Mytilini to utilise local residents and international volunteers to meet the needs of distressed refugees arriving, especially those who have lost family members, needed medical care and remain on Lesbos a longer period. We are working with the local community to arrange our accommodations and identify the greatest need for refuGEN to fill.

The refuGEN mission started its briefing in Greece 20-23 Dec and was on location in Lesbos before 24 Dec. Both Anna, from the ecovillage la Skala and Robert Hall (President of GEN Europe) were part of the first group of refuGEN volunteers on location before Christmas.

We now need your help. We need volunteers, financial support and materials. Also helping us to spread this initiative by posting it in your webs, and social media.

Follow us on the address
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/553344351495976/>

Robert Hall (GEN EU President)

Terra Preta

regenerating the earth



Terra preta is a type of very dark, fertile anthropogenic soil first found in the Amazon Basin and now almost everywhere. Terra preta owes its name to its very high charcoal content, and was indeed made by adding a mixture of charcoal, bone, and manure to the otherwise relatively infertile Amazonian soil over many years.



It is important to note that the fresh charcoal must first be "charged" before it can function as a biotope. This is overcome by soaking the charcoal for 2 to 4 weeks in any liquid nutrient like urine or plant tea.



The goal is to help soil life to regenerate. To have perfect soil, all ingredients should go through the intestinal system of a earthworm. So Biochar particles should be small enough.

Achim Ecker shares how ZEGG is working with the Terra Preta .

In **ZEGG**, we started setting up places to urinate into barrels with organic matter and biochar outside the houses in summer and during our camps. A lot of men and some women used them. It was a great success in raising consciousness for our seminar guests. In the beginning we only had a little biochar from sweat lodges and some camp fires, so we added a lot of woodchips. Smell occurred as we could not renew the contents of the pee places fast enough, with so many people using them during our big events with up to 400 participants last year! Smell is also a sign for decomposition and thus the loss of Nitrogen exactly what we wanted to avoid. When we still did not have a solution of how to produce biochar we started buying expensive sustainable biochar and had it transported to us. Meanwhile, I learned from an article from Ithaca Institute how to produce biochar from brush in a cone like earth hole.

To date, we collect the urine in food safe blue 60 lt. barrels filled with a mix of biochar and leaf compost to get the lactoacid soil bacteria etc. They can be carried by two people and when full they are sealed with the lid for anaerobic fermentation for four weeks. Neither in the phase of being used nor during the fermentation any smell appears. The barrels are great in size for men to pee in. For women they can be fitted with a movable toilet seat and dug into the ground for the right height. Indoors, we are in the process of installing 10 waterless urinals and urine collection facilities in basements and outside the houses in manholes. The urine will be pumped out into a container on a truck and used to fertilize the compost, to charge biochar, or as quenching water for the Kontiki kiln.

To charge the biochar it is best to let it soak in the barrels for anaerobic fermentation for 4 weeks (depending on temperature). We also started to make Bokashi from kitchen waste which we ram into the 60 ltr barrels for anaerobic lactoacid fermentation. In this way we don't lose as much of the nutrients as in a normal aerobic compost. Terra Preta is not just a fertilizer, it builds permanent fertile soil.

see the complete article at
<http://sites.ecovillage.org/de/node/5610>

BIOGAS

The future is now!



The second Biodigester, built at Arterra during our first public workshop.



Insulating the Biodigester with straw bales to preserve inner temperatures.



The Biogas Wave: During the last GEN Europe conference in ZEGG, T.H Culhane, BioGas expert, offered to equip ecovillages with expertise on how to build biogas digesters.

Arterra Bizimodu attended the THC's Biogas workshop in Tamera last spring. Here are the results:

After experiencing a couple of months with the first bio-digester in **Arterra Bizimodu**, we were concerned over the arrival of low temperatures in winter and how would that affect the bacteriological process it develops inside. In the absence of a definitive location for our biodigesters - we have another prepared and a third on the waiting list - we decided to isolate it temporarily, thus we have on asset in its present location since its weight of more than half a ton makes transport difficult once filled.

To avoid the digester getting frozen and wet, a simple bio isolation was performed with pallets and straw bales wrapped in plastic film like such that used for wrapping luggage at airports as a provisional replacement of clay and lime plaster. It was quite an intervention in time because immediately afterwards came two days in which the temperatures dropped sharply to 0 degrees! But to our surprise, our small bio-digester continued gas production as normal! On October 23, we could finally faithfully record the first indoor temperatures of 12 to 13.4 degrees with our new thermometer (that was somewhat surprising because the bacteria psychrophilicas work optimally from 15 degrees and our production of biogas was close enough to normal (48 hours to produce 1m3 of gas).

That same day we decided to heat the mixture of shredded kitchen scraps up to 40 degrees, as it was recommended by the people in Tamera (www.tamera.org) we called for advice as the digester had taken four days to produce one cubic meter of gas! With that simple action, temperatures in the tank bottom finally increased to 16 degrees, but heating up the mixture gradually not to affect the stability of the bacteria. Thanks to the straw ball isolation temperature can be kept constant at 16 degrees. So we can say that our bacteria are working with stability; at first it seemed that everything developed normally.

Follow the BioGas news trough www.arterrabizimodu.org

Scaling up our models



Can you help us achieve the Formula 1 status on energy innovation?

We want to build a Micro Smart Grid in Ecovillage Boekel. That means every house is connected to the other houses and each house has a smart battery. When we use energy, every battery in the ecovillage is emptied before we buy energy from the net and when the sun shines, all batteries are filled before energy goes back to the net. This is Jeremy Rifkin's vision of future energy production and distribution (your excess energy is used by your neighbour). It's also a perfect testing ground for innovative small scale energy production systems and that's one of the things that makes us interesting for the Dutch government and sustainable investors. With this grid we can use a diversity of energy production systems, and we are looking for innovative devices we can connect. If you know of such inventions we can show in our ecovillage, please let us know. We need them to achieve the Formula 1 status.

Learn more about this article?

Look at www.ecovillageboekel.nl/

Hurdal Ecovillage Inspires Regional Transformation in Norway

Attaining sustainability is achieved through change at the local level. 70% of energy use and greenhouse gas emissions come from cities so re-thinking how we organise our cities, towns and villages is a necessary first step in the right direction. One GEN Europe member, **Hurdal** Ecovillage in Norway is taking a catalytic role in transforming its surrounding region. As Norway's first ecovillage, the ecovillage was recently able to build local support from all political parties to get the Hurdal municipality to adopt an ambitious "Plus Community 2025" plan on 10 September 2014 to transition the whole municipality towards sustainability. The plan envisions an investment of 4.4 billion NOK on green housing in the area, including the ecovillage. The Sustainable Valley Festival is meant to inspire from words and vision to concrete action. One of the key target participants are Norwegian municipalities, along with researchers, business leaders and civil society. The festival hopes its workshops will facilitate municipalities in learning from the ecovillages each other. It will offer SVIFT – Sustainable Valley Inspirational Festival Talks, showcasing best practice. A keynote speech from Angela Merkel is planned to come after the opening with Prime Minister Erna Solberg. Other international speakers expected to take part are Thomas Piketty and Gro Harlem

And in Netherlands, the government approaches Ecovillage Boekel as well.

"The Dutch government realises we are shifting towards a sustainable society. Not every employee, I have to admit, but some do. Last year many have been drawn to Ecovillage Boekel. We now have projects with three different Dutch ministries and not because we seek them out, they call us!" – says one inhabitant. The most interesting project is an Educational Circle 'Ecovillages make The Netherlands more sustainable'. Three Dutch ecovillages together with ministries, sustainable organisations, regional and local governments gather to explore the value of ecovillages for the transition to a sustainable society. "And it's working! Our group of 8 organisations supporting Ecovillage Boekel has started 15 actions to support our ecovillage. Not because we asked, but because they wanted! I can see the principle of "All is one" in these projects as these organisations want to support the ecovillage, because they realise we can help them reach their goals by being scouts for the sustainable future. Everything is connected".

GREEN PHOENIX

GEN's Service Station.



Authentic relationships, including gender, generations, sexuality, love, balance between individuality and community, the creation of containers and tools enabling trust, intimacy and deep exchange, ways for elders and youth to join in their co-creative endeavours...How, in our own community, do we deal with those issues ?

Leadership, an exploration of what leadership means in our times and a sharing of how it is experienced in the different communities. How a community keeps clear and holds its essential values in the midst of change or when a founder passes? How leaders or founders can best prepare the way for the continuation?...

North South Cooperation, including migration, refugees, training and partnerships. How to establish partnerships, nourish true dialogues, stay in true partnership and transcend the heavy North-South polarity. What should partnerships cover and include on the basis of the analysis of the already existing ones and the results they deliver?

Global / local exchange network, including internal trade among ecovillages and trusted partners, ecological entrepreneurship, shift to needs-driven economies, creation of a directory of needs among communities, definition of a unit of account based on existing hospitality agreements, bank project and other financial instruments. And of course, education exchange and the eventual creation of a GEN University and a curatorium-approval system.



“The “think tank” of GEN-EUROPE

« We are all refugees, migrating from one Earth to a new Earth » said someone during the harvesting of a silent meditative walk in the rich and magical woody mountains surrounding the **Schweibenalp**, Center for Unity. It was during the Green Phoenix congress, initiated 5 years ago by the founder of Schweibenalp, Dr. Sundar Robert Dreyfus. This was the 6th edition of the congress that each year in autumn, brings together representatives of experiential models for the future in several areas such as education, economy, the art of living together, creating consciousness, ecology and deep ecology.

Thirty participants, all of them coming from communities, met in conversation circles and working groups, as well as in « forum » which created a deep palpable feeling of community within the group, nourished by Leila and Momo's excellent facilitation. A very high quality working meeting !

The topics brought about for deep exchange were divided and spread along the 3 ½ days. A whole day was devoted to the refugees issue and lead to the organization of a direct action, immediate, as you probably already know through the refuGEN letter, circulating among our communities. Medium and long term actions were also studied and several Through partnering with refugee groups and local, national and international stakeholders, we have the opportunity to respond to this humanitarian crisis in ways that can help manifest the positive changes we all wish to see in the world.

Future of Green Phoenix. Both systems of the previous years with the interventions of experts and this year edition, more intimate and internal, have been deeply appreciated. It has been decided that the next Green Phoenix will be held on Schweibenalp between the 28/9 - 2/10/2016. GEN is clearly and deeply interested in integrating the Green Phoenix as a tool, as a thinktank and Green Phoenix defines itself as a Service Station in support of GEN. Although the atmosphere created altogether by the participants to the congress, Schweibenalp community, its environment and its members was sweet, nourishing, almost silky, a big step has been taken in action. A thorough work has been done. This year Green Phoenix is a model of how the feminine and the masculine can meet harmoniously and efficiently in an explosion of coherent creativity. To be followed....

Rosalie Poskin, GEN Europe Council member.

NEW ROOTS

embracing refugees in an ecovillage



"Today we have 3 women and 5 men from Somalia, Ethiopia, Irak, Syria, Afghanistan and Iran visiting. Some have been in Denmark for months or years, others have just arrived last week. We gather around the fire and begin our day in nature, with the New Roots project."



"Today we go to the forest to pick plums for the production of a nice jam we will have with bread for lunch. Zahra is a bit nervous at first and asks if we have lions in Denmark. We assure everyone that there are no lions in Denmark and she proceeds, relieved. Mozafar only has his left hand, as he lost the right one in the war against Saddam Hussein. Due to this disability it is often hard for him to work psychically in the field, but he can pick plums just as everyone else."

"The feedback we get from the participants is mostly to be found in their warm hugs when they greet us, in their light in their eyes when seeing and meeting their needs during the day. But also on Facebook, when they send us photos, loving messages and share their memories from days spent here."

A nature therapy school for asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants in Hallingelille, Denmark.

Lead by 2 members of the community, Lotta and Sasja, the purpose is to support the participants towards a more sustainable life; physically, emotionally, socially and practically.

The group from the nearby Asylum Centre comes twice a week for 4 hours. During those hours we may work in the field, cook from the crops and enjoy a meal, go for walks in the forest or meet and talk to other members of **Hallingelille**. We spend as much time outdoors as possible. Nature has a tremendous healing effect and is a tranquilizer to anyone, but especially to people who have lived through traumatic experiences, like many of our participants. They have all fled from their home countries, crossed land and sea in dangerous ways, left family members behind hoping for a safe life and a better tomorrow. Many of them have troubles sleeping at night, many of them seem to lack meaning in their lives and often they feel rootless, insecure and alone.

In general, an ecovillage is the perfect frame for offering nature experiences and a feeling of community to refugees. It's a safe environment, it's a caring community and it offers so much inspiration, new contacts, learning and healing possibilities. Our contact person at Red Cross is a big sympathizer of the project. He drives the group here in the morning and picks them up again in the afternoon, noticing the changes in their mood and energy. He experiences how even the most vulnerable people will still get up in the morning to join the day in the ecovillage. They do not want to miss their days out of the centre. The local municipalities have to find ways to cater for the refugees, how to integrate them...Therefore, see this as an invitation for everyone who would take upon themselves such a project to conceptualize it and promote it to the municipalities and other stakeholders in charge. Maybe they just needed this good idea to be shared with them, for something to start. It is not so complicated.

In Denmark we have refugee camps spread all over the country - just as we have ecovillages spread out in most of the country. Imagine if all these ecovillages would receive groups of refugees and share time, work and community with them? Imagine if all ecovillages in Europe did that. It would seem quite natural, wouldn't it - that ecovillages, based on all what we stand for, include our newcomers in the communities we share?

www.nyerodder.dk

COP21

“When astrologists do weather forecasting”



“Looking at politicians in Paris, I didn't see them coming up with their ideas and decisions. I saw, rather, how they were expressing our ideas and decisions, they were beginning to take them seriously - on the top political level. I learned long ago that politicians don't create power, they just follow it. They are not sails, they are

“It is difficult to foresee what the state of the world will be in the next decades. Go back ten or twenty years and read what scientist predicted about the present day. Things are constantly changing, it is impossible to know what the world will be like in 2050.”



During the COP21, GEN Europe shared a stand with other likeminded organizations.

A personal insight of what happened at the world event by Nara Petrović.

I was in Paris for 10 days on **COP21** and I looked at the unfolding of the negotiations closely. I watched the film *La Belle Verte* the day prior to going to Paris just to open the kind of mindset that would allow me to scrutinise everything as if I never heard the climate change lingo before. From that perspective the phrases were quirky. Wherever I went, whatever I read on this subject, was revolving around platitudes: one degree, two degrees, three degrees, fossil fuels, global warming, zero carbon, peak emissions, carbon offsetting, carbon depositing... I felt like a ten year old on a lecture on quantum physics.

Then I got on the bus and stood close to the driver, noticing on the speedometer that in the last few hours it travelled with the average speed of 11 km/h, with the average fuel consumption of 65 l per 100 km. For the majority of time the engine was idling at traffic lights, in traffic jams, waiting for passengers ... I wondered what the big sign “hybride” printed on the outside of the bus actually meant? Globally sitting in place while the engine is running we cumulatively waste 10 billion gallons of gasoline each year. Alissa Walker put it so well: “Let's have a moment of silence for all those who are stuck in traffic on their way to the gym to ride stationary bicycles.”

When the climate agreement was finally reached in Paris, when media reported and the world cheered, I looked carefully around. Nothing had changed, really. Our ship is still moving forward, even gaining speed! Environmental efforts are like blowing in the wind. To me COP21 climate agreement is like weather forecast drafted by astrologists, imagining the reality of their environment, now and in the years to come.

When I finally returned to my community in Slovenia, I had to notice we are not immune to the insanities of the world. Still, I could see how our small steps towards meaningful changes, when added up, are not small any more. We don't need to do anything special, we just need to stand firmly in our own “slow position” and the global system will feel that. When many, many people join together in slowing down, that will be noticed.

We'll have to learn to unify the fabric of our networks, to attach it to the existing “Capitalitanic” as it is, to curve our fabric and align it so as to form a huge sail. I am not talking about a gigantic sail on the proportionally gigantic ship. I am talking about millions of small sails perfectly aligned, taking the small rescuing boats away from the giga-ship and using its momentum and the waves, spreading from the ship, for propulsion towards the future that makes sense. We can't halt the momentum of our civilization, but if we are smart we can use it for the common good. The time is ripe!

It is nice to wait for New Year 2016, because we know it will come. The promises it brings should stir optimism. I don't know about 2100, though. I am not questioning the year, I am questioning us, our presence. Will we be there to greet it? As someone once said: “It is not hard to wait. It is hard when there is nobody there waiting.”

GEN FRANCE?



*The Hummingbirds Movement (<http://www.colibris-lemouvement.org>) was founded by Pierre Rabhi in 2006. Its mission is to inspire, connect, support people and groups aspiring to a personal and societal transformation.

The Movement has 15 employees and more than 60 local groups. 4,000 people contribute each month by donating a few euros.

The governance within the movement is inspired by sociocracy. Representatives of various colleges (employees, contributors, partners ...) meet regularly.



Photo: Françoise Janin,

Françoise Janin, from “Hameaux des Buis” community in France, shares what’s going on in her country.

*“What happened in **France** during this ending year ? A lot of nourishing initiatives, openness and a new scenario!*

First, in January there was a meeting between the Hummingbirds Movement and the Oasis Network (that was a member of GEN during some years). They decided to fusion and be one sole movement, giving themselves a chance to be more efficient and visible, and develop their connection to the land, green building, openness to the world, participatory governance and shared practices.*

In June, 13 new projects were chosen to be supported, in meetings and seminars. Support is personalized : it can be training in permaculture, green building, governance, CNV, legal and financial structuring ...

Then , in September, a special issue by Kaizen magazine was edited, an can be consulted : <http://www.kaizen-magazine.com/produit/numero-special-oasis-un-nouveau-mode-de-vie/> . It gives insights on living and/or working together in 100 existing Oasis. It includes articles designed to educate local officials about the benefits of the presence of an Oasis on their territory, the answers they give to basic needs (such as local food production and organic quality).

In October, a special «Forum Humminbirds /Oasis» event took place in « l’Arche de St Antoine » (a full member of GEN Europe) : during 2 days, nearly 100 people attended workshops (NVC, shared governance, basis of permaculture, networking, IT....), and shared their experiences and questions.

After this campaign, the Movement has the project to move towards the implementation of free online courses (MOOC : massive open online courses) to share and disseminate experiences.”

ON GOING PROJECTS



The partner's delegates at a work session in Dulcamara, Italy.



The SCIPP team having a beach working session close to Torri Superiori in Italy.



Here are some of the current transnational projects where you could participate:

Youth Leader:

Erasmus+ Key Action 2 Strategic Partnership for Youth.
Project Name: Youth-led Societal Innovation for Resilience, ySI4R

A free and multilingual on-line training course aimed to help youth workers to develop inspiring dynamics to include their youngsters in the journey towards sustainability.

7 partners: Suderbyn (Sweden), Arterra (Spain), RIVE (Italy), GEN Europe (Germany), CDI Macedonia, GEN International, Slovenia.

They need volunteers for translations into the different languages. Contact: gabriela.andreevska@gmail.com

SCIPP: "Sustainable Community Incubator Partnership Program"

The two-year Erasmus+ funded project will design a support framework for the different phases of the Ecovillages Incubator focusing in the development of community-led projects and their associated challenges.

21 representatives from nine European National Ecovillage Networks met in Torri Superiore, Italy, from October 31 to November 4, to begin designing such program for sustainable community-led initiatives.

Follow the project unfolding through the temporary website.

<http://www.scipp.nl>

FAMILY NEWS



Amalurra Bilbao



Bulgary Alive!



*During 2015, GEN Europe has grown.
Read about the new members.*

Full Membership

In the year 2015, three ecovillages have been acknowledged by the GEN-Europe council as full members. These five ecovillages are:

- 1 Ananda Gaorii (Denmark)
- 2 Amalurra (Spain)
- 3 Charlottendal (Sweden)
- 4 Ecodorp Bergen (The Netherlands)
- 5 Norske Økosamfunn Forening (Norway)

Aspiring Membership

Ten ecovillages have applied for membership at GEN-Europe:

- 1 Andelssamfundet I Hjortshoj (Denmark)
- 2 Terra Sylvestris (Greece)
- 3 Gorsko Kosovo (Bulgaria)
- 4 Comunita di Etica Vivente (Italy)
- 5 Hallingelille (Denmark)
- 6 RUPA (Slovenia)
- 7 Gemeinschaft Sulzbrunn (Austria)
- 8 Permaldeia (Portugal)
- 9 Nea Guinea - School of the Earth (Greece)
- 10 Die Gemeinschaftsstifter (Germany)

National Networks

In the year 2015 the following National Networks have applied for membership at GEN-Europe:

1. Bulgarian Ecovillage Network (Bulgaria)
2. GEN-Israel (Israel)

Welcome to all of them!!!

NEXT GEN



NextGEN Europe is having for more than a year regular monthly Skype calls to catch-up with each other, but also to see what is happening in wider GEN network and what are possible projects that we could develop. In 2016 our energy and focus will be mostly directed to including NextGEN at annual GEN Conference in Arterra, besides that we want to work more closely with Youth Sustainability project and Ecobasa.



We also observe that focus of NextGEN Europe is moving towards youth that is born and raised in communities. What do they need? How can NextGEN support them? We are always open to hear your ideas and see if we can find a way to work together. If you would like to get in touch write to lara@gen-europe.org

NextGEN began in 2005 at a GEN+10 conference and has experienced many swings in energy over the last ten years

Ten years since its creation, in 2015, NextGEN convened again at Findhorn for the GEN+20 Celebration. This time things were a little different, as a series of meetings was arranged to plan for the limited amount of time we would have together at GEN+20. We sought to get the most out of our time by addressing critical questions with efficiency.

Simultaneously, there was a growing frustration within NextGEN. We felt undervalued and misunderstood by the wider GEN community. Some described it as if NextGEN was being perceived as just the “sand box” to put young people in that GEN didn’t know what else to do with. We sought integration with recognition for skills and capacities of individual young people.

Although NextGEN was considered a region within GEN, with due regional representation, there was a general sense that this wasn’t quite fitting. The “region” of NextGEN was further sub-divided into NextGEN groups within each global region of GEN. The position of a region also felt as if it was contributing to separating us from the other regions more so than it worked to include us.

After careful discussion of all these factors, feelings, and the possibilities, we decided to make a drastic shift at the GEN+20 Gathering. **NextGEN is no longer a group of young people, but rather a group focused on youth empowerment.** This means that anyone, of any age, who has an interest in youth issues – such as youth sustainability education, youth programs, youth leadership, and so on – can be a part of NextGEN. This means that not every young person is NextGEN! However, we are retaining an age cap of 30 for the NextGEN representative positions. This decision is to ensure that adequate youth representation is still met within GEN. We are no longer considered a region, but rather a special interest group that has constituents in all GEN regions.

Cynthia Tina (NextGEN Int. Representative) and Lara Kastelic, (NextGEN Europe)

FILMS

Some new releases and interesting items from our own members:

Bulgaria, This Eternal Heresy



Bulgaria, 2014, 128 min, color

Full film online with English subtitles:

<https://vimeo.com/84707344>

A heretic film about life outside of the System, made outside of the System. This is a fictional documentary, musical anthropological, scientific magical, eco anarchic utopian journey in a landscape of 8 parts. You're Kaloyan, the sax player. Or Diana, the Gypsy dancer. You journey together through Bulgaria in search of the utopian village Dolphinovo. It's not Sofia, Paris or New York. That's why this story is rural, rustic and polyphonic. It's like a string of painted walls of village houses, folk songs and allegories. However, who is Ivo? And why does he lead you through these winter landscapes a year later?

Val Todorov is a writer, director, visionary, activist, from GEN Bulgaria.



You can like us on Facebook:
[thestorysofar](#) and
[twitter#Thefindhornmovie](#)

'The Story So Far'

A film about Findhorn.

The film is available for sale as a DVD or digital download at www.moviolaproductions.com is ambitious in the scope it covers, taking us on a remarkable journey from November 1962 to present times.

Directed and edited by Lorenz Gramann, and produced by Maria Craig, it offers penetrating insights and is spiced with rare archival footage as we share the stories of community members young and old, as well as hearing the views of spiritual leaders and visionary presenters who have come to know the community and ecovillage intimately. For many it has been life changing.

The documentary explores what attracted people to the community in the first place, what it means to them, and how they see it evolving and unfolding. Watching the film is a good way to understand what our community is all about, and will also be appreciated by those whose lives it has touched. Thousands visit each year in person and many more via the website, although the challenge remains to make it accessible to an ever wider audience of seekers who are interested in a different and more sustainable way of living together with all life on Earth.

**GEN-
EUROPE'S
20TH
ANNIVERSARY!!**

*The 20th GEN Europe Conference will be in
Arterra Bizimodu, Spain.*

General Assembly 1st and 2d July.

Conference 4th to 8th July.

Information and registration will be posted on:

gen-europe.org

contact person: nonty@gen-europe.org



arterrabizimodu.org