

EDE Damanhur 2015

A different way of life is possible

This year, the participants of our EDE were as international as last year's, maybe even more so. Twenty different nationalities out of 21 participants from four different continents, and some had double nationalities. The people came from Brazil, Canada, USA, Bahrain, France, Austria, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, Japan, Ukraine, Slovakia, Netherlands, Macedonia, Jordan/Palestine, Israel and Italy.



There were many young people in the course, most were in their 20s and 30s, and even despite their young ages, there were many professionals and well-trained people with high-level interpersonal and other skills. It was very unusual that course had more male than female participants: 12 men and 9 women.

One of the strong themes of this year's EDE was the search for a different way of life, finding that new models of society can work, ones that are based on cooperation amongst human beings, and also between humans and nature.

We started out with the social week, which helped to create a strong group experience from the beginning. We have observed in previous years that this provides a very solid base for the whole course, because it gives people a chance to connect strongly, creating a learning “family,” for experiencing the four dimensions with depth throughout the entire month.



The second week was mainly the “worldview” week, because we mix the social and the worldview. We have found from experience that the ecology and economy weeks can become a little “dry” without some social dynamics. This year, the participants expressed the wish for even more mixing, especially of the social in the ecology and economy weeks, which we will take in account for our EDE next year.

The group went through intensive processes, learning about conflict resolution, how to enhance leadership presence, how the others can be mirrors for ourselves and help accelerate personal growth, and last but not least, finding out about different ways of decision making.

The visit and meditation in Damanhur’s Temples of Humankind were highly appreciated, as well as contact with Damanhurians: eating some dinners in the nucleo communities - the large Damanhurian family units, a brunch with Damanhurians, and

sharing some of the participant's projects in a nucleo.

A strong experience of group-building took place during the two-day community building experiment in the woods, allowing the participants to go deeper as a group and find out about the importance of roles.

Two half-days of art gave the opportunity to discover the artist inside of everyone. Field trips allowed participants to understand about local food, the collaboration of an intentional community with the bioregion, and valuing old traditions and knowledge from the bioregion. Everyone had lots of fun during the field trip to the Alps, swimming in a crystal clear, very cold waterfall.



The basics for designing several projects were laid with social tools, like Open Space and World Cafe, and learning about different design methods, from Dragon Dreaming to Permaculture Design. The participants appreciated the hands-on

experiences of building a part of a straw bale house and working in the greenhouses, as a physical counterpart to the social and theoretical learning.

The economy session explored macro and micro-economy, as well as the importance of complementary currencies and local economy. It also talked about the green and blue economy, and how a more fair economy can be created in a community linked to solidarity.

All the different lessons were followed by design sessions in three different groups. These groups were created through a Dragon Dreaming circle, and they became real projects being worked on throughout the entire month from many different points of view. The participants exercised their leadership potential by holding several evenings presentations about their projects.

All in all, it was a very productive month and it strengthened the participants' awareness that a different way of life is possible.

