



Gaia  
education

Report

# Ecovillage Design Education Course

7th February- 4th March 2016

at Siddharth Village, Kakiriguma, Odisha, India









Daily meditation of various types, yoga, every day feedback about the sessions and members, songs, dance, local food, traditional food, sacred dance at night to give importance appreciation and love to each and every one of the ede community, arrangement of the sacred space of the training, pair sharing, small group meeting are some of the features that enables close relationships between the members strengthening the learning beyond session hours.



The first dimension of the EDE is called Worldview. This dimension lays down the foundation upon which an individual can start building up a new life paradigm. It means that each participant is allowed to build an inner space where he/she can explore his/her world internally and become aware of feelings, emotions, old believes, values and patterns. The facilitator leads the participant throughout this journey and provides instruments to change the old reality and create a new one, a reality capable of bringing happiness and abundance in life. This is the first step needed for an individual in order to be clear about him/herself so that healthy relationships with the community and nature can take place.





The journey starts with the question “Who am I”? encouraged participants for intense self discovery process. But a series of exercises help each individual understand that they are not what they think they are. They are not their thoughts, feelings, emotions. They are not their mind, believes, values.



The “Life Road” therapeutic exercise for example brings the person back to the mother's womb, retaking the life journey while identifying 4 incidents in life. After the exercise the participants are asked to draw the journey on a chart paper and then share the experience with the group. While introspecting into the incidents it is possible to find out that there is a particular pattern, acquired during the childhood incident, that gets repeated, due to the fact that from that incident a person has formed a limiting belief system about him/herself and the world.

The exercise allows emotions and deep feelings to be poured out and it is from there that a door towards the healing path is opened.

The following days in fact are dedicated to provide the participants with tools, exercises, that help the healing process to take place. “Triple Dissociation” and “Future Pacing” for example are 2 of the them, which help bringing to the conscious level the map of reality we have created in our mind and replace it with a new one, now made up of enabling believes. The dimension closes up with an exercise that enables participants to manifest their own desires however worldview elements will continuously interlink with the following dimensions.

The social dimension in fact starts with an introduction of chakras, which links back to the Vedic worldview introduced in the previous dimension through the Koshas interconnecting at the same time with personal growth from the basic psychological needs to independence. Values are also brought up to the surface again together with believes. Clarity on values as much as self awareness are fundamental for the construction of a healthy and solid Ecovillage because as long as values are clear whatever message and action are to be transmitted will vibrate strongly and reach the world. Various simulation games on society

analysis, community empowerment, community mobilisation, new development paradigm with change in attitudes, leadership are self transforming experience.

Ecology understanding is not a less important base for an Ecovillage and for that permaculture is straight away introduced together with the Social dimension, transmitting at first the most important principle of this discipline (please allow me to call it so) which is: “more the relationships and connections, healthier the system”. Equipped with self awareness, clarity on values and consciousness on the importance of relationships in a very broad sense participants are starting to form a more concise view on where are they going in this life and what is the purpose of it.

Continuing the journey toward self discovery, now each individual is brought to get a deeper understanding on their needs, learning to fulfill them in order to be able to move further but also to recognize the presence of an addiction to a need.



Learning through games techniques are highly present in this dimension. A very simple but strongly significative one is a competition to catch peanuts which is impressively useful to introduce the topic of “Life Modes”. The Modes are: Survival, Decay, Destructive, Constructive, Artistry. The aim of each individual should be to reach the Artistry mode where identification with the source takes place and from that a life of infinite possibilities lived in oneness and connectedness with the universe. From Modes we move to personalities and temperaments. Powerful/Choleric, Perfectionist/Melancholy, Peaceful/Phlegmatic and Popular/Sanguine are the 4 personalities and one or 2 will be predominant in each individual. The most important thing in order to build a healthy Ecovillage is to start understanding that each personality is a gift given by the universe, that it is normal to have a shadow on which we can work. Integrating all the personalities to develop a balanced and creative community in fundamental in fact all the personalities are important and needed and once this is fully understood each individual's potential can be fully developed and a map of the community resources can be created and developed to its fullest potential.



Another practical game is used in order to introduce the “Levels of Individual Functioning” which are Detractor, Observer, Participator, Contributor and Leader. Stepping from one level to another is natural and necessary in an Ecovillage and each individual has to be left the space to evolve in order to be able to take leadership at times.

The Social dimensions ends with a simulation game aiming to show how social and economical inequity is created and accepted in modern society. The game shows how by creating the right condition (as in society) the groups have behaved exactly as social classes do.



In the Ecology dimension permaculture ethics and principles are taught together with nutrition cycle, food security, seed saving, water harvesting, soil composition, nature's patterns and farm zonation. Practical techniques are also taught like how to make biochar to moisture dry soils, different type of

compost (liquid manure, fish tonic, compost pile) to improve production and repel insects, mud bricks, earth fill buildings, water harvesting structures, how to measure slopes with simple instruments, how to make raised beds to improve production of vegetables without harming microorganisms present in the soil and create biodiversity. In the meantime the group learns how to read the nature and create sustainable eco-systems where each element has more than one function in it, no waste is produced, foot print is extremely reduced so that people are skilled to be part of the fight against climate change. Throughout the course the participants have also learnt to build 2 geodesic domes led by one of the participants who is an expert and passionate architect. Permaculture ethics and principles are identified by the participants on the last day with out any lecture method.

The Economy dimension starts with an exposure to tribal villages of the region of south Orissa mapping the village resources and local economy. Participants are welcomed to the village and introduced to their costumes, eating together, getting the chance to ask questions about their economy, lifestyles, social organization and structure, rituals, religion, agricultural techniques. The experience is very significant because exposes the participant to tribal communities (which are not intentional as per the definition of Ecovillage), getting to see how they create their own sustainable life based on mutual help, shared economy, free of social classes and accumulation of capital.



Where the problem of one member is the problem of the whole community, which is committed to solve it putting if needed the common capital in use. Back to the campus the last 3 days goes on learning about social enterprise, business legal structures, fund raising but the focus is especially on one's own dream, and on how to create a vision and a mission statement based on clear values, roles and goals that will lead life towards the realization of the project dreamt. Thus again integrating with social and world view dimensions, ending



with sessions on behavioral change for community empowerment and conflict resolution techniques.



Final certification ceremony takes place in one of the 2 domes constructed made an holy space by music, flowers, mandalas, incense and yagna with sandle wood burning. The atmosphere is overwhelming and sacred, and brings back the question of “Who am I” to the participants who have now been initiated to the journey of life and self discovery toward the source.

Amidst many rituals all through the ede journey, this last ritual starts with washing each others feet symbolically surrendering ones ego, taking three steps with questions towards the sacred fire ignited with ghee and community responding to deepen the exploration.



It is a miracle that the ambience create “no thought space’ emptying every ones mind for two hours wherein participants were anointed to spread ecovillages on the planet.

A brief report by participant.  
Martina Cordella