

Ecovillage Design Education "Inspired by Programme" Tamarind Village & Lonhaw Village, Myanmar

1. Tamarind Village course report:

Objective

This course was intended to be an experimental program to promote sustainable living in the fields of organic food production, holistic health, building green, conflict facilitation, communication and networking, and sustainable economy in Myanmar society.

Background / General Information



The EDE introductory course was organised by Alinein Organization (House of Wisdom) at Hmawbi Township. The teaching team were from Gaia Sustainable Management Institute (GSMI), and the exchange program under Kalyana Mitta Foundation. The course was conducted from 5 to 9 March 2014, with 19 participants in total (6 females, 13 males) coming from different parts of Myanmar, and majority were from the middle part of the country- Hmawbi Township, Yangon Division.

The group had diverse backgrounds such as farmer, housewife, writer, poet, teacher, hospital worker, factory worker, social worker, environmentalist, and a political party member. To make this course happen, the organizer had prepared parallel small activities for participant's children, so their children could be taking care and playing with each other while mothers and fathers were attending the course.

Daily Schedule

07.00-07.30	Meditation / Morning Exercise
07.30-08.30	Breakfast
09.00-12.00	Morning Session
12.00-13.00	Lunch
13.00-13.30	Deep Relaxation
13.30-17.00	Afternoon Session
17.00-18.00	Break
18.00-19.00	Dinner
19.00-21.00	Evening Session

Outputs

As the country is in a transitional period, people are looking for positive change and responsiveness to sustainable living and sustainable development. With the collaboration from local organizations in Myanmar and the support from Ecovillage Transition Asia (ETA) in Thailand, the course was organised and within five days participants learned about 4 dimensions (Social, Economic, Ecology, and Worldview) of Ecovillage Design Education.

Day one, social dimension, started with community building, where participants draw out daily schedule, expectation and group agreements. With the diversity of the group-elderly and disabled people- participants were willing to go slowly and support each other throughout the course. Then, sharing about Tamarind Village -the place created for head-heart-hands learning environment - and discussion about traditional & intentional community in Thailand and Myanmar, from various type of communities, participants also learned about decision making processes and leadership styles, as these are the key elements to bring community members together.

Day two, economic dimension, we did an exercises where participants did trading several times, and reflected the lessons



learned from the exercise. Participants could understand the current economic system- capitalism- is creating a gap and a bigger gap between the rich and the poor, giant multinational corporations are controlling national law and regulation. In a small group discussion, to preserve the ways of living which are drastically changing, participants saw the potential of doing small things and doing it locally, for example, growing and eating local food, buying or trading within and between communities to maintain their livelihoods.

Day three, ecological dimension, we presented principles about eco-farming & permaculture, sharing about 5 steps (Observation & Research, Brainstorm & Connect, Design, Practice, Reflect & Share) and 3 core values (Local Knowledge, Beliefs & Ethics, Pattern & Principles), linking with the previous day issues, these principles support community livelihoods approach and strengthen local economies. For hands-on experience, we provided a space for mud-house building, using local materials and knowledge.



Some participants had experience doing this before, so they were learning and sharing together processes for mixing materials, making bricks, building mud- walls and plastering. It was fun and brought everyone hope, seeing that a learning community was created and we were empowering one and another.

Day four, worldview, participants requested to start the day with performance and poem, expressing the connectedness between humans and nature, and gratitude for mother earth. Then participants wrote a group poem about "Wild GEESE"-by flying together we are protecting nature and the future of our next generation. After that, there was a discussion on Green Network in Myanmar, which simply shares the ideas are Easy, Cheap and Fun, to raise consumer awareness and criticise the influences of "Globalization", or "Koreanization" particularly in Myanmar and other Asian countries. At the end, participants had deepened and synthesised understanding about knowing who we are and respecting others.

Day five, participants worked on small group designs, putting and presenting all 4 dimensions for "Tamarind Village: Sustainable Living Training Centre", using many forms of local wisdom and culture for social and ecological design, observing and learning from nature, initiating community enterprise for local economy. In the afternoon, we met with Jane Rasbash (from Gaia Education), Jessica Armour (from Spirit in Education Movement, Wongsanit EDE Alumni), and Sally (from Findhorn

Community). Jane presented about Ecovillage Design Education: Transitioning Traditional Villages to Ecovillages. EDE Curriculum is honouring local wisdoms and holistic community design; it's also contextualizing to strengthen communities and CBOs to lead development interventions towards healthy civil society. At night, we celebrated, children and parents joined to play music and sing together.



Feedback from Participants

From the evaluation, most of participants enjoy being and learning at Tamarind village. The EDE contents, discussions and sharing were good. However, some of the participants suggested that accommodation and dining room should be improved, as participants would like to have more comfortable place for sleeping and more space for eating together.



Annex I: Schedule

Day	Time	Content	Activities	Facilitator
(4 Mar)	6.00 pm	Welcoming and Opening	Sharing	NawAung ThetNai
Social				
1 (5 Mar)	Morning	- Knowing each other - Home Group - Max & Min - Expectations - Schedule	Sharing	
		- Tamarind Village - Traditional and Intentional Communities	- Sharing - PPT- Thailand and Myanmar	
	Afternoon	- Embracing diversity - Communication - Decision making - Leadership	Grouping (Diversity) Broken Square	
	16.00-17.00	Design	How could we bring community members together?	
	Evening	Sharing Circle from Design		
Economic				
2 (6 Mar)	Morning	Recap Star Power	Exercise and Sharing circle	
		Capitalism, Law and	Group sharing	



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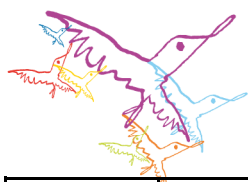
		regulation, Caste	(Brainstorm and share with what they already have)	
	Afternoon	- Shifting global economy to sustainability - Local Economy / Social Enterprise	PPT- Economy and exercise	
		Design	What is the leak and how could you plug the leak?	
	Evening	Sharing Circle from Design		
Ecology				
3 (7 Mar)	Morning	- Recap - Tamarind Village tour - Permaculture Principles	PPT about permaculture Sharing	ViengPhet
	Afternoon	Eco-farming Hands On (Mud house building)		ThetNai
		Design	Discuss 3 core values - Local Knowledge - Beliefs and Ethnics - Pattern and Principles	
	Evening	Sharing Circle from Design		
Worldview				
4 (8 Mar)	Morning	Awakening of consciousness Green Network/ Consumerism		ThetNai

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	Afternoon	Reconnecting with nature Holistic Worldview	Widening Circle PPT	
	16.00-17.00	Design		
	Evening	Sharing Circle from Design		
All dimensions				
5 (9 Mar)	Morning	- Integration & Design - Weaving 4 dimensions - Design for sustainable Tamarind Village	Exercise Info about Tamarind Village	NawAung
		- Group Work / Design - Group Presentation		
	Afternoon	GEN and Gaia Presentation (Networking)	PPT	Jane
		Conclusion and evaluation		
	Evening	Farewell night		
(10 Mar)		Departure		

2. Ecovillage Design Education and Eco-Farming training Report

Objective

This short introductory course about Ecovillage Design Education and Eco-Farming was intended to raise awareness about Ecovillage and Sustainable Ways of Living for trainers and alumni of Inle Lake Watershed Project under Kalyana Mitta Development Foundation in Myanmar.

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General information



This 5-day training was held at Lonhaw Primary School in Lonhaw Village, Gangaw Township, Magway Region from 24 - 28 March 2014. There were 18 participants, 4 females and 14 males, from Lonhaw Village, Gangaw Township, Khudkhai Township, and Irrawaddy Division. The age of participants was between 20-40 years old, with most of participants coming from agricultural

backgrounds. The expectations were learning more concepts and skills about Sustainable living, Self-Reliance, Organic Farming, and Community Building.

Daily Schedule

06.30-07.00	Meditation / Morning Exercise
07.00-08.30	Breakfast
08.30-11.30	Morning Session
11.30-13.00	Lunch
13.00-13.30	Deep Relaxation
13.30-16.30	Afternoon Session
16.30-18.00	Evening Break
18.00-19.00	Dinner
19.00-21.00	Evening Session

Outputs

The training was planned and adjusted for sharing and discussion in the morning session, having exercise or hands-on experience in the afternoon session and spending the last one hour in afternoon session for Community Design, so participants could gain both knowledge and deepening understanding from participatory learning processes and sharing with each other.

The first day, Social, we started with knowing each other, drawing daily schedule and common grounds, and group exercises. Participants were very active and integrated together to participate in exercises and discussion. For social dimension, we all learned



that understanding and trust are important factors for building community, and good communication is the tool to build understanding and trust. Also, we learned about leadership, as we all are leaders with different characteristics, and according to Myanmar morality a leader basically must have tolerance, generosity, kindness, and honesty.

The Second day, Economic, we did an exercise on exchange and trading. This day participants learned about themselves and impacts from globalization. Nowadays many people from the village are going to work in Yangon, as well as going to Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore. This is repeating the same situation as in Thailand and other countries, shifting from Agriculture to Industry and changing from producer to consumer. Many young farmers now

feel inferior, don't want to live so away from family and don't really know what to do. After exploring the current situation, we discussed about how to bring back the community economy. Participants started making list of the goods that they normally consume and seeing the possibility of producing them in their village.

The third day, Ecology, the Lonhaw Youth Group had presented about a biogas project for Lonhaw Village. By mid 2014 the whole community (183 households, primary school and monastery) will be using renewable energy. It was an inspiring discussion and other participants were thinking to install a biogas tank instead of diesel generator in their own community. Another half day, participants learned about permaculture and Eco-Farming principles. In the discussion we looked into Earth Care, People Care, and Fair Share. We shared about 3 core values about beliefs & ethics, local knowledge and patterns & principles, which are already applied in the traditional way of living in Myanmar.

The fourth day, Worldview, well agreed to volunteer for the biogas project. Participants worked on carrying cow dung from many houses to the site by carts, mixing cow dung and water in small pits by their legs and putting the sludge in to the tank by baskets; some people were hesitant to get dirt in the beginning but got used to it eventually. Later on, we shared what we learned from the volunteer work; everyone was satisfied with this work and were able to see that the cow dung was not only providing electricity for the community, it's also providing many more things such as local healthy food, education, livelihoods, and unity for this community which was leading to holistic worldview. At this point, it was very significant for participants to realise that they were talking and seeing the same thing from the different angles.

The last day, Community Planning: Design for sustainability, participants discussed on community plans. Some example issues were road construction, education system, reforestation & community forest, land reform, organic agriculture, water management, community enterprise, and energy planning & consumption. In a sharing circle, participants talked about what they have learned and what they could do when they go back home starting from a small thing.



Everyone was happy to be here and they would like to share this experience to other friends in their community. In the evening, we had a community farewell party; participants and villagers were served with Chin Traditional Food, we did some role-play presenting issues & situations in Myanmar community, and everyone was invited for acting and finding the solution, making fun and lots of creativity for the future of community.

Quote from participants

Participant 1 "Because of the learning, the connection between human and nature, I have come to love the world with a peaceful mind and what I could do to our community is sharing Eco-Farming techniques. I also would like to learn more about agriculture"

Participant 2 "As soon as the training started, we set our responsibility and time, as we should plan for our life"

Participant 3 "If there is no communication and no mutual understanding, we may face many problems and unnecessary issues will occur"

Participants 4 " I'm glad to share about knowledge and experience to other participants and trainers, I learned about unity and collaboration from Lonhaw Community"

Feedback from Participants

Training Contents: Most of participants have learnt and gained more concepts of sustainable living and Eco-Farming.

The Venue: Lonhaw Village is a good place for this kind of training, good environment and community. But the weather during the training is really hot.

Food: Participants were satisfied with the food; they experienced local food every meal and Chin traditional food for the last day, only one comment is the food was oily.

Accommodation: It was simple and enough for everyone, a few comments are:

- The place was hot
- It was far from the shower place
- Noisy at night time from telephone calls
- Doors are not sealed properly



Suggestion from Participants:

- Training hall should be in a cooler place
- This kind of training could be provided for the other areas in Myanmar
- The role-play for participating and finding the solution by the community members was really good.



Annex I: Schedule

Day	Time	Content	Activities	Facilitator
Social				
1 (24 Mar)	Morning	Welcoming and Opening	Sharing from Village Leaders	ThaungLwin
		- Knowing each other - Schedule - Max & Min	Small group discussion	ViengPhet
	Afternoon	- Home Group - Expectations	Grouping (Diversity)	Narumon
		- Embracing diversity - Communication - Decision making - Leadership	Group Drawing Exercise	Narumon
		Design Time	How could we bring community members together?	Narumon
	Evening	Sharing Circle (Design)	Talking Stone	Narumon
Economic				
2 (25 Mar)	Morning	Recap		ViengPhet
		- Global Economy - Capitalism	Star Power Exercise	Narumon



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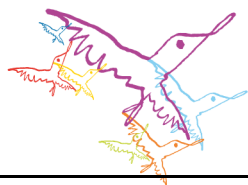
		- Fix Price and Fare Trade	Discussion and Sharing circle	
	Afternoon	- Shifting global economy to Sustainability - Local Economy / Social Enterprise	Discussion and Sharing circle	Narumon
		List of stuff (from community and outside)	Exercise	Narumon
		Leaking Bucket	Exercise	Narumon
		Design Time	What is the leak and how could you plug the leak?	Narumon
	Evening	Sharing Circle (Design)		Narumon
Ecology				
3 (26 Mar)	Morning	Recap		ViengPhet
		Biogas Project		ThetNai ThaungLwin
		Introduction to Permaculture		ViengPhet
	Afternoon	Introduction to Eco-farming		ViengPhet
		Design Time		Narumon
	Evening	Nobel Silence		ViengPhet

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Worldview				
4 (27 Mar)	Morning	Biogas Tank Project		ViengPhet
		Mulching		ViengPhet
	Afternoon	- Awakening of consciousness - Reconnecting with nature - Holistic Worldview		Narumon
	16.00-17.00	Design		Narumon
	Evening	Sharing Circle from Design		Narumon
All dimensions				
5 (28 Mar)	Morning	Integration & Design Weaving 4 dimensions Design for sustainable LonhawVillage	Small Group Exercise Back-casting	Narumon
	Afternoon	Group work and Presentation		Narumon
		Conclusion and evaluation		Narumon
	Evening	Farewell night		
(29 Mar)		Departure		