

EDE Final Report Template

EDE Damanhur 2019

Dates: August 3 – 31, 2019

Host site: Damanhur

- **Course Overview: (150 - 300 words)**

Brief explanation of the background of the organisation, host site. Diversity of participants and facilitators. Main highlights, key success factors and other relevant information that would describe what happened during the EDE. This text will appear at Gaia Education's website to describe your programme.

We are happy to have run successfully our 9th edition of the EDE at Damanhur, organized by the NGO Damanhur Education APS, in partnership with Gaia Education and the Global Ecovillage Network.

Founded in 1975 in northern Italy, Damanhur is a resilient Federation of Communities with its own constitution, culture, art, music, currency, schools and utilization of science and technology. It has about 600 full-time residents, plus 500 citizens in the world.

Damanhur is based on the vision of a new model for society based on solidarity, sharing, love and respect for the environment. For over 44 years, Damanhur has developed into a well organized eco-society in continuous change, though staying true to its foundational principles.

Damanhur also became well known in the world because of building the Temples of Humankind, an underground construction, a unique work of art dedicated to universal spirituality.

Holding the EDE at Damanhur allows the course to look at the many concrete examples and experiences in all four dimensions present in the 45- year old community.

In our EDE we have chosen to put the Social Dimension in the first week. Through the exercises and processes that are being experienced we create community from the very beginning of the course. It is very important, because it creates a red thread, that allows the other weeks to keep the strong community process alive. Many powerful dynamics bring awareness about yourself as well as getting in touch with the Life

stories of the other participants. This actually creates the basis to becoming a life changing experience for many. Some of the highlights of this dimension were the sessions around conflict and leadership.

Visiting and meditating in the Temples of Humankind, hands-on straw-bale building, art sessions and a community building experiment in the woods are just some of the highlights of the other dimensions.

The Economic Dimension uses the example of Damanhur, the hosting community, to demonstrate different economic models, to show aspects of a new economy, as well as how a more just economy can be created.

As every year the group was very international 23 people from 17 different countries. There were people from Brazil, China, Taiwan, Usa, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Austria, Croatia, Italy, Great Britain, Japan, France, Sweden, Philippines, Spain and Switzerland,. The ages ranged from 22 to 59, and many participants were under 30 or between 30 and 40 years of age.

We have observed, that there is a general tendency: This year, as the previous years the participants start already with quite a high level of information and knowledge in the four dimensions of sustainability before hand. Also the willingness to engage in transformational process was very high. This allowed to go really deep creating the life changing processes, that continue to nourish the participants also after the course when they are back in their everyday life.

Most of the facilitators were from Damanhur, and all were experienced EDE teachers with many years of expertise.

- **Participants: (50 - 150 words)**

(Basic stats including numbers of participants, age range, gender ratio, countries, ethnicities and backgrounds)

As every year the group was very international 23 people from 17 different countries. There were people from Brazil, China, Taiwan, Usa, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Austria, Croatia, Italy, Great Britain, Japan, France, Sweden, Philippines, Spain and Switzerland. The ages ranged from 22 to 59, and many participants were under 30 or between 30 and 40 years of age. It is interesting to highlight, that the tendency of the

last years shows more men than women as opposed to all the previous years, where there were far more woman than men. This year there were 13 men and 10 women.

We have observed, that there is a general tendency: This year, as the previous years the participants start already with quite a high level of information and knowledge in the four dimensions of sustainability before hand. Also the willingness to engage in transformational process was very high. This allowed to go really deep creating the life changing processes, that continue to nourish the participants also after the course when they are back in their everyday life.

- **Course rhythms: (50 - 150 words):**

(A description of the times of daily activities, sessions, free time, social time, interaction with hosts, rest; how many hours in lectures & practical sessions,etc.)

In the morning before breakfast, yoga and meditation sessions were offered by the participants, followed by breakfast from 8:00 - 9:00.

The morning session was from 9 - 12:30, lunch at 13:00, break until 15:00.

The afternoon session was from 15:00 - 18:00, dinner at 18:30, break until 20:00. The evening program was from 20:00 - 21:30.

The program varies a lot, but there are some basic patterns. Usually the morning begins with some kind of sharing, followed by a theoretical part. After the theoretical part, there is often the design part, which continues throughout the entire course. The weeks of the four dimensions are different, as the ecological part also has hands-on sessions. There is art in the worldview dimension, and a community building experiment for the social dimension. There are several moments to contact the hosting community, in addition to the initial visit, such as dinners in a Damanhurian nucleo community, a brunch where Damanhurians are invited to attend, the presentation of the participants' projects in a nucleo. There are several free evenings, every week at least one free afternoon and one completely free day.

- **Highlights & challenges of each dimension:**

Social (150 - 250 words): What happened in this dimension? What were the highlights? What subjects were covered? 1-2 participant quotes from the Gaia Education Evaluations or other sources. A sentence on each core faculty/facilitator.

The Social Dimension takes place in the first week of our EDE. The first week gives the direction to the whole course and through the many exercises and processes

experienced in this week a really strong community feeling is created since the beginning. Several participants had life changing experiences during the Social Dimension. The highlights were similar to last year: the sessions about leadership presence, conflict resolution, governance and decision making and most of all the community building experiment in the woods. Going through intensive processes and lot's of fun helped the participants to become more aware of themselves and how they interact with the group.

The community building experience in the woods gave a different, more real perspective to community life. It allowed participants to experience leadership and decision making, to work on personal growth, and to understand what it means to think as a group.

The contact with the hosting community is also very important, because the participants get a taste of community life. This is why Damanhurians are invited to share in a Sunday morning brunch, and the participants have dinners in different nucleos (smaller communities from 12-25 people).

Macaco Tamerice facilitated the Social and Worldview Dimensions, and she co-facilitated the Ecological and Economic Dimensions. She has 26 years of expertise in community living and her ability to guiding groups and group processes lead the group through intense personal and group processes and games.

Formica Coriandolo co-facilitated the Worldview Dimension using art as a tool to self-exploration and bringing energy and warmth. Formica has 36 years of community expertise and is one of Damanhur's artists.

Quotes: "The EDE was so more than learning about EcoVillage Design. During the month my spark for my passion was reignited. I now have a new found confidence and purpose to life."

"In the social dimension the direct and emotional experience of creating community, our own group dynamics and seeing at the same time the vivid and constantly changing mechanisms of a community that is existing since over 40 years, gave a very good impression of the complexity and richness of communities."

Include 2-3 pictures.





Economic (150 - 250 words): What happened in this dimension? What were the highlights? What topics were covered? What practical activities were performed? 2-3 participant quotes from the Gaia Education Evaluations or other sources. A sentence on each core faculty/facilitator. Any other information that you consider relevant.

The Economic Dimension explained about the ownership of money, macro-micro economy and helped the participants explore possible alternatives to an unfair economic system. It also looked at new models through concrete examples. This Dimension explored complementary currencies and local economy and looked at how these aspects are related to a new way of looking at economy. Solidarity as one of the key elements for a regenerative future helped understanding, that if you want to measure richness there are many more forms of richness than just money.

Damanhur, as the hosting community, demonstrated concrete alternatives and many different aspects of a new economy, and how a more just economy can be created in a community inspired by solidarity. Some very concrete economic tools like the balance point and a business plan were explored too.

Lemming Cactus was the main facilitator of the Economic Dimension which he lead with professional expertise and know-how.

Quotes: “Getting to know about where money comes from and to whom it belongs gave a new understanding of our economic system”

“I really loved the session about empowered fundraising and to learn so much about economy”

“Economy plays in such an important part of the whole system in EDE....often we feel intimidated and powerless when it comes to this part as we do not feel confident. Though, it is the world that we live in have put a shadow over the true meaning of healthy economy. With the course that we learn....enable us to have a new perspective and help us to know how we could build a healthy and sustainable system in our future ventures and projects.”

Include 2-3 pictures.



Ecological (150 - 250 words): What happened in this dimension? What were the highlights? What topics were covered? What practical activities were performed? 2-3 participant quotes from the Gaia Education Evaluations or other sources. A sentence on each core faculty/facilitator. Any other information that you consider relevant.

In the **Ecological Dimension**, the participants learned about permaculture design, growing organic food, water and wastewater treatments, green building and retrofitting, alternative energy and about appropriate technology. The highlight of this session was the hands-on experience of straw-bale building and the visit to a permaculture farm . The introduction to permaculture and designing with permaculture principles gave good insights to a holistic way to grow food. Also, visiting places in the hosting community where different technologies had already been successfully implemented showed the practical application of the theory.

The participants had fun with strawbale building and enjoyed to visit a fully fledged permaculture farm. Also the visit to the damanhurian organic farm that produces food for the whole community was highly appreciated.

Nicola Savio facilitated the permaculture program, awakening an interest in permaculture design and best practices, and he showcased a permaculture farm.

Inti China led the sessions about alternative building and the hands-on straw-bale building, showing how to use different tools and methods.

Quotes: “In the ecological dimension, the experience gave a very good and broad overview and nourished my personal interest further to get deeper involved in agricultural practices and permaculture design.”

“ It was so much fun to learn how to build with straw and clay, I will implement this new knowledge in our future ecovillage”

“The hands-on experience, dedication and love for what they do can truly be felt.”

Include 2-3 pictures.





Worldview (150 - 250 words): What happened in this dimension? What were the highlights? What topics were covered? What practical activities were performed? 2-3 participant quotes from the Gaia Education Evaluations or other sources. A sentence on each core faculty/facilitator. Any other information that you consider relevant.

The Worldview Dimension allowed the participants to get a glimpse at their artistic and expressive abilities, to have a deep experience with nature and to visit the Temples of Humankind. They also participated in a meditation in the Temples, which was a highlight of this Dimension. The participants had an introduction to Spiral Dynamics with some exercises, to understand deeper about human evolutionary steps inside ourselves and as a society. A beautiful sharing about worldviews was enriching for all. Especially appreciated was the hands-on part linked to sculpturing with clay, which allowed the participants to bring out the artist that lies in every person. A detailed introduction to Sociocracy with some exercises gave inputs about more inclusive ways of governance.

A session about health gave an inside about how different approaches to health can happily coexist and be applied in a community.

Connecting with nature using exercises from Deep Ecology and from Damanhur was an important highlight of this Dimension. The experience the participants made during

this session created a deep connection with nature and ourselves as being part of nature.

Macaco Tamerice led the Worldview sessions from Spiral Dynamics, personal transformation and connection with nature, to moving toward an understanding of collective intelligence.

Formica Coriandolo co-facilitated and held the art workshop with sensitivity and support, bringing out the artist that lies in everyone and understanding the meaning of creating art together.

Quotes: "In the worldview dimension I loved the approach of Damanhur, the undogmatic presence of the Damanhurian philosophy and the open and inviting experiences."

"Macaco and her team opened a wonderful rich, loving and secure space for development and learning."

"After three weeks of beautiful but intense learning by doing, I loved the session of reconnection with nature. It made me perceive how much we are part of nature."

Include 2-3 pictures.





Design (150 - 250 words): What happened in this dimension? What were the highlights? What topics were covered? What practical activities were performed? 2-3 participant quotes from the Gaia Education Evaluations or other sources. A sentence on each core faculty/facilitator. Any other information that you consider relevant.

The Design Dimension applied different designing methods. This year five projects were created through a Dragon Dreaming process. During the whole course the participants were weaving the theoretical information they received into their projects. We have found that this is a way to apply directly the knowledge and besides supporting the creation of great projects it helps to integrate and stratify the lessons learned.

The first project was a Centre for Healing integrating Chinese traditional Medicine and the contact with the forest, where people can learn about the traditional knowledge of the peoples in Asia, the second was the creation of an online platform for change-makers, that includes trainings and the possibility to share information at many levels called "The New World Network". The third project is a Centre for Healing from Trauma: We serve the regeneration of Mother Earth by bringing community and nature together to heal the individual and to remember our natural place in the cycle of life. The fourth is twin ecovillage in Brazil, "Airar, Bridging Cities to Nature" with one center in the city and one on the countryside, that are collaborating and closely linked together. They want to give people from the City to have meaningful experiences with Nature. They already have the location on the countryside. The fifth group is creating a model to introduce the EDE content into schools and create Gaia Schools as a model, starting with one in Spain.

Quotes: "Team work is not always easy and fluid, learning how to manage conflicts, interests, dreams and becoming able to merge all of those in a single direction is a skill hard to develop.

As the days of the EDE course went by and we managed to build more connection and trust amongst the other participants, we slowly worked our way to be as inclusive as possible and consider everyone's personal dreams, capabilities and aspirations in the process of accomplishing a common vision for how could our future be like."

"It was an intense process to unfold, but with beautiful and enriching results in the end for every single person. Some managed to learn about how to work together, some needed to develop more leadership and some learned that sometimes compromising our own personal interests can really be for the common good.

Developing these projects were definitely a growth opportunity for all of us."

Include 2-3 pictures. If showing a design project photo, please acknowledge the names of the designers.





Design Studio Case Studies: Brief description of the case studies developed during the programme if applicable.

The first project was a Centre for Healing integrating Chinese traditional Medicine and the contact with the forest, where people can learn about the traditional knowledge of the peoples in Asia, the second was the creation of an online platform for change-makers, that includes trainings and the possibility to share information at many levels called "The New World Network". The third project is a Centre for Healing from Trauma: We serve the regeneration of Mother Earth by bringing community and nature together to heal the individual and to remember our natural place in the cycle of life. The fourth is twin ecovillage in Brazil, "Airar, Bridging Cities to Nature" with one center in the city and one on the countryside, that are collaborating and closely linked together. They want to give people from the City to have meaningful experiences with Nature. They already have the location on the countryside. The fifth group is creating a model to introduce the EDE content into schools and create Gaia Schools as a model, starting with one in Spain.

LESSONS LEARNED - notes for future benefit (50 - 300 words):

What could help future EDE's from your experience? What were your biggest learnings? If a re-certified EDE, also list & respond to lessons learnt from your previous EDE.

This year it became obvious again, that a whole month of intensive learning processes needs to include free time for the participants. We have created many more free spaces than in the past, but still it was a lot for someone. Other people are really into processes and don't get tired. We don't know yet how to give the right time to self reflection without losing content.

This year the family of Damanhur that hosted the EDE was in a transformation process itself and didn't have as much energy as in previous years to get in touch with the EDE participants. This will change again, as the process had brought it's fruits and the family is very focused now on hosting courses in the future.

Describe your EDE in terms of the know-how and learning obtained, the stories and inspiration that happen to the participants and the organisers during the EDE or a good summary of a project or activity carried out during the program. Take into

consideration that this will be circulated among the Gaia Education's community, so they wish to learn, get inspired and be empowered by your program and your participant's experiences. (200 – 400 words) . Include 1 or 2 pictures.

The group was extremely diverse and they really wanted to have deep learning experiences. Some were working on existing projects and it was not always easy to feel the ownership of the projects for all people involved in the same way. This led two project groups into active conflict solving allowing the people to learn how to resolve conflict and reach the goals keeping in mind a higher objective.

The group is still in close contact and people are supporting each other's life choices. This year the EDE has been even more life changing than in other years, indeed several people had big changes in their lives after the EDE. All participants appreciated the close community that was built during the EDE and for some people it was their first real intense group experience.

Also this year the partner and the 3 year old child of one of the participants accompanied her and participated in the meals and some of the field trips. Having a child part of the experience adds another layer of community with it's beauty and challenges.

There were many young people with a burning desire to make a difference in the world. For them as well as for the elder ones the tools of the different dimensions that were delivered and experienced created a solid base for their future.

Key trends from the Gaia Education Survey Monkey evaluations, using words and charts if possible.

Summary of projects/activities participants intend to engage in, inspired by their attendance in the course (50 - 150 words):

A good number of the participants want to create ecovillages or join an existing one. We had three participants from China and they want to be very active in making become China an Eco-Society. Many want to join more courses by Gaia Education like the TOT and the GEDS and some want to become relevant actors in the realm of

change-makers in the world. There is also a group that is trying to create a Gaia School in Spain. They all want to be active and awaken more people to the urgency our world is living at the moment.

- **Concise financial information showing income/expenditure.**

--

PARTICIPANT QUOTES: Send 3-4 participant quotes from the Gaia Education Evaluations or other sources, please include names and photos (send the photos as separate .jpeg files and properly captioned/named)

Quotes:

Tanja Sieger:

The EDE gives a great overview over many topics that are of great importance to our time and to forming Ecovillages. It is truly a blessing to be able to experience such an important course in such a strong community.

While the general overview of tools and concepts plays a significant part in the course I feel that I could most profit from tangible experiences such as integrating what we learned into our small emerging community to whom I still feel very much connected months after the course. Creating a field of mutual support and understanding is so fundamental and the EDE lays a perfect base for such connections to be possible and hands-on projects emerge from it. I am eternally grateful for this amazing experience and highly recommend it.

Dylan Everett

“The EDE was so more than learning about EcoVillage Design. During the month my spark for my passion was reignited. I now have a new found confidence and purpose to life.”

Anton Frisch

The course was a very intense, beautiful experience. Two months afterwards while still trying to integrate the experience into daily live, I slowly realize, that I cannot integrate into the old, because the course has changed the old.

Neill Ramsun

"For me, being in community is all about how we experience and navigate between being an individual and part of the whole. Working in a small group to design a

project together was a fantastic way to experiment with that: leaning in to collective creativity and the transformational power of conflict."