

EDE 2014

**Gaia**  
education



# Findhorn

## Design for Sustainability

### Rhythms of the day

Participants start the day in their guesthouses and may join the community in morning meditations or Taize singing. Morning Sessions generally focus on theory, with supportive exercises. Afternoons will often include design studio time and other more practical activities. Three evenings of the week provide organised opportunities to share or prepare. Saturdays and the other evenings are free, with options to engage in wider Findhorn community activities.



### Participants

We began the journey with 12 participants from various European countries: Norway, Finland, Netherlands, UK, Switzerland, Hungary, Italy; and, the Americas: Canada, USA, Columbia and Brasil. They ranged in age from 22 - 59, evenly spread throughout the decades. Not everyone was able to stay for all the modules; we completed the with 9 - eight women and one man.

### Overview

Our course began immediately after the Findhorn Foundation held the New Story Summit, with its expansive energies of openness, exploration, diversity - and so many more questions than answers. Core themes we could continue with the chosen Quality of "Depth" to inform our enquiries.

We were grateful for our decision to start the course with the participatory empowerment Leadership Skills week. Pracha Hutauwatr and Jane Rasbash bring more than Leadership skills to their training; they also engage individual participants to centre themselves deeply and to bond well with each other as the newly forming cohort. From there we launched into the Gaia Education with an unusual sequencing of Social, Ecological, Worldview and Economic modules - each one week long. On the weekend between week 3 Ecological and week 4 Worldview, May East offered the Transition Training - bringing an array of communication materials and approaches that support the participant's next steps after the course.



# Findhorn Report

## Leadership Skills week one

The group bonded extremely well in this first week of stretching "Group Challenges", inner work exercises and facilitation practice sessions. Being a relatively small cohort, this time together strengthened group cohesion, as we did not need to split into two or more sub-groups for the facilitation practice sessions.

*"Amazing process. Very profound for me and fabulous facilitation of the group dynamic... the process has been so profound I'm not even sure who I was when I started. I just know I am now fundamentally different."*



## Social Week two

Decision-making is practised as Case Studies are chosen for the Design Studio time. Communication skills and strategies feature in this week of exploring how to move projects forward together – honouring diversity and seeking unity.

*"Overall the week was jam packed with very interesting and valuable information, lots to be processed. Exercises and examples are really helpful for that. The design studio is great fun and inspirational."*

*Very helpful to spend time on ritual and celebration questions, already during the morning on Friday."*



## Ecological week three

Sessions were thematically presented on topics of Water, Energy, Soil and Shelter. The favourite activity of creating mini "living machines" was again a highlight of the week.



*"I feel it was a good balance between activities outdoors and input indoors. It was great to work with the kits, the biomimicry drawing, and to visit Newbold [House]! Direct experience in learning by being physically engaged felt good."*

## Worldviews week four

After a heady start with the Transition Training and an overview of Spiral Dynamics the participants were very grateful for more quiet inner Nature connection time around the Earth Lodge and Craig's garden, the course moving into an informal setting. The group's final presentation on Hallowe'en evening made a delightful change from the usual power-points. They addressed the WV design questions in an enlivened sharing, honouring the 'indigenous celebration' - making us all beautiful masks, and providing 'treats' for community children.

*"Loved the Transition [Training], such a great addition to the course. It is very relevant for me and will help me speak to and work with friends and community members at home."*



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*"The gardening, doing and learning was very inspiring. We received the needed time together to let our own ideas about different worldviews, personal health and so on to emerge and be expressed."*



*"The teaching from Craig made for a perfect balance in the week, ranging from academic to hands on. We organically learned a lot through conversation, direct experience, group dynamics."*



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*“Enjoyed exploring these topics in an inviting way through games and experiences, and was surprised by how little we were working with numbers, but addressing more general issues. This was helpful.”*

## Economics week five

A challenging theme for the completion week, the content focused on areas that most interested and motivated the participants. The group explored some of the many innovative and alternative approaches to money, exchange and trade and also considered the new story that needs to be told about our relationship with the Earth and the interconnectedness of all life, to enable us to move to more healthy and vibrant living economies.



*“We covered a lot of useful things related to the topic. Lisa’s nature of communicating is inclusive and easeful, and I’m grateful for her way of making the topic of economics seem less daunting.”*



### LESSONS LEARNT - notes for future benefit

- » Promotions began later this year and that may have contributed to low participant numbers on the course.
- » We will be more prepared for Erasmus + applicants into the future.
- » Dropbox for additional resources has been very useful and material supplied by Michael and Lisa much appreciated. A dedicated Dropbox account with adequate space needs to be acquired by the College, ideally the with the Dropbox folders are set up and organised before the course begins.
- » It worked well to have Participatory Leadership as the first week as it was very effective for group cohesion.
- » The Economic Design week is not suited to being the final week due to the weight of the content.
- » Budget expectations need to be adapted to account for smaller groups attending.
- » Spending time with community members in service learning projects is requested and highly desirable.
- » More effective up-front information about the Design Studio work and the selection process for the Case Studies could be beneficial.
- » Create more opportunities for Findhorn-based faculty to teach and lead; and community members to join in the sessions.
- » Coordinate with faculty additional ways that the modules can compliment each other for a more integral course.



# Findhorn Report

## NEW APPROACHES

*changes implemented based on past experience*



Last year's suggestions were all taken into account in this year's course ( with the exception of more free time - we simply can not find it ! ) However the smaller group did shorten some sessions. The longer lunch break throughout this course was especially valuable, as winter's daylight grows shorter.

The two-day Transition Training was open to community, otherwise community members did not participate this year, even though we advertised a very low fee.

Beginning the course with the Leadership Skills Training provided an excellent format for the group to learn about each other, share interests as well as connect on deeper planes of inner resonance. If faculty schedules allow we would begin with Pracha and Jane's training again.

## Faculty – Design coach - Weaver

We are privileged that our core faculty for the Design for Sustainability course are practioners in their fields, with teaching experience both locally and internationally.

They are: May East, who has been spearheading Gaia Education world-wide; Pracha Hutnuwatr, ever expanding his empowering activist work in SE Asia and China; Michael Shaw, ecological engineer effectively shares his wealth of eco solution projects; Lisa Mead, with a background in law, eco-business and Earth Rights activism.



Vera Franco, the weaver, particularly supported the content in the social and ecological module. Both Vera and Lisa have leading roles in Findhorn College's undergraduate semester. Craig Gibsone, multi-talented community elder co-held the Worldview Week.

We are grateful for the for community members who ably lead sessions, Rona Roberio contributed to the Social module; Graham Meltzer and Christopher Raymont supported the Ecological module; and Alex Walker and Richard Coates offered their input to the Economic module.

Jane Rasbash, co-led the facilitation Leadership Skills week and well supported the design studio case study groups. FF College coordinator - Mari Hollander.



# Design Studio Case Studies

**Ecotone Group , Cerrado, Brasil** – Institute Bioregional of Cerrado (IBC), led by IBC community member Cintia Godoy. Cintia is currently living and studying in Findhorn.

The newly forming land-based intentional community with aims to practice and preserve indigenous skills in construction and farming, share knowledge and extend the protected habitat of the region.

**Mycelium, Sion, Switzerland**, led by Alain Maret, Sion resident and an etiks co- founder. etiks: *'Plateforme et incubateur d'actions et de solutions locales'*

Designing further developments for a localised network of people and projects aiming to cultivate a participatory hub, resilient local action and to illuminate our relationship with values and exchange; much is undertaken as gift economy or freely given. Already a successful co-op Cafe, education programmes in sustainability, cultural activities, incredible edible landscaping and much more to come.

**The Phoenix , Ferrara, Italy**

An Urban regeneration project lead by Anna Tambini native of Ferrara.

Project aims to retro-fit an abandoned old Fire station in the centre of the city for co housing, community hub and gardens.

The Phoenix is a laboratory of urban life and work, where people can explore, co- create and experience sustainable abundant living.

This project designs for a thriving ethical economical model replacing the alternative debt based system.

**2014 Financial Outcomes - Design for Sustainability**

**Income**

9 full paying, 3 participants funded	£ 20,790
Bursary income / higher fee / deposits	£ 2,500

**Total**

**£ 23,290**

**Expenditure**

Accommodation to FF	£ 9,700
Extra meals to FF	£ 100
Faculty and staff	£ 7,500
Coordination & Bookings - FFC	£ 3,000
Faculty Travel	£ 1,000
Manuals to Big Sky	£ 250
Marketing	£ 500
Materials – ecokit / classroom	£ 200
Sundry	£ 50
Transport (FF bus)	£ 50
Gaia Education fees and report design	£ 200

**Total**

**£22,550**

**NET =**

**+ £740**

towards all FFC general overheads – accreditation, accounts, insurance, etc.

