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Overview

EDE Findhorn 2017 unfolded with the blessings of unseasonably pleasant weather -again! October really is a fine month to visit Findhorn. Extended lunch break (2hrs) and a free day on the weekend provided time to be outside, in the dunes and woodlands, many swimming in the sea of Moray Firth. A very self-organizing group took advantage of yoga and Scottish dance classes in the nearby town, bought bicycles to tour & travel beyond The Park ecovillage and cooked special meals in their guest accommodation.

Each week participants explored facets of what is required to design a full-featured human settlement or ecovillage. The whole picture is, of course, much greater than the parts we can explore; however, many additional resources are provided in our shared online resource library offering leads and indicators for further research and skill development.

The weavers were... both very passionate and very warm-hearted people, if we needed help we had it immediately, and their lessons and support really worked well. I have been so pleased to be with them and get to know them a little this past 4 weeks, I am going to miss them.

Rhythms of the day

Participants start the day in their guesthouses and may join the community in morning meditations or Taize singing. Morning Session generally focus on theory with supportive exercises. Afternoons often include design studio time and other more practical activities. In the evenings there were optional sharing activities organised by group members, course organisers or events for the wider Findhorn community that participants can join.

Participants

We welcomed a cohort of 14 activists from New Zealand, England, Australia, Iceland, USA and various European countries - Denmark, Netherlands, France, Portugal, Spain. The group consisted of 12 Women and 2 men; they ranged in age from 25-56. They came with knowledge from their careers in engineering, education, building, business, architecture, health, social work and healing arts.
Course Content Evolutions
This Findhorn EDE honed the four dimensions in sequence of Social, Ecological, Economic and Worldviews; there were some overlaps of themed content to support integration (or due to the availability of faculty).

A day visit from May East offered an update on the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals and ways to engage communities to focus on them. We invited in community members to join this teaching and would like to increase community members participation in the future courses.

We continued prioritising content in design methodology & skill building for collaborative processes. The design teams provided an action learning context where participants were able to dive deep into the experience of collaborating in teams of people with diverse life experience.

Sociocracy was introduced in the first week and the teams selected a group facilitator to take them through the process of defining the team’s aims. There was a strong desire to continue using sociocracy throughout the course. This was done by defining the design teams as ‘work circles’ that were able to feed proposals to the “general circle” which comprised their selected circle delegates and delegates from the EDE core team. The design teams where also the context where participants were able to practice facilitation.

Last year we realised the opportunity to highlight a Worldview thread of Joanna Macy’s Work That Reconnects (WTR) through the course as faculty members offered some of these exercises as part of their sessions. This year with changes in our faculty we missed this opportunity. For EDE 2018 we plan to consciously design WTR to be a thread that runs throughout the course once again.

We also see the opportunity to introduce the process of Restorative Circles and then use it where appropriate to facilitate any conflict that arises. We would also like to introduce more embodied survey tools such as the Stuck Exercise from Ulab to help the design teams and the group gain insight into non-visible group dynamics. For these reasons we expect to offer the EDE course for a full five weeks next year.
Again, EDE Findhorn 2017 provided participants with design projects based in the Park Ecovillage, Findhorn. This decision proved to be fruitful in a number of ways.

- Creating equivalence among the project team members
- Providing thorough project information at the beginning of the design time
- Ability for all team members to visit/survey the site
- Meeting with a designated community liaison person for client survey practice
- Provision of accurate base maps in a range of scales
- The host community benefits from the participant creative design thinking
- Participants are able to contribute to something that has a possibility of being realised

Basing the design studio time on local challenges again gave us three outstanding design projects and one faculty member, who's been on the team since the first EDE Findhorn stated that these were the best design projects yet.

**Week 1 Social/Worldview Dimension & Design Studio**

At the beginning of the first week the group were introduced to an overview model of Social Design tools and subsequent sessions provided the opportunity to dive deeper into each component of the model including some work on values, communication and process tools, skills training and project management.
We introduced the 7 Skills for Community Participation (these skills are usually introduced in the Participatory Learning Facilitation training, however, which provided a foundation for healthy community participation - including the ability to speak leanly from the heart and listen well to others perspectives.

The group glue was developed through community building games which were debrief using the action learning questions of: What did you feel? What went well? What could you do differently?

Participants were introduced to the concept of Eldership - learning the four basic archetypes that contribute to the Eldership way of being in community. They participated in introductory level Processwork exercises and a piece of group work where they selected to work on the polarity of creating rural Ecovillage vs. working in the cities.

The concept of whole, living systems design was introduced in this week along with some specific design methods. For the design projects we continued working with locally based project sites which were introduced this week bringing about the formation of the design teams.

Participants were given tours of the Ecovillage including the Hinterland, a nature conservation & regeneration area which became a destination place for many during breaks.

This week participants were introduced to the practice of Gift Circle - which was then also held in week 3 and 5.

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<td>Through the Community Compass model participants gained an overview of all the elements necessary for successful community life.</td>
<td>Broad survey of Social dimension themes alongside, Design approaches and Design projects created a very full week! We would aim to cover this material along with further Worldview content in two weeks at the start of the course next year.</td>
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<td>Participants received a good grounding in Eldership and archetypes, and field theory. Through these model some of them gained personal insight into their behaviour patterns.</td>
<td>If possible we would have the ecokits begin before the week mainly themed on ecological content as it provides a purposeful team building exercise that can be debriefed into a range of social skills - leadership/followership or group facilitation for example.</td>
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<td>The group work stimulated some healthy tension in the group.</td>
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<td>Gift Circle is a great way to give participants the space and time express needs of, or offer gifts to each other - which creates community glue. The group enjoyed a wider range of activities through sharing their knowledge and skills with each other or meeting each other's needs.</td>
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Providing time for design teams to agree on how they want to work together - led to minimal conflict, team member transparency and a more authentic collaborative team environment.

The Design Projects were introduced with a presentation and site visit with opportunity to raise questions to the local liaison people.

From the participants: Facilitators are insightful, experienced effective and well prepared with good material. You are all just brilliant! The Diversity of teachers and the way you teach is great!
**Week 2 Ecological Dimension**

Taught Sessions included the topics Water, Energy, Soil and Green buildings with a tour of eco home at The Park. The mini eco kit experiments replicating a Living Machine started the week and the teams for this were the same as the Design studio teams to providing the opportunity to hone the team's collaboration skills in a rapid design context.

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<td>A walk along the river on Saturday afternoon was much appreciated. The shorter introduction to water remediation and Living Machine principles on the Sunday afternoon for the beginning of the eco kit challenge worked well. A day with May East on SDGs with invited community members joining in was welcome. An evening talk by Alan Watson of Trees for Life was appreciated. Vocabulary was provided within the week and not before. Ample resources were added to the Google doc for participants to access as interested. The presentations went well the design teams are engaged and embracing the design frameworks and process tools. EcoKit challenge was a great team process for the design teams to learn about their group dynamics as well as learning the process of water bioremediation. The Green Design presentation was engaging and provided participants with good background into the roots of eco-design and how it takes form in contemporary architecture. EcoTour home visits were inspiring and gave the participants an insight into eco-home options. We made time in the schedule for a facilitated process on SDGs by May East which was rich with group discussion and participatory engagement. This also this provided an opportunity for participants to meet community members.</td>
<td>By having two weeks of design, social WVs prior to Ecology dimension the design studio time could become more focused on Ecology questions. Provide participants with a glossary of relevant terminology or ask them to learn it before coming on the course - for example kilowatt hours. Let the eco-kit project run longer and avoid ending it on a Friday which gets full with presentations and completing the week. Make time to make compost and other outdoor work in nature activities. Leave Sunday evenings open so those who want to can join the local, regular dance session. We showed the film Home, however participants found it dated and dispiriting. For next year we aim to find a film that focuses on the positive, for example Symphony of the Soil. We recognise that the Design Studio prompts are beneficial - like unpacking Relative Permanence or design principles and make time to sequentially drip feed them in at the beginning of Design Studio sessions.</td>
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From the participants feedback: They're all magic - this is the first course I've been to where everyone seems to go above & beyond. Lots of tangible examples of applications of the theories. Group work necessary and shows us how to apply our Knowledge. [DW, (builder and course leader herself)]

Biomimicry, for me it was a great discovery. AN
**Week 3 Economic Dimension**

Participants were introduced to macroeconomics and the negative impact the current economic worldview of growth is having on people and the planet and that this model is a small human constructed system that dominates human and other planetary life.

They learned about Kate Raworth’s Donut Economics - a worldview that there are limits within the ecosystem services and there are baseline human needs that should be met and that we need to design within those limits and for those needs. This along with the concept from David Graeber’s work on debt that humans are inherently generous.

The Social Enterprise Panel gave participants the opportunity to meet and learn from three community members who are engaged in local enterprise.

They were given an overview of potential legal models required for setting up an ecovillage or social enterprise. For their team project they focused on developing a social enterprise income generator that they presented to funders.

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<td>Jonathan Dawson returned bringing his storytelling style to the introduction of macroeconomics. This made it the topic more accessible for those who didn't have a prior interest.</td>
<td>While the &quot;Dragon's Den&quot; process is valuable, we can improve the learning by having their brief and expected outputs in a written handout.</td>
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<td>The Social Enterprise Panel gave participants another way of learning along with exposure to people who work daily with the challenge of income generation and sharing the wealth. The Panel as a new learning format which we could possibly introduce for other dimensions.</td>
<td>As we request of design teams a clear focus on budgeting, we also need to review the calculation sheets we provide and update and clarify them, as well as making sure each group understands how to use them when faculty aren’t there to help.</td>
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<td>Participants were provided with an overview of legal structures that can be used in Scotland to form social enterprises - this being a pointer for the types of legal structures participants need to look for in the countries where their projects are based.</td>
<td>Effective budgeting is an essential part of realising any project and we wish to continue to support participants gaining confidence in this task.</td>
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<td>The Social Enterprise challenge was introduced and participants had a pressure cooker experience of creativity to develop a social enterprise that would generate income for their ecovillage design. In this mini design process they got to include budget and presentation skills.</td>
<td>Provide a fundraising overview that shows all the different types of funding and timeframes needed to succeed, and the pros and cons in relation to each one.</td>
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<td>..... the challenge in this dimension in that there are two major economics threads - and each could really do with at least a week. The first thread is the economic and finances of actually funding the building of a project and the second is providing information and experience with alternative economic models that could be used once the ecovillage comes into existence.</td>
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We worked with the Gift Circle again - introducing it the first week and continuing during the course. This provided two rich learning opportunities - the participants learned a complementary form of exchange they can immediately apply at home and the group glue was increased through the diverse range of needs that were met and gifts offered.

From the participant feedback:

Such a delight to be so engaged with economics week! A good amount of information given and clearly explained. TJ
Teachers very helpful with the work group; Group work was exciting, and very productive too. PG
The new approach to the economic subject, I liked very much the diversity of subjects. AN
**Week 4 Worldview / Social Dimensions**

In this week the participants were introduced to a range of worldviews - from the macro-worldview of Gaia Theory to the micro-worldview of Gaianeering (working with subtle realms) and from the spiral of v-memes in Spiral Dynamics to ways of connecting with nature through tracking and observation skills.

A session on Personal Resilience gave participants tools they can take with them and apply when navigating life after EDE.

At this point in the course more time was allocated to the Design Studio so the design teams could apply what they've been learning in their ecovillage designs.

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<td>The introduction Gaia Theory provided a macro-underpinning to the why of ecovillages and we are considering introducing it earlier in the course.</td>
<td>We'd like to bring the worldview perspectives into the course earlier so participants have a clear sense of the worldview from which the design thinking emerges.</td>
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<td>Providing participants with tools to support their mental and spiritual health and wellbeing as they begin to prepare to return to life after EDE.</td>
<td>Since we have started using local projects we find that with the Worldview content the presentations tend to mirror back to the audience the practices we already know and live, we are considering making the content for the Social and Worldview dimensions be designed into the small community of the design teams and then have the Ecological and Economic content be reflected in the project site design.</td>
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<td>Bringing in the subtle realm work that Findhorn is internationally known for.</td>
<td>This year we didn't include the Council of All Beings - we would like to find a way to include it in 2018 as it offers a way for participants to connect more deeply with a non-human form and speak from that perspective.</td>
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From the participants:
I find the resilience session really interesting, and was really surprised and it open my mind a bit more the session about the unseen. JB

About all the others activities in this week, I think they have been my favourites ones in the one month course. I love that week of Worldview. Thank you so much for such a present (gift) week!! (AN ??)
**Design Studio**

Design studio provides time for participants to apply the EDE dimension content to a specific project with the intention of deepening their learning through application.

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<td>Making time in the course to provide participants with design and project management tools that they can apply to the design project and take home.</td>
<td>Provide a brief time of deepening and reminding of the various design tools at the beginning of each session and how they might be applied during the design process.</td>
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<td>Providing onsite projects (see Course Content Evolutions for details).</td>
<td>Ask the teams to articulate some of the tools they used and how they applied them in the process part of the final presentation as a way of reinforcing their action learning.</td>
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<td>Providing more time for Design Studio brought about &quot;the best design projects to date&quot; according to Michael Shaw a faculty member who has taught on every EDE Findhorn since the first one.</td>
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**Process Skills**

For a second year we chose to consciously emphasise the opportunity to develop process skills in the context of the Design Teams as the action learning skills development in the course. These skills include facilitation, conflict facilitation, recapping content sessions, problem solving and decision-making in groups.

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<td>Setting up the design teams to develop team agreements and practice sociocratic organisation provided the structural support for healthy collaboration.</td>
<td>Early on in the course, facilitate a session on facilitation so participants all have an overview of that before going into their design teams.</td>
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<td>This proved essential when team members found themselves in conflict, returning to the original team agreements supported them to find a way through.</td>
<td>Introduce the Groups Works card deck as a way of talking about different elements necessary for holding</td>
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<td>Giving more time at the end of the EDE Course for design enable better focus and very good outcomes.</td>
<td>Reviewing the Agile and Lean processes could be useful learning for the Design Teams.</td>
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<td>We intend to offer both the WV and Social modules early on in the course to support the teams to develop their communication practices. With Ecology and Economic design issues to follow with a final week dedicated largely to design time and completion.</td>
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**Design Projects**

Three local projects were offered for the Design Studio focus. Participants had the opportunity to select the project most relevant to their home context. We were fortunate that there was a fairly even distribution of participants for each project. The purpose of the site specific projects where for participants on apply the knowledge and experience gained in the course and what they came with into a local design project using collaborate design skills and a whole living systems design approach.

**Duneland Phase 2a**

The design brief for this project required the design team to develop housing for 8 households on an existing brownfield site at The Park Ecovillage. 5 participants including an architect collaborated on this project developing a design that emphasized shared facilities such as bathing and laundry facilities as well as covering the housing with glass to create outdoor spaces that could be enjoyed all year round.

The team developed an innovative social enterprise whose added value produce was a small scale, easily movable compost toilet.
Pineridge Redesign

The participants for this project works towards a redesign for an existing older part of the ecovillage, still mainly a caravan park. Layout. The team did well considering that their strengths were in Social and World view areas. They demonstrated good grasp of the principle and each team member took on an aspect of the alterations they would recommend. We were especially well informed about cord wood building styles. For their economic generator, they developed a craft centre with studio and workshop space for their income generating project.

Central Area Development

The participants for this project worked on the redesign/layout of an existing part of the ecovillage that included the entrance, shop and long term residential caravans. They were tasked with considering the traffic flow as well as giving consideration of the experience people have on entering the ecovillage.

They developed a modular designed well-being centre for their social enterprise with a potentially high return on investment with income generated through the rental of beautiful healing spaces to practitioners.

Notes for overall course development in 2018 -- Key insights to progress and integrate next time

<table>
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<th>Reflection on EDE16</th>
<th>How we responded in EDE17</th>
<th>Thoughts for EDE18</th>
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<tr>
<td>Create more opportunity for Findhorn based faculty to teach and lead; and for community members to join in the sessions.</td>
<td>Most of the EDE17 faculty live local to the course site or have a long standing relationship with The Park Ecovillage community and the EDE Findhorn course. Community members participated in the SDGs, the Social Enterprise and the Final Design presentations, as well as some social events including the final night party that the EDE group held.</td>
<td>We will continue on the same trajectory as much as possible. A local challenge is the need for more community members to become also skilled in teaching. We will look for opportunities to more formally weave a cohort of community members throughout the course. Or perhaps different sectors joining the course at relevant times, for example - social entrepreneurs during Economic sessions and community elders or families during a Social session.</td>
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<td>Further collaboration opportunities among the lead faculty and key presenters, seeking to reinforce the course material of each other’s</td>
<td>Due to the loss of a key faculty member, we changed the course design from having a key faculty member organise and hold each week to this function for creating the week’s content and activities pattern being held by the course</td>
<td>If we are able to continue working with the EDE17 faculty we see several opportunities for more synthesis</td>
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| Dimension, and complement it in more integral ways will be undertaken. | Coordinator and Weavers.  
We also brought in a number of faculty who were completely new to the course this year so we weren't able to do so much integration. |  

| Further refinements in the project selecting process for Design Studio time is desirable. We anticipate a pre course process that brings all the relevant information together for participants and faculty to become well briefed -- before the design groups are selected. | We are in a position to offer what we proposed after EDE16 | 

| We intend to offer a more succinct approach to design in general - as required in the Design Studio and as an meta view within the whole course. | We were able to partially offer what we proposed after EDE16.  
The design framework GaSADIMET gives participants a good overview of a fairly generic set of steps in which to navigate developing a design.  
We were able to offer the Community Compass as Social Dimension framework. | We are working out how to simplify and synthesize the material further  
Expect to continue with these tools | 

| In future the Design Studio questions will need to be further refined to provide a clear focus on Design principles discussed as well as the issues raised by each dimension. | We developed a list of elements from each dimension along with prompt questions that were to be addresses in the project designs. | We can further refine the list and prompt questions. |
Course Team
We are privileged that our core faculty for the Ecovillage Design Education course are practitioners in their fields, with generous teaching experience locally and internationally.

Ariane Burgess, (MSc Regenerative Design and Leadership) permaculturist, artist, local Green party organiser and Transition Town leader brought her wisdom and insight to the course providing design and process skills this year. [http://arianeburgess.com](http://arianeburgess.com)

Michael Shaw trained as an engineer and has specialised in the fields of ecological design, particularly purifying water supply, transforming waste and green building. He is a founding member of The Ecovillage Institute at Findhorn, an active director of Findhorn College engaging with research grants in the field of Renewable Energy, and serves on the Gaia Education Board and currently works within the team of Biomatrix Water ([link](http://www.biomatrix-water)).

Gill Emslie, PhD is an international facilitator, trainer, executive coach and consultant working in settings ranging from the NGO, social and environmental justice sectors, to business and local government. [http://www.gillemslie.net](http://www.gillemslie.net)

Jonathan Dawson is a sustainability educator, currently working as Head of Economics at Schumacher College in Devon. Jonathan Dawson teaches on the MA course titled: Economics for Transition. He has been a long-term resident at the Findhorn ecovillage and a former President of the Global Ecovillage Network, and has 20 plus years experience as a researcher, author, consultant and project manager in the field of small enterprise development in Africa and South Asia. ([link](https://www.schumachercollege.org.uk/about/jonathan-dawson))

Alex Walker, financial consultant who has advised numerous community and environmental groups in the UK on the subjects of community ownership, renewable energy, and affordable housing. He is chairman of Ekopia Ltd., a community benefit co-operative that raises investment capital for various local projects, a board member of Findhorn Wind Park Ltd. and of Development Trusts Association Scotland.

Lisa Shaw is an artist, designer and environmental educator. She is a partner in the Ecovillage Institute, and Biomatrix Water ([link](http://www.biomatrixwater.com/)), an ecological design and engineering company based at Findhorn.

Chris Johnstone is a medical doctor, author and coach who has been a trainer in the Work That Reconnects for more than two decades, working with Joanna Macy on many occasions and running facilitator trainings in the United Kingdom. ([link](http://chrisjohnstone.info/about-me))

Jane Rasbash, consultant, trainer and professional fundraiser works in sustainable development using an empowerment and engaged spirituality approach. She lives in Findhorn Ecovillage and has taught on EDEs in Findhorn, Sieben Linden and Thailand.
Deborah Benham, PhD in wildlife conservation, environmental education and the people/nature interface. After 15 years working in this field she moved into broader areas of regenerative culture and design for sustainability, with a particular interest in social sustainability and social enterprise. She has been a student of Jon Young’s, and involved with 8 Shields and Art of Mentoring since 2011 and offers consultancy, trainings and workshops in nature connection, regenerative culture, sustainability and youth empowerment.

Maria Cooper co weaver for community life. When not lost in her jungle of a garden, she also works for the Scottish Communities Climate Action Network as well as in the educational part of the Global Ecovillage Network. She helps to hold permaculture and ecovillage design courses with FFC. She is an advocate for Transition University approach across the country and internationally, and has just recently published this guide.

### Financial Outcomes

- **Income — course fees** £34,383.00
- **Income -- bursary donations** £10.00
- **Bursaries offered** (-£ 700.00)
- **NET** £34,393.00

**Course expenditures**
- **Food and Accommodation** £13,500.00
- **Faculty** £9,000.00
- **Course Coordination** £4,000.00
- **Office Overheads** £2,500.00
- **Extra Meals** £175.00
- **Marketing** £500.00
- **Course Materials** £150.00
- **Faculty Travel** £600.00
- **Course Travel** £75.00
- **Gaia Fee** £100.00
- **Course development 2017** £2,000.00

**TOTAL** £32,600.00

**NET** £1,793.00