Ecovillage Design Education 2020
Algoed Estate, Enschede, NL
July 3 – 31, 2020
Final Report
Inhoudsopgave

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This report was mainly written by two of our participants, Sonya and Peter. Due to personal circumstances they had to miss some of the workshops. In order to meet the certification criteria we asked them to do an extra inquiry into this EDE, speaking with teachers, participants and the people from Algoed estate, our fantastic hosts. The result you can find here. We're happy!

GAIA Nederland, Monica, Henk and Hugo
1. COURSE OVERVIEW

With a few days to go before the start of the 2020 Dutch *Ecovillage Design Education* (EDE) course on July 3rd, it still remained uncertain if the event could be held as planned at the Algoed Estate. Under the government COVID-19 pandemic measures, all public camping facilities including Algoed had been closed until late June. Also, international travel was either prohibited or strongly discouraged. With staff, trainers and students eager to start, it came as a great relief when the Estate opened up again and we could go ahead with the EDE 2020!

While earlier EDE courses in Holland had more participants, the uncertainty and restrictions took their toll. This was one of the reasons participants could also choose to join for one or more weeks instead of the whole course. In the first week we had twelve participants, including a Belgian and a Japanese. In the next weeks we had new people coming and a very dedicated core staying for the whole programme. The student group was a good mixture of gender and ages with four participants in their twenties, three in their sixties and the rest somewhere in-between. The number of participants allowed for a relaxed atmosphere and ample opportunities for interaction and personal attention.

EDE 2020 was organised by *Gaia Nederland* and Algoed Estate and supported by *Gaia Education*, with the team of Monica and Henk Petter and Hugo Schönberck of Gaia Nederland as experienced organisers and Angelien Hoppen was Algoed Estate’s liaison to the EDE group.

This year’s host site, the Algoed Estate is situated near Enschede, in the east of the Netherlands, close to the German border. Having been in operation as a social project for more than twenty years, the Algoed farm combines a number of buildings, a camping site, several food and permaculture gardens, meadows and some forest land totalling nearly 50,000 sqm. Algoed is run by half a dozen inhabitants, supported by over fifty volunteers who participate on a daily or weekly basis in various agricultural, building, maintenance and cooking activities. Additionally, the place is a regular meeting ground for a network of friends from all over the country and beyond who organise and enjoy joint meals, alternative festivals, spiritual and music gatherings characterised by good spirits and a limited budget.

While the obligatory social distancing measures and the sometimes cold and rainy weather were relatively minor concerns, the captivating programme and excellent social atmosphere made EDE 2020 a thrilling experience. As some participants are scheduled to move into the newly-build Zuiderveld ecovillage near Nijmegen before the end of this year, the EDE lessons and shared experiences fell on fertile ground.
2. THE TEAM

Organisers

Henk Petter and Monica Petter were this EDE’s organisers; Angelien Hoppen was Algoed Estate’s liaison to the EDE group.

Henk works as a teacher sustainable engineering for the Ecolyceum in Deventer and as a science teacher on the Zeven Linden in Dedemsvaart. He is also coordinator sustainability for higher education and works together with Cleantech Regio, sustainable companies in the Apeldoorn – Zutphen area, and teachers on sustainable challenges. They organize a large yearly event where schools present their challenges and the best win prizes. Henk is a member of the Jury. Cleantech Regio won the first price as an initiative which connect and arrange education between sustainable companies and schools. Henk is initiator of starting Ecovillage initiative Akasha and chairman of GAIA Netherlands. He is actively producing magazines, movies and projects that fit the 4D framework of GAIA Education and are also suitable to contribute to the challenges. Henk is an ambassador of GEN (Global Ecovillage Network).

Monica is certified GEESE teacher at GAIA Education and TOT trainer of GEN. She is a Trustee of GAIA Netherlands. She writes articles for the magazine, develops educational material, does marketing and promotion and supports various working groups within the foundation as well as its projects. Monica is co-initiator of the Akasha initiative; a group starting a sustainable living and working community. For ten years, she has been a teacher in agricultural colleges, in horticulture and biology. She has been editor of various professional magazines like Terugkoppeling and Floristry Magazine. She also had a practice in integrative children therapy and teamcoaching with horses. She is researching holistic education and organize workshops about integral education and analyzing school developments.
Angelien's attitude to life is optimistic and practical. Organizing and teaching are a common thread throughout her life. She is versatile and has an analytical ability helping her to keep track of complex situations. She communicates easily, listens well and is always looking for harmony. She enjoys working together and likes having her own responsibility. Finally, she brings life experience and humour. Her interests are in the field of sustainability, greening and citizen participation. Angelien is a trained and experienced teacher (Biology, Drawing and Mindfulness). Since 2015, she has been intensively involved as one of the coordinators in the organization of AlGoed Estate.
Teachers

Sofie Baeke, Ishi Crosby, Paul Hendriksen, Henry Mentink, Hugo Schönbeck, Annelies van Rijn, Ingmar Tensen and Bas Visser were the trainers at the Dutch EDE 2020.

Sofie is a sensitive, creative and adventurous autodidact living in Ghent, Belgium. She graduated in philosophy and teacher education, and mainly worked in organising & teaching jobs in Belgium, Spain & Italy. As a travel agent, tour manager for artists, and teacher of philosophy, ethics and cultural sciences, she was always looking for ways to optimise the social interaction, participation & collaboration between participants. During an alternative school project in Brazil in 2004 (Edu On Tour), she discovered inclusive ways of collaborating & the art of facilitation. She soon started facilitating (instead of teaching) workshops, classes & events, and continues to do so. Today she is passionate about experience-based learning, expressive arts, spiritual ecology & Dragon Dreaming. In her free time she loves painting & illustrating, dancing & singing. Sofie became a certified Gaia educator recently. Her current dream is to bring facilitation skills and nature connection to educators & youngsters.

Ishi works from an integrated ecological and social approach to the healing of the Earth. As a Permaculture designer and teacher, he has almost twenty years of experience in designing and constructing sustainable food gardens. He has developed the concept of “Integrated Landscapes”: landscapes designed in such a way that everything that a person needs, such as a place to live, food, water, energy, etc., is produced on site. Ishi is involved in Permaculture on a daily basis and has created food gardens for various projects and clients in the EU. He is currently working in the Netherlands with clients and local groups such as the Transition Town movement, Eco-village projects and an Urban agriculture project in The Hague. At Centrum Wilgenhoeve he is busy constructing an Earthhouse (a zero energy and CO2 neutral house) and the construction and further development of the Permaculture Garden. He also provides training on the practical use of mythology. He has years of experience with the “Open Space” problem-solving method which is fully in line with the three ethical principles of Permaculture: care for the Earth, care for people and fair sharing.
Paul started his working career as a journalist, before working for 13 years for COS Overijssel (regional centre for educational projects on international cooperation and sustainable development). Since more than ten years, he is an independent consultant, project manager and teacher on local sustainability issues. Above all Paul is a typical do-thinker. He is nationwide co-initiator of various sustainability organisations and projects, such as Transition Towns Netherlands, Transition Town Deventer, Olst in Transition, Association Earthships East Netherlands, and village coop Goed Veur Mekare.

Henry, being founder and Director of MyWheels, took the challenge of founding Het Veerhuis Varik. Together with others it’s there that he gives meaning to the new economy. His mission is to give awareness and love a practical place. With this aim he founded the first Village Trade Centre. The Veerhuis is also the home of the Club of Budapest, Global Ecovillage Network Netherlands and is connected with Damanhur in Italy. Practical work in the village of Varik as well as being connected with the world. He developed the first 3D business plan, the UNO-Box with Source plan and a new legal form of legal entity that is easy to establish and still meets legal requirements. This is called the Participantship.

Hugo is an inspired entrepreneur and experienced consultant in various projects, research and consultancies. He brings a practical and warm hearted approach to sustainability and a large international network. He loves the challenge of bringing together the best people for any given task. He is an expert in sustainability and behaviour change, designing programmes and facilitating teams in communities, local authorities and companies for Global Action Plan, Nuon Energy, British Gas and currently partner in GPX Energybank, a sustainable energy and smart grid start-up, as well as promoting the very low energy sustainable blockchain from Energy Coin Foundation. Cofounder of a Dutch think-tank on climate change with government officials, NGO’s and representatives from industry that did ground-breaking work on carbon reduction and compensation.

Annelies only feels at home in the multipotentiality box, because it’s one of the few boxes that isn’t a real box. She worked as gymnastic teacher, entertainer, actress, theatre reviewer, teacher, presenter and coach. Over ten years she was team leader of diverse entertainment teams at more than 15 leisure parks all over the Netherlands. Usually she was in places where a stunning team performance had to be done in a very short time or where underperforming teams must shine again quickly. The goal: make the team, guests and manager happy and deliver them a great and amazing time with mostly ordinary things. She studied pedagogy at the University of Amsterdam and became a primary school teacher with a passion for a more holistic education system. She pores over music-education, psychomotor / movement-based learning, cooperative learning and a lot of theories that stimulate brain-friendly and natural learning environments. She believes that exciting experiences and a warm ambiance are necessary to develop wondering, expression skills and body awareness. Hands-on, minds-on, hearts-on activities let us learn, grow and love. Now she tries to combine all here different experiences and personal love for nature, dancing, singing, theatre, playing, spiritual grow, unboxingthinking and system work in her own business: De Verwonderkring; to help children, adults and teams to shine their own powerful uniqueness.
Ingmar finds it a challenge to portray people on all sorts of materials, such as waste cardboard. In the studio where she can be found every week, she tries to breathe new life into waste. For example, she turns old jeans into new fun things, such as a pencil case. In addition, she graduated as a restorer and she loves to restore works of art and ancient ships. She has followed the vocational school for design (Cibap). Ingmar is currently developing a curriculum for schools focused on overcoming barriers to expressing creativity.

Bas is co-initiator of the ecological home-work initiative De Zwerm in Winterswijk and co-owner of Levensland, a 3.5 ha large food forest laid out according to permaculture and Anastasia principles. He lives in a farm (starting home-work group) in Winterswijk. Bas is a lawyer and, among other things, uses his knowledge to supervise starting ecological home-work initiatives and ecovillages. In addition, he has immersed himself in all sorts of cultures and shamanism. The teachers he names are Dave Heggglun (Maori), Ayako Goh (Japan), Ahamkara (Altai), Erik Berglund (USA), Daniel Crane (Tsuu Tina, Canada), Wai Turoa (Maori), Moon Deer (Ojibwaj, USA), Elliot Rivera (Cuba), Suvalaq (Inuit, Alaska), Philip Carr-Gomm (Druid, England), Inti Cesar (Peru), Kiesha / Little grandmother (USA), Tulku Lobsang Rinopoche (India), Ayangat (Mongolia), Anastasia (Siberia) and all who live close to nature, close to the Source.
3. COURSE RHYTHM

From the beginning, the group formed a community in which household tasks like cleaning, preparing breakfast and cooking assistance were divided among the participants. In addition, from Monday to Friday we worked together with the Algoed community practicing skills such as gardening in the permaculture garden, renovating the building and doing major cleaning and reorganising tasks.

Daily schedule from Monday to Friday:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>07:10 – 07:55</td>
<td>Tai Chi lessons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08:00 – 08:30</td>
<td>Breakfast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08:45 – 09:15</td>
<td>Check-in &amp; Practical affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09:15 – 09:30</td>
<td>Work tasking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09:30 – 11:00</td>
<td>Participation in Algoed's Working circles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00 – 11:30</td>
<td>Coffee break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30 – 12:30</td>
<td>Working circles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30 – 13:00</td>
<td>Buddy time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:00 – 14:30</td>
<td>Lunch break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:30 – 17:00</td>
<td>Course time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17:00 – 17:30</td>
<td>Check-out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17:30 – 18:00</td>
<td>Personal time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18:00 – 19:30</td>
<td>Dinner break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19:30 – 21:00</td>
<td>Open space (workshops, lectures, games, music, films, aesthetic dance etc.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Saturday mornings and Sunday evening were devoted to the Design project (Dragon dreaming, concepts, methodology, project group time).
Participants with particular skills (Tai Chi, sociocracy, art, computer skills) contributed with spontaneous classes & presentations.

Group sessions were structured to invite active and secure participation. Among the techniques used were the Talking stick (a virtual corona-proof variety), ending each contribution with ‘Aho!’, and appointing Heart-, Time- and Place-keepers.

4. HIGHLIGHTS of the FOUR DIMENSIONS

The various theories, methods and techniques are explained on the basis of the twenty themes that are illustrated in the sustainability mandala, using exercises and examples. The theory is linked to the experiences gained during the exercises and the knowledge, skills and personal experiences of the participants.

In each of the four EDE weeks, the focus is on a different dimension of sustainability.
Social dimension

In the Social section participants learned:

• to develop a common vision for a collective project, including and transcending individual perspectives;
• to make decisions that everyone can accept and support;
• to improve their communication skills and communicate in a more compassionate way;
• to deal with conflict and diversity as an invitation to growth.

Among the methods introduced this week were: Deep Sharing, Ken Wilber’s Quadrant, the CLIPS model, Fishbowl Conversation technique and Social Permaculture, applying the laws and designs of nature to forms of human organisation.

Paul Hendriksen, co-initiator of the Aardehuizen (Earthship) project in Olst where 23 earth houses were built during three years by all inhabitants themselves until 2015, shared his theoretical knowledge and practical experiences with community-building, overcoming challenges and frustrations, and celebrating success. He distinguishes the initial dreaming phase, during which ecovillage ideas are formed and shared. Many early participants discontinue their involvement as commitment requirements of financial and time investments increase. Dreamers who are reluctant to bend and compromise fly on to pollinate new initiatives with their experiences.

During the Building phase dreams and hopes meet the reality of building, which often comes with hardship, delays, cost increases and frustrations. Those that persevere until the building is finished get to experience ‘living the example’ of sustainability. In this period, intense collaboration is replaced by relaxing and tailoring individual houses and lifestyles. Building fatigue often brings communal life to low levels, and new projects such as collective gardening and creating communal spaces are required to once again feed the collective spirit.

During a visit to the Aardehuizen project in Olst, students get an intense impression of life in a well-designed ecovillage. Advanced earth ship building and permaculture techniques are demonstrated. The EDE group enthuses about the way in which a relatively small group of social/ecological activists from the Aardehuizen project have managed to embed themselves in wider local and regional transformative networks. They inspired and managed to set up an impressive range of initiatives, including sustainable energy, collective food gardening, a moneyless shop and social circles of mutual support.
In his lectures on sustainable leadership, Paul demonstrated how a group needs various complementary types and skills such as dreamers, doers, planners and those celebrating successes. To be effective in wider societal networks a group will benefit from its ‘connectors’, ‘mavens’ and ‘salesmen’.

Leadership functions are best rotated to avoid the corruptive effect of even restricted ‘powers’.

Ishi and Sofie explained the Deep democracy method to organise cooperation and fair decision-making. Participants experience a shifting of consciousness as they represented various species of animals and plants on an ‘Earth Council’, (based on Joanna Macy’s Council of All Beings) discussing how human activities in the Anthropocene are endangering many forms of life. Ishi’s moving tale of the Peacemaker illustrates how a societal shift is possible when strong principles and endurance prevail against enormous odds. Students also experienced the importance of common rituals, feasts and the sharing of grief. Close personal connections and community-building can be facilitated by ancient native American traditions such as the Wampum, a traditional shell bead of the Eastern Woodlands tribes.
Ecological dimension

In the Ecological section participants explored:

- Whole Systems Approach to Ecological Design;
- Benefits of Bioregionalism;
- Key principles in the application of appropriate technologies for clean energy, living water, green buildings and healthy soils as well as an introduction to commons and p2p energy sharing;
- Tours of local gardens, water purification and eco-buildings;
- The importance of decentralized organisation for community resilience.

Among the methods introduced this week were: the pioneering work of Bill Mollison and David Holmgren on ecology and permaculture, Joanna Macy's Systems thinking and Deep Ecology. Design Thinking, Deep listening, Sustainable building and renovation, Sustainable energy, Living machines for water purification, Off-the-grid techniques, Spiral dynamics in cultures, Permaculture gardening, Zone mapping, Food forests, Crop rotation.

With Ishi as the lead trainer, this week involved a lot of open air and hands-on lessons. The group learned to recognise and distinguish various edible vegetables and weeds and discussed the nourishing and healing powers of specific plants and herbs. Walking among permaculture beds and wild vegetation, there was ample opportunity for tasting and trying out both common weeds and plants considered as 'holy' in traditional cultures and beliefs.

Figure 5 Permaculture 'classroom'
Economic dimension

In Economic section participants were introduced to:

- Dominant patterns and leverage points for change within today’s globalised economy;
- Ways to bring economic life into alignment with ecological values;
- Right livelihood & social enterprise;
- How money works; community banks and local currencies;
- Relevant legal and financial issues for Ecovillage projects.

Among the concept and methods introduced this week were: The ‘economics of happiness’; fair banking; Simon Sinek’s Golden Circle (‘The Why’), building local economies; legal aspects of organising communities and economy.

During a working visit to ecological home-work initiative De Zwer in Winterswijk Bas Visser, a legal professional and trained druid, introduced the EDE students to various legal and economic constructs serving ecovillages and other initiatives in their successive phases of development. Starting as a foundation or formal association, an initiative can restructure itself into e.g. a cooperative or enterprise if that fits their purpose.

Deciding parameters are a.o. the project’s intention and development phase, the nature of the initiating group, availability of funding and ownership of the land and buildings, whether one wants to attract subsidies or crowd funding, etc. Specific legislation on e.g. natural habitats and conservation, as well as certain fiscal requirements also come into play.
It is important to think through the legal basis and wording of an initiative’s purposes to allow for crowd funding and other innovative ways of investing, the participation of volunteers and people in reintegration programmes, international networking (e.g., woofing - Work exchange on organic and sustainable properties), etc.

The values and possible powers of money and currency is introduced by Hugo Schönberck with artistic assistance by Ingmar Tensen.

To ecologically connect thinking, feeling, and calculating in a sustainable way, they integrate the historical knowledge and modern economic experience of Hugo on money and economics with art.

The power our currencies these days have are far beyond the functions to facilitate sharing goods and exchange services and space in our worlds. The effects of nowadays money systems is not ecologically inspired at all. And even wearing out all kind of balances the earth and inhabitants suffer from.

After the historical explanation of the emergence of money- and exchange-systems, the EDE-2020 trainees worked on the search for the free determination of an ecological vision.
Ultimately, together we artfully shape a vision, impressions and wishes in color and composition. This piece of our ‘Ecological Economy’ is presented to Algoed Estate at the final presentation.

![Figure 10 Painting result which actually depicts the Design group’s initial ideas!](image)

Worldview dimension

In the **Worldview section** participants learned:

- to recognise and communicate sustainability to diverse worldviews;
- to create a deep connection with Nature through personal experience;
- to develop spiritual practices facilitating the ability to balance inner and outer work;
- to design ceremonies for the most significant moments in their projects;
- to apply transition principles and ingredients in their project.

Among the methods and concepts introduced this week were: Restorative worldview, Personal, community and planetary health, Natural and herbal medicines, the native American Vision Quest, the Hero’s Journey and the Pipe Ceremony.

In the final week, many of the elements in the now familiar Sustainability Wheel came together.

During this week, Ishi and Sofie explained the **Tragedy of the commons** concept. Dating back several centuries, this story of a village’s common meadows exemplifies the risk that shared resources get overexploited and finally exhausted by short-sighted individuals. This illustrates the basic need for environmental awareness that is in fact the epitome of sustainability.
Further emphasizing the importance of mother Nature as our best teacher, Ishi discussed the remarkable richness of the edges between two ecosystems, such as forest and grassland. The same principle is at work where cultures meet or when scientific disciplines collaborate. At a system’s edges, we usually find the biggest potential for development and growth.

Experiencing the *Hero’s Journey*, based on the work of Joseph Campbell, turned out to be among the most thought-forming and inspiring components in the entire EDE programme. Remarkably, this exercise threatened to run into trouble when the intended teacher was unavailable due to a sudden illness. Ishi then had to improvise giving the postponed workshop which he was relatively unfamiliar with. Contemplating his preparations for the next day, Ishi wandered off the estate and picked some nettle for later consumption. Coincidentally, he was approached by a man and a conversation developed during which he mentioned his challenge to teach the Hero’s Journey.

The other man introduced himself as Alex and explained that he was actually writing a book on this subject. Additionally, he had developed an experimental workshop around this elaborate rite of passage approach. Alex turned out to be a former banker who got disconnected from his job and the accompanying lifestyle, only to discover Campbell’s epical work and recognising it as his life’s project. Understanding this ‘meaningful coincidence’ in a Jungian synchronicity perspective, Alex and Ishi subsequently presented the EDE students with a guided meditation that proved to be an unforgettable experience.
**Design project ECOroutes**

Methods

EDE Design groups are created to work together on an assignment. The assignment is based on real problems and on the targets that participants bring in themselves. At the end, the Design groups present the results.

During this Dutch EDE 2020, one Design group was formed and delivered results. Its members were Gerard, Marian, Peter, Sonya and Wilma. Their project comprised elements of their individual goals and dreams, and was named ‘ECOroutes’.

In the first week, every EDE participant was encouraged and facilitated to develop and present their personal dreams and ideal, to explore and understand their personal journey, to sketch and visualise their project, to tell inspiring stories and pitch a proposal to ‘investors’.

At the week’s conclusion, the soon-to-be Design group members had drawn and pitched the individual ideals and recognized their common ground. Continuing with a World Café, the establishing participants found out more about each other’s ideas and started dreaming together. As a result, the ECOroutes Project group was formed.

During the following three weeks, while simultaneously following the lessons and participating in Algoed’s working circles, the Design group worked as a collective to organise their end presentation and draw up a comprehensive project report.

**GEN Case study analysis**

During the entire four-week period, the group was presented daily with specific questions related to one of the twenty sustainability themes, for the purpose of collecting information on how Algoed (the EDE’s host serving as case study) attempted to meet various sustainability goals. The assembled observations and assessment was entered in the GEN Analysis tool to be presented to Algoed’s key persons, the EDE staff and other interested people at the final day.
**Project results**

ECO-routes project: key points from the presentation

Introducing the Design group, a ‘traveling saleswoman on a century-old carriage drawn by a pony arrives at the Estate. She tells her surprised audience how she just came from another eco-village in the region. She brought products (bread, jam, apples) and news with her. She travels along ECO-routes that can be followed by bike, on foot or horseback. The ECO-routes connect ecovillages, spiritual centres, ecologically working farmers and craft workshops, nature campsites, etc. All these initiatives together form a Green Network.

The presentation continues indoors, where the now-dismounted Design group members explain how the ECO-routes that Wilma follows are designed from an initiative of the EDE group 2020. Showing on a prepared paper map how those routes connect hundreds of ecological initiatives, the group explains their idea that you can organize a holiday, for example, by staying at nature campsites or with ecological farmers, from where you can visit inspiring and fun places such as a food forest, a herb garden, eco-farmers or eco-villages.

To emphasise the economic dimension, the group underlines how the ECO-map with the routes between ecological initiatives helps them to easily find each other. The ecological initiatives and entrepreneurs can help one another, very practically or with advice, tips & tricks. Working together, they all become more visible to local, regional and national authorities as well as potential customers and followers. The ECO-route initiative makes the rich ecological world far more accessible and transparent, because people can see and experience how much better a sustainable lifestyle can be. How sustainable activities exist and work in practice. What sustainable happiness and well-being looks like. Under the ‘New Normal’, the wellbeing of all living creatures should be our new prosperity. The ECO-routes are intended to connect and inspire, with well-informed and facilitated visitors generating turnover through the activities, sales of organic products, rental for overnight stays, etc.

The EDE Design group has created a proof-of-concept digital file with over 100 addresses plus a GIS map, so that all information can be found on one website.

By clicking on a specific item such as Algoed, more information is shown about activities, access, possible costs and other aspects.
The route's concept is founded on the holistic perspective, applying Permaculture principles. The plan can be realized by collaborating with existing locations of different types. Drawing from already existing virtual, physical and digital networks such as the GEN Network, networks of ecological farmers, and similar thematic or regional networks, the overview can remain up to date and can be expanded with new initiatives. The criterion for inclusion would be that an initiative should, if possible, be substantially active on all four dimensions of Ecology and Social, Economic and Cultural sustainability. Together, this Green Roadmap makes the richly varied ecological movement visible and accessible.

Immediately starting to bring this promising initiative into practice, the Design group registered multiple relevant Internet domain names for future use including ecoroutes.nl, -eu and -org, ecotraveller.eu and -org and ecotourist.nl. After completing the EDE, group members agreed to continue exploring ways to implement and exploit the ECOroutes concept.
The Algoed Case study as seen through the GEN Analysis lens

The outcomes of the Algoed case study were presented on July 31 and received with much recognition and enthusiasm by the audience present. Additionally, the analysis results were recorded and explained in a concise report for EDE’s Dutch staff and the Algoed organisation.

In summary, the Algoed Estate was appreciated by the Group as a hospitable place where people find opportunities for social and healing experiences. Initially, Algoed was not designed to become an ecological project. In recent years however, it has chosen to gradually become eco-friendly. In some aspects, the high costs of investing in e.g. solar panels and other sustainable technologies have so far been prohibitive. To the EDE 2020 Project team, Algoed is already an inspiring and exemplary ecovillage!
Evaluation and Lessons learned

General impressions

This is the third time that an EDE has been organized in the Netherlands. This EDE was influenced by Corona. In a very short time, trainers were able to adapt the program in such a way that the EDE could still be organized despite the presence and risks of Corona.

In the first two weeks, an average of 12 participants took part, and in the last two weeks, five of them continued to follow the full program.

Despite the uncertainties about Corona and the impact it has on the lives of both participants and trainers, we as participants and trainers have been able to accomplish a very special journey together: The Dutch EDE 2020 has left a very positive impact in many areas and has given a positive impact on both participants and trainers their lives. Volunteers and residents of Landgoed Algoed have also become aware of many things through the interaction with participants and trainers of the EDE, and have been inspired by this. There were, of course, also some challenges.

During week 1, the participants experienced some difficulty in understanding the dynamics of the EDE program, which in the initial phase was characterized by making some necessary adjustments to the program caused by illness of trainers, the feedback the organisation team has got from participants and insecurity feelings due to Corona. In combination with some individual emotional discomfort and the challenge of adapting to Algoed’s daily rhythm of working and housekeeping, the group went through a rather difficult start.

Once participants and staff got more familiar among themselves, strong ties were formed and the atmosphere began to relax.

Over the first two weeks, organisers and participants learnt about the importance of clearly communicating, Corona proof environment, and the difference between therapeutic counselling (where there is no or little space within the EDE program) and a safe community-based learning framework.

Points of improvement include clear advance communication and screening to ensure participants’ expectations match the EDE’s general character and intention. Also, the timely and qualitative preparation of the three course books will help students in getting a grip on the programme and particular terms, concepts and methods.

Over the weeks, the quality of (later) courses could benefit when students get the opportunity to individually evaluate specific teachers’ performances.
Key trends from the Gaia Education evaluation survey

Up to now, 14 participants participated in the survey. Percentages are based on this number.

Overall satisfaction:

85 % found that the learning outcomes were very good or excellent fulfilled.
92 % found that the course delivered very good or excellent what it advertised.
92% found that the organizing team worked very good or excellent together.
92% found that the group check-in and checkout were very good or excellent
100% found that the sustainability of the host was very good or excellent.

Strengths described by the participants from the Dutch EDE 2020:

➢ Really living together with everything that goes with it in an already existing community.
➢ Communication, love, community, caring, flexibility.
➢ I think that cooperation with the community of Algoed that hosted us, was in every way the best part of the program.
➢ Delve deeply into the various aspects of eco communities.
➢ Combination with the location and integrity of the trainers team. Also the fellow students where mind!
➢ Lots of interesting different things in 1 day. Very quick safe feeling at the start.
➢ The group, who was very interested.
➢ Broadness, social / group environment, experience with / handling of group dilemmas, practical usefulness of instructed skills.
➢ Enough variation in different kinds of workshops.
➢ Good information and guidance.
➢ Flexibility and price setting. Small scale experience with passionate and caring people.
➢ Deep sharing !! check-ins / check-outs, All personal talks within and outside the program.
➢ Holistic perspective. A lot of foundations in theory.

Possible Improvements described by the participants from the Dutch EDE 2020:

➢ Switch social week with ecology.
➢ Evaluation of individual teachers.
➢ Holding on to the schedule and not changing it shortly beforehand.
➢ More time to include participants' initiative would be an important improvement.
➢ More of deep sharing, real talks, experience instead of theory.
➢ Open communication when it comes to Corona.
What participants say about the Dutch EDE 2020

➢ "I felt at home, welcome and heard and that was very important to me"
➢ “EDE is a very motivating learning experience. I hope they evolve towards more experiential learning by doing.”
➢ “Thank you!!! I had a wonderful experience”