Final Report

EDE 2021

at La Cité Écologique
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Course Overview

The ecovillage La Cité Écologique, is located in Quebec, Canada. Its residents give priority to education, sustainable development and respect for life. Established more than thirty-five years ago, the community now counts 90 residents, ten businesses and an alternative school. Since 2015, the learning center team offers EDE course. Due to covid-19, the program was adapted to online in 2020 and this year we were ready to offer an official certified EDE.

Participants where coming from a various background, including professionals, students, and self employed. Some were interested in forming or joining a community. Two are now starting an internship on our farm, and two are ready to start their cohousing community. One participant was taking the course for a second time in order to eventually offer some community workshops and one designed her dream community. The facilitators where able to accompany them through the multiple facets of community life inspired by their unique ecovillage experiences.

Main highlights included workshops about fair-trade, organic farming and promotion but also the first week closing circle here we where able to share about our experience as if we were actually sitting together. We think some of the key success factors include the small group, and the flexibility that can offer, and the diversity of workshops and facilitators that created the space for truly exploring the whole system approach. We here happy with the way the schedule allowed time for live sessions but also personal study time and homework. The groups design studios were also interesting, but needs to be better arrange in the zoom rooms.

Overall, we are really glad this one line formula can serve the need for community building. We are excited to offer it soon again and truly believe it is offering a well need opportunity in those times where redesign the world is so important.
Participants

Our group was formed of six participants with ages divided between twenties and fifties. Since the class was live online and offered only in French, the participants were French speaking Canadians living in Quebec.

Course rhythms

The days would start with a personal hour for self-care, some suggestions were made about outdoor activities, yoga and sports. Then we meet for an hour or up to three. In the morning new workshops here introduce and time was allowed to go over the last day and see what need to be clarified or readjust but also what here the most useful learning made. In the afternoon there was a discussion with an invited professional or personal study. At the end of the day the working teams gather around their design studios. Evenings were allocated to revision and homework. Hand one games here suggested and homework here designed for participants to connect with their teammates or partners, but due to online classes, the more concrete leanings need to be done during internships and community activities. Participants are supported by the main facilitator to plan those important contact hours. Some participants are already doing their internships.

Highlights & challenges of each dimension

In the next pages, we will share the summary of each four dimension.
Social Dimension

In this dimension participants learned the importance of greeting a diverse cohesive working group. They also explored the essential tools needs for all collaborations. And an emphasis was given to support the participants in discovering their uniqueness, challenges and gifts so they can better know themselves, and find complementary collaborators.

Highlights included the decision making workshop and the session where we all created our learning mission statement for the EDE.

Subjects covered included:
- Creating and healthy community
- Setting the vision, mission, values and collaboration agreements
- Team work and team building
- Conscious communication (NVC)
- Participatory governance
- Education
- Relationship with the local community and networking

*The homework titled reflection on my behavior in team meetings was the one that enlightened me the most.* - A

*I especially found useful the aspect of identify my collaborators.*
*I hadn't realized the importance and power of this aspect.* - M

Celebration time!!!
Economic Dimension

In this dimension participants learned the importance of greeting a diverse cohesive working group. They also explored the essential tools needs for all collaborations. And an emphasis was given to support the participants in discovering their uniqueness, challenges and gifts so they can better know themselves, and find complementary collaborators.

Highlights included the faire-trade workshop and the session where we discussed about promotion and visual identity of a community project.

Subjects covered included:
- Learning about economic systems and how they are designed
- Alternative and complementary economic formulas
- Entrepreneurship in ecovillages
- Land management
- Social and ethical economy
- Business models
- Promotion

*My favorite workshop was with Lawrence about fair trade and the reality of these producer communities. I took a fresh look at where my products come from and the consequences of my purchases. I can decide, at my level, to maintain a failed economic model that devours the weakest to enrich the bigger ones, or to encourage a system that is more equitable to all the actors who participate in it.* – D

*I really appreciated the promotion workshop with Ugo. He was able to pass a lot of powerful material in a very short time. I was very impressed.* – M
Worldview Dimension

In this dimension participants learned the importance of understanding their worldview and beliefs and seeing how they have a major impact in their relations and actions. We mainly focused on personal growth and opening our perspectives to create a positive environment for the emergence of a new culture of peace, understanding and socially engaged spirituality.

Highlights of that dimension included the day where we used no electronics and here each was on their own doing homework in Nature to reconnect with the environment and explore their creativity.

Subjects covered included:
- Discovering the culture of our region
- Connecting with past and future generations
- Discussing the distribution of privileges
- Art in the service of sustainable development
- Personal growth, wellbeing and self-care
- Opening dialog between differing worldviews
- Reconnecting with Nature

The day without electronics was amazing; I should do that more often. – H

Many problems can be solved if enough people in the world are working on changing their consciousness and increasing their vibratory rate. Thus, we could ultimately create a society driven by our soul and achieve the utopia we all dream of. – A
Ecological Dimension

In this last dimension participants learned the importance of connection, synergy and whole system approach. They also explored essential tools needed for creating ecological shelters and food production systems. An emphasis was given to link all modules in making sure that the community was as ecological as possible within its design.

Highlights included the organic farming workshop and the session where we discussed about herboristery. The workshops about eco building and aquaponic was also really appreciated and interesting since we have a concrete research at the ecovillage and that one participant was mainly interested in the way of farming.

Subjects covered included:
- Ecological construction
- Sustainable agriculture
- Herboristery
- Biomimicry
- Water management
- Sustainable energy
- Sustainable forestry

The workshop on aquaponic was super inspiring; I look forward building my own system – J

Gloria workshop on organic farming was truly eye opening, I feel more confident and I hope I can soon find a garden to learn and practice – D
Design Studio Case Studies

One group worked on the creation of a co-housing community based on the SolutionERA design of Oasis. And the other team designed a family eco-community. It was highly enriching to have those sessions each day in order to integrate the learning in different community style. We also experiment the deference between starting a project at its really early stage and building on a solid idea. We really appreciated the natural fit that seems to be emerging with SolutionERA project and hope there will be more collaboration.

L’OASIS DE LA RÉSILIENCE

Collaborate with complementary people to build and live in an ecological and magnificent house located in the forest. That will operate with a model of harmonious and thoughtful cohabitation and where resilience (human, technical and financial) will be at the center of decisions.

LA COMMUNAUTÉ DES MÈRES NATURE

Create a self-sufficient community in Nature to help families reconnect with themselves and the environment.
Lessons Learned

Helping future EDE’s
We are really happy with the way we distributed the learning within workshops, discussion and homework. This was something we added for the on-line program, but we will keep them for our next editions even when they will be on site. Also, he find it is super useful to have some strong written content that the participants can keep and read over as their projects move forward, we will also keep that when we will be offering the classes in person. Participants have let us know the feel more comfortable with that formula so they can take the time they need and come back to it later in their journey.

Biggest learning
Be really prepared for on-line classes! Most of our platform and tools where great, but we were not able to split the participants in smaller groups in the same platform and that give the organization some hardhacks. It was not so bad since we had a small group and here able to rearrange small group sessions elsewhere, but we need to fix that before our next EDE.

Lessons learnt from previous and current EDE
In our last experiences, on site and on-line we truly gained lots of experience regarding adjusting the schedule to participants needs and interest and we are glad it worked well this time to. We also experiment two major time changes regarding some workshops witch finally ended up being much more relevant like that, so we will plan the schedule accordingly next time.

We also recorded some of our main guest professionals, so we can still share there precious learning in case they cannot join in a future EDE.

Notes for our next EDE
We will make sur we have 2 or 3 person available for coaching during the work session depending on how many participants we have. This year, we had a participant how was taking the EDE for a second time and he was able to really help in those session. We think it is something we could plan for next time since it is a great opportunity for previous participants and for the current ones.

Financial information
This year EDE was not lucrative. We can make it possible because and only because of the Cité Écologique support and generosity of the facilitators and teachers. But, with the on-line version of the EDE we think it will be possible to eventually make profit. Our income was near 1 500 and our expenditure 900. The benefit was given to the ecovillage learning center.
Participant Quotes

The EDE met and exceed my expectations! It is a fantastic and essential training for anyone planning to live in a community or ecovillage. – M

Indispensable if we want to live harmonious relationships with the community, the one with whom we live, but also those with whom we will have social or professional ties. – D

I will recommend the training to my friends. "If you want to have a complete training on the resilience of living differently, this training is for you, it will bring you a lot.” – H

The EDE is a training which brings together the essential elements for living well in community and which should be the basis of any good education. – A

Special Thanks

The EDE 2021 team wishes to share a special thanks you for the host community of la Cité Écologique for sharing time and resources for making that experience a success this year again. We know it is requiring lots of devotion, but we know it is worth it. We truly believe inspiration and fate in a more beautiful world is useful and that this course offers concrete steps toward its realization.

Thanks you to Gaia Education and GEN teams, we are filling so grateful for this opportunity of collaboration.

Thanks to the participants, we had an amazing time working with you and we wish you the best for your next steps building a new world of peace understanding and solidarity.

Light and Love,
CAP Eco-Community team