



Green Phoenix Community Gathering

Summary Report 2018

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Introduction

While building local communities as hearts and cradles of a new culture, how can we nurture the connections between communities and work strategically together? Creating the community of communities is one of the aims of Green Phoenix – the think tank of the Global Ecovillage Network. Green Phoenix has taken place yearly for the last 8 years and the most recent gathering was hosted once again at the Center for Unity Schweibenalp in Switzerland from 24th to 28th October 2018. It brought together over 30 founders, leaders and activists from diverse ecovillages and their regional networks worldwide.

The image below is a group photo of Green Phoenix 2018 after 4 days of sharing, working, and deepening connections and insights. Besides multiple ecovillages and networks from Europe, this year, with support from the Gaia Trust, Green Phoenix also invited representatives from the ecovillage movements of Africa, Latin America, Asia and Australia. The Middle East and Post-Soviet areas were also present through European ecovillagers originating from these regions. This brought a strong focus on working together across continents as a necessary step for European ecovillages. The stories of achievements in the regions were mixed together with the remaining trauma of colonialism and world wars present in reflections.

Green Phoenix is a beautiful attempt to address questions in their complexity and deal with different dimensions of personal, communal and global issues. Working groups are interwoven with process work, social forums, meditation and reflections which deepen and broaden understanding and help to build a trust in the group that is so often missed in conventional work and fast-paced conferences.



All pictures in the report are from [Katrin Kaa Faensen](#), Visual Facilitators.

History of Green Phoenix

Green Phoenix is a platform to support the imminent and mandatory “system change” to a new and healthy culture on all levels and in all fields of human life. It was initiated by Sundar Robert Dreyfus at Centre for Unity Schweibentalp in 2010. Green Phoenix researches questions of the four quadrants of Ecology, Economy, Community and Consciousness/Spirituality as well as supporting deep and effective communication between communities, experts and the public. After five consecutive years of successful conferences, Green Phoenix adapted its format to meet current experiences and necessities by serving thereafter as a more intimate think tank and vessel for in-depth exchange among a smaller group of participants from communities internationally. The aim is to offer a platform for the meeting of the community of communities, in coordination with GEN (the Global Ecovillage Network).



Since 2015, representatives of European and some non-European communities and networks meet annually in an intimate setting to share deeply and explore their most important questions. The process of those meetings nourishes the connection between the communities, builds trust among participants, deepens their relationships, and supports the connecting to an inner space where something new and healing can happen. It helps to achieve a broader understanding of what is happening in the movement and network, to arrive at new insights and develop new ideas and collaborations.

Vision and purpose: This year's reflections

The phoenix is a symbol of the soul. Green Phoenix is a nourishing of the soul of the community of communities and the global ecovillage movement. We meet each year to release, regenerate, express; to hold the space for each other, to create deeper connection, unity and consciousness.



We experience Green Phoenix as a vessel of trust that allows us to achieve greater authenticity and the manifestation of our evolution. It is a space to evolve our being so the community can evolve its being. It is also an experiment, a receiving organ for this evolution of community and consciousness, and a place of conceiving and birthing new projects and practical cooperation among communities.

We currently see many of humanity's long-standing social systems either breaking down or being kept alive illegitimately and beyond their usefulness. This appears to many of us to undermine the planet's ecology so severely and intractably that our collective sense of alarm is palpable, inviting a focus on effective action and pragmatism. At the same time, we are consciously connected to the sacred matrix that runs through even this, our drama of separation.

While sharply attuned to the urgency of the historical moment, we also experience a slowing down, a calm and stillness as we tune, tone, connect, willingly surrender habitual ways of being and doing, and open to collective consciousness and the new forms of leadership urging to move through us.



While established systems are losing evolutionary relevance, the patterns and imprints of new regenerative systems are increasingly recognisable. We see them emerging, in part and importantly, in the global ecovillage movement. They are connected with, inspired by, and conducive to those of the natural world; a part of nature, a healthy organ of a living planet; yet we are their conscious creators. The new systems are a collective consequence of our individual choices to adopt holistic approaches to life, and they emerge through locally attuned, self-organised community.

In the spirit of Ho'oponopono, we accept radical self-responsibility for what has been done to humanity and the planet; for their healing; for bringing into full expression the new regenerative systems that are aligned with evolving consciousness; and for dancing to honour and release those older systems now ready for the great privilege of joining their institutional ancestors. We see ourselves as part of the leading edge in this paradigm shift.

How can we strengthen our role and collaboration as a community of communities in this space between the “old” and the “new” systems? How can we support the underlying transformation of consciousness that is happening globally? How can the solutions that we are co-developing become more visible and accessible? What wants to emerge through us in this process? What is the bigger picture that we as GEN and communities are part of? These are concerns of Green Phoenix.



Themes for 2018

“Deep sharing and trust building” continues to be the main process and content of Green Phoenix as a “feel and think” tank for GEN. Green Phoenix offers a space for being, sharing what is really touching us, connecting, nourishing and deepening our relationships.

In 2018, we aimed to deepen the following topics:

1. "Heart. Trust. Communion."

In safe, deep sharing processes about our own and our communities' challenges beyond taboos we can touch and help evolve core issues of community life and of our network. What are the “burning questions and topics” in our communities or networks?

2. “Awareness” - as mindfulness, tolerance, patience, perseverance, truthfulness...

Many communities have evolved their practices and exercises to heighten awareness. With daily focus and learning, we look at our blind spots, expand awareness and exchange tools. What are the tools used in our communities to focus on internal work and consciousness?

3. The necessary step for changing reality – “Physical-material-social implementation”

We are a movement of doers, a movement of people eager to bring ideas to fruition in reality. What wants to emerge through our communities and our movement in the world? How can we support the bigger shift of paradigm that is happening globally? How can the solutions that we are co-developing become more visible and accessible?

4. Building our alliance - inspiration for a global network of change

Sharing the most precious part of our development: What is happening in our global network of change? How are we catalysing communities for a regenerative future? Hearing back from all regions present: GEN, GEN Europe, GEN Africa, GENOA and CASA. How can we deepen our network? How can the depth of the big communities help to shape and nourish the networks?



The process

This year a total of 35 participants represented 16 European communities plus national as well as regional networks from Europe, Latin America, Africa, Asia and Oceania, and the Global Ecovillage Network as a whole. Participants included the same delegates as in the last 3 years where possible, or a representative from the same communities, as well as participants from new communities wishing to join Green Phoenix and willing to commit for the next 3 years (all full members and associates of GEN Europe having received the invitation).



For the first time the process was captured through graphic recording. Katrin Kaa Faensen from Visual Facilitators accompanied the whole gathering, summarizing the experience of the group through her art. The pictures in this report are elements from her graphic recording. The complete image can be found on page 9. The graphic recording served not only as a way to capture a process that is sometimes hard to describe in words, but also as a strong catalyst of the

whole process itself. Half-way through the meeting, Kaa presented everything she had captured to the group, generating an awareness of many aspects of the work that has been done, serving as a mirror. The same happened again towards the end of the meeting.

Green Phoenix started on Wednesday evening and the group gathered to reconnect, to dive into the space of Green Phoenix, to get an overview of the coming days and welcome new participants.

On Thursday, the process began with a guided meditation with musical accompaniment. We reflected on the questions and topics that are alive at the moment in ourselves and that we bring to Green Phoenix: What do we want to co-create together? What are the burning topics and questions in our communities/networks at the moment?



We discussed in small groups and returned to the circle to share insights. Among them:

- Green Phoenix is an experiment. It is a receiving organ for the evolution of community.
- We are here to hold the space for each other, to create deeper connection.
- Our work involves a commitment to embody our highest selves and be in a network where we can co-create from this space.
- We are here to release, regenerate, express; to evolve our relationships and our experience as a single entity.
- We emphasise radical self-responsibility. We are concerned with preparing the field to make this level of honesty and shadow work possible.
- We are invited to overcome our fears, the invisible walls between us, and the “plastic containers” built around pain that we do not express.

- We create this space to evolve our being so the community can evolve its being.
- We see Green Phoenix as a vessel of trust that allows us to access the manifestation of our evolution.

The afternoon and part of Friday morning were dedicated to hearing from the different regions of the Global Ecovillage Network, hearing about the successes and challenges of the movement, as well as the newest projects and developments. The reports from the regions and from



GEN as an international network allowed us to gain a broader perspective of what it means to live in an ecovillage and be part of our network in different areas of the world. Through the presentations we were faced both with pain and trauma as well as hope, joy and celebration. We heard from ecovillages facing situations of violence and conflict in Cameroon and Colombia. From African communities showing that environmental regeneration is possible, and from governments supporting ecovillage transition. From successful collaborations between ecovillages in the global South and North. From ecovillage networks building up support structures

for emergency and natural disaster situations. From the Rights of Mother Nature being defended and recognized. From trainings being offered all over the world and the message of ecovillages being spread, showcasing solutions for a regenerative future. From farmers regaining a new sense of dignity and moving back to sustainable farming practises and implementing permaculture. From the ecovillage movement growing rapidly in countries like China. From Israelis and Palestinians living together in the ecovillage in development Farkha in Palestine. From the impact of ecovillage solutions being measured scientifically. From advocacy activities taking place at EU and UN levels. From people working relentlessly towards a regenerative future all over the world.



On Friday we started to dive deeper into four topics in the following working groups:

- New leadership in communities: what is needed to step into new forms of leadership in our communities (transition from “green” to “yellow” in Spiral Dynamics)?
- Practical collaboration: Pragmatic ways to promote a new level of interaction between the communities. Taking collective next step towards the future.
- GEN Consultancy and Online Summit: Regional GEN representatives focused on the 2019 online summit on “[Climate Change and Consciousness](#)”, education and consultancy.
- Visualisation: Focusing on the healthy reality that we want to create. Connecting to the highest source of transformation beyond duality and beyond our doing, in order to create the healing directly.

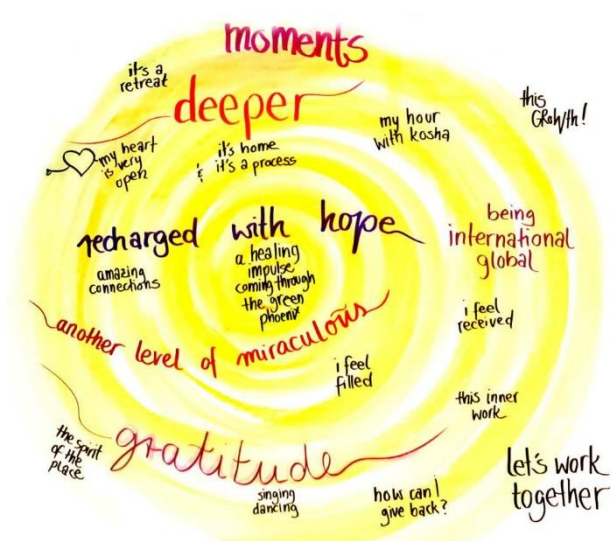
In the afternoon, a part of the time was dedicated to a Nature Meditation: we divided into pairs and walked together in the alpine nature. One partner was blind (closed eyes), the other guided, then they changed roles. Some chose to walk alone and enjoy their time in nature to recharge and reconnect. We returned with more reflections, visions and inspirations to the plenary.



In the meantime, GEN representatives participated in a General Assembly that took place concurrently with Green Phoenix via Zoom. They returned feeling enthusiastic about the results of the meeting, especially relating to a new document that clarifies relationships between the regions and GEN.

On Saturday morning we were guided through a world work process (based on process work) by Anne Duveen and René Hirschi, premised on “deep democracy”, on embracing diversity and recognising that every voice has value. The intention was to support our process of becoming the community of communities; helping us to understand what this means and know its highest potential.

We continued in the working groups defined the previous day in the afternoon. Some remained in the same working group, others changed to a different one. We returned to the circle to share our summaries.



At the end of the gathering on Sunday, we shared our visions and gratitude and closed the meeting with a ritual. The image emerged of the Green Phoenix laying its eggs, and small golden phoenixes hatching from them, now being nurtured and taken care of. It looks like in one way or another, Green Phoenix is wanting to grow and spread...

Next year, for the first time Green Phoenix will leave its nest at Schweibenalp and take place in another community. From 23rd to 27th October 2019, we will meet in Heilhaus

Kassel in Germany. We are looking back with deep appreciation and gratitude to this Green Phoenix gathering and look forward to meeting each other again in October 2019!



by [Katrijn Kaa Faensen](#), Visual Facilitators

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