

Minutes of Council Meeting held during General Assembly at ZEGG, 10-17 July 2004

The meeting was held over several sessions during the course of the week.

Saturday, 10 July 2004

GA agenda

Time was spent discussing the agenda and organisation of the General Assembly

Budget report

Ina presented an update on our spending for the current year: to date 60,705 has been spent out of our 2004 budget of 140,715.

We looked at some specific budget lines:

- *Lucilla* recommended that we recategorise the purchase of books for resale under budget line D5 'Reference materials' rather than, as at present, D1 'Stationery' as our current practice causes us to overspend on D1. Accepted.
- *Lucilla* also suggested that we introduce a new line under Assets to give details of our own contributions, rather than including these under contribution Gaia Villages as in the current budget. Accepted.
- *Lucilla* pointed out that we need contracts for all expenditures under budget category F "Sub-contracting". *Lucilla* will issue a contract to cover the GEN-IS work.

Ina reported that we are still waiting for the balance on our 2003 contribution from the European Commission (EC): we have now sent them all of the additional budgetary information for this period that they have requested.

Ina reported that a request has been received from GEN Senegal for an allocation of 5,000 for the current year. Jean-Michel suggested that it would be good to have a detailed description of what these funds would be used for before agreeing to this request. Agreed.

New membership applications

Applications for full membership have been received from:

Gunes Koy, Turkey – accepted by consensus

Postpolitost Pre Harmonicky Zivot (Slovakia) – accepted by consensus

Renaissance, France – a decision was postponed on this; a smaller group was created to discuss the application with its sponsor, Jean-Luc Girard.

It was agreed that we need to add to the membership criteria the words "national networks incorporating at least two ecovillages with elected representatives."

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Sunday, 11 July 2004

Youth education project proposal

Ina began by explaining why at the last minute before leaving for the ICOSA conference in the US, she decided to sign this proposal to be submitted to the EC under the name of GEN-Europe: this was primarily because, even though she retained significant reservations about the project proposal, she did not want to block the process that others, especially Max Jensen, had put so much work into. She made it clear that if her reservations were not addressed during the General Assembly, she retained the right to withdraw her support and her signature.

Jonathan felt that to continue with this application could threaten the ecovillage educators' proposal soon to be submitted to the EC, that he felt was more professional and stood a greater chance of being accepted and funded.

Insa said that Hildur had asked Max on a number of occasions not to use the term 'Gaia University' in his proposal – which he had proceeded to use anyway. *Insa* said that although Troels Dilling Hansen of the Danish ecovillage network was described in the proposal as 'Pedagogical Consultant, he had expressed strong reservations about his ability and willingness to fill this post.

Jonathan noted that ZEGG was also mentioned as a principal partner in the proposal without having been consulted and that GEN-Europe was committed in the proposal to contributing 12,050, also without having been consulted.

Nicole and *Ina* observed that we need criteria for how this kind of project proposal should be undertaken in future. A small working group was created to make proposals on this.

Report on GEN Board activities

Jonathan and *Lucilla* gave a short report on the activities of the GEN Board, the body that oversees the activities of the GEN international organisation. Since the ending of funding from Gaia Foundation, this has comprised primarily email discussions, although a number of the Board members were able to meet during a recent education meeting in Findhorn, late May. Continuing concerns with a perceived lack of democratic participation and representation in the GENOA region was discussed, together with progress made during the Findhorn meeting to address these concerns.

Lucilla said that she had changed her mind and would like to remain as the second GEN-Europe representative on the Board; this was enthusiastically welcomed by all.

Short reports

Jean-Michel gave a short report on the up-coming meeting to be held in the south of France (August 21 – 23), aiming to bring interested parties in the

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francophone zone to discuss how more ecovillages can be created in this area. *Jonathan* give a short report on his recent **visit to Russia** and gave some background on the new Russian ecovillage network that was created during his visit.

Ecovillage educator's meeting in Findhorn, May 2004.

Jonathan and *Ina* talked about the recent meeting of ecovillage educators in Findhorn. This meeting was set up to explore the creation of an ecovillage training curriculum and to explore how it might be accredited.

Lucilla asked whether it might be possible to extend the consultation process beyond those invited to the Findhorn meeting by *Hildur*.

Jonathan said he had no objections to this, but could think of no one within the ecovillage movement in Europe that was involved in education who had been excluded. His perception was broadly shared by the rest of the Council.

Jean-Michel said that unless materials could be translated, many potential beneficiaries could be excluded.

Ina said that at this stage at least, the budget is very limited, so there is unlikely to be a budget for translation.

Work policy

Lucilla had reviewed all decisions made by the Council over the last two years regarding the division of responsibilities between staff and Council and how both bodies should operate. She identified three outstanding issues that had not been clarified: whether Council meetings are open or closed; the role of 'reserve' Council members; and how the minutes should be formatted. On all other fronts, she said, clear decisions had been made. It was agreed that an information package of these decisions by the existing Council should be prepared and given to members of the new Council.

Lucilla pointed out that we are the only region within GEN that does not have a Board member from the South.

Ina said that this was unfortunate and that we should continue to support the development of networks in Africa.

Wednesday, 14 July 2004

Youth education project proposal

We returned to the subject of the project proposal submitted to the EC.

Jonathan pointed out that there were elementary mistakes in the budget and that there was no explanation of where the matching funds were to come from. He proposed four minimum conditions required for us to continue to support this project:

- That we check up on the capacities of each of the cited partner organisations and on their understanding of the proposed project and their contributions to it
- That all mention of the term 'Gaia University' be removed.
- That GEN-Europe exercise overall management control.
- That all the budgetary mistakes and questions be addressed

These were agreed and a small working group created to try to work on a full list of conditions for the continued participation in the project of GEN-Europe.

Friday, 15 July 2004

New membership applications

New applications were received by Braziers Park, England and the Russian Ecovillage Network. Both were accepted as new members by consensus. Jean-Luc Girard had withdrawn his application for full membership for the Renaissance initiative, but had expressed his intention to submit a future application under the name of Passerelle Eco/French National Network. Jean-Michel Pochat submitted an application for full membership on behalf of the Namir Association in France. After he had described the current status of ecovillage development, it was decided that Namir did not yet qualify as a full member: Jean-Michel was advised to devote his efforts to re-submit his application when the initiative becomes more developed.

It was further agreed by consensus that in future, no applicant will be given full membership unless i) they are well known to the Council or ii) they have participated in a General Assembly. Until they have satisfied one of these criteria, new applicants will be offered supportive membership.

Youth education proposal

The two working groups (one on the conditions for future GEN-Europe involvement in this initiative; the other on criteria for cooperation between GEN-Europe and its members on future similar projects) reported back. After some discussion the following conditions and criteria were agreed by consensus:

Amendments needed to Youth Education Project for GEN-Europe to Give its Support

1. A description of the capacities of each of the participants (how many people they can provide food and accommodation for, details of teaching rooms and other educational facilities).
2. Signed contracts from each of the participants stating that they are in full agreement with the commitments required of them in the project document.

3. A detailed explanation of exactly where all the matching funds (all non-EC contributions) will come from.
4. A correction of the mistakes in the budget.
5. GEN-Europe to appoint a professional budget on a part-time basis (the project budget should make clear how this person will be paid.
6. Remove all mention of Gaia University in the proposal.
7. A 'clear the air' meeting should take place in the near future involving as many of the main participants as possible both to build trust and to clarify next steps.

Geza Lakatos of Mariahalom ecovillage Hungary has agreed to coordinate the various tasks involved here and to report back to the Council on progress by August 31.

Criteria for members undertaking grant applications in cooperation with or on behalf of GEN-Europe

GEN-Europe wants to encourage and support its members to apply for (EU) grants within the overall programme of GEN-Europe. To prevent waste of time and to avoid misunderstandings the Council of GEN-Europe has prepared a list of criteria to protect all parties and to make the procedure easier for all involved partners. These criteria are for projects where GEN-Europe is responsible for content and finances/budgets in applications.

- The draft proposal should be sent to the council as soon as possible. Then the partners define and describe the proposal in details before handed to the council. The subsequent working process should proceed in cooperation and agreement with the GEN-Europe council and the partners.
- Partners/Partners: At least two third of the primary involved partners should be full members of GEN-Europe (Ecovillages), or full members of national networks, or EV initiatives. The partners should reach consensus on the content and on the budget. Partnership has to be documented in written contracts/agreements.
- The project manager/coordinator or main staff will be chosen in agreement between the council and the partners and contracted by GEN-Europe. This contract defines decision-making processes and report back to the council.)
- Finances: Partners should be co-responsible to contribute to the matching funds for the application and be able to pre-finance the coverage of the final balance. GEN-Europe will contribute with funds within its approved

annual budget. All transactions shall be legal and transparent. If local partners cannot pre-finance this has to be announced beforehand and together with the Council a solution will be worked out and contracted.

- Designers of a project must respect and acknowledge the working process of other projects and only use ideas or parts of contents in full agreement, approved in writing, by these projects. According to this projects need to be declared.
- Timing: The proposal of an application should be handed to the GEN-Europe council at least 3 month before any application deadline (except in exceptional circumstances).