

Design Brief

Wongsanit Ashram: EDE 2010

Week 3 – Ecological Dimension

🌍 Conceptual Ecovillage Design 🌍

On Saturday, February 6th, we will come together into our teams and create a Conceptual Ecovillage Design informed by all the lessons learned during our educational stay at the Energy Ashram. This Conceptual Ecovillage Design will be preparation, for everybody, for Week 5 of the EDE: comprehensive ecovillage design for a Children's Youth School and Participatory Action Research for the existing village of Kok Klang. For both projects, *the same ecological principles will apply*. This Design Brief is intended to prepare for this upcoming exercise. Here are some things to consider:

- 1) Remember your purpose and goals: For some it will be the comprehensive design for a new ecovillage; for others it will be assisting an existing village through the practice of PAR.
- 2) Cultivate a space together of open creativity and design exploration: Be creative and stretch outside the box of your prior conditioning: Play with possibilities.
- 3) Keep in mind that this is an exercise. Have fun and learn from it, don't stress over it. You might feel that you need more time to completely develop your ideas and work them all out. That's OK; just do what you can in the time frame of this exercise.
- 4) If you get stuck, refer back to your design principles, patterns, attitudes and values. Develop a list of questions that you can take into Week 5. Shaping the right questions is an invaluable skill.
- 5) Also, this will be an opportunity to practice working with other people in a design process. We sometimes call this a co-creative process. Try communication skills as well as consensus and decision-making skills to work cooperatively, respectfully and creatively together.
- 6) Refer back to the EDE curriculum and make sure you include information from all the Modules: 1) Green Building and Retrofitting, 2) Local Food, 3) Appropriate Technology, 4) Restoring Nature, and 5) Integrated Ecological Design.
- 7) By Saturday afternoon, you will need to focus on what you will present and how you will present it to the group.

Design is the practice whereby imagining humans transform vision into reality. Design is an ongoing process resembling a spiral ever climbing upward. The first step is to identify, clarify, and articulate the Vision. Then we gather information – and this always includes educating ourselves. Then we observe deeply the existing conditions and contemplate ways we can improve these conditions, based on the articulated vision. Next we create a prototype, a visual image representing a solution. The visual image is then presented to the stakeholders, feedback is received and evaluated, before finally beginning the process anew: gathering information and *re*-educating ourselves, observing and contemplating, creating an improved prototype, and then re-presenting this version to the stakeholders. Of course we always start with the vision, the goal, the destination. Once this is achieved we may say the design is finished – *but only for the moment* – because each stage of completion will suggest or inspire new visions to be transformed into reality; and the practice begins anew...