

GAIA Education
Ecovillage Design Education Curriculum
Dimension 5 – Design Principles

These Design Principles are intended to guide design decision-making throughout all four existing dimensions of the curriculum and on into the fifth dimension: design at settlement-scale. The Principles are intended to be fundamental, even archetypal, originating from a primordial source, the very basis from which all design decisions emanate. Once integrated and made subconscious, the Principles will become immanent to the designer's perceptual epistemology, able to influence even the more mundane decisions of everyday life. We might consider these the Principles by which creative humans bring vision into reality.

1) START FROM A WELL-DEFINED CENTER

- Develop Seed Idea, Intention, or Vision
- Define Purpose
- The Nucleus Contains the DNA
- The Center Exists in Multiple Dimensions
- Construct Mission Statement (in collectively organized human systems)

2) CREATE REASONABLE BOUNDARIES

- Use the Power of Limits
- Envision Permeable Membrane
- Maximize Edge
- Identify Where Systems Overlap
- Move between the Known and Unknown, Explicate and Implicate

3) POSITION YOURSELF WITHIN THE FLOW

- Identify Where You Are in an Ongoing Process
- Let IT Go Where IT Wants To Go
- Work *with* Nature, Not Against
- Create Sinks to Capture and Store the Flow
- Try to Tap the Source, Where the New and Novel is Ever-Emerging

4) DRAW FROM MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES

- Where the Flows Converge, Multiple Intelligences Emerge
- Encourage, Optimize, and Manage Collective Intelligence
- Recognize the Existence of the Intelligence of the Cells
- We Move from Potential to Probability when Utilizing Multiple Intelligences
- The Whole is Far More Knowing than Any Individual

5) RECONCILE POLARITIES

- Identify and Synthesize Apparent Oppositions (yin/yang, inner/outer, masculine/feminine, intellect/intuition, advance/recede, etc.)

- Cultivate and Harvest the Medicine of Tension in Polarity
 - Recognize and Unleash the Concentrated Power within Encounter
 - Do Not Shirk from Conflict; Creatively Move through It to Greater Understanding
 - Transcend Polarity in the Spirit of Tantra
- 6) MOVE FREELY ACROSS DISCIPLINES AND DIMENSIONS
- Transdisciplinary, Multidisciplinary, Interdisciplinary
 - Prioritize Relevancy (some disciplines will be more emphasized than others)
 - Proactively Create Networks and Webs
 - Identify Nested Systems: Systems within Systems (Russian Doll phenomena)
 - The Integrity of Holarchy Promotes Communication
- 7) UTILIZE WHOLE-BRAIN, WHOLE-BODY AWARENESS
- Titillate and Engage All the Senses
 - Promote Synaptic Connections: Stimulate Both Hemispheres
 - Design Is for Real People in Real Places with Real Human Proportions
 - Avoid Decisions Based on Purely Intellectual Concepts or Constructs
 - Heart and Soul: Fully Present, Fully Engaged, Fully Aware
- 8) IDENTIFY APPROPRIATE SCALE
- All Design Takes Place Somewhere within the Micro-Macro Range of Possibilities
 - Utilize Fractal and Holographic Understanding
 - Honor the Intimacy and Sense of Belonging at a Human-Scale
 - There Are Economies of Scale in Every Design
 - Different Energy Requirements at Different Scales
- 9) INTEGRATE! INTEGRATE! INTEGRATE!
- Keep Pulling Divergent Information Back to Center; Centripetal vs. Centrifugal
 - Explore Boundaries, Push Edge, Yet Always Refer to the Source
 - Create Multiplistic Diversities, Then Unify into Larger Wholes
 - Segregation Disperses Energy; Integration Concentrates Energy
 - Oneness is an Ideal: Honor the Multiplicities Yet Seek Reconciliation
- 10) GENERATE SELF-ORGANIZING SYSTEMS
- The Designer Creates, then the System Manifests
 - Autopoietic, Living Systems Can Assume a Life of Their Own
 - Aim for Self-Reliance Rather than Self-Sufficiency
 - Learn From and Enhance the Living Systems Embodied in Nature
 - Self-Maintenance, Self-Regeneration is the Goal
- 11) PREPARE FOR AND ANTICIPATE ORGANIC GROWTH
- All Designs Go through Stages of Evolution to Fruition
 - Accept and Move With the Dynamics of Change
 - Opportunities May Appear for an Instant; Grab Them If You Dare!
 - Start Small, Then Expand in Measured Stages According to Natural Cycles

- Timing Is Everything

12) TEST RUN, USE FEEDBACK, AND REFINE

- A Design is Never Finished, Always 'In Process'
- Hone the Facility of Keen Observation
- Create Prototypes, Then Gradually Adjust Over Time
- Learn to Give and Receive Meaningful Feedback
- Take Notes So that Others May Learn from Your Example