

Recommendations for the Successful Manifestation of a  
“Community Education Campus”  
Prepared for Humanity First Worldwide  
by Village Design Institute – 9 February 2009

The Village Design Institute is an educational nonprofit with international experience writing curricula and other educational materials, setting up educational programs, speaking at educational events, and successfully delivering design courses. Since the ultimate purpose of the Institute is to set up an Academy of Sustainable Community Design that will become the heart of an emerging world-class Ecovillage, please accept the following observations and/or recommendations based on principles we’ve come to believe are essential for the successful manifestation of Projects such as these – being as they are germinations on the leading edge of planetary evolution.

Start with a potent Seed. The Seed will be an inspired Vision Statement that evolves into a goal-oriented Mission Statement. It is best to convene a Core Group of talented, conscious and committed individuals to co-draft these Statements. The Core Group should always start small – 3 to 4 individuals, no more than 6 – so that they can be swift and effective in the early stages. It is far more energy efficient to have a Core Group, a collective body, than to go it alone, especially if each member of the Group can feel some sense of ‘ownership’ of the Project – meaning having some influence in its overall direction.

Another benefit of developing a tight Core Group is being able to tap into the wisdom and creativity of the Group Mind – which is far more powerful and penetrating than the best of individual minds. Each person has a part of the picture. The patriarchal era of the dominant male leader-in-charge is coming to a close: the Aquarian Age will be the humanitarian Age of the Collective Wish; Jesus is coming back as a Community!

It is very important in the early stages of the Project to develop trust, cohesiveness, and rapport in the Core Group. To do this, having a least 1 meeting per week is recommended, where major issues can be outlined, priorities evaluated, and then tasks delegated. Eventually, members of the Core Group will become heads of Committees.

If you really want to have a tight and effective Core Group, you’ll want to adopt some form of mutually agreed upon decision-making process beforehand – this usually being some form of consensus. Facilitation training will be very useful so that meetings can proceed smoothly and productively. Ideally, facilitation of meetings will be rotated amongst members of the Group. Also extremely valuable will be training in Conflict Resolution and Non-violent

Communication. Most of us (especially Americans) need to un-learn patterns we inherited that prevent us from effectively communicating and working in groups.

In order to congeal, refine, and make vivid the Group Mind, meditations or visualizations before or after meetings will be essential – and there are techniques for making these meditations effective. Eventually, the Group Mind may be enlisted to carry out tasks on dimensions not accessible to individuals.

Once the Seed has sprouted, a Core Group has formed, and a Mission Statement has been agreed upon, the next stage is to create a vehicle for taking this Intention out into the World. In the case of Schools and Academies and the like, the most appropriate vehicle is a not-for-profit corporation for educational purposes. The Core Group, or one Committee of the Core Group, will need to compose a set of By-Laws that will act as the “genetic code” of the organization. The final By-Laws will need to be approved by all. After this, an application for 501(c)3 federal tax exempt status will need to be submitted. In the meantime, a small and effective Board of Directors will need to be organized, and Board meetings initiated. Members of the Board *could* come from the Core Group but the Board is mostly sought for its influence in the community and its ability to attract funds.

Speaking of funds, the main reason for going through all these steps to get a functional and operating non-profit is so that this entity can become a *money magnet*. With the appointment of a Director, an active search for grants can begin. Some grant writers work for free, simply taking a percentage of any grants that *do* happen to get awarded, although I prefer having the Director do this work in active engagement with the greater community – you know, going to the right parties and receptions, making the right contacts face-to-face. I believe also that there are plenty of State monies available for Sustainable Community Design and Development projects.

Speaking of non-profits, in this case I would scrap Humanity First Worldwide. It may have started out as a great idea but it seems to have gotten bogged down somewhere along the way. Its identity is almost nebulous, maybe even shadowy; it can't seem to be used openly, much less joyously. For example, where is it based? Where is the Board? Where are the contacts? Also, its original plan is so complex and awkward that it belies one of its stated intended purposes – which is to create an “organic” development model that can be replicated by others. Maybe instead of “Humanity First” we can concentrate on “Life First,” cause humanity is running roughshod over the Earth, on a rampage destroying other life-forms, even whole cultures.

An “organic” development process begins with a potent Seed, as is being outlined in this Recommendation Report. In this case, I would set up a brand new non-profit – registered in the State of Washington, amidst much fanfare and celebration, given form by the full strength and clarity of the Core Group, announced to the Universe with a bold and righteous Vision

Statement. I also would take the time to research planetary positions a few months ahead, so that an auspicious date can be chosen with a fortunate planetary line-up for the birthday of the Corporation. Registering the Corporation with the Secretary of State can then be timed to fall on a particular hour of that auspicious day. With the addition of a birth chart, transits can be monitored to guide the ongoing business of the Corporation.

Soon after the non-profit is born, you'll want to compose a Strategic Plan. This forward-looking statement of the projected goals of the Corporation becomes the basis for the very practical Business Plan. The Business Plan will spell out in some detail projected revenue streams and sources of income, followed by a complete inventory of financial needs. Of course, every year a new Budget will need to be written. These three – Strategic Plan, Business Plan, Budget – will want to be seen by every potential donor, so it's important to keep them up-to-date and in good order.

Very early on, I would also create a cool logo – a design with subtle subliminal influence. It might be fun to have a local contest to collect design ideas. The winner could score a series of free workshops!

In the Project of setting up a School, once the Seed has sprouted and grown into a stout sapling, it's time to find a land base. In this case, the Project is very fortunate because a magnificent and suitable land base has been provided first. After the land base has been secured, the fun can really begin!

The first step is to cleanse the place of any lingering and unwanted energy from previous residents or uses. Begin with the house – Zone 1 of a Permaculture Plan. Get your Core Group and anyone else who may be interested. Go through the house room by room, walking in a line first counterclockwise with the intention of removing the old energy, and then clockwise with the intention of instilling your new purpose. This festive procession will include a smoking sage smudge, drums, bells and whistles. After the ritual, the group could get together and visualize the place surrounded by white light, re-affirming the intention to have it grow into a thriving education center – a real benefit for the community and planet.

Then, this same kind of ritual can be repeated outside, along the perimeter of the property (although you'll probably want to be a little quieter so as not to arouse the curiosity of your neighbors!). The purpose here is to mark the boundaries of your energy field, so that there is a clear demarcation as to what goes on inside the field being distinct from what goes on outside. By marking this energetic boundary, the potentials inside the field will be enhanced significantly. This is your force-field of white light. Also, the intention of the outdoor procession is to announce to the Nature Spirits and Elementals of the land that a new era is dawning in their world. While moving through the property in this ritualistic manner, members of the procession can openly communicate with such Spirits and ask for their assistance while reassuring them that their existence will not only be protected but *improved* – they will become

part of a global network devoted to healing the Earth. An active alliance with the Spirits of the Land can thus be initiated, reinforced periodically through spontaneous affirmations or rituals.

Within the protective bubble of the energy field, steps can be taken to heighten and purify the vibration, to optimally fine-tune the energy for maximum benefit and productivity. Feng Shui is one such practice for achieving this optimization. Feng Shui also is useful for neutralizing any discordant energies, so an analysis should be initiated at once. Remedial solutions then can be implemented within the house and on the land to attune the energies to more harmonic resonance.

Geomantic practices also should be initiated on the land: for example, dowsing for ley lines and water lines, and then using earth acupuncture to accentuate nodal points. These lines and points then can be clearly mapped, thus influencing the eventual site plan.

Ideally, all this energy work will be done before – way before – the actual design work of placing circulation patterns and buildings. In this way, the foundation for any future organic growth is an *energetic* foundation. Thus conceived, the Project will have a strong, stable base, and can be planned for the sustainable long-term – for a least seven generations into the future. This means that the implementation of the Project will outlive the life-span of any of its current participants, and this is a natural consequence of organic growth. Mechanical systems are built all at once, in one fell swoop; *living* systems continually renew themselves over time in a cyclical, self-organizing manner. Mechanical systems are not sustainable; they eventually break down. Living systems are the essence of sustainability.

Once the educational non-profit is up and running and the energetics of the community center and land base have been fine-tuned, then the School can be established. While the non-profit is the container, establishing the School means filling in the contents. The Core Group and Board of Directors will want to convene to brainstorm a list of potential courses and workshops. Alliances will be initiated with existing educational institutions in the region, as well as with independent educators, local experts, community mentors, influential residents, artisans and professionals. A picture will soon develop of the catalog of existing educational experiences, and consequently of those educational niches remaining to be filled. In order to be successful, and in order to lay the foundation for the village stage of development, the School will need a broad base of community support – so these alliances should be taken very seriously and nurtured over time.

A complementary strategy will be simply to evaluate the strengths and talents of the Core Group – and associated friends – and begin from there. In this way, weekend workshops and evening events can begin almost immediately. This strategy is *inductive*, whereas the previous is deductive. Before offering any classes, however, hold a festive house-warming party and invite a bunch of friends and neighbors!

Of course, with this particular Project, the number-one ally is the existing Whole Earth Montessori. An extended conversation with Ms. Galante will highlight those directions in which she would like to move based on her vision of expansion. She also will have a keen intuition of existing needs and opportunities in the community. While the Community Education Campus will not be the expanded Montessori High School, understanding the more complete Montessori curriculum will reveal meaningful relationships.

Based on the vision of the role of the Community Education Campus within the greater sustainable village, and anticipating needs in the community that are not yet being met, and so laying the groundwork for future progression, the initial curriculum for the School could focus on the following:

- Human Growth and Development
- Sustainable Community Design
- Arts and Crafts
- Environmental Studies
- Communication Media
- Permaculture
- Organic Gardening and Food Preservation

The same values and principles that guide the growth process of the sustainable village also inform the development of the curriculum and the teaching methodology of its Education Campus; thus, this is essentially a “sense of place” curriculum for participatory, community-based, person-centered, life-long learning. While maintaining a global perspective, learning will be continually referenced *back to the community* – back to considering real challenges and opportunities arising within this particular place on Earth. In this way, the Community Education Campus becomes a nexus for the cultivation of strong community identity, solidarity, and purpose; it encourages individuals within the community to become the best they can be – to reach for their full potentials – to discover and nurture that special gift that’s waiting to be offered to the world. There does not exist yet such a place, one focusing on personal, community, and planetary evolution, so the Community Education Campus will herald a new era in holistic, place-based education for the region.

In preparation for the offering of classes and workshops, a schedule will need to be produced, distributed, and updated regularly. Individual classes or workshops will need their own flyers – most likely created by the facilitators of the events. A brochure will need to be designed, produced, and distributed. A website will need to be created and maintained. Once all these promotional materials are made available, the Director will need to take responsibility for their successful circulation and management. Eventually, an ongoing newsletter will need to be published.

At this stage in the Project, you may very well want to focus on creating a self-maintaining, self-organizing, self-regenerating, living system – a system with all the right people and processes in place – including multiple passive income streams – so that it can take care of itself and run on its own. This, then, would become an organic living model of sustainability – a Project for others to emulate. And then you could move on to the next Project!

(See Checklist Below)

# ✚ CHECKLIST ✚

## Successful Manifestation of a Community Education Campus

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- ▶ Identify and Organize Core Group – best to keep it small at first
- ▶ Convene First Meeting of Core Group
- ▶ Adopt Decision-Making Process for Core Group
- ▶ Get Training in Facilitation, Conflict Resolution, and Non-Violent Communication
- ▶ Draft Vision Statement
- ▶ Draft Mission Statement
- ▶ Design and Initiate Core Group Meditations
- ▶ Set up Washington-based Non-profit Corporation
- ▶ Research Birth Time for Non-profit – get a Birth Chart
- ▶ Compose Set of By-Laws
- ▶ Apply for 501(c)3 Federal Tax Exempt Status
- ▶ Organize Board of Directors – best to keep it small at first
- ▶ Convene First Board Meeting
- ▶ Appoint Executive Director to manage Non-Profit
- ▶ Begin Grant and Funding Search
- ▶ Compose Strategic Plan for Non-Profit
- ▶ Compose Business Plan for Non-Profit
- ▶ Create Budget for Non-Profit
- ▶ Hold a Logo-making Contest – Create Business Cards, Letterhead, T-Shirts, Coffee Cups, etc.
- ▶ Design and conduct Ceremonies to cleanse House and Land
- ▶ Hold Visualizations for grounding New Purpose
- ▶ Conduct Feng Shui Analysis for Building and Land
- ▶ Implement Feng Shui Remediation
- ▶ Dowse Property for Ley Lines and Water Lines
- ▶ Erect Lithopuncture Stones and Cairns
- ▶ Make Contact and Solicit Cooperation with Elementals of the Land
- ▶ Brainstorm List of Potential Courses and Workshops
- ▶ Initiate Alliances with existing Educational Institutions, as well as with Independent Educators, Local Experts, Community Mentors, Influential Residents, Artisans and Professionals by sending out welcoming Introduction Letter
- ▶ Hold a house-warming Party for Friends and Neighbors
- ▶ Begin a Class and Workshop Schedule with Selections from Core Group
- ▶ Design a Comprehensive Curriculum based on Long-term Goals. Include Philosophy, Pedagogy, and Methodology underlying Curriculum and Campus
- ▶ Create a Brochure
- ▶ Create and maintain a Website
- ▶ Create first Newsletter
- ▶ Keep in touch with all who express interest or contribute so as to nurture broad-based community support over the long-term....

✚ Checklist composed by Village Design Institute – February 2009 ✚

