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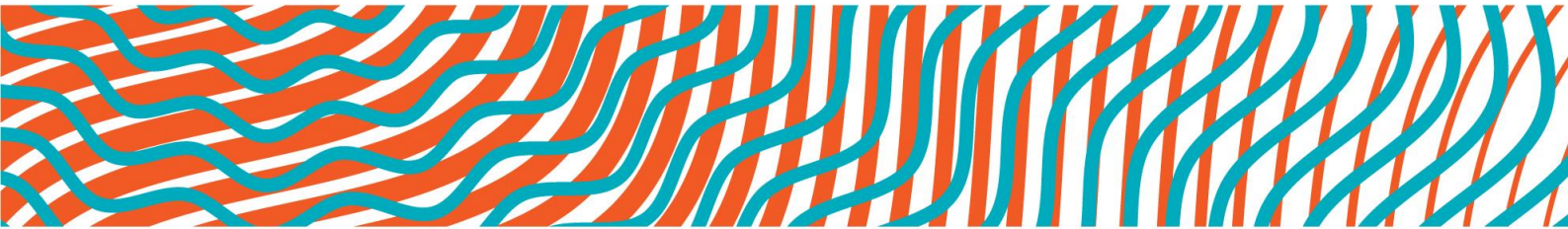
TRANSIT | Research Report: Social Innovation and the Global Ecovillage Network

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Abbreviation	Labels & Keywords
7Linden	Ecovillage of Sieben Linden, Eastern Germany
CASA	The Latin American regional network of GEN
DE	Deutsch/ German
ECOLISE	European Network on community-lead initiatives on Climate Change and Sustainability
EN	English
EV	Ecovillage
GEN	Global Ecovillage Network
ICSA	International Communal Studies Association
RQ	research questions
SE	social entrepreneurship
SI	social innovation
TAM	Tamera, ecovillage case study in Portugal
TH	Schloss Tempelhof, ecovillage case study, Southern Germany
ZEGG	Zentrum für Experimentelle Gesellschaftsgestaltung, Ecovillage near Berlin

The interviews conducted during this survey are citied in this report in the following way: The acronyms GEN, TAM and TH indicate if the interviewee is interviewed on GEN, Tamera or Schloss Tempelhof. The number behind the acronym indicates the number of the interviewee, listed in the annex 2.

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1 Introduction to *the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN)*

The Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) was founded in 1995 at a conference gathering of ecovillages from all over the world, held in Findhorn ecovillage in Scotland. GEN describes itself as *"a growing network of sustainable communities and initiatives that bridges different cultures, countries, and continents. GEN serves as umbrella organization for ecovillages, transition town initiatives, intentional communities, and ecologically-minded individuals worldwide."* (GEN website).
The official definition of an ecovillage, agreed upon by the GEN board and used by GEN today is:

> *"An ecovillage is an intentional or traditional community that is consciously designed through locally owned, participatory processes to regenerate social and natural environments. The four dimensions of sustainability (ecology, economy, the social and the cultural) are all integrated into a holistic approach."* *(GEN int. board 2012)*

While GEN was founded as a formal, international network with regional and thematic subnetworks, the ecovillage movement has always been a bottom-up movement, carried by a variety of single ecovillages. On the one hand, GEN is active in education, networking and information dissemination with political organisations like the EU and UNESCO. On the other hand, GEN provides a platform for support and exchange for the local ecovillages and welcomes not only new founded villages of the environmental movement but also traditional villages. GEN today lists more than 1000 local ecovillage projects and networks worldwide, among them approximately 130 in Europe. The independent Eurotopia-Directory on communities in Europe 2014 lists 430 different kinds of community projects including a hard to define number of ecovillages in Europe. Outside Europe, GEN is strong in the Global South: in Africa, Latin America and Asia. The Senegalese government even set up a ministry for ecovillages fostering the evolution of traditional villages into ecovillages. People who move to ecovillages or take courses in one of their seminar centres, mostly do so because they aim to live a more sustainable life, and/or integrate sustainability into their work. The GAIA ecovillage education program founded by GEN in 2005 provides hands-on experiences on social, ecological, economic and cultural tools on how to design a self-organized ecovillage.

Overall, we observe a great variety of purposes and aims to run ecovillages, reaching from self-sufficiency and eco-farming, to democratic and communal organization, as well as so called 'gift economy' or some work with personal development in love, relationships and social competences regarding spiritual practices of 'connecting to nature'. They are aiming at providing realistic and holistic experiences in sustainable living, often including small scale economy, commons, intergenerational living and local gardening. Ecovillages often have an indirect societal impact by teaching their best practice methods to interested visitors in their seminar centres, in some cases to local authorities as well as national, European and international policy-makers.

The international networking of eco-communities in focus
While intentional communities are age-old phenomena, the term 'ecovillage' is relatively new, having been coined in 1985. The Ecovillage Movement emerged in the early 1990s and can be distinguished from 'anti-society' movements such as the early environmental and commune movement or the contemporary anti-globalization-movement (McLaughlin/ Davidson 1985). GEN was founded as a bottom-up network at a time when already several hundreds of eco-communities existed around the globe, starting to network amongst each other. People from communities in Senegal and Europe, the USA and Thailand discovered that they were striving for similar goals without having been aware of each other (Jackson 2004).

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A historical timeline can be drawn from the intentional communities and their network, to private initiatives like the Gaia Trust, based in Denmark which started to found eco-communities in the Scandinavian countries in 1990 and later funded the process of international networking of eco-communities including co-housing (see section 3.1). In the 1960s, several spiritually motivated communities were initiated with growing global networks; including amongst others: Findhorn in Scotland, Solheimer in Iceland, Damanhur in Italy, The Farm in Tennessee/USA, Auroville in India, Sarvodaya in Sri Lanka and the NAAM movement in Burkina Faso.

GEN is divided into sub-networks: The network of Northern (GEN-NA) and Latin America (CASA), GEN Africa, GENOA Oceania & Asia, GEN Europe, and 'NextGEN', a network of young generations involved in the ecovillage movement. The European network has become stronger in networking and has worked for GEN international especially in terms of fundraising in the last three years. More regionally active networks of GEN are currently emerging. Cooperation of GEN-networks with transition town movements, the seed movement, permaculture or other like-minded initiatives are common everywhere. Only in Western-Europe and in the USA the movements have found their separate networks.

In addition to hosting and organizing regular conferences, workshops and being present at assemblies of like-minded networks or political events, a large amount of the international networking of ecovillages is done by individuals who are travelling voluntarily between ecovillages or have moved from one ecovillage to another.

Two local ecovillages under study: Schloss Tempelhof (TH) and Tamera (TAM)

As case studies, we chose two local ecovillages, both of which are members of GEN.

The first case is located in Germany, where we can find about 10 established ecovillages (Kunze 2009: 111, also see updated information in Eurotopia 2014). As first case, we have chosen Schloss Tempelhof for three main reasons: (1) it is an ecovillage that is well connected to its region, (2) it is a young and extremely fast growing project with 140 members, founded in 2011, and (3) it has already been covered multiple times by national media, and is thus known beyond the environmental movement. There is no significant research on Schloss Tempelhof, yet. Schloss Tempelhof is located in Southern Germany in a rural area of the *Jagst* region between Stuttgart and Nürnberg in the state of Baden-Württemberg at the Bavarian border.

The second case is located in Portugal in the Southern region of Alentejo. Tamera is the largest and most developed ecovillage in Portugal. Founded in 1994, it is also one of the oldest ecovillages and plays an active role in GEN (e.g. it hosted the GEN conference in 2011). Besides GEN, Tamera is involved in several other transnational networking activities. The project has its roots in Germany and also comes with interesting intercultural dynamics.

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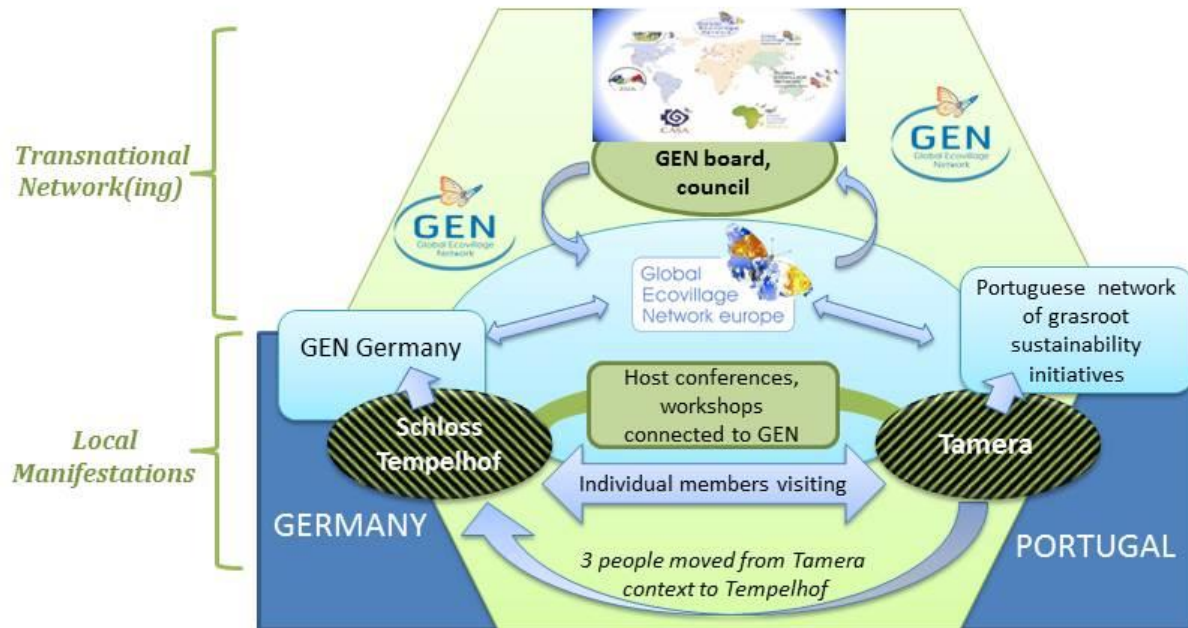
Figure 1-1: actor relations between the national network and the two local cases

Overview of the report

This research report on ecovillages starts with a chapter on the methodology that has been used to study GEN and the two local ecovillages. It is followed by three main chapters. Chapter 3 presents the ecovillage movement and the GEN network. Chapter 4 presents the German case study Schloss Tempelhof, and chapter 5 the Portuguese case study Tamera. Each of these chapters discusses the respective case according to the conceptual framework developed by the TRANSIT research project. This includes distinguishing different types of change and innovation (social innovation, system innovation, game-changers, narratives of change and societal transformation) and the project's cross-cutting topics connected to empowerment (governance, social learning, resourcing and monitoring). The last chapter summarizes the findings drawn from a comparison between the different cases.

2 Methodology

2.1 Researcher's relations to the case

I, Iris Kunze, have studied intentional communities and ecovillages for 13 years. I started to develop an interest in these initiatives coming from a transdisciplinary perspective of searching experiments and fruitful practices for sustainable living. Furthermore, I am asking about new forms of community from a theoretical sociological perspective. For examining intentional communities and ecovillages empirically, I conducted mainly qualitative (Kunze 2003, 2006, 2009, 2012), but also quantitative studies (Dierschke et al. 2006; Grundmann/Kunze 2011). A major research method has always been participant observation, which turned out to be the most suitable and fruitful approach. Also, I organized student research seminars in two ecovillages. In a more explorative endeavour, I initiated and hosted a discussion and action circle on communal living in Münster for some years. Since the late nineties, I was personally involved in three initiatives aiming at founding co-housing projects. Before researching communities, I lived in two intentional communities for almost three years and visited numerous community conferences including GEN assemblies. Having started with ecological engagement and researching from a sociological and cultural perspective in view of the challenges of societal transformation, I am grateful to have had the opportunity to study community experiments for so many years already. Having lived in some of these projects, I have experienced processes of hope and disillusionment, finally realizing that every community is the mirror of its members, including their unconscious cultural backgrounds, and hence also of the society they live in. I realized that self-reflection and mindfulness are crucial keys for creating sustainable and innovative communities. I hope that my research further contributes to this adventure. I am also grateful to serve as a board member of the Communal Studies Association (ICSA) since 2012. Since 2015 I am the coordinator of the GEN research group.

I, Flor Avelino, have been following and studying the ecovillage movement since 2009. Academically, I started by exploring ecovillages from the perspectives of sustainability transitions, empowerment, power relations and governance (Avelino/ Kunze 2009; Kunze/Avelino 2009, Avelino 2012). The TRANSIT research project is my first opportunity to conduct in-depth fieldwork on ecovillages. Together with Iris Kunze, I am a member of the GEN research group and always interested in facilitating ecovillage research. Besides academic research, I have been active in the Dutch ecovillage movement for the past six years. I have been particularly involved in the Ekosofia project, which envisions an eco-community project near the city of Amsterdam, and I have co-founded the association ELIA (*Ecological Life Initiative Amsterdam*, www.eliadam.nl). These action research experiences and observations have not been included in this report explicitly, but they obviously do influence my perspective on the ecovillage movement. For most of my life, I have had an image/dream to one day live and work in a vibrant 'eco-community' and 'sustainability university' where daily life is intertwined with diverse forms of art, action research, and life-long-learning. I am grateful to be able to study and learn from places that are already working on realising their image of a sustainable community.

2.2 Methods

2.2.1 Overall methodology

The overall research methodology we used for/in this study was based on TRANSIT's methodological guidelines (Søgaard Jørgensen et al. 2014). Our research was guided by the four

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empirical research questions outlined in these guidelines, and based on the preliminary conceptual framework of the TRANSIT project (Haxeltine et al. 2014).,

In line with the methodological guidelines and as an appropriate approach to ecovillages, we combined empirical methodologies to explore GEN and the selected two local ecovillages. The research was based on combinations and triangulation of interviews, participant observation, document review, as well as a media analyses. Participant observation turned out to be particularly important. Our participant observations happened in one-week to two week visits to the local cases, including co-living experiences, attending decision-making assemblies, learning seminars, and working shifts in e.g. the kitchen or the agriculture. In addition, many talks during eating and working generated valuable information and gave us access to subjective opinions of members. During these visits we conducted a range of (semi-)structured and unstructured interviews.

In the ecovillages, we are confronted with case studies where people live and work together and not just share certain partial actions. Hence we considered it to be important to use participant observation rather than just interviews to really get an insight into these initiatives. We also observed that the benefit of interview data is limited, because the interviewees only explain obvious aspects while the most relevant things, consuming most time and energy in these villages, are happening in daily co-living and interaction in work, decision-making processes, eating, child care, free time and the interlinkages between all these areas of life. All of these are much more intensively intertwined in an ecovillage in comparison to a more traditional neighbourhood.

First field contacts
Our first step was to analyse the websites of our three cases. They provide practical information on how to visit, how to become a member, as well as advertisement of their services and businesses.

Field Contacts Global Ecovillage Network
I, Iris Kunze, have been in contact with GEN and in particular with the ecovillages of 7Linden, Findhorn, Steyerberg, and ZEGG quite intensely since 2005 due to my PhD research and three Master seminars I taught for students in 7Linden and the Commune of Niederkaufungen. I also organized an EU-Grundtvig exchange meeting in 7Linden. I had conversations with the current GEN president and two former GEN presidents before. Also, I was involved in an application for a research project with GEN and the transition town movement in 2012. When I introduced TRANSIT to the GEN president and to the GEN Europe manager, they were very willing to convey interviewees. Another contact came into being through the Communal Studies Association (ISCA). The respective interviewee also knows the intentional communities movement and GEN very well (having written an PhD in this area), and thus provided a bit of an outside perspective.

Field Contacts Schloss Tempelhof (TH)
In the case of TH, I, Iris Kunze, started the survey based on a number of documentaries by state TV and articles which have been published in large German newspapers[1] . I approached the initiative in different ways: Firstly I asked to attend an introductory course as an interested guest while mentioning my research interest only marginally. This approach could create trust and indicate that I was also personally interested in the project. I arranged interviews with the PR-group of Tempelhof. Additionally, a TH member had been in the Artabana group with a friend of mine before moving to Schloss Tempelhof. Further contacts were made on site.

Field Contacts Tamera

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[1] Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ), Magazin 47/2012; Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ), Sept. 27, 2013; all meadia articles on Schloss Tempelhof: http://www.schloss-tempelhof.de/service/presse/ (Jan. 10, 2015)

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I, Flor Avelino, approached Tamera from different angels. First, I contacted a leading figure in Tamera via Iris Kunze, who had already met her. Second, I contacted the standard guest office to inquire about possibilities to visit Tamera. Third, I contacted one of the few Portuguese participants in Tamera via people from the University of Lisbon, who had already cooperated with that person. It was this combination of approaches and contacts that in the end enabled me to visit Tamera on two occasions and conduct a total of 10 interviews with leading figures in Tamera's projects and organisations. On the second occasion, I visited Tamera for one week, and I was assigned a 'host' that showed me around and arranged all interview appointments for me, which was very helpful. All logistics regarding accommodation and food were arranged via the guest office (see more in chap. 5).

2.2.2 Interviews

The list of interview questions we developed in a team work process within the TRANSIT project was very useful. Most of the interviewees focussed on specific areas according to their expertise (see chap. 2.2.2) while other questions have been dropped. Certain terms had to be adapted to the jargon of the initiatives. The game changers were simply introduced as societal crises and problems. In addition to asking about their contribution to innovation and change, they were asked about their attitude towards and practice of traditions. Especially communities also sometimes rely on and create their own traditions to build sustainable relationships and social networks.

Interviews All in all:
28 Interviews were done with a length of approx. 1540 min/ 25,6 hours. (listed in annex 2). All TH-interviews and one TAM-interview were conducted not in English, but in German or Portuguese. We translated central quotes of these interviews from German and Portuguese into English. The interviews are citied in this report in the following way: GEN, TAM and TH indicated if the interviewee is interviewed on GEN, Tamera or Schloss Tempelhof. The number behind the acronym indicates the number of the interviewee, listed in annex 2.

Interviews Global Ecovillage Network:
We interviewed persons from the board, the council and the executive office of the network at the GEN Europe Conference in summer 2014 and I, Iris Kunze, also conducted some interviews via skype. The interviewees presented the network very professionally, and we had to ask some more critical questions. To get a variety of interesting interviewees we used snow ball guided methods plus intentional selection of interview partners. Attending the GEN Europe conference helped us finding appropriate interviewees too. (5 interview partners, 7,2 hours)

Interviews Schloss Tempelhof, DE:
13 recorded and noted interviews were conducted with a total length of 11,76 hours. The first contacts via e-mail were rather short and limited to my guest helper visit. In the first morning in Schloss Tempelhof I used the opportunity to announce my guest helper status plus the research project and asked for interview partners in the morning circle (where normally only 20 out of 120 members show up). Several members approached me for giving an interview and many talked to me at the meal tables. Furthermore, there was also a snow ball effect and I had the opportunity to talk more personally to people. Secondly I approached ecovillagers who were engaged in activities close to social innovation like educating the community experiences and ecological aims. Furthermore I also talked to some "normal" members to get a broader perspective on the variety of members. I also had the chance to talk to children in the unique and one year old experimental "village school" founded in Tempelhof. I asked how they like the new school and living in Tempelhof in comparison to their former environments in a normal neighbourhood. Often the interviewees talked very freely

and personally, while I guided them flexibly through the topics of the questionnaire. Additionally there were some situations at the meal tables, in the Sauna, cooking together, and while harvesting carrots in which I could listen to personal stories, discuss Tempelhofs' potential for innovation and talk about best practices for a communal village among a few people more informally and spontaneously.

Interviews Tamera, PT:
A total of 10 formal interviews were held, amounting to a total of 10:58 hours. The first formal interview was held with one of the key figures of Tamera at the Global Ecovillage Conference. All the other interviews were held at Tamera during the second visit. The interviews have all been arranged by the assigned 'host', which was extremely convenient. Over a period of one 6 days, 1-3 interviews were held every day or other day. These 'formal interview' were all recorded, (partly) transcribed and followed the guiding interview questions from the TRANSIT guidelines. Because time was often limited, and in order to avoid confusing jargon, the interview questions were simplified. Rather than asking about all sorts of specific different types of change and innovation (social, system, game-changers etc.) we simply asked how Tamera contributed to change and innovation in general. Likewise, we asked simple questions about empowerment and power struggles. The cross-cutting themes (governance, learning, resourcing, monitoring) were spread over different interviews and asked in terms of probing further on answers that had already been given. Besides the 10 formal interviews, there were numerous informal mini-interviews and conversations (see section on participant observation).

2.2.3 Participant observation

Participant observation became the main method in addition to the interviews. For the international networking we both attended the European Ecovillage Conference. The participant observation was important to get an impression of the atmosphere. Being part of the plenary sessions and listening to many of the presentations and talks we attained information on the activities of the members of GEN. Also talks with single active persons were helpful, and we could conduct a number of interviews there. In the local ecovillages the participant observation helped us to discover innovative practices that even the members themselves were not aware of. A list of attended events and specified dates of the participant observation can be found in Annex 3.

Participant Observation GEN
In July 2014 we both attended the GEN Europe conference in the ZEGG ecovillage. We got a lively impression of the culture and atmosphere in GEN, and what is discussed in GEN by participating in many lectures of the conference, talks and conversations, and also in shared meals and the final party. We could create more personal contacts, and also conducted 4 interviews.

Participant Observation Schloss Tempelhof
I accessed the initiative as a "guest helper" staying for a week in June and another 10 days in November. This was a crucial base for building trust and showing a real interest by being ready to work for the community rather than just showing up for interviews. During the two visits in Schloss Tempelhof I participated in the following special occasions:
- June 29: village plenary,
- June: kitchen (4 half-day shifts),
- July: farming (2 half-day shifts),
- July, 1: I gave a lecture on the research project TRANSIT and my community research.
- Okt.30-Nov.2: attending the symposium "meaningful life" in cooperation with the "Sinnstiftung"

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- Nov.2: private Movie night at a member's place "(meine (k)eine Familie", Otto Mühl Commune) and discussion with 4 Tempelhof members.
- Nov.3-6: 4 half-day shifts in farming
- Nov.3: participating in the village school meeting of learning assistants (teachers)
- Nov.5: 11:45-12:30h observation in the free village school, Lunch together, 13-14:45h discussion with elder pupils 10-17, 14:45h-16h: talk with 2 learning assistants.
- Nov.6: Coordination circle
- Events like Yoga, a one-day workshop on nature painting, Sauna, sharing circles of guest helpers and "Forschungshütte" (research hut), dozens of talks during meals

I noticed the value of participant observation also by gaining information that would probably not have been consciously shared as innovative otherwise. For instance, while I was working on the vegetable farm, I could observe how the farmers emphasize the importance of harvesting and cleaning the veggies in a certain way to save the kitchen work. This is an example of an effective, socio-ecological practice and synergy effect of such a small scale ecovillage that would hardly have been mentioned in an interview. Also talks during meals revealed interesting side aspects.

I also noticed that without being recorded, the persons shared more concrete examples. I stayed for a second, longer time in Tempelhof. Showing up as a private person too resulted in a deeper base of trust.

This resulted in many non-recorded notes from a large number of conversations with different people in the ecovillages who probably would never have agreed to being interviewed. Getting a qualified outside perspective on the cases was not easy. I conducted a media analysis (annex 1.2). Most material was superficial compared to my own participant observation and rather mirroring the intention or even stereotypes of the respective journalist. There were also some good documentaries, but rather focussing on

Pic. 2.1: researcher Iris Kunze in Schloss Tempelhof, working in the garden, Nov. 2014

private life stories or certain events than on the research topics of TRANSIT. I also talked to people from the local ecovillages' neighbourhood, who have known the projects for several years and are in constant business or political contact with them (the majors of the municipality of Kressberg where TH is a part of have been interviewed by my MA student Sarah Mitternacht: TH 8,9).

Participant Observation Tamera

I spent a total of 10 days and 9 nights at Tamera, starting with a short visit over the weekend at the beginning of May 2014, and ending with a 1-week visit at the end of September 2014. Also, our participant observation at the GEN conference (5 days) included participant observation of (people from) Tamera. All this included participation in and/or observation of the following:

- 26 communal meals (2-3 meals a day)
- 2 kitchen shifts (dish-washing) of 2 hours each
- 1 gardening shift (picking and washing carrots) of 3-4 hours
- 2 days/nights at 'Visitors Hut', shared bedroom with 3 other female visitors, outside toilet and shower
- 7 days/nights at Guest House (private room, shared inside bathroom with neighbouring room, shared living room and small kitchen with ±10 other guests
- 1 Stone Circle meditation ceremony
- 1 Introduction tour around Tamera with ±10 other visitors and 2 people from Tamera
- 2 Matinée meetings (weekly community gathering on Sunday morning)
- 4 lectures/public speeches from people from Tamera

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- 8 visits to the café/terrace (day and evening)
- 1 dance party on Saturday night with ±150 people (visitors from ongoing programme + people from Tamera and surroundings)
- 1 Sunday afternoon "bazar" festivity at Aldeia da Luz (see chap. 5).
- Numerous conversations with visitors and people from Tamera
- Numerous walks through Tamera

Before and after the visits to Tamera, I spent time in Lisbon and Alentejo, meeting with friends and colleagues, including numerous conversations about (their impressions of and experiences with) Tamera.

Pic. 2.2: Researcher Flor Avelino (person on the right on left picture), working in the Tamera gardens

2.2.4   Document reviews

We started the document review by checking ecovillages' own materials – mainly official websites of the initiatives where they present their aims, often their common ground, their philosophical or visionary roots and their organizational structures. At their homepages the ecovillages also present their work and services. It shows the image they intend to create to the outside world, including advertisements for their businesses and educational events. Please check Annex 1.1 for details on our document review of the ecovillage movement.

Secondly there is a large body of grey literature by experts, that are involved in the movement. Scientific literature is rather rare and segmentary, approaching ecovillages from different disciplinary angles. For the specific TRANSIT questions on social innovation, some works could be included as relevant. But we mainly referred to our generated field data. Please check the literature list for scientific literature on the ecovillage movement in chapter 7.

A delicate area is media reports like magazine articles, films, and radio reports on ecovillages. They often show rather the clichés of the magazine etc. than the ecovillage itself. We were mainly using those as indicators of the image of the initiatives in certain parts of society. Please check Annex 1.3 for the detailed document reviews on media.

3   Analysis of the ecovillage movement and GEN

By Iris Kunze and Flor Avelino

Pic.3.1: impressions of the Global Ecovillage Network (by Iris Kunze)

3.1   Transnational networking: GEN as formal network of the ecovillage movement

In the following chapter we describe the development of the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) as a formal network that was founded in 1995. The ecovillage movement emerged in the 1980s/90s in response to ecological and social challenges in modern societies and GEN has become its strongest global networking initiative. Ecovillages are holistic and they start in personal, daily life by self-designing communal structures. Ecovillages cover basically all areas of life including consumption, economic activity, infrastructural planning, organization and governance. Ecovillages are founded with an ecological and often socio-political or spiritual intention. They experiment with new forms of living that actively respond to the contemporary ecological, economic and social challenges (Kunze 2009).

3.1.1   Descriptions and definitions of an ecovillage

The definition of one of the early researchers and co-founders of GEN, describes an ecovillage as

"a human-scale, full-featured settlement, in which human activities are harmlessly integrated into the natural world, in a way that is supportive of healthy human development and can be successfully continued into the indefinite future" (Gilman, 1991).

A more recent definition of ecovillages by a former GEN-EU president positions ecovillages as:

"private citizens' initiatives in which the communitarian impulse is of central importance, that are seeking to win back some measure of control over community resources, that have strong shared values (…) and that act as centres of research, demonstration and (in most cases) training" (Dawson, 2006).

Examples of ecovillages are eco-architectural town-experiments (e.g. Auroville, India and Arcosanti, USA), farmland communes with sustainable living structures (e.g. Earthheaven, USA, Svanholm, DK or La Commune di Bagnaia, IT), spiritual communities with an ecological life style (e.g. Wongsamit

Ashram, Thailand), traditional villages in developing countries that rediscover ancient ecological knowledge (Colufifa, Senegal) and the Sri Lankan Sarvodaya peace movement consisting of several thousand villages.

Ecovillages are connected to a much older movement of communal living. They are a specific type of 'intentional community'. An intentional community is defined as:

> *"a group of people who have chosen to live together with a common purpose, working cooperatively to create a lifestyle that reflects their shared core values. The people may live together on a piece of rural land, in a suburban home, or in an urban neighbourhood, and they may share a single residence or live in a cluster of dwellings" (IC website).*

As an inclusive term, 'intentional community' covers many sorts of communities, from monasteries, kibbutzim and (rural) communes, to ecovillages, student cooperatives and cohousing groups. Although these different examples are diverse in philosophy and lifestyle, each of them "places a high priority on fostering a sense of community – a feeling of belonging and mutual support that is increasingly hard to find in mainstream Western society" (GEN website).

3.1.2   Development of GEN as a global network

An important supporter and 'midwife' of GEN was the Gaia trust founded in 1987 in Denmark, mainly by Hildur and Ross Jackson who invested their assets into the trust. While Hildur was an eco-activist, Ross Jackson saw a strategic potential of a network of ecovillages as a response to the coming global economic crisis as we reach the limits to growth. Their involvement with the ecovillage movement started in 1990:

> *"We had founded and lived in one of the very first co-housings from 1972 to 1991, and were now ready to take the idea to a new level by establishing Ecovillage Fjordvang in Western Denmark at this time. From personal experience, we were enthusiastic about the benefits, both for young families and for the elderly." (Jackson 2004)[2]*

They commissioned Robert and Diane Gilman of Seattle, editors of the *InContext* magazine, to survey the field and identify the best examples of ecovillages around the world. Their report showed that, although many exciting and vastly differing communities existed, the full-scale ideal ecovillage did not (yet) exist. But together, the existing projects made up a total vision of a different culture and lifestyle that had great potential. Twenty people from some of the most established ecovillage communities, and a few broad thinkers with a global social interest, were invited to the Danish ecovillage Fjordvang in 1991 to discuss a strategy for developing and spreading the concept of sustainable communities and sustainable living. The approaches were very different and Gaia Trust decided to work with the people "actually *doing it* – the ecovillagers" (Jackson 2004).

In 1993, Gaia Trust started the first national ecovillage network in Denmark. In 1994, the second international meeting was held, resulting in a coordinative secretariat in Denmark funded by Gaia Trust. In 1995 two major steps were made by the ecovillage movement: they set up a website (www.gaia.org), and the Findhorn community organized the Conference "ecovillages and sustainable communities for the 21st century" supported by the evolving informal international network and Gaia Trust. The weeklong meeting is reported to have been a great success, attended by 400 people from 40 countries while another 300 had to be turned away (Jackson 2006). After this meeting, 20 ecovillage members decided to formally establish the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN), consisting of three regional networks with administrative centers at The Farm (USA), Lebensgarten, (Germany) and Crystal Waters (Australia), with an international coordinating office at Gaia Trust, Denmark. Gaia Trust committed to covering the expenses of the network for 3-5 years.

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[2] Jackson, Hildur and Ross (2004): GEN history 1990-2004;
  http://www.gaia.org/mediafiles/gaia/resources/HJackson_GEN-History.pdf (2014-12-12)

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In 1996, GEN decided to join the Habitat II conference in Istanbul, initiated by one passionate person. Setting up a major exhibition and acting as a distribution desk for several NGOs who were not able to afford their own stand, GEN was highly praised for its lively exhibition including an earth brick building and straw bale house installations. The Habitat Conference Istanbul made GEN internationally known, and even the UN started to acknowledge GEN.

The following years were about building networks. The international GEN board and council met twice a year combining the meetings with large international meetings of interest, hosting and presenting ecovillages or giving permaculture courses. Three major regional networks (the Americas, Europe/Africa and Asia/Australia) emerged. GEN had 15 national networks at that time. Topics of discussion were membership rules and the question to copyright the term ecovillage, which in the end was not considered to be a good idea. The main outcome of these early discussions was the evolution of a voluntary audit system that an individual ecovillage can use to judge how far it has come compared to the 'ideal targets' which are about ecological footprint, democratic decision making and others. This self-auditing system is known as the Community Sustainability Assessment[3].

A common educational network and curriculum was launched in 2005. The idea of ecovillages as *living and learning centers* emerged in the late 90ies in the Danish GEN office. GEN decided in 1999 to offer resources to identify three appropriate living and learning sites in the South. This concept emerged initially out of GEN's visionary proposal to the UN in Istanbul in 1996 to allocate 100 million dollars to build 50 demonstration ecovillages across the world as a concrete Agenda 21 initiative. The Jacksons comment: "Unfortunately neither the UN nor anyone else apparently had funds for such a purpose. Amazing, isn't it, when we think of the money that is wasted on far less worthy initiatives!)" (Jackson 2004). Over the next three years, this resulted in identifying, analyzing and describing three Living and Learning center projects: (1) Tanamalwila in Sri Lanka (2) EcoYoff in Senegal, and (3) the Ecoversidade project in Brazil. To date, it is only EcoYoff that has received any significant funding, but each project is moving ahead anyway with local support, and gradually developing their Living and Learning vision.

One positive result of the relationship with the UN was that GEN's application for consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) was accepted, giving the organization more visibility and influence (chap.3.3.1.2). Since 2003, the Gaia Trust withdrew its funds and GEN would have to find new sources of funding. As of spring 2004, the only significant funding raised has been from the EU for GEN-Europe (Jackson 2004).

While the GEN secretariat was located in Copenhagen, three significant publications were prepared, all edited by Hildur Jackson and Karen Svensson. The first two, published in 2001, contain(ed) basic information on GEN — one about the whole movement and one about education. In 2002, a regular book was published which was widely acclaimed, and is selling well. Since 2003, the Permaculture Magazine made a few pages in each issue available for GEN news and announcements.

In spite of the cutback in funding, new networks continue to emerge. Recent examples include India, Eastern Europe and Japan. Senegal started as the first African network and the first network anywhere to receive government support. Later, the government established a ministry for ecovillages for some years (which was later closed again), seeing the ecovillage movement as a possible alternative development model, in tune with their traditions.

In 2005, at the GEN+10 Conference in Findhorn, GAIA education was launched; a program that came out of GEN to educate people on the fundamentals of ecovillage building in a four week course (see chap. 3.3.2). Over the years, the president and board members of GEN international and GEN Europe

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[3] is has been used by a number of ecovillages and is available for download on the GEN website http://gen-europe.org/fileadmin/_migrated/content_uploads/Community_Sustainability_Assessment_02.pdf   2015-12-11

shifted a few times. GEN Europe has always been a democratic organization holding council elections every two years, and with office rotation foreseen every four to five years. When the GEN Europe officer started in 2008, her job contract had just a few activities and there was hardly any money to take care of. In 2009 they had their first EU-Grundtvig learning partnership and therefore started to work differently - with funding. In 2010 GEN launched a new website.

Today, the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) is a platform for exchange, discussion, information and further development of the ecovillage concept (Jackson, 2004). GEN "has been a driving force in spreading the ecovillage movement across the globe" (Bagadzinski, 2002: 16), as it not only supports and facilitates ecovillages, but also organises education and demonstration programs, and represents ecovillages at international institutions such as the UN, EU and several NGOs. Despite very different problems in developing and industrial countries, the intention to live in a healthy, democratic and ecological community was a general consensus. Since then, GEN has fostered exchange and mutual learning between ecovillages in different countries. Projects in developing countries get support from ecovillages in industrial countries regarding the application of eco-technologies like solar panels. In return, ecovillages from developing countries teach traditional methods of natural building as well as spiritual and social knowledge about community building, which is often perceived to be missing in industrial countries.

Graph 3.1: GEN time line 1987 – 2013 (the dissemination activities in orange)
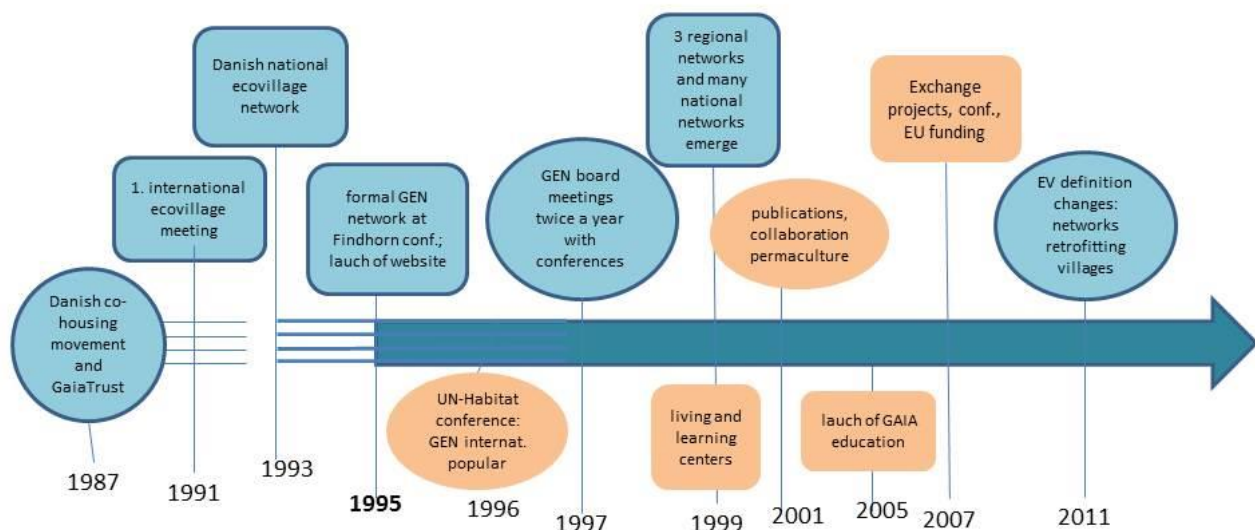
3.1.3 Recent developments in GEN

Today, GEN lists about 400 ecovillages worldwide[4] while only 57 ecovillages are members in GEN, plus a number of networks like Sarvodaya in Sri Lanka or the Longo Mai movement. It is hard to estimate exactly how many ecovillages exist on the world today, since such numbers are also highly dependent on (self-appropriated) definitions. Jackson estimates that there are between 4.000 and 5.000 eco-villages worldwide, while Albert Bates from the international GEN board estimates that there are 15.000 eco-villages, using a more inclusive definition (Jackson 2004:27, Van Schyndel Kasper 2008:13-14). Other sources (Eurotopia, 1998-2009) reveal that there is high fluctuation and all together a quick grow in projects who call themselves ecovillages.

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[4] See on online web data base GEN sites: http://gen-europe.org/ecovillages/find-ecovillages/index.htm
http://sites.ecovillage.org/en

GEN started off with three sub-networks: Ecovillages of the Americas (ENA), GEN Asia, and GEN Europe. Today there are two additional networks of Northern (GEN-NA) and Latin America (CASA), GEN Africa plus NextGEN (the youth network of GEN). GEN Europe has become stronger in networking and has worked for GEN international, especially in terms of fundraising. These networking activities are moving to GEN international now. Only since February 2013, GEN as a formal organization with board, council and members is a charity in the UK. Before, GEN was run from the USA while legally based in Italy. Moreover, additional regional and national networks of GEN have been emerging in the past few years (chap. 3.3.1.1).

The membership criteria have been opened up recently. GEN-President Kosha Joubert explains that a village is seen as an ecovillage and can become a full member "*if its residents say: we do not want the future of our settlement or urban neighbourhood to be dictated by outside forces – we are going to co-design our own pathway into the future.*" (Interview GEN1). The GEN Europe coordinator says that GEN international has reviewed the ecovillage definition about two years ago (also chap. 3.3.1.1). Now, it also includes traditional villages. Before this decision was taken, the definition focused on intentional communities only – a concept more suitable for the Western ecovillage movement since the nineteen eighties. The new GEN definition can also be used for traditional villages from the global South:

> *"An intentional or traditional community that is consciously designed through locally owned, participatory processes to regenerate social and natural environments. The four dimensions of sustainability (ecology, economy, the social and the cultural) are all integrated into a holistic approach."* *(Interview GEN5)*

The GEN president emphasizes there are different pathways to start an ecovillage. Also, becoming or being an ecovillage is rather a process then a specific result.

> *"You can have an ecovillage that focusses on the social, intergenerational solidarity or on integrating political refugees, or one that focusses on ecological showcasing of a new technology or one that focusses on economy, local currency and local entrepreneurship. You can also have an ecovillage focusing on how we really connect to a higher purpose, a spiritual approach. All of that is possible. There are different entrances. In the end, all ecovillages evolve towards integrating all four aspects."(Interview GEN 1).*

3.2 Aspects of 'innovation' and 'change' within GEN

3.2.1 Relation with social innovation

Most local ecovillages have intensively worked on developing new social practices to improve democratic decision making, and to facilitate meetings and conferences which are also applied in **GEN** as a global network. The members are quite aware of these abilities and appreciate the effort of GEN.

> *"Participatory decision making is a key, maybe THE innovation of ecovillages" (GEN3).*

The methods do not stay in occasional meetings or certain projects, but are seen as living practice in ecovillages.

> *"The core innovation of ecovillages to me is understanding and living the integrative version of all these methods" (GEN5).*

GEN is an important platform to gather and communicate the social innovations that are emerging from ecovillages to a larger public. GEN provides official information on single ecovillages and their

best practice experiences on its website[5]. It has also published several important books on life in ecovillages (e.g. Svennson/Jackson 2001, Jackson 2005, Dawson 2006). Many of the innovative practices have not been invented in ecovillages but could be realized on a broader and advanced level. For example:

> *"Alternative currencies and being more creative with money: hard to say, if it is a specific ecovillage invention. However it is easier in ecovillages to realize" (GEN3)*

GEN works on achieving political impact: First, it works on political contacts with the EU or the UN. GEN has consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) (chap.3.1). It has hosted an UNESCO training center for local authorities in Findhorn for several years. Also business contacts are increasingly interested to learn from ecovillages, yet so far on a rather small scale level.

> *"I have met Paul Paulman (unilever) engaged with NGOs. He is clear, that we need partnerships, and he admits: "you know something, we don't know" (GEN3).*

> *"Painful for me: just 6-8 conscious names in the world who are really awake to the dynamics of power and sustainability." (GEN3)*

On the other hand, ecovillages note that a growing number of organizations is about to change their culture toward more communal and wholesome structures (Laloux 2014):

> *"Social tools of ecovillages: we have a lot to give, people use it in other kinds of organisations" (GEN5).*

GEN tries to communicate the ecovillage model to macro-system policy-makers and other professionals by presenting it at different occasions (like the UN Habitat II in 1996). The GEN conferences work as platforms for journalists and interested people to get in contact with the ecovillage movement.

Another strong point that GEN activists from Latin America emphasize as social innovative is that GEN fosters respectful approaches of communication between people from the global North and South which enhance their mutual learning from each other. They comment on what they find to be innovative about the combination between mostly urban, educated Western people, with traditional, indigenous tribal people:

> *"The new thing really is the relationship. For so long there was such a gap... racism, rejection of the old, colonialism: now there is acknowledgement... that is a really an interesting dynamic, recovering the old medical practices, agricultural techniques, spiritual – there is wealth of knowledge and examples there" (GEN4).*

> *"CASA[6] is innovative and on the other hand also rediscovering the roots of communal living. Ecovillages are in a sense trying to imitate that but with new technologies and new social structures." (GEN4)*

Further, they explain that a lot of the ecovillage projects connected to CASA are rediscovering indigenous models of old cultures in the Americas, and reintegrate these into contemporary contexts. Many activists are involved in bridging local traditional knowledge and new technologies like the internet.

> *"That is probably happening around the world... in CASA in Latin-America we see it most... I guess in Africa it is also present" (GEN4).*

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[5] The 'solution library': http://solution.ecovillage.org 2016-01-27
[6] The network in Latin America is called CASA.

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At its conferences, the GEN team is highly motivated to create an atmosphere of trust and openness which invites people to share even deep emotions. At our visit to the GEN Europe Conference (summer 2014 at ZEGG ecovillage), we witnessed emotionally moving moments in the plenary session with more than 400 people.

The majority of the innovations are happening in the local ecovillages. People living in these communities seem to represent only a tiny little percentage of the respective society – plus a larger number of visitors which is difficult to estimate. Their value for social innovation is mainly to be seen in the experimental spaces they create. Having a closer look at their activities, multiple kinds of outreach and impact can be discovered. Starting small scale businesses, employment, fair trade, gift economy, alternative schools, elderly people care, or eco-technologies to abandoned rural areas, thousands of visitors learn hands-on practices for a daily sustainable life style during their work visits to ecovillages. Visitors can learn about social and ecological innovative practices like personal development, community building, non-violent communication, clay house building, and permaculture.

Another important manifestation of social innovation are specific practices of communication and facilitation of group meetings, which each ecovillage has particular ways of doing. Such practices are shared and/or taken over by others at larger meetings such as the GEN-conference. One specific example is applauding by waving one's hands in the air, rather than beating palms, so as to respect small children and babies who are sleeping. Another example is everybody raising one hand in the air to silence a large group of people (which works remarkably well). These are two small examples, but there are many more, including more serious group facilitation techniques (e.g. the Forum, see chapter 5 and 6.3). The meetings and platforms organised by GEN are an important channel for ecovillages to share such practices between each other.

3.2.2 Relation with system innovation

The concrete work in transforming infrastructures and communities is done by local ecovillages. Various authors have emphasised that ecovillages are not isolated endeavours but interact with their surrounding (Moore & Wight, 2007: 14). Gilman, one of the 'founding fathers' of the ecovillage concept, explicitly states that "ecovillages must not become insular, exclusive, or sheltered but must interact with and integrate wholeheartedly with the surrounding culture". Many contemporary ecovillages have multiple exchanges with the local economy and municipality; outreach happens by running education and learning centres for the larger region (Dawson, 2006). GEN president describes the evolution from being 'niches' towards becoming models and demonstration fields for many domains:

> *"GEN started off as 'islands' of a new culture and experiments of the future. Today we live in a different world. Awareness has risen dramatically. Many of the concepts that GEN was using 10 years ago are currently mainstreamed and used by politicians and in the corporate world. Today GEN aims not to create islands but to transition society to resilience. And we are searching for the role that GEN can play WITHIN that. [...] – seeing ourselves as part of a society wide dialogue." (GEN1)*

> *"It is also a shift from seeing ecovillages as intentional and rural communities to seeing ecovillages as a process of transformation and transition and a retrofitting of existing structures." (GEN1)*

> *On the other hand, "GEN carries historical baggage – we are sometimes still seen as hippies who don't really want to work with mainstream, as a network of freak communities with strange spiritual pathways." (GEN1)*

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GEN interviewees have a differentiated picture about their impact on the larger social system. They see themselves as a part of a larger and very diverse movement:

> *"The ecovillage idea represents the extreme part of the message. It makes people think." (GEN5)*

> *"Blessed unrest: Paul Hawken[7] rolls up the names of all organisations working on this transformation – hundreds and thousands! There is a huge movement out there. In the 70s I thought things would move a lot faster." (GEN2)*

> *"Investment banks are not evil in general. ECOPIA is an example - ethicall. You get shares; ecovillages can provide alternatives; anybody can invest in it!" (GEN3)*

3.2.3   Relation with game-changers

The aim of the ecovillage movement is to build a network of resilient communities that is not easily affected or hit by negative societal developments or game changers. The majority of ecovillage activists are highly sensitive and aware of system instabilities in various critical areas: economy, ecology, climate change, politics, and the crisis of the welfare state. They are critical of large scale systemic structures that are perceived as non-resilient "dinosaurs". They prefer to work on building up human-scale and trustful structures based on transparency and personal relationships. This quote expresses the ecovillages' relation to crises and game changers:

> *"GEN wasn't really created as a response to a crisis; more as an enthusiastic expression." (GEN3)*

GEN's networking of the globally spread community of ecovillages benefits from the internet and the game-changer of the ICT-revolution. Communication via social media, shared working spaces, virtual conferences are used on a regular base by GEN board and GEN's working groups.

> *"The internet: web access is a game changer." (GEN3)*

Some GEN interviewees (GEN 1,3, 4, 5) mention climate change as the biggest game changer. Other see political decisions on eco-technologies like genetic modification, or soil erosion in conventional agriculture, as threating game-changers.

> *"Laws that protect GMO – the seed-keeping movement is strong in Latin America. It has everything to do with ecovillages and transition towns. It is very direct, very easy to understand, that is a major topic." (GEN4)*

Others, in particular TH interviewees, mainly point to socio-economic and cultural issues as most critical issues of modern societies, such as human alienation from nature and communities, which have led to disembeddedness, mistrust and fear (TH 1,5,6, GEN2). The economic crisis is also seen as a game changer, to which ecovillages are working on alternative solutions.

> *"Capitalist big business is so intertwined with the government; they will shrink. It is happening, the alternative will arrive, 99% are uprising like the occupy movement. GEN is part of that movement. I thought the global economy would have crashed by now; it seems like capitalism is able to cut and dive; it is a bit disturbing, but I am still confident that ultimately we will prevail." (GEN2)*

Two interviewees (GEN3 and TH2) mention the responsibility of ecovillages for refugees – being aware that "first world countries" exploit "third world countries" and then reject their responsibility. Several projects for instance in refugee camps in Greece have been started which aim at bringing

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[7] Paul Hawken is an environmentalist and social activist's examination of the worldwide movement for social and environmental change.

ecovillage methods into refugee camps or hosting migrants as a first step towards integrating them into the hosting country.

All in all, ecovillage have a very broad view on game changers and do not focus on one specific societal development. They intend to work on finding resilient solutions to multiple game changers through a holistic ecovillage strategy.

3.2.4   Relation with societal transformation

Societal transformation is described as a "fundamental and persistent change across society, exceeding sub-systems and including simultaneous changes in multiple dimensions" (Avelino et al. 2014). Ecovillages definitely have the intention to strive for such societal transformation:

> *"It is not enough to be little acupuncture points: there is the need for interconnection." (GEN3)*

The number of ecovillages worldwide is relatively small. It is difficult to measure how far they contribute to transform the 'alienated' societies around them towards a 'new culture'. Indeed, we rather have to look for long-term effects, if ecovillages have a potential to bring about societal transformation by a "silent revolution" of widespread ways of living. GEN is playing an important role in connecting these single 'acupuncture points' and raise their motivation to be able to contribute to system innovations and system change.

We understand GEN's intention mainly as wanting to achieve two potential impacts in view of societal transformation: First, it works on political contacts with international organisations such as the EU or the UN. Second, GEN tries to communicate the ecovillage model to marco-system policy-makers and corporations by presenting the concept of ecovillages at different occasions. GEN Interviewees generally seem to be quite aware of the ecovillages' role as niches for social innovation.

> *"The ecovillage movement is the most radical approach amongst the alternative movements because it touches all areas of life! In comparison with permaculture, transition movement etc. The Cleaning-up-message of "Let's do it!" is easy, it is opening doors, everyone can agree to it while the ecovillage concept is very complex, not many people can agree to it when they first hear about it." (GEN5)*

Studies show how ecovillages can transform the way of living from within their niches. Some ecovillages under study have been particularly successful, in the sense that their ecological footprint is only 28- 42 % of the German average (Simon et al., 2003) and 21,5 - 37% of the UK average (Dawson, 2006). This amount of energy saving does not come from a reduced quality of living or a life-style of renunciation. Ecovillages are striving for more than reducing the energy consumption: they are organized communities with innovative decision-making structures that support sharing systems easily. While significantly reducing energy consumption, the ecovillages that have been examined rather display increased life quality conditions in terms of security, choice of lifestyle, co-existence with others, working freedom and combining work and family life (Karl-Heinz Simon et al., 2003; Kunze, 2006).

3.2.5   Relation with narratives of change

> *"If nothing ever changed, there would be no butterflies" (website GEN)*

GEN uses the butterfly as its logo. It is seen as a central symbol of change because the new cells of the butterfly have to cooperate. When the caterpillar pupated, new imago cells are emerging. But they are so new and unknown that the old system destroys them. The shift only happens when the imago cells start to cluster. Finally the old immune system collapses. The body of the butterfly can be built and is finally born. The cooperation of the large number of local ecovillages is a central

purpose of GEN. That the many local ecovillages are healing points or imago cells of a new culture is a central narrative of change in the ecovillage movement. Narratives and stories have a growing popularity amongst ecovillages. Findhorn recently organized and hosted the "New Story Summit" and launched a resource hub[8] around exchanging narratives.

These "new communities have realized that sustainable communities cannot only be built around things that they reject (…), but must be built around common positive values" (McLaughlin and Davidson 1985: 22). From the 1980s onwards, many intentional communities wanted to bridge the best aspects in society; they were more service-oriented, strived for more membership-commitment and became more structured and organized (ibid. 100-1).

The narrative of change that the ecovillage movement is referring to is at the same time their action strategy: to build a network of resilient communities that is not easily affected or hit by negative developments at the macro-level. They prefer to rely on micro- and meso-systems, because they can overlook, design and influence them. Ecovillages believe in a long-term approach of cultural change and small scale resilience. An important elements of their narrative of change is to start with oneself and then unite to build resilient communities. Ecovillages are passionate about changing individual mind-sets and to support personal development towards more responsibility, cooperative behaviour and empowerment. As a GEN member living in Findhorn formulates it:

> *"We do a lot of sharing: Being heard, sitting in a circle; the sharings can go very deep… issues, dragons, backgrounds. Some people and guests say it is the first time they feel really heard… an atmosphere, very open hearted… it is mind-blowing and heart-blowing… a lot of people go away completely transformed."* (GEN2)

> *"Changing the world one heart at a time" (GEN2)*

Spirituality has a central meaning for change amongst ecovillage people in GEN. It is part of their four dimensions of sustainability, generally using the less controversial term 'worldview'. Spiritual values and practice are seen as the base for individual change to increase happiness and compassion and therefore a motivation to live a less consumption based life style while increasing social life and connection to nature.

> *"The response to these crises requires a spiritual base" (GEN3)*

Main terms and concepts of ecological, social and economic crisis are known by probably all ecovillage members. The EV movement is rather passionate about narratives that deal with small scale and doable practical solutions, like "small is beautiful" (Schumacher 1999).

It is also a shift in the ecovillage approach from seeing ecovillages as intentional communities, urban and rural communities to seeing ecovillages as a process of transformation and transition and a retrofitting of existing structures. Today, 90% of the GEN member ecovillages are intentional communities and 10% communities in transition. Some argue that in the future, 90% will be retrofitting existing urban and rural structures and villages (GEN1). There is still hope, says one of our interviewee, that ecovillages could be the solution to the big crises, when the system crashes, as "safe havens".

> *"So we are clear that without worrying too much about the crisis, we have to create the new structures that are not too dependent on the old system… so when the crisis escalates…. The experiments that we are creating in ecovillages will serve when other people do not have other places to go…. And this will happen."* (GEN4)

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[8] http://newstoryhub.com/ 2015-01-17

Moreover the ecovillage movement and GEN make reference to larger narratives of civil society and eco-movements like the resilience narrative coming out of the transition movement, permaculture and also to post growth movements. In other words, they practically connect to many different bottom-up movements.

"We can see an alliance between ecovillages and the seed movement: The ability to create things with very little resources… people are really resilient already" (GEN4)

3.3 Aspects of empowerment and disempowerment of GEN

The key to social and political innovations in ecovillages is empowerment, the motivation and involvement of the residents. The ecovillage movement attracts and breeds individuals that are exceptionally motivated to develop, implement and advocate alternative forms of living. It is the specific *synergy between personal and societal transformation* that increases intrinsic motivation and empowers individuals to 'make a difference'.

3.3.1 Governance

In the following chapter the governance practices of the Global Ecovillage Network are described.

3.3.1.1 Internal governance

In the area of internal governance, GEN seems quite innovative and experimental. GEN-Europe is organized as a board and a council[9]. GEN international uses consensus decision making, and has working groups for different topics which send representatives to the council meetings. In some of the sub-networks, aspects of sociocracy[10] are implemented (in CASA, GEN4, also in the Austrian ecovillage movement[11]).

Most members of ecovillages are already busy with internal relations and regional networking beyond the ecovillage movement and cannot take on additional engagements in GEN. The larger communities have more capacities. Every local project of an ecovillage is an entire world in itself with their local and international networks (GEN1). GEN's international president remarks that national networks are increasing. Some of the bigger ecovillages have networks themselves that span around the globe. Such ecovillages can easily become overpowering within the national networks and compared to the many smaller communities. This could happen, for instance, to Tamera within the Portuguese network. In Italy, Damanhur has stepped back to allow smaller ecovillages to engage (GEN1).

GEN international's president acknowledges that the global South is very present in the global network: the African, South American and Asian networks.

"It is a main achievement for me that we really have grown into a global community" (GEN1).

This is a result of personal networking, regular events, workshops and conferences, as well as of organizational structures of governance.

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[9] http://gen-europe.org/about-us/gen-europe-council/gen-europe-council/index.htm

[10] **Sociocracy** is a system of governance, using consent-based decision making among equivalent individuals and an organizational structure based on cybernetic principles.

[11] http://www.soziokratie.at/ueber-soziokratie/geschichten/ 2015, Jan.10

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Decisions on membership criteria

A fundamental question of internal governance is: what are the criteria for qualifying as an 'ecovillage'? Together with its members, GEN discusses and develops criteria to specify which criteria a project should strive to achieve in order to become a member. A formal membership procedure with membership fees is only used by GEN Europe at the moment. The American GEN networks (CASA and GENNA), the Asian networks (GENOA) are

> *"networks that welcome projects that want to do this work on the ground and want to be part of this network, but there is no official membership process and no fee. GEN Africa is currently setting up its membership structures."(GEN1)*

GEN Europe has a particular process of deciding on membership.

> *"You have to have at least two years of implementation before you are fully recognized as a member of GEN, so we do not get those projects that just last six months" (GEN1).*

A problem could emerge, if GEN had a majority of members that are not active anymore, for in that case they cannot vote in the general assembly, because a minimum of 50% percent of the members need to be active voters (TAM1). So far, the rule was that at least eight adults had to live together permanently, at least for 1-2 years, in order to be granted full member rights (GEN1).

> *"Of course the intention of the core part of GEN – the holistic approach - will still be a major part. The social, cultural, ecological, economic, all of them play a similar role, they are all equally important. At the core of what is an ecovillage lies the awareness of the people." (GEN1)*

The membership criteria for national networks have changed. So far, only networks of ecovillages could become members. Today, GEN is also open for networks that include at least three projects that are ecovillages or call themselves ecovillages. The networks can be national, but by now also transnational.

> *"We have members like Arche international, the Camphill communities are interested to become a member. Holistic healing centres could become members. But also people who are more connected to political local organizations or to social entrepreneurship and sustainable businesses" (GEN1).*

The Latin American network CASA, like many other national networks inside GEN, includes other initiatives besides ecovillages, for instance transition towns, permaculture, and "eco-nomadic projects". They network via internet[12] and by travelling around as "Casa eco-caravanas". CASA has four working groups: on communication, financial resources, processes, and on education. (GEN4)

> *"For activists on the ground in Chile, South Africa or Senegal, it would make much more sense to work with Transition Towns, GEN, and permaculture together. They are very frustrated that we are three different organizations." (GEN1)*

> *"We have ECOLISE (see BOX3.4) in Europe bringing together permaculture, transition towns and GEN, researchers and Gaia education – those are the three main organizations. [Networking between them] is starting. There is some ego-rubbing between the organizations. But the atmosphere of collaboration is growing rapidly." (GEN1)*

Informal networking is important

A large amount of the international networking between ecovillages works in the form of individuals travelling voluntarily between ecovillages or having moved from one to another ecovillage. They are

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[12] http://casa.ecovillage.org/

motivated to experience different kinds of communities or want to learn and exchange internationally or even get involved in founding a new project. Especially in the younger ecovillages (like in our case study Schloss Tempelhof) we observe a (small) number of community experienced people who have lived in several ecovillages or intentional communities before. Also in Tamera, several of the people living there used to live in other intentional communities before moving to Tamera. In the early years of GEN, interviewees perceived some competition amongst the ecovillages up to the fact that some projects – Tamera as well – did not want to call themselves ecovillages (GEN1, TAM1).

> *"But then we became aware that there are other projects with similar experiences, we got to know each other in these meetings and also in personal contacts, visits. We found out, the other projects are different, also have a different world view but the similarities are much bigger. GEN serves as a protection shield, it helps creating a certain image that can be understood by the mainstream, an umbrella that can protect more extreme projects like Tamera." (TAM1)*

GEN is a very informal network that relies on personal contacts and shared experiences of working together for ecological projects – may it be on the computer, at political conferences or on the building site of a clay house. The members of GEN are building their feeling of belonging through shared emotional experiences, visions of 'a better world', and being part of a world-wide movement towards more social cooperative and ecological ways of living.

Example of a national network: GEN Germany

GEN Germany shall be shortly introduced as an example of a national network. Before the network was founded there have been permanent tensions between the large and the small communities. During the last years several large communities have developed in Germany, including Schloss Tempelhof, and the idea to found GEN Germany emerged in 2014. The German ecovillage members had been engaged in GEN Europe. In Germany there was the 'come together' network of communities which does not exist anymore (GEN1). GEN Germany was only launched in 2014 as a legal entity. German ecovillages with board members are Schloss Tempelhof, Lebensgarten Steyerberg, ZEGG, Gastwerke Emmerich, Schloss Tonndorf, 7Linden, and also an ecovillage in the planning phase (TH10). The criteria of membership are slightly different from those of GEN Europe. The respective German ecovillages had practical motives to found GEN Germany. A purpose of GEN Germany is to collaborate on dealing with German laws that are seen as unjust for communities and not really arranged for communal organizations like fees for TV, construction and eco-housing laws. Another topic is mutual exchange and support for educating the teenagers of the ecovillages by exchange visits to other ecovillages. A long term vision aims at exchanging services like health care, insurances etc. (TH10). The members of GEN Germany are also driven by exploring solutions for problems that occur in ecovillages and therefore want to provide a supportive platform for the single ecovillages.

3.3.1.2   External governance

GEN is rather missing a strategy on dealing with external contacts. A major effort of GEN is about changing the image of ecovillages as separate islands. The aim is to be part of society wide dialogue and processes. This is seen as already taking place (GEN1):

> *"There is a lot more openness now in mainstream, politics and academia. This openness was not there in the beginning when I started in 2008. Now GEN is working with governments in Senegal and Thailand. It would not have been possible 10 years ago. GEN is not seen as hippies anymore." (GEN5).*

Also the former president of Ireland keeps an eye on GEN and supposedly regrets that GEN is still too low under the radar of mainstream politics (GEN3).

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In 1996, GEN decided to join the Habitat II conference in Istanbul, which had effects on its political visibility for and influence on UN institutions. GEN received consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). For many years, GEN participates regularly in ECOSOC meetings with a team of representatives who live in or near New York City. GEN has been an active participant in the World Social Forum meetings at Porto Alegré in Brazil and elsewhere and is regularly sending representatives to climate summits and/or part of civil society exhibitions.

Another large-scale political influence of GEN is the CIFAL[13] training centre's activities in Findhorn ecovillage to train local authorities for sustainability. The center was recently moved to Edinburgh (GEN2). Some research projects on and with ecovillages, have been funded by the EU (Baltic Sea network, Grundtvig partnership) and by the German government.

3.3.2 Social learning

GEN offers a knowledge and teaching platform on how to start a project by learning and using social competences, the so called 'ecovillage incubator' trainings. In its self-organized working groups, members are compelled to create their own structures. With an intention of communal support, the communication culture tends to imply aspects of non-violent communication. It is also a platform to discover one's abilities in management and web administration.

The social innovations in ecovillages are translated to social learning courses. Communal living and its challenges and best practice solution attract also people from other social contexts.

> *"We have positive, real examples. Seeing a living example is much more valuable than talking. Living the change." (GEN5)*

> *"Learning is happening in single ecovillages: learning by doing. Not only focus on mental learning, but hands-on experience, the whole person. Of course we also have lots of technical courses like straw bale house building." (GEN5)*

> *"The emotional level is crucial. The forum is central as a learning method for going through your own processes. Singing and massaging each other: these are small non-mental activities." (GEN5)*

Long-term ecovillage members and experts of GEN have developed an education program to teach the experiences and successful results from years of experimentation in dozens of ecovillages around the globe (EDE 2005). The program not only wants to teach how to found and run an ecovillage, but the experimental and responsive approach is part of these trainings as well. Also, the teachers adapt the program to the communities or cities where the participants come from.[14]

As a four-week introductory course in an ecovillage, EDE provides an overview of the full spectrum of designing considerations for implementing sustainable communities. Education methods include hands-on experience, 'body-based' memory or shared work, thereby providing lessons on how to accept responsibility for community maintenance and to apply open communication methods. The program contains four basic dimensions. These dimensions are of central importance to GEN, as also becomes visible in their above quoted definition of an ecovillage (chap. 3.1):

1. **Cultural/Worldview**: transforming of consciousness, socially engaged spirituality etc.

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[13] CIFAL Scotland **-** the United Nations institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) Affiliated Training Centre-empowers individuals, governments and organisations through knowledge and learning to effectively implement sustainable development, and other associated UN international conventions. http://www.cifalscotland.org/

[14] The program is further developed into? a Wiki (http://ecovillage.wikicities.com/wiki/Gaia_Education) and exists also as an online program at a Spanish university (http://www.gaiaeducation.org/.

2. **Social**: building community, regional and global outreach, personal empowerment etc.
3. **Ecological**: green building, appropriate technology, local food, restoring nature etc.
4. **Economic**: social enterprise, regional networks, interest free currencies etc.

An important issue, related to the community culture of ecovillages, is empowering children, elderly people (example of TH, chap. 4.3.2) and women. GEN PR-active member Leila Dregger together with sociologist Nina Kovoets, did a small survey on women in ecovillages in Europe. Some of the main results are:

"The majority of the communities and projects that answered have slightly more women than men, and nearly all of them feel that women are better off in communities than outside of communities. […] Half of the answering communities are "doing something to increase the love and understanding between men and women", for example: "Men and women groups, Forum, days for love and partnership, meetings for these issues… and many other methods." […](GEN3).

The final statement shows that in spite of the similarities, communities have a diverse image of their capacity for women's empowerment:

"The tendency is to replicate the mainstream, sometimes without being aware. (…) I believe we are mirroring a growing paradigm where women's roles are changing."[15]

3.3.3   Resources

GEN hosts an innovative mixture of material, financial and immaterial resources like social capital and voluntary engagement. Concerning its financial resources, GEN as a global network started off with financial funding and still receives irregular funding by the Danish GAIA trust to maintain the basic structure (chap.3.1). It has never received large amounts of funding. While the UN is not subsidising, the EU has funded small exchange projects. The German government has also funded some projects. GEN can mainly rely on large ecovillages like Findhorn, 7Linden, ZEGG, and Damanhur in Europe and many others around the world to fund it. They are hosting GEN conferences, GAIA education workshops and provide office space for GEN. Only GEN international is a charity in the UK – since 2013 – GEN Europe is a non-profit based in Germany and receives membership fees. Due to a lack of financial resources, the salaries of GEN activists are quite low. Hence most of them work on a voluntary base.

"Many people that get involved in GEN have good capacities of leadership, but good people leave, because there is not much income. It is painfully underpaid." (GEN3)

GEN offers a platform of social capital for ecovillage members from around the world to get in contact with people from other parts of the world. In some cases of the mentioned project funding, ecovillage members from Africa can visit a conference in Germany or vice versa. At those conferences often collaboration between ecovillage from different countries is started. Also a culture of donation and gifting is common. The social capital is also expressed in the form of a public online database that informs about ecovillages including an interactive map of GEN Europe.[16]

At the GEN Europe conference, awards are given to particularly inspiring ecovillages from time to time, which are funded by donations. At the GEN Europe conference 2014, we witnessed a nomination for an award that was funded by an ecological global company. The GEN conference voted for two projects, one in Romania and the other one in the West Bank supported by Tamera's global campus programme.

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[15] Women in ecovillages, GEN newsletter March 23, 2014. http://gen.ecovillage.org/index.php/news/326-how-are-you-empowering-the-women-in-your-community.html

[16] The map: http://gen-europe.org/ecovillages/find-ecovillages/index.htm   and the global platform: http://sites.ecovillage.org/

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GEN creates a network pooling many non-monetary resources, which is seen as challenging to exchange. Nevertheless, GEN tries to find ways of establishing non-monetary exchange:

> *"It is happening on an informal level where people know each other. The field has a lot of potential, we are not using so far. People dream of it, but often we do not do it. If you want to sell goods there is the logistics questions, it is not so easy. It is not formally organized in any way" (GEN5).*

Support between the ecovillages on national and transnational levels is starting:

> *"Visiting each other for free – in GEN-Suisse it is already working. A trading system amongst communities, e.g. olive oil from Damanhur does exist." (GEN5)*

CASA, the Latin American Network of GEN is actively carried by young people connecting different ecological movements like natural seed cultivation, permaculture, eco-nomads and ecovillage living. The global GEN network is an inspiring platform and community for them to learn and get support (event 3).

> *"CASA network facilitates, connects, finding the window of opportunity for funding, support – that is what the network gives, rather than being the innovator." (GEN4)*

Broader networking activities show GEN's active participation in the ECOLISE[17] network. It is a newly founded coalition of organisations engaged in promoting and supporting local communities across Europe in their efforts to build pathways to a sustainable future. The mission of ECOLISE is to be a shared platform for learning, action and advocacy of community-based initiatives on climate change and sustainability in Europe, as well as collective fund-raising regarding e.g. EU funding schemes.

3.3.4   Monitoring and evaluation

GEN does not have systematic forms of evaluation or monitoring. Nevertheless it provides space for reflection. An important platform for exchange and also reflection and monitoring can be seen in the interactive websites and databases of GEN[18]. GEN Europe seems to be more systematically organized than the other sub-networks. They receive some EU-funding for adult learning exchanges (Grundtvig-partnership, Grundtvig-workshops, ERAMUS+) and have to report on these projects. However, a detailed monitoring or evaluation does not happen, besides reflecting meetings on particularly problematic projects. The GEN Europe officer indicates that they don't even document their membership statistics over the years (GEN5). On the other hand, a huge database is growing on the websites of GEN (see BOX 3.5).

The mentioned "Community Sustainability Assessment" (chap. 3.1.2) can also be seen as a form of evaluation, but it is not used anymore, because it was seen as too rigid to capture the diverse and creative pathways of ecovillages. Also, the honest intention is seen as more important than the actual realization of ecovillage aspects (chap. 3.1). Evaluation sometimes comes in the form of external research projects. We received answers that researchers are welcome to evaluate the impact of ecovillages.

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[17] http://www.ecolise.eu

[18] The online database and interactive map of GEN Europe: http://gen-europe.org/ecovillages/find-ecovillages/index.htm **Ecovillage Networking**, global platform: http://sites.ecovillage.org/

3.4 Question by interviewees to TRANSIT research project

In this section we would like to report the (research) questions which our interviews proposed to us. Most of the interviewees appreciated our questions as differentiated enough to capture social innovations around their initiatives by also including views from different angles. We asked them, if they have research questions we could support them in finding answers to. Just some of the interviewees responded. One person asked, if we know holistic/integral organizations as defined by the integral approach (Laloux, 2014) and if we can give advice on how ecovillages could manage a similar evolution (GEN3). Another interviewee asked how like-minded networks could be brought together more closely, given that there is a lot of duplication and competition of exclusive networking, which the interviewee considers to be characteristics of 'the old system'. Actually networking would be an important practice to live a 'new paradigm', and competition is perceived as an obstacle by him (GEN2).

Another interviewee from GEN was interested in having the impact of the ecovillage movement measured by a research project (GEN4). Also in the local cases, people were interested to see concrete evidence of their impact on sustainable lifestyles and the spreading of ecovillage movement values.

An interviewee from Tamera would like to see an academic research project on the degree of happiness of people in ecovillages. And more specifically he/she asked about to what extent they are happy with their relational and interpersonal practices. Research should relate more to the topic of love and sexuality as aspects of community because a relation with empowerment issues is seen here (TAM1).

In Schloss Tempelhof we gave an evening presentation on the TRANSIT research project and on some results from previous research on intentional communities. Besides a few members from Tempelhof, mainly guests attended the presentation. It was interesting to hear the questions that these guests without prior ecovillage experience had. They first asked about how this can work without falling apart because of conflicts; and second, how the individuality can be protected from peer pressure.

4   Local initiative 1: *Schloss Tempelhof (TH)*

By Iris Kunze

Pic. 4.1: Pictures clockwise from upper left: Panorama view on Schloss Tempelhof from a south eastern perspective with entrance, official village sign and seminar centre; view from the north on historical buildings, mobile homes and Yurte (used as seminar room); canteen at lunchtime, map in the village school for the school children with magnets to indicate where they are; (photos: Iris Kunze), Tempelhof village from above with land (the black line does not show the corrects land marks).

4.1 Overview of developments in Schloss Tempelhof

Schloss Tempelhof was founded in 2007 by entrepreneurs and activists from civil society movements like Artabana[19], credit unions (the virtual income community Neue Wege in Munich) and by two former members of the ecovillage 7Linden. The intention and core idea to found this community emerged around the question of how a cooperative and more communal way of living could be created. The main ideas target intergenerational living – children and elderly people shall be acknowledged better–, a solidary economy, and a higher financial consciousness. The method for achieving this has been found in the combination of personal development and living in community.

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[19] Artabana is a self-organized health solidarity community network functioning similar like insurances. Hundreds of local communities are connected in a national wide solidarity fund. www.artabana.de (Dec.15, 2014).

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Tools are used for building authentic communication, empathic relationships and economic transparency. The main tool since the early starting phase is called WE-Process[20].

Beginning in 2007 in Munich, the group of approx. 20 core members organized community building processes. Their plan was to build a village of 150-200 people – a decent number of people for mutually supportive living. Lacking success in finding a large enough site close to Munich the group realized in early 2010 that it was necessary to expand the radius of their search. They immediately came across the abandoned village called Tempelhof. After signing a contract of option for fixing a pre-emption right to buy the real estate, it was finally bought in December 2010.

In spring 2011 after six months of renovation during which 20 workers lived on site, the 20 core group members plus 30 newcomers moved in. Only the core group had carried the financial responsibility and risk. The newcomers had a year of trial were they could have left – taking away their 25.000€ contribution from the cooperative. The project went extraordinarily well through this pioneering phase (chap. 6.1).

Since 2013 the founders started to intentionally step back from their leading role of managing the board. The reason was not a conflict, but the founders rather wanted to support the community to grow into the *all leader*-principle. It was a well-communicated process during which the governance structures were adapted. The so-called coordinating circle was very powerful and the community wanted to change this structure. But no suitable new members stepped forward. Finally, the small coordinating circle was transformed into a coordinating plenary in which everyone can participate actively in preparing the decisions of the village plenary (TH3).

Schloss Tempelhof as of today is a communal and self-organized village of 140 inhabitants, of 32ha (4ha of buildings, 27ha of agrarian land including 1ha of forest) located in the Jagstregion, a rural area in Southern Germany, state of Baden-Württemberg. TH is not only a residential ecovillage but also employs about half of its members in part time

> **BOX 4.1: Communal infrastructure services** of Schloss Tempelhof for the 140 residents: cost efficient and ecological:
> - Car sharing: 8 cars used by about half of the total number of residents
> - The canteen prepares 3 meals a day (highly frequented): 4-5workers on half-time need based salaries.
> - The farm works with natural fertilizers, permacultural methods and compost heat ('Biomeiler')
> - The farm produces vegetables, dairy products with goats, also meat (on 26ha of agrarian land and 1ha of forest)
> - Honey (80 bee colonies) and fruits, also fruit juice and soon gourmet vinegar are gained in cooperation with regional farmers.
> - 60% self-sufficiency in nutrition, including TH and the guest house.
> - Administration, seminar house with more than 8.000 overnight stays per year
> - Village school with two professional & five part time teachers
> - carpentry, metal workshop, constructors etc.
> - A nurse, 2 medical doctors, several therapists and artists

positions n the basis of need-based salaries (chap. 4.3.1.1). The members have built up a strong sense of cohesion within this originally very diverse community by introducing a tolerant culture of community and by avoiding any political or spiritual dogma. It is remarkable that just a few people have left TH so far and that stability has been high in the starting phase. Leaving was mostly due to private priorities to live somewhere else rather than because of conflict or misunderstandings (TH1).

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[20] The term 'Wir-Prozess' was created by the Schloss Tempelhof community drawing on and further developing Scott Peck's process of community building (Peck 2005). It is applied in other communities as well and offered as a public workshop.

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Concerning networking Schloss Tempelhof actively built up contacts with the region from the beginning (chap. 4.2.2). In terms of 'ecovillage networking' members already started getting to know other ecovillages before they started on site. TH became a member of GEN in 2013. Since the beginning and with increasing emphasis it is networking amongst communities in Germany. In 2014 it co-founded GEN Germany as an independent association (chap. 3.3.1.1).

Today after three years on site the Schloss Tempelhof community notices that the initial enthusiastic feeling of the pioneering phase, full of great hope is slowly dying away (TH18). Members describe this phase as the communal "honey moon", observing that this is now over and that personal disenchantment arises with the challenges of ordinary daily life (Schloss Tempelhof newsletter Dec.2014). Sometimes people are falling back into contra productive habits that were expected to be overcome by this promising project of a communal living experiment. Nevertheless there is no stagnation to observe but rather a shift towards daring to go one step further to see what is going to evolve next.

With about 140 members the community starts to differentiate into smaller groups now. Members are looking for their personal reference group which some found in the work departments (kitchen, agriculture), others in the sharing economy experiment, in the mobile homes, through connecting visions or "by chance". In the TH newsletter they reflect on how these small groups can create a more intimate atmosphere and thereby help to address the question what community really means for each of them, i.e. if it is just an utopia or a home, if it does foster noble behaviour and how one can support other people? To be rooted in the smaller and concrete "you" in comparison to the large community also helped to overcome the dark sides and disillusions experienced in the community. Disillusionment can reveal one's own unrealistic ideals of oneself and thus encourage releasing them (Schloss Tempelhof newsletter Dec.2014).

Table 4.1: development of Schloss Tempelhof

Year / period	Important activities/changes/milestones in local initiative: Schloss Tempelhof	Important changes in context
2007	**Start of group in Munich: emerged out of civil society** movements like Artabana, credit unions (the virtual income community "Neue Wege") and two former members of the ecovillage 7Linden, more democracy e.V.	Long-term development of demographical change, financial crises, raise of burn out, unemployment and divorce rates.
Later 2007	Crown land of the state at Ammerlake was open for sale. Divided opinions about buying it, **the group almost died**.	The interest of the group raised the attractiveness of the object. Suddenly the real estate of Ammersee **was bought by somebody else** for a relatively high amount of money.
2008 – 2010	**New start**: Community circle met regularly for **community building processes** and visions on how to organize decision making, building, and around the question how to organize the cooperative. Visits to existing communities like Schloss Glarisegg, 7Linden, Auroville, Damanhur and others.	Turning the focus of development **from outside search to inner group process** development and clarification of common ground.
Early January 2010	In the group retreat it was realized they had to either stay a network in the city or to **enlarge the radius beyond Munich area to find a site to live.**	Around Munich only small sites for 20-30 people were offered.
End of January 2010	A Co-founder **googled "Dorf kaufen"** (buy a village) and found the the village of Tempelhof in the Jagstregion being offered for sale.	The **village of Tempelhof was offered**. In early times it had been founded by the order of the templara. During the last decades the castle had been used as city hall of Kressberg. The other buildings were a children's home, later a care village for disabled children owned by the church. During the last five years before the group bought Tempelhof, the building

		complex was almost not used except for the large kitchen. The owner was a private agent, the previous owner had been the protestant church
July 2010	Signing of **option contract** (learning from Ammerlake desaster) that gives pre-emption right to buy Tempelhof for 6 months for a fixed price of 1,5 million.	Personal support in juridical issues
Summer 2010	Setting up the **foundation and the cooperative** for preparing to buy the real estate and land.	**Moving to the site of Tempelhof.**
Fall 2010	The workers **started with renovating** and living in Tempelhof. First incomes of need for farming and building workers	Handing over of the keys of the community initiatve: symbolic start by arriving and taking ownership of the place.
23. December 2010	**Tempelhof is bought** for 1,5 Million Euros (another 4.600 Euros has to be paid for every new member from the 67.person on that joins until 2017).	**Notarial act**: The real estate and land of 30ha is bought by the Schloss Tempelhof foundation. No individual co-owner of the cooperative can ever sell his/her part. Therefore **the land and buildings are prevented from being sold for profit.**
Spring-summer 2011	The **first 50 inhabitants moved in** for a trial year. The 30 newcomers had the right to take their 25.000 € out again. Only the 20 people of the core group carried the risk.	The community chose the name "*Schloss Tempelhof*" to indicate their commitment and identification with the place.
Spring 2011	Foundation of the **association Tempelhof e.V.** as the third juridical body of the initiative.	
2011	Opening of the **seminar house**, opening to the public.	Starting to **welcome external visitors**
May, 1, 2011	**1.300 guests** came to Tempelhof for the first of May open door event which became a tradition.	The **tradition of the first may event** at Tempelhof is known in the region
Since summer 2011	Until now, the members of Schloss Tempelhof rather belong to the elder generation, 50+. Special events for attracting **families** to join Tempelhof.	**More families** are attracted and join Schloss Tempelhof
Since July 2011	A **monthly Info cafe** and guided tour informs about Schloss Tempelhof.	Up to today **60-80 visitors** are coming to every Info cafe.
2013	**Media interest is rising**: first documentaries in West state TV by famous Anke Engelke ('Something like fortune'), Articels in large magazine Süddeutsche, and in special ecomagazines.	Tempelhof is getting famous in German media. **20.000 homepage visits** the day after the WDR- West German TV broadcast.
Summer 2013	Charity project of the German unit of gardeners (BASEG) restores and beautifies the outland and areas and paths between the buildings for a special price.	**More publicity is attracted again**
2013	Opening of firm MoWo (mobiles Wohnen: mobile living) **more space for living**, young families and people can arrive.	
Sept. 2013	Opening of special unique **village school** at TH as elementary and middle school in combination with the firms and businesses at TH.	Permission to run the school by the state ministry of education and school after one year
Fall 2013	**The founders stepped back** from the manging board (after announcements in spring)	**Self-critique of a concentration of power** by the members of the board in charge.
Fall-winter 2013	**Internal formal decision structures in transition:** during a phase of about two months no bodies met which is described as a fluid state of transition	Members were **waiting for initial empowerment and getting in charge**
2014	**Integration into the municipality** of Kressberg: Guests from Belarus? stay at TH: supporting the municipality. tree planting at TH.	Action to support the 'White Russia relief' project of the municipality of Kressberg: hosting visitors.
Since 2014	A new managing board of mainly young people (mid-thirties) is elected. The decision making structures were changed as well: **A new internal form is taking root**: opening the coordination circle to all who want to come as a preparatory body to the village plenary and some other changes e.g. in the	**Requirements of governing the village**

	financial board. **More decisions are delegated to the working groups and projects.**	
Since 2014	**Reduction to 10 newcomers** a year: joining of people of age 50+ is reduced while young people are still welcome	
Januar 2014	Contact with the municipality of Kressberg: Since May 2014 a member of TH is **part of Kressberg's village council**	First civil society assembly at Kressberg
Fall 2014	Start of experimental housing: The first comb houses are built in the neighbouring village. Application for the **first Earth ship in Germany**.	A **unique law** allows **experimental buildings** in the state of Baden-Württemberg.
Fall 2015	Construction of the first **Earth Ship** in Germany[21], funded by donations	

4.2 Aspects of 'innovation' and 'change' of Schloss Tempelhof

4.2.1 Relation with social innovation

Schloss Tempelhof is a space that invites and supports people to create social innovations; at the same time it is a social innovation itself. In the following chapter, TH will first be interpreted as an innovation and second, various social innovations and sustainability innovations that have reached out so far are introduced.

4.2.1.1 Schloss Tempelhof as social innovation

A communal ecovillage is a unique and valuable field functioning as an 'incubator' for innovations on two levels: first the infrastructure provides land, administration and tools. The actual underlying value is a committed community with a culture of transparency, tolerance, cooperation and trust. It attracts people who want to experiment with communal and ecological methods.

"We are a potential "Wunderwerkstatt!" (factory of miracles) (TH2)

4.2.1.2 Social innovations of Schloss Tempelhof

Communal and social methods

The community building practice described by Scott Peck was further developed by TH into the so called *WE-Process*. It is practiced by the community and also taught in seminars inside and outside TH. A method called *Possibility Management* developed by Clinton Callahan who lived in TH and gained practice and popularity by educating coaches. The so called 'WE-process' is a central method for building the identity and stability of TH. It is perceived as something very special by some members[22] because the group enters a space of the 'unknown'. Sitting in a circle for a weekend 6-8 times a year with some basic communication rules for responsible and adequate communication, the WE-process operates without moderation, theme or guidance. Often the process gets stuck or becomes unbearable because of superficial and conditioned communication. People have committed to stay until the end and it is observed, that if they pass through difficult phases, suddenly a mutual empathy emerges. Awareness has expanded and expectations have minimized. They enter a state of emptiness (Peck 2005) and unknown which is full of new possibilities. The challenge is for people

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[21] http://www.earthship-tempelhof.de 2016-02-15
[22] Interview TH15 and Thomas Steininger 2015, see annex 'media analysis on TH'

not to withdraw in moments of uncertainty and to fall into conditioned, conventional behavior and thinking.

Practical solutions for demographical change: intergenerational living

The average age of the founders was between forty-five and sixty. Their focus also included how to live a good life when they are old. Members committed already to support each other in cases of disability and hardship while they are completely aware that they have no plan in this regard yet. Nevertheless they trust that they will manage it.

> *"Taking our experiences with some disability cases into account, we estimate that 100 young people can easily take care of 10 elders" (TH5).*

Concerning living in dignity for elders TH is making progress together with the Artabana network Germany. They bring experts together that can advise on formulating ones advance directive etc. and are working on a concept for a hospice embedded in the community.

Socio-economic innovations and private, communal insurances

For realizing their intention of economic transformation the TH people started with raising awareness on the individual level. Every member has to list the money they need every month and the money they earn and possess – and in a culture of economic transparency present it to the community in form of a poster exhibition. Of course it is a very intimate issue that could be abused by others. It was discussed a lot. The aim to present one's individual financial situation was set up because of the "need-based salaries". TH wants to support its members to be able to live of the work they do for the community.

TH members want to become independent of banks, insurances and other distant, abstract anonymous financial systems. They apply a kind of internal private insurance where members support each other financially or socially in case of hardship, called *TempelGrund* which is a model developed by Artabana (chap. 4.1). Similarly, in the ecovillage of ZEGG they started establishing a *ZEGG Grund*.

In the area of education the village school for children is a new and unique model fostering childrens' intrinsic motivation. It is accepted as a legal school for the first year now and parents from outside TH start to move to the region because of this school.

Personal social innovations

Social innovation starts with every single member changing his/her place of living for joining the project and often also her/his job. A 32-year old member checked deeply if he really wanted to leave his safe job as a teacher, his position that he had worked hard for until he decided to join Schloss Tempelhof (TH6). He is one of the few younger pioneers of the project. Interestingly, the majority of founders and pioneers are rather old – mid 40ies to 60. It is clearly not a young student eco-commune at all. One of the founders says:

> *"The ideal age to found such a project is beyond 50, because you are established in your job, the children can stand on their own feet, and you are experienced. Young people do not want to be so committed yet like you need to be for living in community. And young parents with children who need to work are too busy to have enough capacities for such a pioneering phase." (TH5)*

4.2.1.3   Other innovations directly related to social innovations

Social innovations, especially the community culture and infrastructure, have triggered economic, technological and ecological innovations in the following areas:

Economic innovations

TH has created a culture of trust and a gift economy for supporting members financially within a communal frame of mutual help. Furthermore, two innovations emerged out of an experiment of about 12 members around a shared property economy and a shared income economy, both having run for about two years.

The following example of *spontaneous, intrinsic ecological change of behavior* shows how real change can be triggered from a completely different place than intended: Some people suggested to set up a car sharing pool. But the car owners did not resonate with this idea, so it could not be introduced. Later they started with their culture of economic transparency. In their first meeting when everyone listed their financial budgets including monthly expenses, it was revealing how much money everyone was spending on their private car. As a spontaneous reaction someone through their car keys in the middle, announcing to hand it over to a car sharing pool. Six other car owners followed immediately. The car sharing was born and is lively used since then. I want to use this example to show that in such an ecovillage multiple synergies can contribute to ecological results and behavior. In this case of an effective ecological mobility besides the car sharing the TH morning circle is a space where lifts are asked for and offered every morning, as well as doing shopping for someone else. Still – ecological actions like car sharing are voluntarily. Every person is free to also not use them and still many people in TH have their private cars. The next related innovation is that the inner development circle has asked why especially women (50+) want to keep their own car. It seems to be a symbol of independence. Can TH give this feeling of independency to the women without them having a car (TH3)?

Eco low-technologies

The first *Earthship* is planned, a *Biomeiler* is built and already exported, permacultural methods are practiced and taught. *A "Biomeiler"*[23] is a low tech compost heating system. It consists of a pile of 7 diameters consisting of 150 cubic meters of small pieces of wood garbage. Its ecological efficiency is obvious: it generates heat up to 72 degrees Celsius without burning and with zero emissions. A water pipe goes through the differentiated compost system of anaerobe and aerobe bacteria, creating gases and absorbing them in the next layer of the Biomeiler. This water protects 400 square meters of green houses with vegetables from frost in winter. When I climbed on top of the Biomeiler, I could feel the warm humus by digging just 10cm under the surface – and it did not smell at all. A Biomeiler has been invented before, but it can still be seen as an innovation from TH because before, it was hardly known and has been further developed by a TH farmer supported by the community.

Pic. 4.1: *Biomeiler* in Schloss Tempelhof (photo: http://lebensraum-permakultur.de/der-erste-biomeiler-am-schloss-tempelhof/)

Based on a small book he built and experimented with it first and already exports this idea by giving workshops on how to build it in Germany and soon in Turkey (TH15). The Biomeiler is an ecological

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[23] There is no English term for Biomeiler yet. For more information on the native power network in Germany: http://www.native-power.de/de/content/newsletter-september-2014

energy innovation in the first place. Taking its low tech and synergy effects for a communal agriculture into account it is also a social innovation.

4.2.2 Relation with system innovation

"We did not think that our project would attract so much interest out of the middle of society. Maybe it is our task and our possibility to show that this time it is not just the 'eco-freaks'." (TH11)

"An earthship is an innovative recycling building. A 200years old farm house is an earthship in my view: it was built with regional, natural material and works off the grid." (TH2)

The approach of Schloss Tempelhof is not political in the sense of changing special rules or laws. It rather strives for reclaiming services and the like for the people and the community which have been taken over by larger institutions like the state, corporations or business services.
Further their alternative and personal based system of insurances can be seen as a potential system innovation, as has already been explained in the previous chapter.

4.2.2.1 Providing affordable housing and ecological land use

The main governance innovation started with the ownership structures. The real estate and land of 32ha is bought by the Tempelhof foundation. No individual co-owner of the cooperative can ever sell his/her part. Therefore the land and buildings are prevented from being sold for profit.

"We have taken the land and the housing out of speculation forever!" (TH12)

4.2.2.2 Experimental innovations inside the context of the existing building law

The state of Baden-Württemberg recently adopted a new law on experimental buildings. Some young families and construction workers from Schloss Tempelhof had already been keen on experimenting with mobile homes. They had found the 'MoWo' factory for building comfortable wood trailers. The factory is also just building a low-energy wooden comb house in the nearby village privately owned by one of the families settling in the surroundings.
The largest building project at the moment is the first *Earthship*[24] in Germany. The adequate way to present the model to the public is discussed in the village plenary these weeks. The mobile home residents would like to have a living room. It should also include a guest room and it needs to be accessible for the public. Furthermore the plans for other innovative eco-houses are being checked for realization.

4.2.2.3 Regional integration and influence of Schloss Tempelhof

The Tempelhof village used to belong to the protestant church that ran a home for orphans and, during the last decades, for handicapped children there. It was an important institution in the region. Tempelhof was abandoned und left unused for several years. The community project acted consciously for being integrated in the region from the beginning. They adopted the tradition of the May, 1st event with setting up a tree in the spring. More than one thousand people from the region came to this event. It was the major start to get to know people, projects, initiatives and businesses in the region.

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[24] An Earthship is a building style that was invented in Arizona, USA, using recycling materials and passive solar power. Earthships "provide electricity, potable water, contained sewage treatment and sustainable food production." (www.earthship.com Dec. 20, 2015)

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Most TH members are not indigenous of the region. They came because of the project. At least a few of them are really networking not just for business contacts but also for private friendships with people in the neighbouring villages (TH4).

The first mayor of Kressberg emphasizes his satisfaction to have the Schloss Tempelhof project in his municipality (TH9). He values the project because of the increase of inhabitants in the region, and because the historical buildings are used and renovated by open-minded people that integrate well into the region. The major sees the 120 inhabitants of Schloss Tempelhof mainly as a positive economic factor. He mentioned that they occupy craftsmen and visit the regional gastronomy. Also the demand for rented flats in the surrounding villages has risen since newcomers or more loosely connected people of the TH project came into the region (TH9). He perceives the Schloss Tempelhof members connect to the municipality and the region (TH9). TH members start getting active in the local government. Interestingly, the mayor just hosted mayors from other municipalities of Germany to explain and show them how to deal with such an ecovillage project. For many years the municipality has been organizing an exchange program for families and children from Belarus. Since 2014, TH supports them with providing free accommodation for the visitors and with exchanging cultural activities.

Schloss Tempelhof actively cooperates with the municipality in *agriculture and preservation of the cultural landscape*. The municipality benefits from the bee colonies pollinating the farm lands of other farmers and TH's goat farm which regenerates the meadows because this project receives EU-funding while the municipality can save money (according to the deputy mayor TH8). Also, the marketing of regional products of high ecological and traditional value is about to start (TH8). A main activity is preserving traditional orchards which some TH farmers are passionately engaged with. While there are just a few fruit trees on the 26ha of THs' farm land, the gardeners are known in the region for picking up fruits and helping in the gardens. The Jagdstregion is shaped by small scale agriculture. The ageing population and missing young generation have problems to care for the orchards. The TH gardener understands that he can offer a mixture of supporting mainly elderly single woman with their gardens but is also a social contact and support for them (TH15).
The Jagstregion is traditionally known for producing must from its orchards less than fruits or juice. Just recently the municipality of Kressberg together with Schloss Tempelhof farmers started to engage in interregional networking. The "fränkische Moststraße" (Franconian muststreet" is a regional label for tourist marketing over several hundred kilometres reaching as far as to the Danube (TH15).

Schloss Tempelhof has further plans for local businesses: A Café is going to be launched in the castle of TH in the summer of 2015. Schloss Tempelhof is starting to produce self-grown ecological gourmet products like apple juice, herbal teas, fruit and vegetable products. Some members are building up their own businesses around exquisite chocolate or bread which might spread across regional boundaries...

4.2.3   Relation with game-changers

The founders of TH started setting up a sharing economy in Munich, being aware of the economic crises. The second issue that TH was triggered by and where it works on alternatives is demographical change. Third, the founding members were motivated to become active in civil society initiatives because of the fundamental awareness that macrosystems create dependencies that cannot be influenced by single people. TH members question the prominence of banks, insurances and other anonymous financial systems (chap.4.2.1).

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A more long term and subtle game changer that was mentioned by some interviewees (TH 1,5,6) is the *social alienation*, the *loss of community* in (post)modern societies. It weakens social cohesion and is also related to problems of integrating and financially sustaining elderly people and children in our societies. Concerning climate change there are different opinions in TH and no official statement. There is definitely awareness around it amongst all interviewees.

4.2.4   Relation with societal transformation

Societal transformation in the sense of "fundamental and persistent change across society, exceeding sub-systems and including simultaneous changes in multiple dimensions" (Avelino et al. 2014) is too much of a long-term change for the Schloss Tempelhof community to have achieved anything in this regard after only three years of existence on site. Still, there are already strong facts in at least three dimensions that have a potential for larger societal transformations.

First, the village school newly founded in 2013 gained permission by state institutions as elementary and secondary school. The model is revolutionary even compared to many "regular" free schools because it works without compulsory curriculums at all, but learning assistants support the pupils to take over the responsibility for their learning motivation and manage and create their individual curriculum with the opportunity to use all qualified members of TH plus their enterprises and workshops (chap.4.3.2). It is hard to say after just a year how far this model will transform the educational system in Germany. So far, the network of free schools is enthusiastic about it.

Second, Schloss Tempelhof is engaged in the Artabana alternative health care movement. There is a potential to introduce a new, cooperative form of caring system for disabled and ill people. A hospice included in the community is about to be planned.

Third, Schloss Tempelhof has established a foundation that owns the real estate regulating the use of this piece of land through ecological and social guidelines. It has already been offered to other communities to use this foundation to also buy land. The land can never be sold again. It is taken out of speculation. There are some other, mainly urban initiatives in Germany with the same intentions, but only for single houses inside cities.

TH is increasingly asked by other community initiatives to consult them about the steps it needs to found an intentional community project. Meanwhile, a team of experienced TH members is advising 10-20 starting initiatives every month. This can already be called a societal impact with transformative value. This amount of new initiatives can benefit not only of the experiences of TH on community building, legal regulations and how to buy land but also by using the existing foundation as a legal frame (TH12).

4.2.5   Relation with narratives of change

In Munich, the pioneers started on the basis of civil society networks in 2007. It was the time of the economic crises. Their main focus was to create small scale alternatives. They make reference to narratives like the post growth economy and the economy of the common good (Felber 2015). Interviewees are not just referring to changes of macrosystems but rather to the meso- and micro level, as well as to individual changes. Because of these interlinkages between all of these levels, TH members started working on their private biographies of money, transforming personal beliefs around it (TH1).

"We prefer to use money to incite enterprising ideas and life stimulating processes rather than reinforcing systems based on competition and measurement." (TH English homepage)

But some argue more substantially, saying that alienation is the actual and original crises:

"The biggest crisis of our time is alienation – from our feelings, our core of being. The planet is a part of us. If we lose our inner connection we can be manipulated for everything like working against each other." (TH6)

"The insight of inner injury, the pain of separation and to learn from this; to integrate the parts which want to live. We learn in daily life of self-organization that we are not alone but need to cooperate in little concrete situations e.g. that I cannot pay my rent. But here in TH people approaching me compassionately, asking if I need help." (TH6)

"If I am in my "ego-movie" people will gently let me know why that does not work." (TH6)

There is at least a majority of TH members who believe and assume that authentic communication can heal alienation. While this is not officially part of Schloss Tempelhof single people apply methods like schamanism, 'next culture' movement (possibility management), or constellation therapy work.

A lot of narratives are discussed quite controversially in the community. Some have more conventional, some more alternative attitudes towards change.

"Some in TH think we need to make everything new in comparison to society. That is too simple. I think it is all about transformation – that's the only way to create something new." (TH3)

"We want to showcase that "there ARE alternatives!" – based on the societal standards how normal people live. I think that restrictive and dogmatic communities cannot survive. Alternative ways of life can only survive if they include individual freedom. […] That is also why we in TH do not inforce an ecological life style on our members." (TH3)

Schloss Tempelhof is in close connection with the following networks related to similar narratives of change. They often host assemblies of these networks:
- Artabana: solidarity health care
- Community supported agriculture: a system of a producer-consumer-cooperative and collective ownership of farms
- "Mehr Demokratie e.V.", the German headquarter of the federal association of direct democracy has its office in Schloss Tempelhof. One of the founders is a board member.
- "Sinnstiftung", Foundation for a meaningful life
- Free schools, individually-adapted and self-responsible model of education
- and many others

4.3 Aspects of empowerment and disempowerment of Schloss Tempelhof

"I wondered how we can create communal processes from the beginning that encourage and empower people?" (TH3, active in inner development circle of TH)

"TH offers a space where people really dare to get engaged and to empower themselves!" (TH1)

"Also the guests coming in see that we are very normal people. And when they see that we can create something like this, they also feel empowered to do so" (GEN5)

"We endeavor to recognize, appreciate and give support to our own and others skills. […] Each expression has meaning creating the greater whole. Aware of this we can transform feelings of scarcity and unfulfilled needs into productiveness." (English homepage TH)

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The intention to live an individually empowered life is a main pillar of how Schloss Tempelhof has started, as these quotes illustrate. Its credo includes community and the creation of constructive cooperation as the basis of individual empowerment. In Munich the founding members experimented first, with economic empowerment, including gift economy, or for instance with supporting each other in finding creative ways to deal with personal lacks of money. A second issue is empowering aged people. Both themes needed an experimental space that was created within the communal self-organized village of TH. Very early the founding members realized that a self-organized community can set the ideal space for empowering people, because community is about communication and negotiation, about tolerance and support based on personal commitment and trust as the following quotes illustrate.

> *"The members have to play a part here. We need people who get involved." (Interview TH1)*

> *"You have a unique option and power for self-organization here in TH. You have as much power as you want to have. But if you want to co-design a project you have to inform yourself a lot. In the end the power is theoretical because you can get involved probably only in 1-2 projects at the same time." (TH2)*

> *"I really like our goal to become a group of all leader. It is still a long way to go, that everyone steps into their power! Someone says I want to be manager and financial secretary. Another one says I like to clean the toilets. Both are equally important! I do my communal service as garbage manager." (TH4)*

> *„Actually there should be no difference in leading an empowered life here or in Munich city. I have to care for myself and be self-responsible. I agree, it is more concrete here, but I do not want to rely on any community care" (TH4)*

Various kinds of economic empowerment have been realized in TH. The *need-based income* (also chap. 4.3.1.1) empowers members to determine their own salary. The precondition of this is complete transparency about what each individual person spends and owns. Some newcomers felt suspicious about that kind of social control. Still I could not find any case where it was used to disempower or control anyone.

Empowerment of elderly people is a huge issue. Two thirds of the people applying to join TH are older than sixty (TH5). It shows the crucial needs of citizens in Germany as a country of demographical change. TH went through intense processes: the older members wanted to obtain commitments in view of care taking in the case of disability by younger members. But the younger members – the minority in TH – rejected, saying they do not know what they want to do in five years (TH5). They have not worked out a solution but created a path that integrates the zeitgeist of individual freedom expressed by their young members: They start to create attractive living conditions for young people. Firstly they decided that parents do not have to pay for their children. The community pays for them. It attracted a number of young families (TH5). This process seems to have the potential to inspire society as it mirrors the situation of the majority of people in society.

For TH empowerment goes hand in hand with self-sufficiency (currently 60% with regard to food), being independent from insurances and large economic markets that cannot be influenced by single persons.

4.3.1   Governance

Governance structures has been set up with a foundation, a cooperative and an association and thus, governance is an important function of the ecovillage of Schloss Tempelhof. The founders of TH had strong ideas of democratic decision making, small scale governance and also a practical attitude towards the requirements of the law. In the following sections, first, the internal governance structures and second, the external governance of Schloss Tempelhof is described.

4.3.1.1   Internal governance

The land and real estate is not privately owned but belongs to communal bodies - *Tempelhof foundation and the Tempelhof cooperative*. Hence a lot of communal decisions around spending money are part of the internal governance. The owners are the foundation and the cooperative. Every member has to pay the same contribution to become a member of the cooperative and every person has one voice (BOX 4.3). The bases of consensus decision making are equal ownership structures. Some members have experienced what can happen, if one person is the owner of land and buildings and rents them out to the other members during previous periods of living in other communities (Interview TH7). This is seen as an inadequate basis for democracy or consensus decision making because the only owner has the formal power and also the responsibility.

The land and real estate is the basis of an ecovillage like Schloss Tempelhof. In the case of TH it cannot be sold to private entities for speculation. The members emphasize that this act is about "freeing land". Hence a lot of communal decisions around spending money are part of the internal governance. Every member has to pay the same contribution to the cooperative in order to become a member and every member has one voice.

Schloss Tempelhof tries to implement the principle of "all are leaders". It implies radical self-responsibility in all aspects of living in the community and, more concretely, consensus decision making processes. Every member has the same right to vote. This principle appreciates that "each expression has meaning creating the greater whole." (English homepage TH) A democratic process also challenges to release control:

> *„If I have agreed to projects that are done by others, I really trust and release the responsibility to the creators. I do not need to check every five minutes, if they are constructing the heating system for our community house correctly" (Interview TH4).*

In Schloss Tempelhof the internal governance was carefully worked out to insure the empowerment of all members, thus implementing the principle of *all leader*. All interviewees mention that to fully implement this vision, it is still a long way to go, because the influence and the advanced knowledge of the founders remains present on an informal level to some extent and creates an unintended hierarchy. The founders of TH moved back voluntarily after just a year which is quite unusual in comparison to other ecovillages (chap.4.3.1.1) to foster the principle of *all leader* and a vacuum of power existed for a few months. No assembly was held and finally some new volunteers started again with slightly adapted structures. Today the village plenary and the coordination circle are open for every member[25]. The decision making system has six modes of voting[26].

Another challenge in TH for smooth decision making where everyone feels empowered – as stated in many ecovillages (Kunze 2009: 108ff) – was to balance the right to vote with the motivation to realize. It was perceived that active people often were blocked by a veto of sometimes just a single person which caused a lot of frustration and stagnation of activities in the entire ecovillage. The result is that TH is in the process of outsourcing most of the decisions to the working groups rather than to the plenary. Active people are also more likely to carry the responsibility for realizing their decisions. In the plenary the decision making process is focussed on opportunities to *create* rather than to criticise or block activities of other members. The new way of decision making has temporarily caused a fear of being disempowered, the single member only has the right to veto if s/he can bring an alternative solution. TH remarks that consensus vote empowers and honours all members with their wishes, perspectives and abilities and addresses responsibility at the same time, which motivates members to contribute in a constructive way. The TH principle of "all leader" is not

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[25] An exception people who live and work in TH but have not become members of the cooperative (yet) (see further down: process of exclusiveness).

[26] The six options of voting: unlimited agreement, light concerns, neutral, strong concerns, stand aside, and veto. The system was adopted from Artabana decision making, explained in an inofficial paper by Roman Huber.

only about equality in decision making processes, it is also about honouring. Empowering and trusting in everyone with his and her contribution is seen as important for the 'all leader' principle – may it be as manager, as artist or as garbage wo/man (Interview TH7).

> **BOX 4.2: The main governance bodies** functioning in practice are self-organized and have been established in 2011. This box shows how they have worked since fall 2013.
>
> - *Village plenary*: all main desicions are made here (every 6 weeks)
> - *Coordination circle*: prepares and discusses desicions for the village plenary, everyone can come, contribute and hand in proposals (every two weeks)
> - *Finance circle*: A representative from every working group and the financial mangers (every four weeks)
> - Five *working group circles* (about every months, individual plans), each having one external supervisor from the community:
>   - Circles of: agriculture and kitchen; maintenance; education and culture; settlement; publicity
>
> All members of the cooperative have one voice. The other residents, e.g. project co-workers are heard and can co-decide in the working circles they are attached to.

> **BOX 4.3: the fundaments of consensus, democratical decision making in TH:**
> **Schloss Tempelhof consists of three juridical bodies:**
>
> - "*Stiftung Tempelhof" (foundation)* owns the land and real estate and leases it to the cooperative. It makes sure that the land cannot be object of speculation and sold away. It protects the values and the vision. The property has been donated by TH members at the beginning of the project.
>
> - "*Genossenschaft Tempelhof e.G." (cooperative)* buys the right to lease the buildings for 99 years, constructs new buildings and maintains the existing ones. The villagers should get co-owners to become members and take part in decision making by paying 30.000 € to the cooperative. When leaving 10.000€ is refunded. → three persons serve as halftime managing secretaries
>
> - "*Tempelhof Verein e.V." (association)* carries the social charity projects, mainly the village school and the non-profit events and seminars.

All projects are discussed and decided in the plenary – with the aim to conclude with consensus and every person has the choice between six options of voting[27]. TH members emphasize that being co-developer and co-designer for community governance goes hand in hand with responsibility.

The main dynamics of internal governance of Schloss Tempelhof have already been introduced in chapter 4.1. The internal formal and informal governance structures are explained in BOX 4.3 and 4.4. Those structures have been designed through the communal decision process of the members over the years.

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[27] The six options of voting: unlimited agreement, light concerns, neutral, strong concerns, stand aside, and veto. The system was adopted from Artabana decision making, explained in a paper by one of the founders of TH.

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In TH a number of groups and meeting platforms have developed which play an important nevertheless indorect role in the decision making and governance process (TH3). The following groups and meetings are serving TH's social processes and conflict resolution:

- The ***social forum*** (every Wednesday evening)
- The ***WE-Processes***, several weekends a year, recommecndation to attend at least two a year.
- ***Men's and women's circles***
- The ***morning cirlce*** as an information platform (every morning in the beakfast room at 8 a.m.)
- ***Reference groups*** (chap.4.1)
- ***The biannual retreats***
- Plus a number of sub-initiatives offered by single members like *Forschungshütte* (research hut)

Schloss Tempelhof's dynamics show that the members prefer flexible structures. For them it is important to meet needs and support innovative ideas of single members spontaniously rather than sticking to old rules. Many discussions and conflicts are carried out in these social spaces.

Many members still perceive an informal influence by the founders who have stepped back from the managing bord (which is now the coordination circle) in the fall of 2013 (TH2).

Schloss Tempelhof is not just a residential ecovillage but also an entrepreneur, employing about half of the adult members on part time jobs in the kitchen, in agriculture, maintenance, in the seminar- und guest house, in administration and as craftsmen. The payment is not standardised but based on each individual worker's needs (*Bedarfsökonomie*, need-based economy). The majority of the elderly people (about ten members) live on their pension money while some of them need to work additionally, e.g. as healing therapists. The majority is creative in patch working their incomes with being self-employed or working a few days a week or month in nearby cities.

It could be criticized that TH was conceived only for middle-class wealthy people, since for becoming a member it needs 30.000€ of contribution to the cooperative. Indeed, it has happened in several cases already that people did not have this amount, but that members said they would like them to join and donated the money to them. Researching in TH, I understood that the culture of gift economy can even be more empowering and supporting to the 'all leader' principle than single members being financed by the cooperative. If newcomers receive the necessary money as a donation, this is a sign of unlimited trust. It is a process of becoming accepted and empowered. They can feel empowered when they can pay the necessary amount of money themselves, rather than if the cooperative would take them for free and therefore creating a hierarchy about the financial contribution of the members. TH wants to make a difference by creating structures where members are voluntarily and personally committed to each other rather than dependent on formal contracts.

It can be concluded, that TH has built a governance system of formal bodies and informal, but established 'groups' which can empower the individual members by offering them options of participation.

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Pic 4.2: Bodies and Circles of Schloss Tempelhof: The work of the TH-member and artist Werner Ratering comes from an approach of "social sculpture". The artist facilitates WE-processes as art-performances in many German cities. He designed this graph to visualize the bodies and circles of Schloss Tempelhof. It was approved by the village plenary, but is not completely up to date any more (graph: Werner Ratering)

VERSORGUNGSKREIS
- Landwirtschaft
- Kantine
- Laden
- Gärtnerei

FUNKTIONSKREIS
- Hausverwaltung (inkl. Hausmeisterei)
- Buchhaltung / Kasse
- Verwaltung (Mitglieder)
- Recht
- Finanzen (Vorstand = Kreissprecher)

ZUKÜNFTIGE BETRIEBE (B)
- Holz / Metall
- Biogasanlage
- Photovoltaik
- Chocolaterie

VISIONSKREIS
- Hüter die Werte der Gemeinschaft
- Wahrnehmung des Gesamtschehens
- Setzt Impulse für die Zukunft
Der Aufsichtsrat der eG ist an den Visions-
kreis angebunden.
STEG:
Strukturentwicklungsgruppe als Teilaufgabe
des Visionskreises

SIEDLUNGSKREIS
(Geschäftsführer = Kreissprecher)
Planen
- Siedlung
- Energie
Bauen
- Netzwerk IT / Telefonie
- Bauhütte
- Bauinitiativen / alternative Wohnformen

SOZIALKREIS
- Kinder
- Seminar– und Gästehaus
- 60plus-Konzept
- Gesundheitshaus

VEREIN (gemeinnützig)
- Träger von sozialen Projekten

Grüne Kreise
- Hier findet die tägliche Arbeit statt.
- Bestehen aus Vertretern der Projektteams und AGs

STIFTUNG
Gemeinnützig,
Eigentümerin von
Grund und Boden

ÖFFENTLICHKEITSKREIS
- Kontakt zur Gemeinde / Politik (Vorstand = Kreissprecher)
- Veranstaltungsorganisation / Kultur
- Fundraising
- Internet/CI
- Gästebetreuung
- Interessentenbetreuung

VEREIN
- Freundes- / Unterstützerkreis

KOORDINATIONSKREIS
- Abstimmung und Koordination der verschiedenen Bereiche
- An– und Einbindung von eG-Vorstand und Geschäftsführung
- Plenumsvorbereitung

GESCHÄFTSFÜHRUNG
- Gleichzeitig Sprecher Siedlunskreis
- Tagesgeschäft / Koordination
- Vorbereitung Koordinationskreis

VORSTAND
- Vertretung nach außen
- Gesamt-Finanzverantwortung

Innerer Entwicklungskreis (Social Context):
- Sozialprozesse, Sozialplenum
- Inneres Wachstum/Entwicklung
- Transparenz, z.B. Protokolle
- Kommunikationskultur
- Rituale

Wachstumskreis
- Führt Gespräche mit Interessenten für Annäherung und Aufnahme in eG
- Begleitet den Weg in die Gemeinschaft
- Spricht Empfehlungen für Dorfplenum aus

Eigenverantwortung für die
persönliche Entwicklung **(ich)**
WIR-Prozess,
Community Building **(wir)**

Dialog, Konflikt, Mediation **(du)**
Das Namenlose, geistige Impulse **(ES)**

DORF-PLENUM
- Souverän
- Richtlinienentscheidung
- Wählt Vorstand, GF und Koordinationskreis, für 1 Jahr
- Findung Visionskreis (inkl. STEG) und Inn. Entwicklungskreis (inkl. Wachstumskreis), für 1 Jahr

TEMPELHOF eG
Vorschlag der
Strukturentwicklungsgruppe (STEG) II

4.3.1.2 External governance

The founders of TH probably felt disempowered when they were searching for a place to start a large community. Finding an affordable piece of land is the biggest challenge for ecovillages. They could make this step after three years, well prepared and advised by their lawyers. The estate agent they bought Tempelhof from agreed to sign an option contract, making sure that the object was reserved for the community for 6 months. The founders experienced this as a helpful strategy and a save way to gain time for decision processes for the community. They recommend signing an option contract to the community groups they are consulting (TH5).

Schloss Tempelhof initiative started with buying a piece of land and a village to realize a more socially cooperative way of living. Therefore they are using ownership structures that serve these aims vis-à-vis the national laws. Owned by the Tempelhof foundation and leased by the cooperative for 90 years, no individual co-owner of the cooperative can ever sell his part. Therefore the land and buildings are prevented from selling it for profit.

4.3.2 Social learning

Social learning is a main goal and relevant topic in Schloss Tempelhof. The understanding shared by the majority of the TH people seems to be life-long and experience-based learning. Social learning mainly occurs on two levels: personal development due to communal interaction and due to work.

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Personal development related to the communal interaction

Social learning includes questioning own attitudes, imprints and growing over oneself in relation to social interaction (TH1). The formal tools and spaces for personal development are established by the WE-process and the social forum. The interviewees say that social learning also includes de-learning of old stereotypes and habits and to be really open for listening to and understanding others (TH1,2,6). Community is a field for 'rubbing'. It is seen as a promoter for personal growth. TH has cultivated a field where people mirror each other in daily life.

> *"If you are on your egotrip you can be sure, that someone gently tells you about it." (Interview TH6)*

> *„What I have learned here is to stay in contact, also if I disagree with you; To communicate directly, openly and honestly" (Interview TH4).*

> *„After my craftsman work, talking about my sensitivities in the social circles in the evening is not easy for me as a man. I also take a distance and clarify things for myself. But I also enjoy those processes if I am awake, then I do need to take care of going there. It is still exhausting for me – even after three years now" (Interview TH4).*

There is a general attitude of learning to be observed for instance when several interviewees say, we do not know yet how we solve the challenge of caring for elderly people in our community in several years, but we trust we will find out when the time is coming.

Social learning related to work

Many have patch work identities with regard to their (professional) activities. Social learning is also about personal growth and about setting out for new adventures like starting a self-employed business, getting involved in new working areas etc.
TH members are aware of the fact that Schloss Tempelhof residents have easily the chance to learn new occupations including social learning because of three reasons: First, the community offers an informal frame to join "friends" at their work places and get professional advice more informally. Second, there are lots of opportunities for everyone to contribute like in agriculture, cooking for more than 100 people or facilitating meetings. Third the barrier to try out something new is low because an attitude of empathy is cultivated where failing is accepted based on the trust and broader knowledge of each other (TH1).
The financial manager – a young academic in her thirties – emphasizes her experience of driving a wheel loader. She was coordinating the garden works in the village. At the last day she wanted to know herself how it is to drive a wheel loader. So someone briefly explained it to her and she could try it out. It was a remarkable experience for her – completely different from her usual work (TH1).

The social level

An interviewee is convinced/reports his impression that the majority of members in TH are bourgeois and middle-class intellectuals (TH2). At the same time, he sees himself as a worker and is appreciating this constellation. He notes that TH is a place where he slowly witnesses "how the intellectual class and the working class are approaching each other because people can work in areas different from their traditional profession" (TH2). A teacher is employed in the metal workshop for a few afternoons per week, a gardener is working in the school, the Yoga teacher is also the cook, and many more examples can be found in TH.

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The reform school for teaching children

The village school can be seen as a fundamental and long-term context of social learning. Based on a concept of completely free and voluntary learning the school interacts with the community and actively works with the expertise of the village people. TH members have found this new communal reform school to be an educational experiment. The reform village school is a unique new school model that was approved as an elementary plus a working secondary school by the state in Sept. 2013 after two years of conceptualization and preparation. Since then most of the TH inhabitants' children go to this school plus a few from the surrounding villages. Some families even moved to Schloss Tempelhof from other regions of Germany because of this school. The second year of operation of the school just started with 38 pupils aged from 6 to 18. The reform school model intends to focus on the individual development of each pupil. Frontal and other standard teaching methods are not used. The teachers are called learning assistants because they are present but do not teach according to a fixed curriculum. They support the pupils in finding their motivation and starting own initiatives on what they want to learn. After experimenting with no classes and age groups, there are now three age groups having separate daily tuning-in and tuning out meetings.

Even though there is no frontal teaching, a normal school day at the TH village school still has a clear time frame and structure (participant observation and TH 13):
- 8 a.m. meeting in three separate age tuning-in circles (age 6-9, 10-13, 14-18) Pupils are encouraged but not forced to tell about their interests and plans for the day.
- 8:20-12:40h: Individual or group projects, learning etc.
- 12:40-13h: tuning-out circles in the three age-groups, sharing about what has been experienced and done in the morning.
- On Wednesday there is afternoon class for the older two age groups.

The team of learning assistants consists of three professional teachers with university degree and several years of teaching in state schools and a parent who co-founded a free school and already worked as learning assistant for 6 years. An additional 5 voluntary adults from the village are serving their community working hours in the school, each of them one day a week. The pupils are free to contact other village members with any professional and semi-professional expertise to support them in learning or can ask them for an internship. The learning style allows the children to freely follow what they want to do. I could observe this when I took part in a school day and discussed with the pupils. They can individually discuss with the learning assistants or ask for mutual kinds of advice and support. On a village map on the board they are obliged to indicate where they are going for the day. They can always use the rich equipment of the school, including didactic materials for all ages, a library, a computer, a kitchen, an atelier, laboratory equipment like an aquarium or chemical learning sets. They are free to use the gym of Schloss Tempelhof village for sports activities attended by a learning assistant.

Some examples of initiatives of pupils in the last and first year of the school should be highlighted. Learning Spanish and organizing a trip to Spain: Two 15year old girls wanted to learn Spanish and found a woman in Schloss Tempelhof who knows Spanish and agreed to teach it to them. As the girls were very happy and motivated three more pupils were drawn to join. Their learning activity became so dynamic that the girls wanted to organize a trip to Spain. Supported by the learning assistants they connected to a free school near Barcelona, calculated the trip coats, learnt how to fundraise money, and organized the trip. A learning assistant with four pupils finally went on the trip. Second, an (individual) internship in agriculture: A 16 years old boy helped out some afternoons with the harvest and was so fascinated that he started an internship in the agriculture and gardening department of TH during the school holidays. The pupils learn in a project oriented rather than in a subject oriented manner. They have no separate classes in maths, Spanish or biology but learn

calculation, Spanish or botanic details during their projects of a trip to a foreign country, a project of building a teenager meeting hut, or because they follow an adult they like during his working day.

Besides learning facts and knowledge, a lot of attention is given to learning soft skills. First, the pupils are confronted with managing themselves taking more responsibility for their own learning journey than in a regular school. They are responsible for their own motivation, for their effort and success and for deciding if they want to graduate with an exam or not. The learning assistants also coach them in self-management and fundamental questions such as reflecting about the purpose of life. Further, pupils also learn to be responsible in the group, in particular in their interactions with younger pupils. The villagers observed after some months of school how the older pupils started to take care of the younger ones after the school. Second, the school form not only allows but even softly urges them to develop social competences. In the free and self-organized spaces pupils can explore how to behave and move inside the group. The interaction between the school and the village is intended. Villagers work as learning assistants one day a week. The weekly school assembly is open to all villagers. They can announce potential internships for pupils wishing to do their projects by working with them. It can be said Schloss Tempelhof has demonstrated great expertise in setting up this reform concept and to receive state approval for it. However, after just one year of operation, only small examples can be given whereas it is premature to draw conclusions with regard to whether this school form can become an educational innovation.

4.3.3   Resources

In Schloss Tempelhof I got the impression of a culture of philanthropy that is based on/nurtured by an attitude of gratitude and abundance rather than being scared about lacking money or resources. The founders have started with an initiative of sharing money, practicing to spend money creatively and to support each other financially. TH people refer to this by using the term of *gift economy*[28]. TH is all based upon people who contribute their resources from external work and other sources like pension. Most members have a creative patchwork of small jobs. More than half of the members are on part time *need-based incomes* working in one of the departments of TH while earning the other parts of their income by working in a nearby city as yoga teacher, gardener, business coach, medical doctor, cook, waiter and in many other occupations.

Realizing TH was only possible on the basis of private investments of many members – which actually were donations. The owner of the land and real estate is the foundation (chap. 4.3.1.1). Many other ecovillages start with a lack of resources and have to rely on bank loans for buying real estate, like Tollense Lebenspark near Berlin which recently had to declare bankruptcy. Many TH members are beyond their 50ies, established in their professions and have savings which they could bring into the community. Starting such a project without bank loans would have been much more difficult for younger people. I perceive TH as a project that rewards people who succeeded in mainstream carriers in society and who want to make the next step. Many of them have experienced a burn out wondering if there is something more to life, something else than merely making money. The majority of TH members obviously are educated middle-class people, but not all of them. Also some craftsmen with or without property work within the need-based economy of TH or make their own living:

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[28] The term gift economy has been brought into the discussion mainly by Genevieve Vaughan http://gift-economy.com. The German activist Heidemarie Schwermer has been living without money for more than 20 years and is the German idol of living gift economy. She has been invited to TV shows around the world to share her experiences and authored several books telling the story of her experiment – an inspiring voice for Schloss Tempelhof http://neueseite.heidemarieschwermer.com/

„I have to work fulltime to make a living. To build a village along the way – me alone – does not work. I need 100 people for it. I am happy that we have resources – some have a pension, income from renting out a house, but I do not have that, so I work, I also do not want to rely on the community" (TH4).

Over the years Schloss Tempelhof has established a living culture of gift economy. For many things like the piano in the event hall active members do fundraising in TH, even the pupils do it for school trips. Also single members have received funding by others, for instance in two cases of a burn out and a reorientation, two persons were completely financed by the sum of donations of other community members for a whole year. The interior of the guest rooms in the seminar house tells a creative and funny story of using resources. Community members could choose a room and then garnish it with furniture that could not use anymore after moving from the large apartment in Munich to the small community room in Tempelhof. These rooms have the names of the respective donators.

In addition, the members are extraordinarily rich with social capital and resources such as skills and knowledge.

"The office here is doing the accounting of my metal workshop. I am glad to be able to rely on that rather easily" (TH4).

For registering the foundation a member who is a professional tax consultant worked out the charter. Today, professionals from diverse areas are coming to TH. The community has finally agreed on an option for people who are just employed and live there without becoming a member.

4.3.4   Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation does not happen in a professional or systematic way in Schloss Tempelhof. An interviewee relates the lack of monitoring to missing resources and being absorbed by daily life/affairs. One of the managers worked in evaluation jobs before she came to TH. She says it does not fit to use these "conventional" methods in TH. Instead, she observes how single members and the community as a whole are learning and incorporating experiences that effect and improve the next project, decision making process or business. She notices how much effect the experience of success and appreciation have on the willingness to engage and on creating new successful projects (TH1). TH has just evaluated several processes "where failure could not be overlooked" (TH3). At least they have an annual several day long retreat at the end of the year to reflect about the past year, with regard to the extent to which they have achieved their goals, and what would make sense to be changed and done during the next year (TH1).

An evaluation has also been done for four large projects that had failed, namely through a process of communal reflection and sampling of failures, inquiring into ways of performing better. For instance, last year a large building project failed. The members reflected on the reasons. While our interviewee laughs saying there are 90 different opinions, a few logical arguments were mentioned. They had included the potential residents of the new building into the process. But the house is owned by the cooperative according to the structure of TH. Over time, some had found more suitable places to live and did not feel so engaged with the project anymore while many new people joined TH, interested in living in the other kinds of buildings. The newcomers did not dare to question the project, and so it was continued but with too little commitment (TH1).

There is also a little internal "research project" by a member exploring how the community can evolve from a pioneering to an established phase (TH10). It was relevant for the Tempelhofer to ask

how the pioneers and the "maintainers" can co-exists, in short, how a community can stay innovative and lively while providing safety and stability at the same time.

4.4 Other issues about Schloss Tempelhof

Schloss Tempelhof as an ecovillage

Interviewees (TH1, 2, 4, 5, 6) do not perceive Schloss Tempelhof as a classical ecovillage because it is rather focused on social and socio-economic aspects. It has become a member of GEN in 2013 after GEN had broadened its criteria. The Tempelhofer see the term *ecovillage* as too narrow for describing Schloss Tempelhof. The reasons given for this differ between interviewees. While two interviewees say the term ecovillages rather fits projects that focus primarily on ecological activities (TH1,6), another person sees TH as being different from what is often reported as the "image" of ecovillages as being a collection of dropouts and "freaks". In contrast, the members perceive themselves as "normal people from the middle of society" addressing broad societal issues, namely demographical change, and a meaningful life (TH5). TH started to connect with other ecovillages from the beginning to learn from their experiences. They adopted some tools like the social forum (from ZEGG), the building guidelines (from Ecovillage 7Linden) and many smaller and qualitative aspects of culture and practice from many other communities. Indeed, at first glance, TH does not look like an ecovillage but rather like a creative mixture of the old castle, half-timbered houses and concrete buildings from the 60ies (see pic. 4.1). Nevertheless, retrofitting old buildings ends up being more ecological than building new ecohouses on free land. GEN is supporting these tendencies (see chap. 3.2.2).

A member engaged in permaculture critically complains that Schloss Tempelhof could do more about ecology now only represented by a "minority of eco-freaks" (TH2). He explains that the founders had great ideas and painted a colourful picture whereas so far, only little spots have begun to be painted. He voices a general critique about intentional ecovillage projects:

> *"Every redneck who buys his stuff at Aldi and goes for vacation to Sauerland by car causes a smaller ecological footprint than we do – because two third of us are flying around the world quite a bit." (TH2)*

There is no data on the mobility of Schloss Tempelhof members. But three other ecovillages have been examined with regard to their CO_2 emissions, and the conclusion was that a slightly higher mobility is compensated by using public transportation and, to a large amount, by sharing rooms and by growing and eating local food, mainly vegetarian one (Simon et al. 2006). TH lively uses car sharing and has a public bus stop. Schloss Tempelhof has proven to live ecologically by having a more than 60% degree of self-sufficiency due to its own organically grown food, the use of strong ecological guidelines for building and renovating houses (which have been copied from 7Linden), of rain and grey water for washing machines and toilets, and due to their socially advanced system of sharing almost all kinds of goods.

In short, I wish to conclude, that even if TH did not start as an ecovillage and still does not have a primary focus on ecological living; it has nevertheless realized major ecological milestones in comparison to mainstream society in Germany and even to many other ecovillages. Schloss Tempelhof therefore is an innovative example of realizing a low impact way of living in a healthy community.

5   Local initiative 2: *Tamera*

By Flor Avelino

5.1 Overview of (development of) Tamera

Tamera is an intentional community consisting of 170 people, who live and work on site (German majority combined with dozens of people from across the world). The site covers 330 acres/ 134 hectares and is located 20kms off the west coast in the Alentejo region in southern Portugal (*Tamera website*). In addition to the permanent community, there are hundreds of guests who temporarily live and work in Tamera. In many official communications, as well as in interviews, Tamera describes itself as a 'healing biotope'[29]: *"The Healing Biotope I Tamera is a peace research project with the goal to create the model for a future society that is free from hatred, lies, violence and fear. Tamera should become an acupuncture point of peace, a greenhouse of trust, a prototype for an existence free of fear on this planet, a post-capitalist societal model and a place where the human and meta realm of life come together"(Tamera website).* Also in interviews, people from Tamera stress the identity of Tamera as a community, a peace research centre, and a place for healing. In our overview of Tamera, we introduce five main topics: (1) community identity, (2) space and ecology, (3) networking and outreach, (4) background and development, and (5) national and regional context.

Figure 5-1 (Part of) Tamera seen from above. Source: Tamera Website

5.1.1   Community Identity

A central feature that distinguishes Tamera from other ecovillages and communities, is its focus on social issues regarding community, love, sexuality and partnership. This issue was emphasised in each and every formal interview and informal conversation about Tamera as its main focus and unique characteristic. A main message of Tamera is that "the drama of the world is a drama of love" (Dieter Duhm, February 2014), that "there cannot be peace in the world as long as there is war in love", and that "love and sexuality are the central political issues of the newly dawning era" (Tamera

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29 Biotope originates in the German "Biotop", which is derived from "bio" and the Greek word "topos" (=place). "Biotope is an area of uniform environmental conditions providing a living place for a specific assemblage of plants and animals. (…) the subject of a habitat is a species or a population, the subject of a biotope is a biological community". (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biotope, accessed on 22.12.2014).

website). Essentially, the belief is that all/most societal challenges in contemporary society (war, violence, ecological destruction, inequality, etc.) originate in difficulties within human relations, and that it is necessary to deal with this human relations in order to solve these societal challenges.

> *"Unique and specific in Tamera is that they are researching about free love. This is unique. And that they are very courageous with this topic to be public more and more. (…) Other communities are afraid of this topic. And unique is also in Tamera that, [other communities] don't have the tools for this, and here they are experts since more than 30 years working on this topic. And this free love has a very exciting sound, but if you look very simply to this, then it means that free love is love free of fear. And this is the love between parents, the love in the community among the people, and of course the love among or between the genders, or also free love among homos, lesbians or gays, or so. Every time, free love is free of fear and full of trust". (Interview TAM4).*

> *"I never had an experience of a community that is able to address social issues, in this profound way. All the communities I was living in were failing on that level. There was not enough knowledge about how to sustainably live together. And not enough knowledge to be able to address these issues, in order not to keep them under the carpet". (Interview TAM10).*

> *"The topic may seem secondary. Many groups want an ecological place to live. Then 10-20 people get together… and after a while the group falls apart because of conflict, because he or she fell in love with another. So there is a need for personal work. This is an issue that other communities sometimes forget." (Interview TAM2).*

Another defining and distinguishing feature of TAMERA is its strong emphasis on the 'political'. This is manifested in many 'political' network organisations, focused on peace projects, technological innovation and/or ecological restoration. The political is also more generally present in an explicit discourse on 'the political', both in casual conversations and public lectures, as well as in written text and organisational names. This is nicely illustrated in the example of the *Political Ashram*, one of the centres in Tamera, which is presented on the website as follows:

> *"The Political Ashram is the mental-spiritual center of Tamera. (…). The connection with the source of life, its wisdom, strength and leadership, is essential for the creation of a world that no longer relies on fear and violence, but on trust and cooperation. We live in a mental-spiritual world. After thousands of years of oppression, we human beings need to learn to think independently again. After Auschwitz and Hiroshima, we can no longer blindly follow. We want to use thought to approach the area of our life that we have so far associated with religion and, in doing so, regain this power. For this, there is daily training in the Ashram". (Tamera website).*

Figure 5-2 Sign of "Political Ashram" in Tamera. Source: Tamera Website

As a political scientist, I often find myself explaining to people that 'the political' is far broader than just parliamentary politics or other forms of formal political negotiation. In common parlance, it is

not evident that the 'political' is manifested in informal interactions, on the street, in daily practices and consumption patterns, or even in our personal relations. At Tamera, however, politics is understood in its broadest sense. Almost everything seems to be understood as 'political', including one's organic gardening and intimate love relations. This strong political notion distinguishes Tamera from several other ecovillages, some of which tend to take an explicitly a-political approach to the societal context.

In addition to the focus on human relations and political work, there is also strong attention to spiritual matters, as manifested in conversations, public events and community rituals. There is not *one* specific religion or spiritual practice in Tamera, there is rather a variety of spiritual perspectives, including ancestral wisdoms. One of the most telling manifestations of spirituality is observed at the 'stone circle', a physical place in Tamera. As the name suggests, the place concerns a circle of stones (in one of the more desolate nature areas), which is considered to be a spiritual place and where people from Tamera go to meditate, alone or together.

Both the political and spiritual identity of Tamera is strongly connected to the views of its founders: Dieter Duhm, Sabine Lichtenfels and Charly Reiner Enhrenpreis. On the website, Dieter Duhm is presented as a "*Psychoanalyst, Art Historian, Prolific Author and one of the Leading Figures in the 1968 Students Movement in Germany, Visionary and Head of the Department for Art and Healing in Tamera*"[30]. Sabine Lichtenfels is a "*Peace Ambassador, Author, Theologian, Head of the Global Love School and of the Spiritual Research in Tamera*"[31]. Charly Reiner Enhrenrpeis is not explicitly presented on the website, but reported by interviewees to be a co-founder and important force in getting Tamera established (interviewees 1, 2). During my participant observation, it was the 'presence' of the first two founders that was mostly manifested in conversations and in books. Both these founders have written dozens of books, which are quoted in signs and in leaflets, all available and visible in the guesthouse, the visitor's book shop and in the large variety of offices. During interview and conversations, one of the things that particularly struck me was the extent to which many people from Tamera spoke about social issues from a psycho-analytical perspective (e.g. explaining conflict in terms of inner struggles and frustrations). One of the visitors commented that many communities tend to mirror their founders, and that in the case of Tamera, one really sees the psycho-analytical imprint of Dieter Duhm on the community and the way in which its members approach social experiences. Even though the strong imprint of the founders is evident and widely recognised, it must also be pointed out that Tamera's identity and structure has developed beyond its founders in several ways, and that conscious efforts were made to encourage that (see more in section 0 on how Tamera has developed over the years).

5.1.2   Space and Ecology

Walking through Tamera one sees many lakes, permaculture gardens and hilly landscape, and spread across those, there are buildings and dwellings of all sorts, shapes and sizes. Tamera includes three main areas (see map in Figure 5-3 below): the guest area (orange), the community space (red), and the rest of the lakes and hills (blue/green). The guest area, also referred to as the 'Campus', includes a guest house, bungalow houses, an area for tents and trailers, a large building called the 'Tent Hall' (incl. computer spaces, seminar rooms and dormitories), a visitors centre, including a large kitchen, dining terrace and bookshop, a large straw bale building called the 'Aula', and – after passing lake #1 – the cultural centre, including an open air coffee corner and bar. The community space includes a 'Testfield Solar Village' with several experimental technological constructs, and an

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[30] http://www.tamera.org/what-is-tamera/the-founders/, accessed 22.12.2014
[31] Ibid

area with numerous Tamera offices (spread out over several small buildings, bungalows and trailers), belonging to the several projects and networks, including the *Political Ashram* and the *Institute for Global Peace* work (IGP). Walking 'deeper' into Tamera one finds several dwellings, including houses, yurts, tents and trailers. There, one also finds *Aldeia da Luz* (Portuguese for "Village of Light", named after the village Luz which was drowned in the Alqueva dam), a picturesque lake and garden, surrounded by experimental residential straw bale buildings, a Herbal House, a sculpture and ceramic studio, a sewing workshop and a kitchen. On the other side, far from the guest area, there is the 'Place of the Children', including a kindergarten and a place for home schooling. Throughout the whole Tamera village, there are outdoor compost toilets and showers.

Figure 5-3. Scan of Tamera Map. Source: Tamera "Guidelines & Basic Information for Guests"
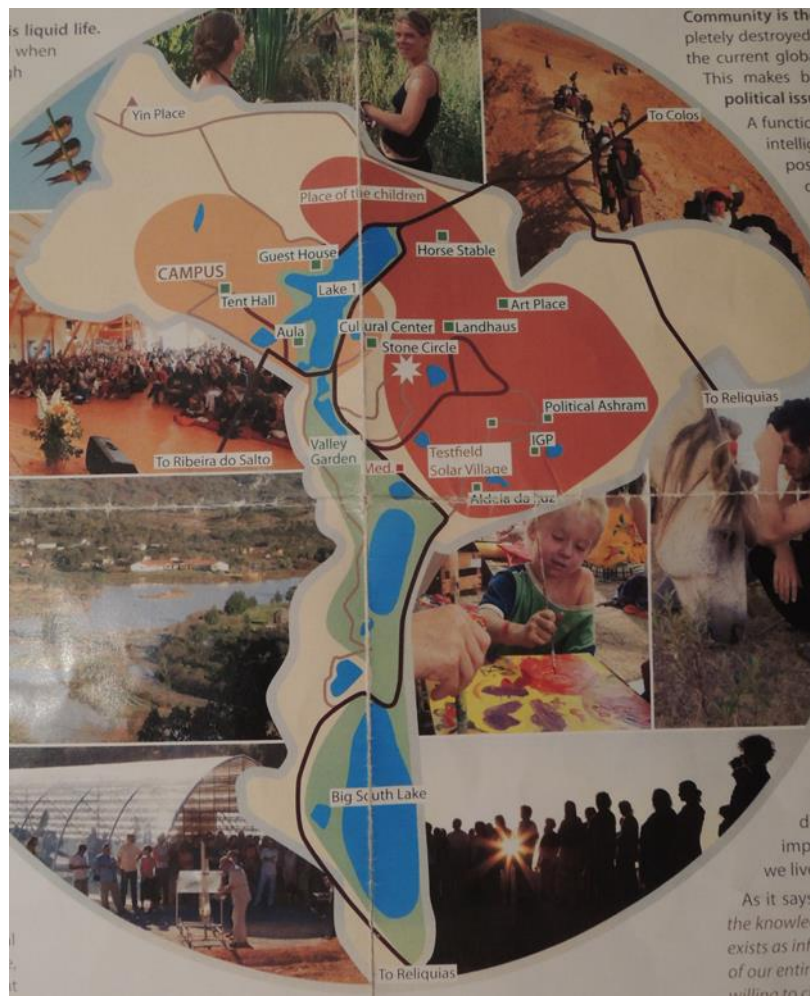
Tamera is an active member of the *Global Ecovillage Network* (GEN) and is often described as an 'ecovillage' (even though it describes itself more often as a 'healing biotope'). Tamera aims for 'autonomy' in technology, ecology and architecture, as well as regional autonomy. People in Tamera see this ecological and technological work as something that is an integral part of their more primary social work on peace and human relations (see more on this in section 5.2). Tamera starts off from the starting point that "*humans must reintegrate into the ecological cycles*" and work on "*on cooperation and contact instead of exploitation; for open, holistic, decentral systems instead of central control and for diverse biotopes instead of mono-cultures*" (Tamera website). The *Global Ecology Institute,* founded in 2013, aims to "*put the practical work of Tamera´s ecology department into a global context*" (ibid).

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The focus of Tamera's ecological work is on creating a "Water Retention Landscape", not only for its 100% autonomous water supply, but more generally for "healing the land", harvesting rainwater, slowing it down and enabling it to filter into the soil, recharging the aquifers and regenerating the topsoil, forest and pasture, enabling food production and increasing biodiversity (ibid). Tamera's man-made lakes, and their greening impact on the landscape, are quite renowned across the world, known also for using permaculture principles and for the cooperation with permaculture expert Sepp Holzer. These methods for water retention and gardening are being studied by researchers, taught in various courses and programmes. As a visitor, I myself have also been recurrently amazed by the 'green oasis' in the middle of Portugal's driest region. The transformation of the landscape is also mentioned by many as one of the most important milestones/changes in Tamera (see more in section 5.1.4) and also seem to have a particular empowering effect (see section 5.3).

Although Tamera is not entirely autonomous in its food supply, it does gain a significant proportion (40%) of its food from its own gardens, where vegetables, fruits and herbs are hand-picked by residents and guests. In the area of technology, the 'Solar Power Village' is seen as test field for technological experiments, including 'low-temperature Stirling motors', Scheffler mirrors, biogas digesters, and other inventions by several scientists (incl. Kleinwächter, Culhane, Scheffler and Gagneuax).

The Solar Power Village is one of the places that is often shown to visitors and used in educational activities. It includes a 'Solar Kitchen' and an outdoor terraces with various tables and chairs. One if my interviews were held at the terrace of the Solar Kitchen, accompanied by a cup of coffee that was made on a biogas powered stove.

Figure 5-4. Visual Impression Tamera – Source: Tamera website

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Besides the more 'famous' water retention landscape and the Solar Power Village, Tamera includes several other projects and practices focused on ecology and autonomy. In the area of architecture, Tamera harbours Portugal's first and largest straw bale building (the *Aula,* built by architect Gernot Minke), which has a green roof and appears on many pictures of Tamera, as well as numerous other ecologically built dwellings, communal buildings and compost toilets.

Furthermore, Tamera overtly promotes a low-impact life-style. All food in the common kitchens is 100% vegan: all animal products, including eggs, milk, cheese and butter, are excluded from common kitchens, with the exception of honey. The herbs used in these kitchens are handpicked and dried by Tamera residents through their 'Herbal House'. There is a culture of recycling, saving energy, and using biodegradable products. Guests are explicitly requested to use organic or biodegradable soaps, shampoos and cosmetics, and to not use sun cream before swimming in the lake. Moreover, there is an apparent voluntary simplicity regarding consumption, including clothes and machines, which is aided by the communal sharing of kitchens, workshops, offices, studios, and so on. The sewing workshop in the *Aldeia da Luz* area, includes a shop for clothes swapping (or at least it did during one of the bazar festivities that I participated in). "We dress without luxury, we consume much less, and we show others that it is possible to live this way." (Interview TAM2).

On a more spiritual level, ecology and 'connecting with nature' plays and important role in Tamera's spiritual practices and discourses, as manifested in *Terra Deva*, a department for "spiritual nature research", "spiritual ecology, deep ecology and communication with nature beings". Tamera 'spiritual' places such as the 'Stone Circle' and 'Pilgrims Path', have an explicit ecological component.

Figure 5-5. Visual Impression Tamera – Source: own pictures

5.1.3   Networking, Outreach and Communication

Tamera seems to be bursting with international networking and outreach efforts, driven by exceptionally high levels of activism and idealism. People from Tamera have founded numerous international network organisations and run numerous educational and activist programmes. The majority of these efforts have a thematic focus on peace work and/or love and sexuality.

> *"We also try to achieve a global effect. We are an education place for peace workers, also from the global south and crises areas. People come that what to learn how to create sustainability, autonomy in an ecological and social dimension. We support projects in different continents and we provide knowledge to everybody who wants it. We create a place where people can learn sustainability". (Interview TAM1).*

The *Institute for Global Peace* Work (IGP) is an international network organization that aims to *"develop a global cooperation for building up peace research villages in order to create alternatives for the global system of violence"* and works with "*representatives of indigenous peoples, scientists, peace initiatives and individual peace activists from all over the world*" (Tamera website). The IGP includes numerous units and initiatives, including the *Global Campus*, the "*Plan of Peace Research Villages and Healing Biotopes*", the *Grace Pilgrimages*, the *Terra Nova School* (Portuguese for 'New World School') and many more. The *Global Campus* is described as "*an international training platform [which] consists of a growing network of base stations*", including initiatives in Columbia, Brazil, Israel/Palestine, Kenya, Mexico, Switzerland and Portugal (ibid). The training of the Global Campus is "*designed to support the base stations in questions of food self-sufficiency, energy autonomy, water management, community building and the study of peace knowledge*" (ibid).

> *"The purpose of Global Campus is to gather knowledge and people who want to work on a future without war. Wherever it is, Columbia, Sudan: the important thing is that people have this inner commitment to find new solutions. When these people come together from all over the world, even if the context is completely different, they can have the same need, for instance energy production, and they can learn from each other. So we work on creating long-term relations, rather than, for example, call a company to ask for energy advice. This allows the local networks to rise more and more. It is not carried by one organization but by thousands of people. That way it can spread without being destroyed". (Interview TAM5)*

I met one of my interviewees at the office of the IGP, a round building with windows on all sides, an office space with several desks and computers, a kitchen, and a more lounge-like space with sofas. On the wall, there was a large map of the world with pins across, bearing a text saying: "*Terra Nova: a movement for a global system change*". This map visualises Tamera's future vision of 1000+ Peace Research Village initiatives emerging across the world. One of the existing initiatives concerns *Global Campus Palestine*, which was awarded the annual GEN Ecovillage Excellency Award in 2014.

> *"The wish came that we bring the knowledge that exists in Tamera and in many other places, to bring the whole knowledge of sustainability in material projects, to bring it to Palestine. To also support the political resistance of the Palestinian people in a non-violent way. How to support people who are under direct occupation, under direct oppression, to strengthen them, to empower them with technology that can make their life much easier, and not to support them being bound to the system of occupation. (....) This is what is called Global Campus Palestine." (TAM3)*

Another major recurring activity in Tamera, concerns its *Love School* programme, including seminars and courses of all shapes and sizes. It is presented as a learning event where participants can learn from Tamera's "long-standing research" on questions of how to "contribute to a system of love without deception" and "a new orientation in Eros" (Tamera website). One particularly special edition of this curriculum, concerns the *Global* Love School. This programme is on personal invitation only, attended by 40+ of Tamera's network partners across the world, with the aim of creating *"a platform upon which we as counsellors, teachers and guides can work systematically towards healing possibilities and alternatives for the world"* (ibid). Compared to other Love School

programmes, the *Global* Love School consists of "more dedication" and a "more stable group" that comes together "at least three times in row" (Interview TAM7):

> "The Global Love School is a group of people that said 'we need to combine our political work with work in love. We can no longer separate our public figure that we are from our private love issue'. Love is not a private issue; we need to take it into a more public space, because otherwise we exclude part of ourselves that hinders us. So it includes NGO's, communities, but also a lot of people from the professional world". (Interview TAM6).

> "The Global Love School is a very special event to unite leaders from different project, networks, companies, acupuncture points in society, to unite under this question of love and sexuality, have an exchange and networking amongst them. But on a different level: not only politics, humanity crisis, but goes on levels beyond, [to] human issues that are present anyway wherever you work. Under the theory that only sustainable help can be given by people who are free of fear, without hidden aggressions or desperation in love." (Interview TAM7).

Besides these more 'intense' programmes which seem to focus on Tamera's network partners, there are also 'lighter programmes' such as the annual 10-day International Summer University (having its 20th edition in 2014, open for anyone, attended by an average of 300 people), and possibilities to participate in Tamera as a guest (more about that in section 5.3.1.1).

Moreover, every week there is a Sunday Morning Matinée, held at the Aula for all people working and living in Tamera, but also for guests and for friends from the surrounding region. The Matinée takes around 45 minutes and includes a lecture, community announcements, singing and the possibility to buy books at a small stand. During the two Matinées that I attended – in May and September 2014 – there were 100-200 people present. The first Matinée included an interview with Founder Dieter Duhm, the second a lecture by Brigitte Muskalla (Coordinator of the *Love School*) on "Basic Thoughts on the Questions of Community, Love and Sexuality". Both Matinée meetings also included communal singing and some announcements on on-going activities and guest programmes.

Besides Tamera's own networks and activities, the *Global Ecovillage Network* (GEN, see chapter 3) was recognised in all interviews and informal conversations as an important network for Tamera (albeit it considered less pivotal than many other Tamera networks, as described above). Tamera is an active member in GEN, and hosted the GEN conference "Seeds of Hope in Times of Change" in July 2011 (Tamera website, GEN website). At the 2014 GEN-conference on "Strategies for Resilience" (held at ZEGG Germany), four representatives from Tamera were present, and three of them had a prominent role as plenary speakers and/or workshop facilitators. Interviewees commented that being part of GEN, and having hosted the GEN conference at Tamera, helps to present Tamera to the outside world, to learn from other communities, and to draw more attention to ecological issues.

> "We found out, the other projects are different, also have a different world view, but the similarities are much bigger. GEN serves as a protection shield, it helps creating a certain image that can be understood by the mainstream, an umbrella that can protect more extreme projects like Tamera. (...) I discovered what we can learn from each other, for example in transforming an ecovillage from a charismatic leader project to a democratic project and keep the love and trust to this founder". (Interview TAM1).

> "When TAMERA was formed, the aspect of an ecovillage was not yet explored that much. The contact with GEN has opened more attention for the ecological issues. Since GEN [since GEN conference at Tamera in 2011], there has been more investment in ecology, both in time and in money. Many present TAMERA as a 'healing biotope'… but nobody knows what that is. I prefer to present it as an ecovillage that makes part of GEN. I come from the environmental side. That is for me the main issue that weighs a lot. For others there are other issues that weigh more". (Interview TAM2).

> "I was really excited about the idea of GEN [because it] is really important to connect the different communities. (...) GEN is there not to replicate ecovillages, but [to] bring the idea of ecovillages forward in different official councils. I think that's really good, so it becomes a more official status and not just

some weird hippies living somewhere in the middle of nowhere. (...) For me it was really eye-opening to see the different communities and how different people are and with their energy and what they do and what their intention is. To also see that the needs are more or less the same". (Interview TAM7)

"It is a very good basis for us to be integrated in, because it's just good to be connected with people who are also building community. Where you can exchange experiences, where you have a support. GEN supports us on many different levels, also with projects we do (...).It's also something of exchanging knowledge. It's also a political thing. If you stand alone as a project, it's of course not as easy as when you are part of a bigger initiative (...). Especially now in the last years, GEN really says that we want to get out of this corner where we are somewhere in this alternative niche, but really to bring it more into society. To make this ecovillage knowledge something that goes mainstream. (...) Where it becomes something that is politically seen. And this of course is a big support, especially when you are a project that deals with such delicate working areas. (...) GEN is based on more general guidelines and still they are radical. (...) They provide support, [while] here we can really go much deeper into certain points that couldn't be a general agreement already in a bigger network." (Interview TAM8).

Today, the relations between Tamera and GEN seem one of cooperation and mutual respect. However, this has not always been self-evident, as there have been considerable disagreements between the two in the past, especially considering the issue of free love (interview 4, 7).

"Many communities, let's say 10 years ago, had a lot of resistance to Tamera, because of this topic of free love. (...) [With] GEN networking, the borders between the communities are crashing down. (...) [We now] realize the value of every community is a little acupuncture point all over the world. And every community is special, and we have to respect this and to honour this and learn from each other." (Interview TAM4)

Besides the several organisations, networks, programmes and events, Tamera's outreach is also manifested through all sorts of written text: websites, manuals, articles and most of all numerous books. Tamera even has its own Publishing house Verlag-Meiga, an online bookshop and a physical bookshop on site. The many political ideas of Tamera and its active involvement in various networks and projects, is also quite discursively and visually present in Tamera, in the form of numerous signs, murals and posters, across the area and buildings (see figure 5-6 below). These include statements such as "join the global food revolution" (bottom right picutre), "the healing of our planets starts in contact with all beings" (upper left), and: "A healing biotope is taking shape on this site (...) Those who live her seek to travel a path of co-evolution and love together. Every being that comes here can take part in this enterprise. Please help this work to succeed." (middle picture).

Figure 5-6 Some Signs, Murals and Posters present in Tamera. Source: Own Pictures

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5.1.4 Background & Development

On its website, Tamera summarises its own development through time as follows:

> *"Since the original idea and founding in Germany in 1978, the Project of the Healing Biotopes went through many stages of development and new beginnings, until Tamera was founded in southern Portugal in 1995. Today 170 people live and work here and are connected with the growing international network and base stations in Israel-Palestine, Colombia, Brazil, Kenya and other countries. Since the beginning the central focus of the project was the question of how human beings from all cultures and religions can live together so that peace can arise amongst them". (Tamera website).*

The "original idea and founding in Germany in 1978" mentioned in the text above refers to a Germany community project called 'Bauhutte' (German for 'building workers' hut'), founded by a group of people including Dieter Duhm, who describes it as consisting of "*a few committed, politically left-leaning people; historically, they came from the failed New Left movement and the emerging ecological movement*" (ibid). Another 'Tamera elder' who has also been involved from the very start, argued that the initial intention of the Bauhutte was to build a model "*that can showcase what another world can really look like*" (interview 9). The original rationale was that all the necessary knowledge and many solutions were available, and that what was lacking was a place to put it all together. The aim was to create an "*alternative university where we invite the specialists of the different fields and we will develop step by step this other life model*" (ibid). It was through the experience of trying to 'bring people together' that the early project members realised the importance of the human relations issue:

> *"When you put together specialists you get immense human problems of communication, of really listening to each other, of creating synergies rather than creating 'I know better' and so. So it was clear that the real research is in this area. It was also very soon clear that this is why the beautiful knowledge has not been put together yet in one place. And at that time they thought 'let's do three years research on the social question and then we're done and then we do the model'. And since then we are in an ongoing research on these questions." (Interview TAM9).*

After the "Bauhutte seed had been planted", it resulted in different follow-up projects that went separate ways but are still connected. One of them was the MEIGA network (German acronym for "Modell Einer Internationalen Gewaltfreien Alternative", meaning "Model for an International Non-violent Alternative") which under the name of "Verlag-Meiga" is still an important organisational part of Tamera, functioning as "publishing house and political initiative" (Verlag Meiga website). Another follow-up concerns the intentional community ZEGG (German acronym for "Zentrum für experimentelle Gesellschaftsgestaltung", i.e. Center for Experimental Societal Design), founded in 1991 and located in Eastern Germany (1 hour from Berlin). Today, ZEGG is a community of about 100 adults and children, and an active member of the *Global Ecovillage Network*. ZEGG hosted the GEN-conference in 2014, where we as TRANSIT-researchers were present (see annex 3), as well as 4 people from Tamera. When asked about the difference between ZEGG and Tamera, an interviewee from Tamera argued that, in Germany, there is much less space to really build a new life model, due to bureaucracy and "*an immanent resistance against experiments*", which are mentioned as one of the reasons why the group moved to Portugal to found Tamera (interview 9). Another reason to leave Germany concerns the political controversies that surrounded both ZEGG and MEIGA, including press campaigns in which they were depicted as an abusive "sex cult", controversies that still live on today both in Germany and in Portugal (see more in section 5.4.1 on controversies).

Since Tamera itself was founded in 1995 in the South of Portugal, there have been many changes and developments. The changes and milestones that were mentioned most often include the following:

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1. The creation of natural lakes and subsequent 'greening' of Tamera
2. Leadership 'shift' to the younger generation
3. The internationalisation and 'opening up' to outsiders
4. The loosening up of strict rules and norms.
5. Increasing attention for ecological issues and life-styles.
6. Strengthening relations and integration with the Portuguese, regional context.

In each interview, I asked what had changed most drastically over the past years in Tamera. All correspondents mentioned the creation of the natural lakes over the years, starting in 2007, which turned Tamera from a desert-like are into a green oasis:

"Tamera has changed a lot, especially in the last 5 years. Since 2007, with the water landscape, just the physical landscape of this land changed. When I visited the first time in 2004, (...) I just remember a dusty hot place. You walked and the dust was all over, it was really challenging. (...) And now you walk and there is like the feeling of spring all the time. All the time it's green, it's the water, just the presence of the water, and what culture the water creates (...). In the outside world, when people want to have a picnic, they go to a place where they can have water. (...) And we live in a picnic all year round. This is for me something that we need to recognize and to understand what we have actually here." (Interview TAM3).

"In the ecology, a lot has changed. In 2007, still we were in the situation that during our bigger guest events, we did not even know if we would have enough water here to offer drinking water for the people. We were far away from thinking about water for irrigation and things like that. The whole community was autarkic in water, but depending on one deep bore hole. So it was an autonomous situation but it was not sustainable. And now, after a few years of consequently installing the water retention principles, it changed a lot. From a not sustainable situation to a regenerative situation and complete autonomy in the area of water." (Interview TAM10)

Figure 5-7. Impression of Landscape Transformation. Source: Tamera website (left) + own pictures (right)
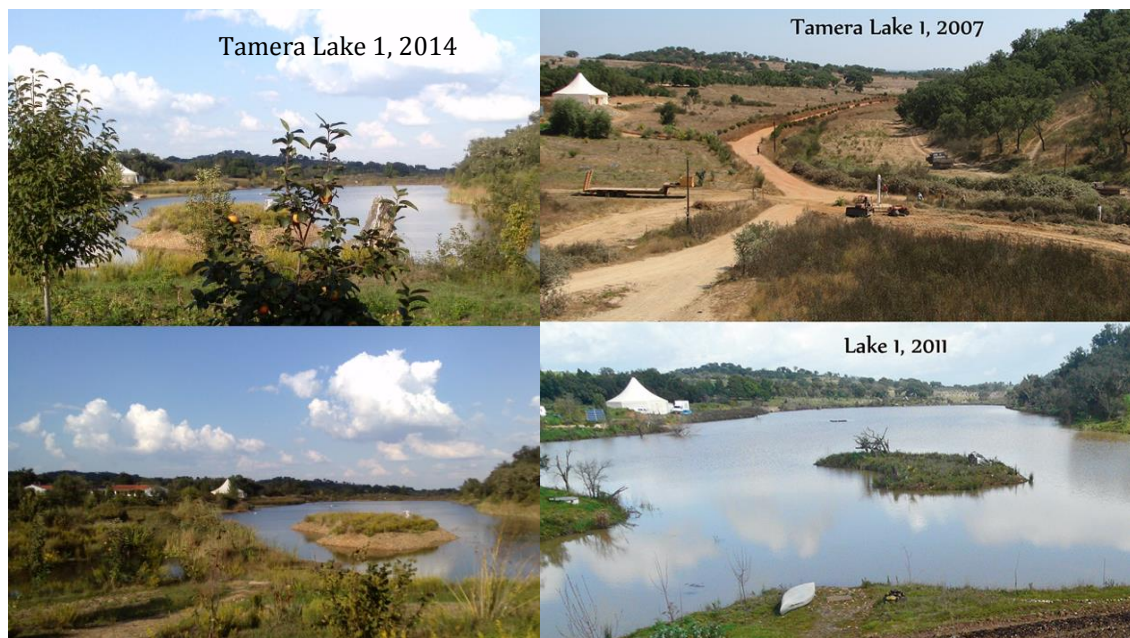
Another milestone that is often also mentioned as a 'distinguishing' feature of Tamera, is that at some point it was decided to more or less 'handover' leadership to the 'younger generations' (ages 16-25). This is primarily manifested in the fact that the majority of the Tamera project organisations and networks (see section 5.1.3.), are headed and coordinated by these younger

generations and also that the "Tamera government" (see section 5.3.1.1.) does not consist of the founders but of the younger generations.

> *"Many communities and ecovillages have such a high average age because they cannot keep the youth and this is a big problem for many communities where they fall apart. And here something took place 10 years ago, where the founder generation consciously said to the people in their twenties 'you now fully take it on'. And they put them in this position and there was not this clinging. And so something very beautiful has developed, of cooperation between the generations. And it's also in many projects now that you have a kind of leadership that is both: with a mature person from the first generation and a younger one from the second generation. So this is very beautiful, and a strong basis." (Interview TAM8)*

The internationalisation and related process of 'opening up' to outsiders from across the world, is manifested in the organisation of programmes at Tamera with an explicit invitation for visitors. This includes an 'opening up' to Portugal and the strengthening relation and integration with the national and regional context (more on this in section 5.1.4.).

> *"We often get this feedback that we are this island that is not penetrable, and you can't come in, from guests and neighbours and so. And I think this is getting better every year, like the contacts to the neighbours for sure". (Interview TAM6).*

Several programmes have been and continue to be organised to involve people from outside Tamera. Two of the most important programmes mentioned as milestones, concern the yearly *International Summer Universities* (starting in 2000) and the *Monte Cerro School* held in 2006. The *International Summer University* is an annual 10-day event where people from all over the world are welcome to stay in Tamera and follow a diverse programme of courses, lectures and workshops. The *Monte Cerro School* was a project to receive students from all over the world for 3 years, which "has given a very important impulse in Tamera." (Interview TAM2).

Both the shift of leadership to the younger generations, as well as the process of internationalisation, overlapped with (and possibly caused) a process of 'loosening up' rules and norms. Not only in interviews but also in informal conversations, people from within Tamera as well as returning visitors, stressed that Tamera has changed in the past decade or so. One of the most mentioned issues concerns the rules and norms about free love and partnerships. It appears that one decade ago, Tamera used to be much stricter and narrower about its interpretation of 'free love', which implied having multiple sexual partners and tended to condemn monogamous partnerships. Today, the 'free' part of the free love philosophy is stressed more in terms of the freedom to choose, and monogamy is supposedly accepted and practiced (albeit by a minority).

> *"In 2006, things were really quite different. Everything was much stricter, forbidden, you were almost not allowed to do anything. Also the infrastructure was very rudimentary, students sleeping on the floor, internet was paid. The international students made the German temperament in TAMERA more flexible. We felt that there was a straightjacket around 2006, and that we had to break that". (Interview TAM2).*

> *"It's very unique to have this experiment of free sexuality and free love in a community going on for almost 40 years and that it still works and that the community has neither stopped it nor broken apart with it. So this is very special. And also that it's a research journey where the focus has also shifted. In the beginning it was much more about ridding oneself from the old patterns of relationships, to really just claim the freedom of sexuality. This has been a whole evolution process where now in the last years, we also focus much more on the question: what does partnership look like, how do you bring in the intimate longing into this picture? How do you combine it with a lifestyle where you don't exclude sexuality with others? So how do you really bring these two fully into balance? So it's also something that is alive and is still in research. What I want to say is that for me, this not something that is dogmatic, so it's nothing where you have a law that is written and you follow it, but it's something where we check and maybe we recognize now that certain statements in the past went too far and we have to correct them now." (Interview TAM8)*

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Another change that was mentioned by several, concerns the increasing attention for ecological issues and life-styles. Even though Tamera and its background always harboured explicit ecological and environmental awareness, the strong attention for issues of love, peace and sexuality sometimes have overshadowed the ecological question. Nevertheless, the attention for ecological issues has continued to increase over the years and several projects and programmes have been started up that focus on ecology (see section 5.1.2).

Figure 5-8: Development Milestones of Tamera through Time
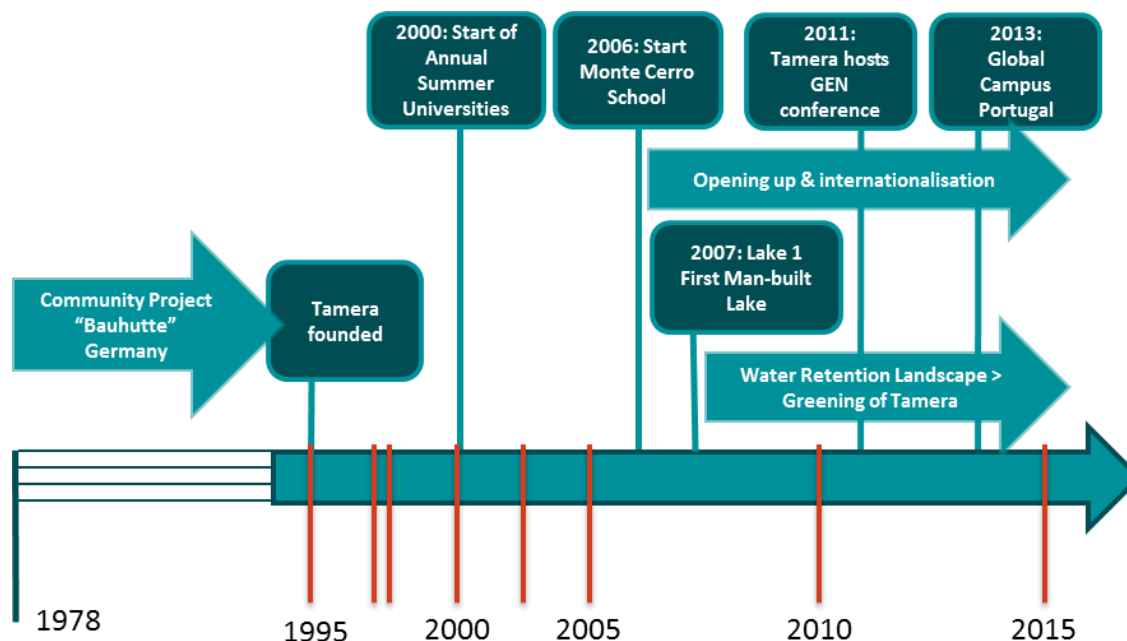
5.1.5   National & Regional Context: Portugal & Alentejo

Tamera is located 20 km off the west coast in the Alentejo region in southern Portugal. As indicated in the previous section, one of the developments in Tamera has been the 'opening' up to its national and regional context and a strengthening of linkages. One example concerns the *Global Campus Portugal* initiative that was started in 2013, a 4-week pilgrimage of 15 people from Tamera visiting different places in Portugal (e.g. Castro Verde, Beija, Moura, Mertola, Évora, Montemore-o-Novo). The rationale behind this pilgrimage was to acknowledge the social challenges in Portugal. This was a response to a critique (both from insiders and outsiders) that Tamera was paying much attention to peace work and activism across the world, while ignoring the issues in its own regional and national backyard. Like other South-European countries, Portugal has suffered considerably under the economic crisis, with increasing rates of poverty and unemployment, which are magnified in Alentejo, being Portugal's poorest region. Tamera's *Global Campus Portugal* project was dedicated to acknowledge and pay attention to these challenges. *"We saw that Portugal is also a region and country in crisis, with unemployment, emigration, and so forth. So we made a tour to visit the places and acknowledge their problems"* (interview TAM2).

One of the outcomes of the Tamera's pilgrimage has been the publication of articles on the socio-economic situation in Portugal. One of these articles, co-authors by a journalist from Tamera, presents "*Portugal as Model for a New Socialism*" (Dregger, 2014). It explicitly plays into Portugal's communist revolution of 1974, which has known a revived national interested since the break out of the economic crisis. On the 25th of April 1974, the military had conducted a coup over Salazar's dictatorship over Portugal. The event became known as one of the most peaceful revolutions in

history, without one single death. On the streets of Lisbon that day, female florists had placed red carnations in the rifles of the soldiers, earning the revolution its name as the "Revolution of Carnations". Dregger's article on Portugal has a cover with a picture of red carnations, and makes the argument that Portugal had a peaceful revolution before, and that this could be repeated to overcome the tyranny of the suppressive capitalist system:

> Today Portugal suffers under a dictatorship again – the dictatorship of capital, as countless graffiti on the walls attest. Austerity measures, debt and tax regulations pressure the workers, small business owners, craftsmen and farmers above all others. The wave of privatization pushes masses of people into unemployment. The number of young people leaving the country today is almost as high as during the dictatorship – back then they fled military service and prison, today they flee from the prospect of a bleak future.
>
> But the country and its people have not fully forgotten the dream of freedom, equality and socialism. After the big demonstrations against the Troika in recent years, some pioneer groups moved to the countryside to build alternatives – cooperatives for regional subsistence and neighborly assistance; "Ajudadas" (actions of mutual help); legal and illegal local markets for exchanging goods outside of the monetary system; "Land Banks" for transferring property between landowners and landless people; citizenship academies for conveying knowledge. As small and cautious as these attempts often are, they carry great potential. Visionary thinkers already see a new map of Portugal arising – a map of regional economic cycles, modern subsistence, self-confident eco-regions and model villages, which counter the globalized world with another reality.
>
> At a time when the dream of socialism seemed to be over - with the decline of the eastern bloc and the fall of the Berlin Wall, with its activists reintegrating into the capitalist system - it turns out that socialism is a dream of humanity and a dream of humanity cannot be suppressed. It will come out time and again anew until it is realized. However, this might happen differently than its early proponents predicted. (Dregger 2014:1).

Tamera is not the only alternative sustainability initiative in Alentejo. The revolution of 1974 had originated in the Alentejo region, where communist ideas had been bred and spread amongst the cork workers. Ever since, the region of Alentejo is referred as Portugal's 'revolutionary breeding ground'. Today, the region of Alentejo harbour various alternative sustainability projects and communities. This is part of a broader sustainability and alternative social movement in Portugal, which includes a movement of the so-called 'neo-rurais' ('neo-rural people'): people who are moving from the city back in to the rural areas (Campos et al. forthcoming). Other sustainability community initiatives in Alentejo include *Aldeia das Amoreiras/ Centro de Convergência* (ibid) and the small community *Cento-e-Oito* near Tamera.

Besides the formal interview with people from Tamera, I have had various informal conversations with people involved in Portugal's sustainability and alternative movement, both in Alentejo and elsewhere, both from Portugal and from abroad (there is quite an amount of foreigners who have settled in Portugal, some of which are involved in sustainability projects). Most of the people I spoke to, have sympathy for the Tamera project, especially for its renowned man-made lakes, which are studied by university researchers as an example of community-led climate change adaptation and regeneration (see for instance the EU funded BASE research project on 'bottom-up climate adaptations strategies', including a case-study on Alentejo region and Tamera: Base-adaptation.eu).

Having said that, also amongst Portugal's alternative and sustainability 'avant-garde', there still seems to be quite some critique and suspicion regarding Tamera. Even those that accept the experiment and the idea of free love as such, still wonder to what extent it is appropriate to conduct such an experiment in the middle of a traditional and catholic Portuguese context. The fiercest and most recurring (Portuguese) critique of Tamera, however, is that there is 'nothing Portuguese about' and that it is very disconnected from its national and regional context. This is not helped by the fact that Tamera has several disagreements with the local and neighbouring local governments (see section 5.3.1.2).

It should be mentioned, however, that nearly everybody acknowledged that the connection and openness to Portugal and Alentejo has greatly improved in the past few years. Besides the *Global Campus Portugal* mentioned earlier, efforts have been made to organise regular open days for Portuguese visitors, including Portuguese translation. Tamera has invested in its Portuguese connection, *inter alia* by hiring a full-time Portuguese representative to consult and advise a team that has been made responsible to build and ensure connections with the national and regional context. Most of the signs and brochures at Tamera are both in English and in Portuguese, and some initiatives bear Portuguese names. One particular example is the *Aldeia da Luz* initiative (introduced in section 5.1.2), which *"has chosen its name to honour an old Portuguese village that was flooded by the Alqueva Dam in 2002. In Portugal, the "Aldeia da Luz" creates a special soul sound. It inspires memories of past times when communities were still living and working in the villages across the different generations"* (Tamera Website).

> *"When the Portuguese visitors hear that there is something called Aldeia de Luz, then they like to come. And when we make a tour and explain what we are doing here they say: 'that's like our grandparents did, to collect the herbs, to make the clothes yourself, or to recycle, to live in a really conscious way with nature'. We are doing this autonomy that all their grandparents did (...). They are reminded, and this is a sound of a communitarian sound, also for the Portuguese people. Because 40 years before, they did live in their villages in this communitarian way, and this they have lost it, like we have lost it. And so it comes back for all of us, to come back to our roots. Because we are all indigenous people all over the world."* (Interview TAM4).

Tamera's efforts to increase its connection with its surroundings, includes in activities to start a regional sustainability network, and active involvement in local farmer and handicrafts markets. Moreover, the registrations prices for the more extensive guest programmes (*A Votre Service* - see also sections 5.1.3. and 5.3.1.1.) have been reduced to account for Portuguese income averages (which are considerably lower that German or many other foreign ones). During interviews, many people from Tamera spoke fondly of Portugal, and emphasised what they loved about it:

> *"This immanent resistance towards experiments was very high [in Germany]. This is very different in Portugal, people welcome us so warmly. And I often have the feeling that Portugal is much closer to the natural connection to the issue of community, especially here in Alentejo. It is not strange for people when people sing together. In Germany this is strange. Or helping each other, this was, it is here still very near. Also during the dictatorship people would not have survived if they wouldn't have helped each other. So they still are in this 'yes we are one community, that we have to take care of each other'. And so at the beginning they said very clearly 'we don't understand you but we see you are nice people'. And with those people we are closely together, this still is like this".* (Interview TAM9)

However, the fact still remains that out of its 170 residents, only 9 are Portuguese. German and English are the main languages, and the far majority does not speak Portuguese. Moreover, getting to Tamera takes 30 minutes by car from the nearest train station, 15-20 minutes during which one is driving through a deserted landscape. Both physically and culturally, Tamera still comes across as a foreign island that has 'landed' in the Portuguese desert. Despite of the fact that Tamera has gone and continues to go through several processes of internationalisation, and has invested in strengthening the Portuguese connection, there are still several mechanisms in its (formal and informal) governance that make Portuguese people feel excluded:

> *"Our Tamera government is always German. There is never someone who is not German in the government. It is also a question of language. There already has been a person, a Portuguese person, who has left because there was no opening, because he felt that he was not involved in certain decision making, that there was always a place where there was no room for his opinion".* (Interview TAM2).

This (unintended) 'exclusion' of Portuguese people also has a financial element, in the sense that all members that are not full members have to pay to live in Tamera (see section 3.3), which for the

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Portuguese average income is particularly expensive. This also makes it difficult for Portuguese people to come to Tamera as a guest. Even though Tamera has decreased the prices for Portuguese guests (from 20 to 15 euro per day – see section 5.3.3), this is still considered too expensive for many Portuguese.

Having a partly Portuguese background, I have to admit that I sometimes had to make an effort not to feel offended by a seeming condescendence toward the Portuguese population, which seemed to be expressed by some people from Tamera (certainly not everybody, and often unconsciously). Even the enthusiastic descriptions about 'the Portuguese culture', as exemplified in the interview quote above, sometimes struck me as a little stereotypical and unrepresentative of modern day Portugal. Having said that, this might have more to do with my own predominantly 'urban' experience of Portugal. Also, I have to admit that none of what I saw at Tamera seemed any different from any average foreigner's image of a country, as commonly occurs amongst tourists or any kind of foreign, expat community or settlement. Moreover, in as far as Tamera 'separates itself' from the regional population, this does not seem particularly directed at the Portuguese culture, but more generally comes from its radical views that inherently differ from any Western mainstream society.

5.2 Innovation and Change in/by Tamera

Tamera has an overt aspiration to contribute to change and innovation. Its *Global Campus* network activities across the world are described as "pioneer and model projects for the transition to a new human culture across various regions" and the *Terra Nova School* is described as "a worldwide learning platform intended to become a catalyst for global system-change" (Tamera website). All shades of change and innovation, including the several notions we use for it within the TRANSIT research project, seem to appear in Tamera discourse, in one way or the other. Tamera and its underlying philosophies demonstrate an explicit theory of change. This theory of change can be characterised as consisting of five main elements, in which social change is seen as coming forth from:

1. Personal transformation and 'inner work'
2. Re-creating trust within social and intimate relations
3. Living the change by example and through experimentation
4. Holism: political, socio-economic and ecological change are inextricably intertwined
5. Creation of 'healing biotopes' and 'morphogenetic fields' to (globally) foster a 'new culture'

"What I think is really unique is the absolute holistic approach and ambition of Tamera. Where you really try to really take all human areas of life into research and to put them on a basis of a matrix of trust and cooperation, this idea of the 'healing biotope'. (…) This is a political thing where it's nothing we just do for ourselves or to have impact on a region or a country. But this approach to develop a community that can trigger a morphogenetic field process. I know that other communities do brilliant work and also have this idea of supporting a global healing process. But still I think this idea of working on a morphogenetic field, this is still another dimension (…). Because if you follow this principle, there are criteria that come up that you don't have if you don't. So, for example, you have to free yourself, to make this life system that you create… to free it from inner contradictions. So you have to make sure that you take out all the points of complicity in the system of violence, which can both be consumption habits of products that involve complicity, but also in the inter-personal realm. It comes down to the point where the participants of the project have to free themselves from their participation that they have in this system of violence even through thoughts. So it's a very radical approach in a way." (Interview TAM8).

"One important thing is the sentence 'be the change you want to see in the world', said by Mahatma Gandhi, and we often quote it. Because there is a high responsibility to our own actions. The other is to create showcases of an alternative lifestyle which is attractive, sexy, global, interesting and not this a little bit hard, a little bit backwards, a little bit more uncomfortable but 'good way' to live on the planet. And

to offer those showcases as education centres, that they can be visited. And the third level of change is for me best described by Rupert Sheldrake: 'the morphogenetic field building'. (…) When you build a project according to this theory, you have different guidelines on how to live and 'what builds a field' is then the question. And for field-building you cannot exclude yourself. You only build a real information by living it, by doing it." (Interview TAM9).

In this section, we will touch on each of these themes. In the interviews, we did not explicitly ask about jargon concepts such as 'system innovation' or 'game-changers'. As, such we will use the sub-section on different types of change and innovation to organise and structure Tamera's ideas on change and innovation in terms of different levels and dimensions.

5.2.1 Relation with social innovation

If social innovation is defined in terms of new social practices and new social relations, than Tamera can be seen as a place that is 'all about social innovation', in particular in terms of creating new social relations. In the first place, there is the aspect of 'living in community', more specifically an *intentional* community, which Tamera shares with several other ecovillages (see chapter 3). Even though the phenomena of intentional community is not new in itself, the experimental way in which Tamera practices it, can be considered as socially innovative.

Then of course there is the more specific philosophy on re-creating intimate social relations. As a simplistic description, one could characterise this in terms of monogamy being replaced by polygamy or 'polyamory'. Most people from Tamera, however, would argue that the idea of 'free love' is not necessarily about having multiple sexual relations, but first and foremost about having 'true' and 'honest' relations. The underlying suggestion is that the supposed monogamy 'practiced' in mainstream society is in fact filled with lies, cheating, abuse, etc. and as such not 'true' most of the time. As such, the main ambition of Tamera is to enable social relations that are honest, true and based on trust. How exactly this is achieved, is the main 'action research question' of Tamera.

In order to research this question, Tamera has introduced several 'practices' / techniques that are used in and by the community, which can in themselves be considered as 'social innovations'. One of the most renowned social innovations that is intensely practices at ZEGG and at Tamera concerns "The Forum", a facilitation tool for group communication, "*a tool to create transparency with our true motivations and wishes, to find out and reveal deeper truth and insights, and process pending conflicts and questions*" (Tamera on GEN-website). The practice of the Forum – and related techniques such as 'The Plenary' (see section 5.3.1.1. on internal governance) also get exported to other communities (see more in the next section 5.2.3. on system innovation).

"The Forum is a well-facilitated method for evoking emotional transparency that functions like a combination of psychodrama and group empathy. Each person goes into the center of the circle for whole-group attention, telling the others about a personal issue, then people in the group mirror back to that person what they're seeing and hearing." (Ecovillage Newsletter, n.d.)

It also seems that Tamera practices several innovative practices related to 'courtship' and erotic relations. Regarding courtship, there is a strong emphasis on honesty and openness, i.e. being honest about finding someone attractive, and being allowed to express that to that person (interview 1, 7). An important aspect of this is also the honesty and freedom to *respond* to someone that one is *not* attracted or interested, something which in mainstream society is mostly considered a particularly awkward and hurtful affair. Making these kind of interactions more honest and direct, and aiming to remove issues of fear and insecurity, seem to be an important part of 'social innovation' at Tamera. Much of this is also related to both female and male emancipation, e.g. teaching women how to say 'thank you but no thank you' in a respectful but confident way (ibid). Besides the social innovation

oriented towards social relations and community, there are also numerous (social) innovations regarding ecology, life-style and technology (see section 5.1.2).

5.2.2   Relation with system innovation

In all communications about Tamera, it is strongly emphasised that Tamera wants to create new social systems, or in fact, a new world, a "Realistic Utopia" (Tamera website). They clearly want to do more than creating a pleasant, green living environment for themselves, they really want to 'change the world'. The *Tamera Manifesto For a New Generation on Planet Earth* (Dieter Duhm, n.d.) argues that "the world is in transition towards a new way to live on Earth", that "we are experiencing the collapse of the mega-systems", and that "the new planetary community is making a fundamental system-change from the matrix of fear to the matrix of trust". Several interviewees emphasise how they want 'real' and 'profound' change, rather than 'fixing' things.

> *"I came with a clear intention to find answers to what is my role in this world that serves. How to really heal organisms rather than just putting patches on this. This is not easy, because sometimes you want to put a patch". (Interview TAM5).*

> *"The system that I'm envisioning, the ecological system is a decentralized, local, regional decentralized regenerative system where living beings would have free access to water, food and energy all over the world. (...) I think this is the level where the highest challenge is. It is (emphasis) about a system change. What my vision requires, for my vision to come through requires a system change (emphasis) and not a bit repairing here and there. Complete system change. And where to address that? This system change will probably not come out of the existing system." (Interview TAM10).*

On several occasions, Tamera is presented as "Test Field 1", indicating that the ultimate aim is to create more 'healing biotopes' across the world (something which the many networks – as introduced in section 5.1.3. – are working on). The main strategy for spreading the model is through experimentation, research and education. People from Tamera really believe that their experiments on site can serve as examples for creating new systems elsewhere. As elaborately described in section 5.1.3, Tamera has numerous outreach activities and programmes, including an impressive amount of published materials, in which experiments, solutions and insights from Tamera are shared with others.

> *"Back to Gandhi, he said: nature has provided enough for human need but not enough for human greed. And can we show an example that there is a way, with creating sustainability in the human issues, to solve the human greed, to answer the question: why do human beings become greedy? Why? What fear, what motivation stands behind this greediness? What motivates you to want more? And to answer it from the roots. So this is the focus on human issues that we do. And in the other issues, we definitely work with nails and teeth, and you see us as carriers running, and running a life that is sometimes exhausting but it is also fulfilling for the heart, when you say, see that by your work you can set an example where people really can see a change. So in the issue of water. For the issue of water: we are 100% sustainable. There is no other place in the world that has this. Now when I say sustainable, we are also irrigating and nurturing and enriching mother earth. It's not that we are keeping the water for us. And we have our drinking water, good quality, and we are reaching more and more a percentage in the issue of food." (Interview TAM3).*

> *"We urgently need viable ecological solutions and alternatives in order to survive. These solutions must be tested and optimized before they can be applied on a large scale. (...) The new cultural impulse which is starting to emerge could enable many people to return to the countryside or to create urban ecosystems in the cities" (Tamera website).*

Regarding Tamera's ecological work, one can argue that it has already had a profound impact on the surrounding socio-ecological system (see section 5.1.2 and 5.1.4). Methods for water retention landscape and permaculture gardening are being studied by researchers, taught in various courses and programmes, and thus exported outside Tamera. Insights on social relations as well as communication methods are also exported to other communities, such as e.g. the Forum (see section

transformative **s**ocial **i**nnovation **t**heory

5.3.1.1.). Ecovillage researcher Karen T. Liften (2014) argues that: *"The Forum worked so well at ZEGG and its Portuguese sister ecovillage, Tamera, that it is now used in hundreds of communities to address all sorts of hot issues – not just sexuality. Every European ecovillage I visited had incorporated the Forum into its communication toolkit, and the practice is spreading to the United States and Latin America".*

Several Portuguese people I spoke to, both insiders and outsiders to Tamera, argued that even though Tamera was a relatively isolated island, it still did have a transformative impact on the surrounding region. This occurs for instance in terms of there now being a vegetarian restaurant in nearby villages, or a baker learning to bake organic, wholemeal bread, both of which also become accessible to other villagers outside Tamera. (Vegetarianism and wholemeal bread are both still very uncommon in Portugal, especially in these rural regions). It is argued that many producers, organic farmers and shops in the regions would "not survive without Tamera" (interviewee 1). In this light, one could argue that Tamera functions as one of the 'launching customers' for the creation and trading of ecological and organic products in the Alentejo region. Tamera is also actively involved in promoting and creating a regional sustainability network, to keep the production and food processing in the region and thus to make it possible for locals to survive economically beyond the direct consumption by people from Tamera. At the same time however, this impact on the region – which could be construed as 'positive' from a sustainability and economic perspective – also has its downfalls, such as the attraction of North-European foreigners and the resulting rising property prices around Tamera, pushing out the poorer original populations. This double-sided impact of Tamera on the surrounding rural region reminds us of the typical gentrification impacts of alternative sustainability initiatives in urban areas.

5.2.3 Relation with game-changers

The main global events/ macro-developments that seem to be felt and referred to in Tamera, concern (1) wars and other outburst of violence, (2) ecological degradation (in whatever form) and (3) poverty, or any other forms of human or planetary pain and despair. Like many other people living in ecovillages and other alternative social movements, people from Tamera emphasise that they are 'planetary, global citizens' rather than national citizens. Awareness about global pain and despair is consciously used as a motivational driver for Tamera's activism.

> *"Facing climate change, widespread hunger and the destruction of the Earth's ecosystems, we urgently need viable ecological solutions and alternatives in order to survive. These solutions must be tested and optimized before they can be applied on a large scale. We will need to make fundamental changes in the way we think and act in our contact with nature: humans must reintegrate into the ecological cycles."* *(Tamera Website)*

> *"Here in Tamera, we could for sure be happy about what we have achieved here with water and so on… but we can also say [that] the aim is food autonomy, regenerative systems. So as long as we still buy gas for heating water in any kind of kitchen, we are part of the war in Columbia, where our cooperation partners are dying as a consequence of that. And we have to face that. If we would forget that, it would be really strange. And then finding this balance and saying, yes we know that and we try to change that as soon as possible, and be very aware of that, without becoming moralistic. And that is a challenge."* *(Interview TAM10).*

> *"And for us, especially for our younger people it is so important to live for a while in Africa or in South America, to know what it means not to be [at] the highest level of the society, or to live in conflict area, where you always are in danger to be killed, like in South America. What does it mean to live in fear, day and night? To be said that 10% of your population in your peace village is already killed, and every day it could happen to your father, to your mother or to yourself? To feel this, this is really important. And to live in very very simple conditions. What does it mean if you don't have food every day? What does it mean if the water is not clean? So we know that we have the responsibility to build a model so, that's my ideology, so that everybody in this world, every woman, every child, every man should have the same possibilities*

to live like me. That means, economically, in material things, or in social things and in emotion, to feel safe. (…) From the Colombian peace community, there was a young woman [who came here] who said 'the first time in my life I can sleep in the night without fear. And this is something very special. When she came here. To know this, in which paradise we are living. For me always the luxurious things are for example to have healthy air, healthy birth, to be able to live in silence and without fear. This is really something, that are for me the wealthy things in my life. Not to have a car or a bank account or a title. The really wealthy things are friendship, trust, community. For me at the moment it's community life, even if I'm sometimes in doubts or in trouble. But I know this is the topic of life. And I think when people are coming back to their roots, that means community life." (Interview TAM4).

During the *Global Ecovillage Network* conference in July 2014, a news item on violence outbursts in Israel-Palestine was publicly commemorated and mourned, and an important personality in this ceremony was a political activist from Tamera, leading the *Global Campus* peace project in Palestine (which was also awarded the *annual GEN excellence award* at that same conference – section 5.1.4.). Even if global connectedness is a widespread value across the ecovillage movement, some argue that the explicit political awareness, in particular its attention for and activism against war and violence, is a specific characteristic of Tamera that distinguishes it from (many) other ecovillages:

"What differentiates Tamera from many other communities, and I see also that many other communities are also joining this line, of understanding that it's great, it's beautiful that we work in transition movement, that we work in building communities here and there and in many places, but that we understand our connection with the whole. That from this place there is no island of happiness when the whole world is crying of suffering. It was clear for Tamera from the beginning that we, they, do not create bubbles of safety of beauty, of harmony with nature, whilst closing the eyes and the heart from what's going on in the world. So it came quite from the beginning with the activities of Tamera, the issue of networking. Networking, in order to bring the harvest of the knowledge that we have here to other places but also to open our hearts to what's going on in other places, so that when we act, we act from a place of knowing and not closing our heart to the suffering of the world. And so this balance of working globally and thinking globally is very important, and working innerly into our structures and our issues and looking how our inner structures are reflected in the world is a very essential line of the work in Tamera." (Interview TAM3).

Q: What is specific about Tamera, compared to other similar places? A: "To take issues of our times in a very comprehensive and responsible way. I have been to several communities, and this is really unique about TAMERA. It is not that we just want to live good together, it is so much more than that". (Interview TAM5).

"What I liked in Tamera is also the communitarian political work. It's so intensive. (…) In {ecovillage in Germany} I always did political work but I was alone. {This ecovillage in Germany} is more local. I always wanted to go out in the world". (Interview TAM4).

5.2.4   Relation with societal transformation

Both Ghandi *("be the change you want to see in the world"*) and Buckminster Fuller ("*You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete*") are quoted and paraphrased on several occasions in and around Tamera. This concurs with Tamera's philosophy of building a 'biotope', i.e. a model demonstrating how the human species can live differently from the way mainstream society does.

For outsiders, the linkages between free love and solving wars and ecological degradation, might seem far-fetched and hard to follow, or stereotypically reminiscent of the 'hippie' slogan "make love not war". During my participant observation, I spoke to many guests – both short-term and long-term guests – about their impressions of Tamera. One of the more casual short-term visitors, a young man from the USA, commented that he liked the concept of free love, but that he did not like that free love was seen as the solution for everything. He argued that Tamera used free love to explain and/or solve everything, including Nazism, wars, water scarcity, and sustainable energy. Some outsiders that I spoke to, when hearing about Tamera, tend to even comment that the idea of 'free love saving

the world' must be 'an excuse to have a lot of sex' and/or a 'way to attract people to Tamera'. However, to the best of my observation and probing, I had the impression that all Tamera people I spoke to, have an authentic belief in this relation between free love and profound societal transformation. This belief seems to rest on four principle ideas/ hypotheses:

1. There is an abundance of resources (incl. love), but we have been conditioned to think in terms of scarcity,
2. Scarcity is fostered by separation, dishonesty and distrust between people (which in turn leads to greed, jealousy, frustration, fear etc.), which together form the source of all human and ecological suffering,
3. If we learn to think and relate to other living creatures on the basis of connectedness, trust, and abundance, this will dissolve the sources of human and ecological suffering.
4. For people to relearn connectedness, trust and abundance, they need to relearn to live in community and with free, honest love.

As described by people from Tamera themselves:

"What I really think is, what I mentioned before, is the state of the human being that we are usually in society, in the outer world, perpetuates a certain behaviour of destruction and capitalism and so forth, where I at the moment don't believe anymore that this destructive way that the planet is heading and or is on can be changed outerly, with outer solutions, because also these solution proposals are made from people that are traumatized and unfulfilled and innerly unhappy and have in them a system of hate and distrust. So these people I think can't make loving and trusting and caring decisions or proposals because also they don't know how that could look like. So that if you create a culture where, based on trust and a free human being, these free human beings will have a completely different way of dealing with problems that are put on them or have a total different perspective of what is useful and not useful. So that's what we're working on, basically. (…) Creating free human beings that can then, from that point, create solutions that are sustainable and are in contact with the planet and the actual being of the human being so that it is healing for both." (Interview TAM7).

"All beings {emphasis} have access. Who can imagine that in the culture that we are living in? That our environment has such a potential that, for sure every living being has access to water, food and energy? (…) To let that happen again we have to, let's say relearn, or maybe it's not so much learning but forgetting what we were taught and, for example, understand water as a living being and treat water as a living being. That's just a new concept out of which then a completely different world view pops up." (Interview 10).

"[We work] with this belief that if we want to create a world of peace, then human kind needs to find ways to live together that are based on trust, on truth, on cooperation. We cannot hide from each other, because this will create separation. And as soon as you have separation you have mistrust. And this is the little little seed, when you put it and you enlarge it, then you have a conflict area. This is the conflict area in small. We live with this worldview that the world is one whole. We say what is a conflict zone in small, when we are able to solve this and put the whole thing in a new structures then we work for a foundation for a peaceful world, because with this we create a solution that is globally available at least. Latently available, you know. It's a world view that is also based on spirituality and on this 'being connected'. Then it works. If one does not believe in this then at least we say let us build one centre where people can come and visit and see it functions. On this very direct educational path". (Interview TAM9).

In reaction to this and other similar reasoning, one of the major questions is the extent to which it is realistic to rid the human species of emotions such as jealousy or fear. If sexual desire is considered a 'natural' biological drive (which the Tamera philosophy emphasises as something that we cannot supress without causing problems), then aren't certain emotions (e.g. jealousy) also 'natural' facts of life that we need to learn to deal with (individually and as society), rather than trying to 'get rid' of them? Is it not a contradiction to accept one biological drive, while wanting to suppress others? I posed this question in different ways during interviews, and came to realise that the philosophy of Tamera is also based on an idea that (1) what is or is not a biological drive is to a large extent socially

constructed and conditioned, and (2) that even if something is 'really' a biologically drive, we can in fact even change that. This is where Tamera's philosophy turns to the concept of "morphogenetic fields" that can bring about changes in evolution (Gilbert et al. 1996).

> *"It's something to really study and go into, you cannot just believe it like this. It's such a big jump from what we have now and what is normal now, that you need to have also an intellectual and spiritual basis for it to see it. [There is] a whole theory behind it and also in the scientific world (…). What we had in the last years with the epigenetics for example, where you see that actually we are not determined by the genes, how we thought it, but actually that our genetic code is a library with all kinds of potentiality, like potential programs that we can activate for our lives and that it strongly depends on our upbringing and then actually as we develop our consciousness and where we focus our intelligence on, on our consciousness ultimately, what parts will be activated. So we cannot say that it's part of human nature to do all these things. But we have, as humanity, we have been programmed, we were bound to a certain program. And also societal order, where we are always reproducing this kind of violent matrix. So what we are doing here is to deeply de-condition ourselves, trying to de-condition ourselves from these programs and to adapt to another possible operational system." (Interview TAM8).*

5.2.5 Relation with narratives of change

Tamera has synergies with various narratives of change and is connected to several social movements, including not only the global ecovillage movement, but also permaculture, gift economy, transition towns, and so on. Besides its connection to various narratives and movements, Tamera also has an overt aspiration to create a "New Culture" and a "New Image". The notion of "Terra Nova" (Portuguese for 'New World') is described as "the vision of a new Earth. It contains the image of a post-patriarchal civilization free of violence and war" (Tamera website).

> *"'New Culture' is a culture that come from the inside, that is really anchored in the people, that is actually serving life. Every solution that we find, we need to ask: does it serve life? Or does it serve destruction, separation? Many still serve the Old Culture". (Interview TAM5).*

In some interviews, I asked to what extent other social movements were seen as being part of this "New Culture", and how Tamera saw its relation to such other social movements:

> *"When I was new in Tamera, in 2012, the whole Arab spring started, this revolution in Egypt and Tunisia and so. And suddenly I realized: what I saw, then also later in Occupy Wallstreet in the US, what I saw was a whole generation of people that somehow did not fit anymore into the cultural image that they were part of, the cultural idea. And there was a lot of energy, like revolting against what we see, I mean this is still it. And there was not an image of where to go to. And this was innerly for me such a changing point where I understood the process of creating this new image itself is already help for the world because once this image can be seen and understood by people it is like a gateway. You have a lot of energy that is turmoiling that is stuck and you don't have the possibility for it to be directed. And then suddenly you see an image and you start to believe in it and 'woosh', a lot of energy can go there. And definitely on a personal level for me it was like this. This is why I made Tamera my point of education and work". (Interview TAM6).*

> *"Many of these movements [e.g. Transition Towns, Occupy, environmental movement] are still led by people who are not considering to work on themselves to do their work. You often find yourself in conferences, in emails, where you see that people really have simple reactions, based on distrust. That raises a question: How can we work together? If I see something [to mirror them on], does that person want to know? (…) The "New Culture" is carried by many actors in the world, the problem is that we do not know each other yet. I would like to work on recognizing each other more and more, not only in data-bases but really connect on our inner and outer peace work. I think the Global Campus is part of trying to do this." (Interview TAM5)*

Much of the networking and educational programmes – as elaborately described in previous sections (see in particular section 5.1.3) – are overtly about creating a new narrative, a new image of what the world should look like:

> *"It's absolutely crucial for our survival that we change the dream of our civilization. That we take the knowledge and the information that has crystallized in the 36 years of this project and that we bring it out into the world, in a way that people can use it as an inspiration to join this consciousness process of forming a new dream. (…) I feel strongly that if there is a big crisis and you have knowledge for solving it, then it's almost your responsibility to make it available. So for us the Terra Nova School, it also serves this, that we want to address all people who are interested in stepping out of the current mode of life and to fully dismantle this illusion that there is no alternative. Because it is an illusion and it's a mortal, it is a fatal one. Because the system is crashing and the longer we stick to this belief we will crash with it. And many people are bound in fear, they think: 'if I leave this kind of system, then what will I do?' It's so much a scarcity image. But if we no longer follow the laws of society and the laws of capital, but the laws of nature and the laws of life, then we actually step into a world of abundance. So this is, these are all thoughts for this kind of, what is, what we need to, and also experiences that we need to form this dream of a post-capitalist society. So this is the Terra Nova School and this is growing since last year and it's growing and growing. And there it's also the idea that (…) all the protests that are rising up in the world, the people who are standing up, there is this forum built for this question: 'So what can be a positive goal for the revolution?' Because as long as it's just an outrage against something it will not lead very far. As if the crew on the ship demonstrates against sinking, it doesn't help much. And still in this indignation there is a power that you can use for creating something new." (Interview TAM8).*

During interviews and informal conversations, it was striking to notice the images and metaphors that are invoked in 'Tamera discourse'. For instance, health metaphors ('acupuncture points', 'healing') and ecological metaphors ('biotope', 'butterfly').

> *"Love nowadays is like the water that comes out of the tap, when you open the tap. This is what we know. We know tap water and we know this love but this has very little to do with water if you know water as a living being. What quality, what power water has as a living being, if it were not put into a hydraulic system and trapped in there? How would drinking water be that comes out of a spring? What a different energy does that have, compared with tap water? One can play around a lot there with these things. And many people discover that as a powerful tool." (Interview TAM10).*

> *"Willem Reich gave this analogy where he says that it is not the river that flows over, out of its bed, that makes damage that is violent. But it's the tight bed that we have given it where it is not moving according to its energy that actually brings about the eruption of violence". (Interview TAM8).*

One of the most active members of Tamera – who I also is a staff-member of GEN as editor of its newsletter – is a journalist that is active in alternative journalist movements, including ideas such as constructive journalism. This in combination with Tamera's professionalism when it comes to publishing books and designing websites and brochures, gives the impression that as a whole, Tamera masters an exceptionally developed capacity for communication and PR (especially compared to many other ecovillages).

At Tamera, ideas such as the morphogenetic field building or the 'New Culture' do not remain abstract intellectual thoughts, but are translated in images, symbols, signs and rituals, that are visualised, materialised and practiced in Tamera. One example concerns a weekly ceremony on every Monday morning at sun rise, where people from Tamera meet at their sacred 'stone circle' to meditate and express intentions. Apparently, this ceremony is repeated by other communities across the globe on the same day, thus creating a global field (a "ring of power") of meditative intentions at sunrise moments, across the world. "*It is an important spiritual practice. Every Monday when sun is rising, people from the whole world pray during the rising of the son, creating a ring*" (Interview TAM10).

5.3 Empowerment and Disempowerment in/by Tamera

When asking how people are empowered and/or disempowered in or by Tamera, it is important to understand where these people come from and what drives them. As indicated previously, the

majority of people living and working at Tamera are German, and then there is a diversity of other nationalities from across the world. The people I interviewed included a French, Portuguese, and Palestinian. Furthermore, while being at Tamera, I met people from the UK, the United States, the Netherlands, Spain, Italy, and Israel. The backgrounds of the people I met/interviewed at Tamera, have one clear commonality: high levels of idealism and interest in alternative social movements, be it from a more ecological or social perspective. Most of the people I met, are or have been actively involved in such social movements (e.g. peace activism permaculture, journalism, etc.) and had visited several ecovillages and/or sustainability projects. Many of the people I came in contact with, had either lived in intentional communities before, or had close relatives who lived in them.

Empowerment

"There is enough knowledge to stop wars, but we need to do it. In the issue of food. (…) It is an issue of water. (…) It is an issue of energy (…) As a mother I cannot rest, I cannot sit silent and not spread it everywhere. (…) And this is where Tamera, by setting an example of being the change you want to see in the world. And at the same time, we don't build it for ourselves. We bring the work, that's why we are busy in networking, we are busy in bringing people from outside, we are raising money all the time to empower people to come here, to take the knowledge and go back to their land, because we don't want to solve something for Tamera only but for the whole world" (Interview TAM3).

The main and most obvious way in which people feel empowered in/by Tamera, is the exceptionally high level of idealism and activism that is present all around. As indicated in section 5.1.1., there is a particularly strong physical manifestation of idealistic philosophies at Tamera, in the permaculture, gardens, the man-made lakes, the organic buildings, and the numerous signs stating bits and pieces of Tamera's ideals. Whether or not one like what one sees, walking around in Tamera, feels like walking around in a living proof that 'another reality is possible' (which is one of its explicit intentions, to 'demonstrate' that). Another obvious source of power in Tamera, is the strong sense of community. People feel supported and cared for, they can recover and 'be themselves', and the feel recharged and empowered to "go into the world" to do their political and activist work:

{Describes Tamera's political work around the world}. "These are really for me acupuncture points of what Tamera is doing. And in this sense I'm always proud of Tamera, I'm always proud and deeply connected to this community. And I'm still deeply connected. Sometimes I have my trouble. But mostly I'm deeply connected and I'm very grateful that I can live here. And to fill up my battery and then go out into the world again. This is always, still my desire." (Interview TAM4).

"Before I came here, I was so also insecure and fear-driven, it was like as if you walked on ice. As if every moment it can break. (…) Not like all issues are solved or something, but to have a basis in life that I know I can always really rely on. And in my inner feeling (…) it's also a feeling of abundance in a way, because you live in a community where you don't have to do all the things yourself. I know that part of my life is the ecological work, even if I'm not working in it, or the children's work, all these things, so this is part of a life system. (…) I had a huge anger towards the world situation, and I still have it in many parts. And this impatience, where you have this urge to change this situation. And when I came I didn't have a lot of perspective how this could work. And by now I feel, the longer I'm here the more I'm actually following a certain line of how a solution could look like, where I feel it constantly gives me more power. And this has also specifically to do with me actually being here, understanding more the idea of peace work that Tamera follows, and actually an ever growing understanding and also, where I feel this could really be a way." (Interview TAM8).

For people who have been living in Tamera for longer periods of time, and for people who have come back along the years, the developments and changes that have occurred in the past decade (as described in section 5.1.4.) also have an empowering effect. Especially the greening transformation of the landscape, the influx of international members and the shift of leadership to the younger generations. Not only do these developments make people trust that Tamera can change, improve and diversify itself, it also makes people believe that it is possible to significantly transform one's

social and ecological context, that it is possible to turn a desert into a green oasis and to have the younger generations lead, and that all this is 'possible', and thus worth spreading and fighting for.

"To see how wet and how beautiful it is all year round. This reminds you of what planet Earth is supposed to be. I don't want to make it small, what Portugal, or what Europe is supposed to be. But what planet Earth is supposed to be when you give that healing impulses. And then when I see this and I know that in my country [Palestine] we are starting wars on a drop of water, and in Africa people are dying, every 30 seconds a child is dying. And then it moves my heart: how could it be that we have this knowledge, so much knowledge, and then it's still not spread to the outside. Like this brings me into rage, like 'why!?'. And the special thing is that I am experiencing this on myself. Not somebody is telling me stories. I walked in this place. This place for example, the Grace Lake, if you see it now with lots of water lilies and so. This was one of the most ugly and scary places in Tamera for me. It was really scary. Because it had this cliffs, you see now only one cliff. So it had like two, three smaller cliffs like this and then a hole underground. A total hole. (...) I used to [walk] around it and it was so scary, I really hated it. And suddenly, I went to Palestine for a few months, and I came back and it was full with water...What a lovely place!" (Interview TAM3).

"Through this [changing water landscape] a whole new picture popped up, could become visible also for other community members who were not working in the ecology, of the potential of that land. That this land does not need to be a desert. Before that this was not obvious at all. There was a situation in spring 2007 still, where we were thinking about: is it possible to live sustainably and autonomous on this place, with a community of 300 people on 150 hectare? And we didn't have an answer at that time. And now I think for everybody in the community it is obvious that this land has more than the potential to feed 300 people. And this led us in that time to much more intensive contact with the neighbourhood, also the global neighbourhood. So international cooperation partners react a lot on that model of the water retention landscape we show here. So we got really intensive contacts through this." (Interview TAM10)

Moreover, the focus on inner work and social relations, as the source of social change, also has an inherent empowering element to it, in the sense that it makes social change something that can be worked on at the lowest possible scale (i.e. in one's relation or even at home, alone). Overcoming a negative emotion (e.g. jealousy) is not only a personal victory and provider of a pleasant feeling, it also seems to functions as a confirmation of one's activist work in and around Tamera (which is focused on 'liberating' people). The concept of 'liberation' and 'freedom' recurs as a theme that people feel empowered by.

"I see that I can move beyond jealousy. I did it again and again. It is possible, and it is amazing". Q: What does it feel like? A: "Ah, it is more than nice... it is a liberation! The emotion of fear goes away, and then you feel like you expand. And you can see that this is love, before it was not love. You feel much more free in your body and in your thoughts". (Interview TAM5)

[Uses metaphor of water to answer question on how people are empowered in Tamera]: "You can move water in different ways. In our common hydraulic systems, water is moved in a way that you put it into a closed vessel and push from the back, give pressure on it to make it move to get out of the tap at the other end. This is one way of moving water. If you know water more intimately, as a living being, if you would know water by itself, it wouldn't move like that. If you see water moving as a vortex, I don't know if you have ever seen that, if you create artificially a vortex in a transparent vessel, you see there is a moment before the vortex is created where a fine thin line becomes visible and around or along this line the vortex will create. This is what is called the 'line of tension' that gives the direction to the vortex. And so water would need a line of tension and then would follow this line of tension. And this is the same for me with the vision. People having a vision would follow that vision. It's another, different principle of moving. Not because there is pressure from behind that wants you to move somewhere else. But there is a vision that sucks you in and you would just follow it." (Interview TAM10).

"Follow what you love, follow what you long for. Take a stand for it, do it. This is an information that I got from Tamera very very strongly. More than I could have gotten it from somewhere else I think, because Tamera is an experimental community, you could say. Privately I encountered Tamera as very very open. Wherever my energy goes, when it is in communication with the community, when it's not a total ego trip, wherever my energy goes, I found an open door. And as a young man, I mean, this is beautiful. 'Ok do it, if you want to do it, do it and then we see'. And some things I did were failures and some things were just beautiful. And by this I was seen in the community and acknowledged. So this point of 'just follow what you love, follow what you long for'. This is a strong information that many people receive here. And this is

true for the question of profession, but it is also true for the question of your Eros, for your erotic attractions. And this is definitely an empowerment." (Interview TAM6).

Disempowerment and Power Struggles

"When you create community, then you are always confronted with the dark side of every human being involved, including yourself. Our founder once said, if you build a community with 20 people you have the whole world present. With its beauty and its struggle and with its dark side. And in a way it is like this." (Interview TAM9).

While the focus on inner work and social relations is often considered empowering, it also seems to be one of the main sources of challenges and power struggles. It was quite striking to notice that in Tamera, when I asked explicitly about main power struggles or issues of disempowerment, the thing that was mentioned first and foremost concerned 'inner power struggles'. There is a clear link to the psycho-therapeutic background of Tamera and one of its founders Dieter Duhm (as described in section 5.1.1.).

"The strongest power struggle is within me, that's very clear. My inner decision to really know that I'm not a victim of the past but I can create something new. And the outer struggles, they happen if you have a big vision, like I have in the area of ecology, I want to bring that into realization. And in this, in the frame of this society, I cannot move" (Interview TAM10).

"Many people come to Tamera and first it's this positive awakening and afterwards they feel this dark side coming up. And this is exactly what I spoke about before, with this split personality that, when you awaken a big longing, or, also if you open sexually, then you also touch points that you pushed away by closing off from life, from sexuality. So this is also an attempt of life in a way, that through the opening to also transform the darkness. I see it like this. And this is exactly our work, to make these processes visible, to make them conscious and thereby enter into a process of transforming them. (…) Of course these are the dark sides and in every community you have these kind of areas also where, it's not just in communities, it's whenever human beings live together that you have it., we call it 'psychological mine fields'. You just have areas where you cannot speak about it anymore because they are attached to certain issues that you cannot deal with, like mostly issues of fear, of competition, of anger in the underground. So these are things also that of course accumulate. And we work with these areas through having special forums and sometimes we even work with trances, like just the profound psychoanalysis, or like profound work to actually get to the point (…).This is in the centre of the social work: to make the human matter visible, which is not individual, but every more profound human issue is a global one, so we have to make this 'matter'. It is always stuck or always pulling us down, to make it visible in a way that we are the one, we are the ones to master these developments and not having them master us." (Interview TAM8).

It was often emphasised that working on social relations and overcoming issues of jealousy can be extremely confronting and difficult and that this can be disheartening. At the same time, it was also mentioned that at such disheartened moments, the support of the community really helped (see also previous section). Especially the Forum as a facilitated group process was mentioned as a method to deal with processes of disempowerment and power struggles.

"It needs a lot of power to go through the inner struggle. When I say be the change that you want to see in the world, it requires a lot of inner decisions. Every human being has moments or has areas in his or her life where major decisions need to be made in order to be really there, no? Very often these are decisions in love or in community or in trust. Around such issues, and when you again and again and again come to the same border, and again and again and again. It needs a high belief and power to say: 'I go through these struggles for more than myself'. It is hard work, and one can feel disempowered sometimes. Therefore you need to be in a community so people can tell you 'yes go for it, maybe you feel weak now, and nevertheless I see you already came a long way'. Things that we sometimes don't see from inside, when we are in the struggle". (Interview TAM9).

"Free love is free of fear and full of trust. And we are on the path, we are on the way. I'm not free of fear in my life, also not in Tamera. But it's a daily training on this. And one of the very important trainings we have is this Forum, I think you heard about it. We have nearly daily Forum in the different groups and twice a week in the whole community" (Interview TAM4).

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"To go this path of community building, transparency, demands a lot of readiness for self-change, so also self-reflection. And I have encountered points of pain within myself, or of disappointment, where for a long long time I thought (…) 'they did it'… you blame the outer. And this can be really painful. But also I have experienced, for some questions it took me a year. (…). This moment of when you are not yet ready to reflect on yourself and you sit in the pain, this can be really disempowering. And what takes you out of it is the readiness to stay with it, to just still stay in community, still trust your friends, still speak time and again. And this takes you out of it because you gain distance from where you've been at. (…) In general, this path of digging deeper and trying to understand 'what is really your question?' This for sure is something that we do a lot. And the community is very trained in this". (Interview TAM6).

"Sometimes I run to the danger [of thinking that] I'm manipulated in the community and [that] I'm not free. (…) Sometimes I feel they are too conservative, or to this or that. But I know my individual picture, or self, is growing in community. Without a community I wouldn't be this individual that I am. I was, also when I was a political activist, but I didn't have the mirrors of my friends. And here, sometimes, it's hard to receive the mirrors. To know 'Aha, that's you. Aha'. That's not easy, to be yourself. But then you feel, yes, I come out of this depression very fast, because I feel I can be in opposite of the community and still I'm loved. This is very important that I never forget it. Sometimes it's difficult to have another opinion in front of 120 people. And then, sometimes I have this opinion. And it's really difficult to make it public. 'I feel this is not, for example, honest, or we have to change this'… to say this in public". (Interview TAM4)

As indicated previously, Tamera tends to explain all social behaviour in terms of inner processes, intimate social relations and desires. As such it is not surprising that in Tamera, power struggles are also related to underlying inner struggles and intimate issues. This can be as simplistic as two men who are arguing at work about a professional issue, discovering that what they are actually frustrated about is that one did get the attention of a particular woman while the other did not.

"There are power struggles, no doubt, and I can say something about this later. But a lot of power struggles, a lot of competition between men, a lot of fights between women, a lot of power struggles, they turn out to be something so completely different, once they are put in a space of transparency, I mean once they are looked at in a space of transparency. And this is the work of the Forum, leading the human being back to the level of truth. Because in the end it might be a totally different story than the power struggle about a subject on a professional level. But maybe it is, sometimes maybe it is the attraction that two men shared for one woman and he spend the night with her while he actually wanted to do it and the next day they clash on a professional level, while it is somewhere totally else." (Interview TAM6).

When asked to specify more concrete power struggles and challenges at Tamera, the three main things that were mentioned included: (1) power of Tamera's founders and current leaders, (2) power relations between the generations, and (3) the power relations/tensions between Tamera and the regional/local context.

- **Power of Tamera's founders and current leaders.** Even though Tamera prides itself for having 'handed over power' from the founders to the new generations, the power of the founders to influence the community is still exceptionally strong. Also, the new 'young' leaders seem to have quite some power in terms of governance (see more in section 4.3.1.2.).
- **Power relations between the generations.** Some claim that 'too much' responsibilities was given to the younger generations, and that these young leaders are too little receptive to learn from the experience of the older generations.
- **Power relations between Tamera and the societal/institutional context.** The relation between Tamera and its regional/local institutional context will be elaborated in section 5.3.1.2. on external governance.

"The outer struggles, they happen if you have a big vision, like I have in the area of ecology, I want to bring that into realization. And in this, in the frame of this society, I cannot move. As a free person with a vision I cannot move in that society. There is a framework of legislation which doesn't allow me to breathe and to move. To accept that and to look and find the right, most effective way to change that is a huge challenge. So all these struggles with policy makers and so on (sighs)". (Interview TAM10).

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Moreover, a more general 'dark side' of Tamera that is mentioned especially by outsiders and visitors, but also by some insiders, concerns the tendency/risk of people from Tamera to gain a sense of superiority.

> *"I think, because I was a political activist for many years, the dark sides of GEN or Tamera is the ignorance, is part of an ignorance, to honour that a political movement in Germany or here or there has value also. For example there is a big big peace movement all over the world. And I think, I feel, that Tamera and also GEN, they have the feeling that they [those other movements] are not complete. That what they are doing is very nice, but that it's not deep enough. That we have the better recipes. (…). [This is] an ignorance and it's "eitel" (uses German word in search for English, I propose vanity) yes, it is vanity. (…) I think in GEN and also in Tamera, we have to be careful not to be in a vanity feeling of 'we are the better ones'. For example the Occupy movement, for me it was great. But then we, communities think, no that's not effective, or things like this". (Interview TAM4).*

> *"The power struggles of Tamera trying to claim knowledge to itself, like 'we know more about it than you and we have the theory and the answer for the change'. And basically 'you could adapt that and then follow us', that would be great, or not even great, but fitting. Often I think organizations or people from the outside don't really go into, mostly the language of the project not so much the ideas. Also it's a bit far out for them, to be like 'what are you doing and why? Water retention landscapes is great but what's that with the sex?' So it's really not so great. But now the power dynamics is tricky because Tamera says 'we know the answer and we don't have any money so please give us money for it' and the outer world has the power to say 'no we're not giving you money, we want you to do this to get money' and then we say 'no we don't want to do this to get money'" (Interview TAM7).*

5.3.1 Governance

5.3.1.1 Internal governance

Regarding the formal internal governance, the following topics will be discussed: (1) the Tamera "Government" (2) the working group and project structures, (3) decision-making structures and conflict resolution platforms like "The Plenary" and "The Forum", (4) membership structures, and (5) the management of visitors and volunteers.

Besides the formal governance, there are obviously also many informal rules and norms, which relate to the predominant German cultural background, and the ideas of free love. On the brochure that one receives when arriving at Tamera, visitors are kindly requested to "be on time", and not to swim naked in the lakes to "respect the different cultures of our guests and neighbours" (Tamera, Guidelines & Basic Information for Guests). One visitor told me that when he had visited Tamera in 2006, it had been 'forbidden' for couples to hold hands, as this was seen as a 'possessive' gesture. People from Tamera indicate that this was never forbidden, "but that it was mainly through receiving guests from the Middle East that we encouraged ourselves to be more modest" (interviewee 1). During my participant observation, I have seen several people holding hands in Tamera. Interestingly, however, I hardly saw any kissing or other forms of explicit sensual contact in any of the public areas of Tamera, not even in the café in the evening or during a witnessed dance party. I was told that such display of erotic contact was avoided in public spaces for the sake of children (more about this in section 5.4.1. on controversies).

Regarding the more formal governance structures, Tamera has its own "Government", which consists of three members who are responsible for taking final decisions.

> *"We have a government of three people who have to manage certain things. They have to invite experts from the community on the topics and decisions: they prepare a decision. The plenary approves or disapproves on the topic. It would be too much for the government to decide on all things because we are a big community, it is too complex. We have different bodies and working groups, and groups like the woman council. (…) We developed our system ourselves. Nothing is fixed, we change it, if it is not working". (Interview TAM1).*

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Interestingly, one of these three members of the 'Government' is the daughter of Dieter Duhm, and another is her partner (and father of her child). Even though monogamy had never been formally 'forbidden', several voices indicate that it used to be frowned upon, until Dieter Duhm around 2010 publicly stated that monogamy can also function well. Apparently he argued that his daughter and her partner (who are now part of the "government") had been having a monogamous relation for a while, and that they were very happy. Although these kind of 'norms' do not seem to be formalised in any way, the leaders of Tamera – both the founders as well as the current government members and core group members – do seem to have a significant influence on the community with such statements and 'exemplary' behaviour. Obviously, such a situation raises questions about leadership and the power of 'charismatic gurus', a recurring topic in ecovillages and other intentional communities. One of the community members indicated that before moving to Tamera, s/he 'researched' this leadership issue by joining the leaders of Tamera on one of their pilgrimages:

> *"I wanted to prove, how is Tamera, how is the leadership in Tamera and how is the social behaviour. And in this pilgrimage I realized, ok I can trust, I can trust the leadership, which is an authority but not autoritär [authoritarian]". (Interview TAM4).*

It is obviously rather difficult to 'verify' to what extent Tamera's leaders are authoritarian or not. What I can say, is that when hearing the co-founders or the three members of government speak (during participant observation and/or online), one of the things they seem to have in common is a particular way of speaking that is on the one hand full of conviction, and at the same time, quite humble and gentle. Besides that, their level of charisma and speaking talents seem to differ widely.

Besides 'The Government' there is also an extensive 'core-group' (of which the 'Government' is part), consisting of 10+ leading positions in some of the many project organisations. As introduced in section 5.1., Tamera has numerous projects and organisations (see section 5.1.3.), which are all led and coordinated by different people. The website mentions some members of the core group, including many coordinators of the numerous organisations, projects and programmes described in section 5.1.3. (e.g. Global Campus, Love School, Political Ashram, Terra Nova School, Institute for Global Ecology, Grace Foundation, etc.), as well as a more technological or ecological experts.

Interestingly, after the first draft of this report had been written, one of my respondents indicated that "the whole system has changed during last winter" and that "the government was one attempt, but from this winter we are having again a council "carrier circle" of about 15 members" (interview TAM1). As such it seems that the governance structure in Tamera are quite fluid and under constant scrutiny and development.

> *"So in 2010 when I came the whole social structure was completely different. [We used to have] pillars where you had one for the solar village, one for the campus, for the grace village, for the place of the children, so it was four or five pillars which were social groups in Tamera that met every day, I think, for two hours: one for a speech and one for the 1-hour forum. Within their groups, every day, except for the weekend. And then Saturday sometimes you had events for the Love School or even most of the Saturdays and then on Sunday the matinee, that was clear. And then there was a structure that is now called the government. It was the carrier circle, which were like the leaders of the different projects to discuss the different issue, which were like 15-20 people or a bit less. And so actually it was a difficult time to come [in 2010] because it was the end of this structure, it somehow broke apart and there wasn't anything else to take its place, so for a year or one and a half years, there were hardly any forums or social structures within the community, also because they realized that they reached a dead end with the forum where you don't come into the depth anymore, but there is more like sharing of what did they do today or 'I felt bad about this or about that', so it wasn't really going into the depth that is necessary somehow for it to be interesting and healthy. (…) And then it changed that you realized you need some sort of government, like a decision structure to move things further, and you need social structures, otherwise the people get nuts, start fighting with each other or leaving or whatever". (Interview TAM7).*

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I asked one of the young people with a coordinating role in one of the programmes to comment on the hierarchies and subsequent power struggles. It is interesting to note that s/he explicitly referred to the need of letting go of one's ego, and learning to thinking in terms of 'serving' Tamera or 'life' more generally, a topic that recurred in several interviews. It was also emphasise that Tamera has a quite informal way of working and is strongly vision-oriented.

> *"It is an art to work in Tamera. Because it's usually not so clear that 'this is the manager, this the consultant, assistant'. More or less you know the rules and where you are. There is no clear definition who's a boss or so. {Name of older person leading programme} for example would be my boss at the moment. But it's not like she tells me what to do, but it's more like I tell her what I do and she says 'ah ok, good, or you should do this, or have a look at that' or something like that. So it's more, I would say power struggle is more internally: how do I position myself and how do I think is my opinion valued. You have to know, if you have an idea, how to bring it to the people so that it's heard. Because I can't just go up in a plenary and say this my idea and I want to do it. I mean you could but you don't have any support then. So I would first go to her and say 'this is my idea', and the she says 'ah ok, you have to look at this and this' and then I have to do that and talk to her and somebody else. And then they form it and it's like a forming thing until it's then there. So you always somehow have to involve the authorities and not just say 'this is my thing and I'm going to do it now by myself'. Otherwise you won't come through somehow. Also sometimes for me it's a bit funny, sometimes I propose an idea in an informal way and then it's taken on from one of the figures and in the next meeting I hear 'we had the idea that'. And then my idea comes up and I'm like 'oh great but it's not my idea anymore, it's just a communitarian thing'. So it's kind of to become a bit humble in that." (Interview TAM7).*

> *"Tamera is in it's core very very informal. There is the question of the human being, of creating trust, of what do you love. All these questions are much more in the centre than anything else. If you have conflicts on a professional level it will always be taken back to this point. So this is something that is very unusual in the conventional world. If you have a professional problem and then your boss would ask you 'how is your love relationship' or something, this is not how it is. (…) So a lot of the apparent conflicts in topics that we work on, very often you can take them back to really intimate question of the people involved. This is not always true, but it is for sure often true. So I can say Tamera is very informal. What I saw in [other community] Findhorn is, I tried to track this core of the community, I tried to see who holds this inner spark, who holds the vision? And I ask ten different people and I get ten different answers. And on the one hand this is variety, but on the other hand I also lack something that is in the core, I lack a vision that is alive. So Tamera is very very strongly vision-based." (Interview TAM6).*

There are also several 'elders' in Tamera, people above 50/60, who have been involved from the beginning, and who continue to be involved in several projects and organisations. This, in combination with the explicit 'hand-over' of power and responsibilities to the younger generations, illustrates Tamera's conscious attempt to find a balance in leadership. The handover of power to younger generations – as also described in section 5.1.4. – is also seen as a conscious attempt to reduce or at least 'balance out' the hierarchy:

> *"The reduction of the hierarchy, that is very welcomed. The founders are getting old, they are becoming more like advisors. The younger generations are really getting into training and opening themselves to serve as leaders of the project. There is a bunch of 30 people really taking it up. It really is a transition, not a sudden shift. It is not easy for all sorts of authority reasons, but it is happening". (Interview TAM5).*

Important elements of decision-making, conflict resolution and community-building, are "the Forum" (see section 5.2.1.) and "The Plenary". The Plenary has been described by some people as "a Forum for larger groups", but others argue that it is not a Forum, but rather an "informational meeting with announcements and, sometimes, decision-making" (interview TAM1). A Plenary is organised once a week for all community members (100-120 people), and on top of that, there are several smaller Forums throughout the week (every day except for Saturday and Sunday) for different working groups and organisations (around 30 people). The topics of the forum and the plenary differ, and are decided based on community needs:

> *"For example at the moment, the topic of the pregnant women: what do they need, what kind of fears do they have, how welcome are the babies, how is the connection to the father, the biological father, or to*

another father, and all this. So to say welcome to a new baby means the whole community feels responsible for this, for the wellbeing, to say welcome to the babies". (Interview TAM4).

"We say we don't have tools. I can say what I discovered in my four years in Tamera is trust as the deepest quality that brings together a community. And then there are several pathways you can take to create trust. Or in the end it is always about this question 'how do you create trust?' And in Tamera for sure the Forum work is a strong work that leads to this point of trust, but Forum in itself is also not really a tool. In order to do Forum work on a continuous work, you really need to be ready to let yourself be seen, to show your questions, your fears, your love, your passion, whatever, really to other people. And this is an inner point. So if one says, the Forum is a tool, it might work but it might also not work, because it's the inner state of the people: do you want transparency or not? (Flor: so it's an attitude?) It's an attitude, yes. And then I can say, like I experience trust or an intimate community feeling also in very different spaces. For example the Christmas times in Tamera, they are something very special for me because the whole community is together in a... I don't know, in a way where something (emphasis) sacred is present. I don't put it now in the Christian context. But yes, the children are together, the elders are there and you are in a special flair (…). And this also is something that leads to this inner frequency of trust. So I think on the one hand it is really working on transparency and revealing the dark spots and the stuff that is within you and on the other hand it is also just a vital form of live, that also creates an inner bond between people." (Interview TAM6).

Memberships of Tamera has several stages. Full members are called "co-workers". They receive their daily sustenance from Tamera and some pocket money, and they are co-responsible for earning money for Tamera (working at Tamera or outside of it). Before one can become a co-workers, there are 3-4 stages. First, one starts by being a guest/volunteer at Tamera for at least one month. If after that experience, one wants to join Tamera, one first becomes a "student", and after that – when both parties agree that there is a fit – one becomes a "joiner" ("Einsteiger" in German). After that, one becomes a "co-worker in training", before becoming a full "co-worker". There is also a separate status of "specialists", some of which are hired to advise Tamera on specific topics, and unlike all other functions in Tamera, receive salary. "Einsteigers" and "co-workers in training" participate in the "Plenary" meeting and sometimes some students, when they request it. Guests/ volunteers and most students do not participate (interview TAM1, TAM5). Although the different stages of membership are often referred to, they are not very clear cut and also not very formally enforced, it is partly also an informal process of seeing whether there is a good match.

Governance of the Guest Area

A substantive part of Tamera's organisation revolves around the management of visitors, guests and volunteers. Every Sunday, Tamera has a tour of 2 hours where people can visit. Recently, an option has been made to come for a short-term visit over the weekend (which I made use of in May 2014). For longer and more substantial visits, the most visible and accessible option is the programme *'A Votre Service'* (French for 'At your Service'), which consists of visiting Tamera for 1 month as a guest and volunteer. Furthermore, one can visit Tamera for one of the many seminars and other events (see section 5.1.3). Every year, more than 1.000 of people visit Tamera, of which hundreds participate in this *A Votre Service* programme.

I was not part of this programme as I was only there for one week, and spent most of my time interviewing people. Nevertheless, I did sleep and eat in the *Global Campus* guest area, and as such had most of my informal encounters with guests and visitors, many of which were participating the *A Votre Service* programme. This programme consists of volunteer work in either the gardens or the communal kitchen, some seminars/ lectures, Forum meetings with other guests, and some free time. In many of the conversations I had with *A Votre Service* guests, most of them expressed enthusiasm about Tamera concept and seemed to have an overall positive and interesting experience. At the same time, several guests that I spoke to also expressed complaints and disappointment. The main complaint revolved around the hours of 'mandatory' volunteer work, while still having to pay for

accommodation and food, which differs from some other communities and the WWOOF network (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms) where visitors receive free accommodation and food in return for volunteer work. Some of the guests even felt that they were 'exploited'. Another complaint concerned the relative distance between the guests and the 'real' Tamera community. Several guests seemed disappointed not to have more contact with people living and working in Tamera. When discussed these complaints and sentiments with people from Tamera, in interviews and/or informal conversation, various nuances were raised. First, it is argued that the volunteer work in the kitchen and the gardens is oriented towards sustaining the guests themselves, not the people living and working in Tamera. Second, the conditions of the *A Votre Service* programme are clearly and explicitly communicated before and, so people (should) know what they sign up for. Third, it is argued that many people come to Tamera with a longing for contact and community, but that it is obviously impossible to build a community if anybody can just come and go in, so there needs to be some self-protection. Fourth, it is argued that guests are also not aware of the efforts, time and energy that people from Tamera do invest in the guest community. See the quotes below for a fuller story.

> *"It's an issue all the time, that people want to be closer to the community and so on. (...) People that come here have this need for contact and for deep communication and community and wanting to be with people finally. And the people who live here they are in contact with people all the time. So you're a bit fed up also. (...) There's a certain time you have to invest to come to the interesting part, break through the resistances of the people and the questions that come all the time, until you come to a point where you say 'oh this is an interesting contact now'. But you have to invest quite a bit of time. (...). They come to a place where there is somehow the promise in the air of a fulfilment, so they for sure want a piece of that. (...) In our Votre Service (...) the ones that work in the kitchen they work for the people that are at the guest centre, so it's like a self-organising thing. Also, it was a chance for people that say we don't want to have a course, we don't want to have talks every day and speaking so much. Because that has been another point, that people say 'oh you're speaking so much every time, like sitting circles and don't do enough'. So that was like 'ok, if you want to come here and experience also what life is like here more, you can come for a month and work here'. And yes, it might not be satisfying for all but it shows a bit how it works. Then, they have 2-3 meetings every week where there are speeches and forum and so on, so this is also the offer from us to have this every week. And sometimes I think people also don't really recognize the work that we do for them, which is like the human work. In the kitchen for example, the kitchen chief says it's like you have a box of cats and you have to try and keep them together and tell them, ok, let one person speak first and then the other. Really simple human education we would say. That's what we say all the time with a guest, what you have to do is to educate them to have a talking culture where one speaks first and lets the other speak also. And you do that all the time but people don't really reckon it as contact or help. (...) And then it's also that one kind of tries to find out over the time [whether] they are really interested in the project or they just want to have their needs fulfilled. And if you see 'ah this is an interesting person who's enthusiastic who really wants to learn something, wants to be engaged for a peace project', then it's also getting closer. I mean, he would go to a different working place than the kitchen probably, and get in contact more with the people (...). [When] it's not just [that they think] 'I want something from the community, that's why they should come here and have contact with me', but more like 'I want to be part of the project and what does it need'." (Interview TAM7).*

5.3.1.2   External governance

Already in Tamera's background history, there had been quite some conflicts with governments (section 5.4.1). It seems that there was an expectation that Portugal would have less rules/ less bureaucracy than Germany. One critical outsider argued that people from Tamera 'came here thinking there were no rules' but that 'we all have to follow government rules'. Unsurprisingly, most people from Tamera do not seem to have a very positive impression of government.

> *"The system that I'm envisioning (...) is a decentralized, local, regional decentralized regenerative system where living beings would have free access to water, food and energy all over the world. And [we] face a reality where I see this is not yet politically wished. The political mainstream wants still to create the dependency. The whole installation of globalized centralized structures is a manipulative structure for to keep the government, governments. I like to say, these people who live, imagine once, if you close your*

> *eyes and look into that picture, imagine you would live in a decentralized autonomous system with free access to all basic needs, you are a free living being. As a free living being you are not governable. And this in political mainstream is a problem. And this for me is a really big conflict. Knowing that the vision I have, if I bring that into a policy, I tell the people 'this is the destruction of your system. If you would accept that you have to retreat your whole system. I think this is the level where the highest challenge is. (Interview TAM10).*

At a more concrete and local level, there are two main issues regarding the relation with local government. One of the main issues concerns the issue of not being allowed to build anymore and the spatial planning regulations. There are quite particular regulations in Portugal's rural areas regarding building, which prescribes that one can only build to a certain extent, and most of it has to be a form of restoring old farms. Tamera has used up all its restoration options and reached its construction limit, so currently there is no construction possible. This is why many people live in trailers or other temporary living arrangements such as yurts. Tamera is currently working with the Municipality of Odemira and has applied for for an official altering of the land use classifications, through a so-called PIER process (Portugues abbreviation for "Plano de Intervenção em Espaço Rural", i.e. Intervention Plan in Rural Areas).

Then there is the issue of the parents being obliged to send their children to the regional school, while Tamera has created its own certified school (combining elements from Montessori and Waldorf). The story told in Tamera is that a few years ago, the local government came and said that Tamera had to send their children to the local school. Tamera did send their kids to local school for two years, meanwhile working on their own school system and getting it certified. Supposedly, in 2014 the school was ready and certified, but the local government would still not allow it, and still 'forced' Tamera to send their children to school. As such, in the summer/fall of 2014, Tamera decided to just take their children from school for the new school year, providing them with home-schooling supported by annual tests at the local school. When I visited Tamera in September, this was on-going, and on one of the days, Tamera was visited by the Portuguese policy and child protection institutes, to see what the conditions are and also to see whether the children were not being neglected, and so. From several sources in Tamera, I was told that the inspection went quite well, that they (policy + child benefit workers) had listened, said they understood what Tamera was trying to do, but they also had the official rules, so that they were 'in between'. They had taken pictures of the school and were clearly impressed, even saying that 'it was better than their own schools and better than their own office'. One of the people I interviewed called the whole inspection a "beautiful encounter" and that s/he even asked to have a picture taken with the policy. When the policy had been surprised about this, s/he had explained that 'it was good for her/him', coming from a situation in Israel where s/he had had very violent experiences with police, it was 'good for her/his system to have this positive experience with the police' (interview TAM4).

5.3.2   Social learning

Social learning is one of the main aims and methods that Tamera focuses on. This includes the classical demonstration role of Tamera: *"Our solar village shows people that it is possible. For schools and research centres, we function as an example"* (Interview TAM2), but it goes beyond that. On the website, it states that "Tamera is a School and Research Station for Realistic Utopia"[32]. The learning discourse is omnipresent, as the programmes at Tamera (see section 5.1.4) are filled with "schools" and "campuses" of all sorts.

> *"I think Tamera creates an image that can arise within the human being of 'oh wow, this is possible, this is a different cultural model'. This is also why Tamera focuses so much on studying. It is on the one hand*

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for sure about building the things concretely. But when I say it is about changing the parameters, or the basic conditioning of our society, we need to understand what we are in and we need to understand where we go. And then the question of cooperation with nature, for example, becomes a study topic: how do we do this? How do we build our supply systems based on this assumption? Assumption is a bad word but you know what I mean (Flor: premise?) Premise, yea. And now I say nature, I mean the same thing is true for the human being: how do men and women understand each other again in a way that we end the misunderstandings, that we end the hidden war between the genders, that we end the suffering that is created in this area of life". (Interview TAM6).

"It has been and still is a very strong path of personal transformation and also of learning, in a way also maturing and growing up. For sure it's clear that when you enter such a community with 16, that it's anyways an age where your personality is really forming. So this has been of course a very powerful time to do that. And in Tamera, to step into a community, because this is really the biggest shift, coming into Tamera, it's this shift where you come out of a private mode of life and you step into a communitarian one. And I think this has been a very strong learning process, and I'm still learning. It has been a major shift, where usually you always live in a system where you disguise yourself and you have to keep up a certain role and mask, even as a young person. And then to recognize that you live in a community where people support you and where you can fully reveal what moves you and what you want. These very basic human things actually. And thereby experience a kind of acceptance from outside." (Interview TAM8).

"It is a future laboratory you could say. It serves as a living environment for developing, for making visible how a new form of human life can look like, that is both based on a new relation to nature, on an inter-personal, on a social level and also to the human being himself. Where the human being reconciles with the own inner energies and powers. Of course we will have a completely different image of what a human being actually is. (…) when you step out of this fear cage you are just a different person. (…) it's a place to show the possibility, it's a place to research it and it's also a place where people can come to learn: it's also an education place. And it's a place where also literature goes out, or information, so through this we also want to contribute to even a new theory building." (Interview TAM8).

The Forum and the Plenary meetings are considered events where everyone learns much, about themselves, about others, and about facilitation. There also seems to be a culture of apprenticeships, where people are stimulated to do new things and take on new responsibilities, with the help of more experienced tutors. *"In all areas, kitchen, technical workshops we have apprentices. They get responsibilities and they are monitored and coached"* (interview TAM1).

This resonates with the recurring idea of "handing over responsibilities to the younger generations". Such education of younger generations seems to be not only a means to sustain Tamera, but also an end that Tamera aims: to educate younger generations to go in to the world and do meaningful work.

"To become and learn as a human being: How do I become a peace worker? How do I become aware of the structures we carry inside ourselves, that we contribute to (…) and where we subconsciously contribute to a system of violence and to structures of competition? These kind of things, and to thereby be able to transform it. I think this is also a big empowerment, to be able to work for peace, if you can grow a peace power in yourself. (…) And, very concretely, to see also from this empowering knowledge, I think this is a big part we still have to develop in terms of coordination, to really develop a system where people, especially young people, where it no longer that peace work or working on sustainability is like a dream and then I have to get into real professions. To develop a system where young people who want to go into this kind of education know that they have a place, a professional place in creating a new kind of society. (…) There are things coming up, but to make it much more strong, to really be able to make a good offer" (Interview TAM8).

5.3.3   Resources

The main revenues of income for Tamera comprise (1) accommodation/ sustenance contributions by all who are not full o-workers (see section 5.3.1.1), (2) books and other products from Tamera (e.g. herbs, jewellery or other crafts), (3) events, trainings, seminars etc., (4) donations and fundraising, and (5) co-workers going abroad to earn money for a while with their profession (e.g. energy advice or writing). Full co-workers earn money for Tamera by their work at Tamera or

outside of it, and receive daily sustenance and pocket money. All others pay for their presence in Tamera. For guests, the daily rate for room and board is 20€, based on accommodation in the dormitory or one's own tent. Seminar participants pay an additional seminar fee (different for each event). People from ages 6 – 16 pay half the daily rate, youth from ages 17 to 21, as well as people from Portugal, are charged a reduced fee of 15€. One pays and additional fee of 5€ / night to stay in a visitor's hut. To stay in the Guest House, one pays 28 € / night for a single room, and 45 € / night for a double room. In principle, nobody living in Tamera receives salary from Tamera, with the exception of a few specialist advisors (e.g. Portuguese advisor).

For each infrastructure or other project in Tamera, 30% goes to the basis household of Tamera: "If you want to build for instance a new solar system, if it costs 7.000 €, we have to raise 10.000: 3.000 go to the basic household (30%). For this money people of Tamera will build it" (Interview TAM1). The land of Tamera as well as all the real estate on it, is owned by a Tamera foundations. If one builds a house in Tamera, when one leave, the house remains property of Tamera. One interviewee did indicate that there have been some conflicts regarding property (interview TAM1), but not in any detail. Interestingly, when I asked about financial and legal arrangements, and whether these raise conflict, I was often answered that different 'social relations' based on 'trust' also lead to different interactions about money. The "Gift Economy" was also often mentioned as a basis:

> Q: Is there a financial transparency amongst the members in Tamera? "Yes. In the Forum, we can ask each other. Recently we had a list going around of what we have. This transparency is liberating. There is no greed, no enemy... it is liberating. We do have individual property with personal money. We have kind of gift economy: I ask and get money from my friends sometimes and also give money to others. It needs some courage to ask for it, that is the basis of gift economy". (Interview TAM1).

> "Economy is always a reflection of our social behaviour. And so you need to look at this if you want to change the economy also. (...) I believe that Gift Economy is a transition vision, or maybe even a vision for the future of how economy looks like. Definitely, this for me is no question. Because to change the profit-driven mind-set that we have at the moment to something that is non-profit, that is not in this mind-set of growth. I think gifting, the process of gift, it is not only a good solution but it is actually a healing for our fucked up mind, if we always run after profit and if we come again to this inner state of 'I want to gift', it is healing something inside, because you learn to surrender again, and to trust, and to give. (...) Tamera in itself, Tamera in its core, is a Gift Economy. So we as the co-workers, we do not calculate the hours we work. If I do a fundraising for a student I want to fund in Tamera and somebody else is cooking in the kitchen, I do not compare, I do not say 'I worked more than you and so on'. But all the community members trust that everybody gives what he or she can and there is no calculation of hours. So in the core it is a Gift Economy and it is one of the reasons Tamera is working. Because once you start to go into 'I worked more than you', you're immediately in comparison. And with this, the whole chain comes of comparison, fear, and so on. (...) For me Gift Economy, the way how it is practiced at the moment [elsewhere], most of what I see is still a niche in the existing system. It is not something that challenges our economic system. As long as we deal with the currency we deal with we are still part of this system. And if we build a new currency, we need to anchor it in a new social system, in a new social behaviour of people, in order for it to work. Because if I don't trust people, also Gift Economy doesn't work at some point. [...] I have my doubts [about alternative economic systems] if they are not based in community work." (Interview TAM6).

5.3.4   Monitoring and evaluation

> "Monitoring? We don't really have a system for that. Sometimes we have researches like you. Most of the times we don't find them so helpful, because they have their questions. We should have some kind of monitoring because we understand ourselves as a research project. Also we want to give our results to the public. We see the community developing: we have a reflection time every week and winter reflection" (Interview TAM1).

The main method of evaluation and monitoring seems to be the Forum and the Plenary, which can be seen as a participatory group evaluation, in which community members continuously evaluate and monitor what they feel, what can be improved, etc.

Then there is the idea of "research", both formal and informal. There are official scientific research institutes researching (and thus evaluating) some of the ecological structures such as the impact of the man-made lakes. Then there is much informal research going on. There is also an explicit culture of 'doing research' and 'being a student'. When walking through Tamera, many people appear to be 'studying': reading, pondering and writing in diaries. One of the first things that I was told when I visited Tamera for the first time, was that me being a researcher, 'was the right attitude to come to Tamera with'. Moreover, the winter months (October – February) are described as "time for reflection and study". It appears that there are several study groups around the many themes that were discussed so far. This winter period is also reported to be an importan phase "for the planning of the next year, and restructuring all that needs to be changed, improved, created, and so on"(Interviewee TAM1).

5.4 Other issues about the local initiative

5.4.1 Research Questions from People in Tamera

In several interviews I asked: "Do you have any questions to us? Which research questions do you have? Which research questions do you hope that our project will answer?" Below I collect the answers to this question:

"Good question. I find it also good from your side to ask it. Because (…) sometimes [I think] that we waste each other's time by writing researches that nobody gives a shit in reading them. So sometimes I feel, from one side I want to speak and maybe who knows who will read it, and sometimes I there comes another researcher, journalist and then you speak and you open your heart and what does it land? Where? What? Who will pick up this information? (…) So my question to you would be: would you do efforts that what is spoken here, not only from my talk, but from other people's talk, would come to the right addresses? Would really mark the change that we are all looking for? Or, that we just don't waste anymore… this game of funds, a fund that has funded a research that has from the beginning an aim to get the same results, the main results that support the theory of the one who funded it? (…) So would you do an effort that this brings a change, the change that we are looking for?" (Interview TAM4).

"I would love that social change can be explained in words that people, that mister "tous le monde" can understand. That people can really see that real change is possible. That we can turn to institutions, bosses, parents… that we can really see amongst ourselves… "look: it is possible". So if you have something that comes out, that I can show to my mother to say look, it is possible." (Interview TAM5).

"Tamera is really good in social questions, internal work, internal empowerment. Specialist form outside are really good in making projects out but not the internal work… they don't seem to come together well. How to bring a solution to planet earth, with deep internal work, as well as fast movement, applying new methodologies?" (Interview TAM7).

"What does a regenerative human settlement look like? That was one of the main questions we were dealing with over the weekend {refers to "Blueprint" meeting}. With regenerative I mean that you build a life where you do not only cause less harm, but where you in every area produce better than you meet it. So for instance, very simple example: composting toilets – you produce earth out of something that normally goes with the water and pollutes water and so on. Or we had a man here who constructed something, he says "productive wetlands" – he takes toxic waters, and as he knows the plants that he has to plant in such a wetland, he can purify these waters and he produces with it bamboo for building, willow for basket things, and when the water is more purified then also fruits for eating and also habitat for birds. This is where you deliver more." Q: So what's your most burning question? A: "To find a taskforce that really goes to build such a model, to find the money to do it and to have a group who is really going to live in this model. And doing a sort of research that is coming out life and not about gathering data. [Something] that is really coming out of an own lived life." (Interview TAM9).

"My main research question before this system change would be in the direction: how does education look like to bring that through? Afterwards my research question would be a lot about water, intimate understanding of energy flows in water. In general, energy system on this planet. What energy systems are driving us? What do we create, what is creating us? What part does the earth play in the universe? To dare to look at a bigger vessel we are part of". (Interview TAM10).

5.4.2 Controversies around Free Sexuality

Besides the topic of free love being inherently controversial, one of the most negative controversies around Tamera and ZEGG have to do with the past linkages between founder Dieter Duhm and the controversial figure of Otto Muehl (died in 2013 at the age of 78). Otto Muehl was an Austrian artist who is known as a founder of the controversial Friedrichshof Commune/ Aktionsanalytische Organisation (AAO) and as a member of the 'Viennese Actionism', an action art movement from the 60s, a related to free love, pscyhotherapy and anarchy. One of the former members of the Friedrichshof Commune wrote a book entitled "Die Diktatur der freien Sexualität. Buch über Otto Muehl, seine Kommune und deren Ende" ("The Dictatorship of Free Sexuality. Book about Otto Muehl, his Commune and its End")[33]. Muehl was arrested in 1991 and imprisoned for six years, on charges of "sexual abuse of minors, rape and forced abortion"[34]. Although Muehl rejected the image of him as a child molestor ("the girls were all developed"[35]) he did issue a public apology in 2010 regarding the role he played in the commune: "The statement of young people in the courtroom at that time made me speechless. I wanted to free them, but instead, I overwhelmed and offended them with sexual transgression. It definitely was not my intention. I hope they forgive me."[36]

The connotation between Otto Muehl and Tamera is strongly refuted by people in Tamera. Already in 1997, Dieter Duhm wrote a statement to emphasise the separation between him and Otto Muehl, and to argue that free love is explicitly aimed to be the opposite of sexual abuse:

"The MEIGA and ZEGG projects are not successor projects of Otto Muehls earlier AAO project [Friedrichshof Commune/ Aktionsanalytische Organisation], but are developing the ideas of free sexuality and free love in a whole different direction. My attempt to collaborate with Otto Muehl failed definitively already 18 years ago (in 1979), because I could not tolerate the absolutistic structures and the ignorant way of dealing with religious issues which were prevalent there. This separation occurred 12 years before he was convicted. Already then - in spite of the witch hunt against the Muehl commune - I retained a differentiated opinion about him, because I respected his radical willingness to start something new and his courage, for I knew from experience how difficult it is to tackle the issues of sexuality and community in depth without making human and historic mistakes. (This of course does not justify child abuse. I do not know what truly happened in the Muehl case.)

(...) The meanest allegations that the press and other zealots have made against us [Tamera community] is that we have sex with children and that child abuse is endorsed. Of course the exact opposite is true. We have repeatedly explained why sex with children has nothing to do with sexual liberation. The sexual abuse of children is one of the worst symptoms of the illness of our times, and in no way do we come to the defense of the perpetrators. On the other hand, sometimes terrible methods are used when accusing people of abuse and when eliciting the corresponding "confessions" from children. Here, a chain reaction of suspicion and hatred has been set in motion, which can only be resolved through an inner healing of the deep wounds that we all at some point have received in the area of love and sexuality".[37]

The controversies around Tamera still live on today, both in Germany and in Portugal. This seems unavoidable, as the topic of sexuality and free love seems to come with inherent controversy. As a monogamous researcher visiting Tamera, I also had to make efforts to overcome my prejudices and

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[33] http://www.agpf.de/Schlothauer-AAO-Muehl.htm, accessed 08.01.2015

[34] http://www.theartnewspaper.com/articles/Otto-Muehl-dies-aged-/29804, accessed 08.01.2015

[35] (DIE ZEIT, 26 February 2004)

[36] http://diepresse.com/home/kultur/kunst/572628/Otto-Muehls-Brief-im-Wortlaut, accessed 08.01.2014

[37] "Information and correction regarding the projects meiga and zegg" by Dr. Dieter Duhm, July 1997
  http://www.tamera.org/fs/about-the-project/delon-statement-english/, accessed 08.01.2015

judgements. Before going to Tamera, after all the stories I had heard, I had some fears about being indecently 'approached' by men in Tamera or otherwise confronted with an overtly polygamous culture. All these fears turned out to be entirely unfounded. On the contrary, people in Tamera seem to be very conscious of not engaging in aggressive or invasive discourse on this issue, and indecent approaches or sexists comments did not occur once (while they actually do occur in bars, professional contexts or even on the street in any average European city).

On the brochure that one receives when entering Tamera, one is invited to take an attitude of open enquiry towards the issue:

> *"Love and Sexuality. A culture change is needed to make eternal love possible. We want to lead the dream of love and sensual-sexual longing which we all carry within ourselves into an area of possible fulfilment. For this we have to develop a way of life in which there is no more betrayal and where full truth, trust and deep solidarity between lovers and those who desire each other is possible.* **This makes love and sexuality research topics in Tamera! These are both topics of study and not of "achievement". In many areas the culture that is being developed here is already very different to the existing one. We ask you to perceive and study what is arising here. (Similarly to an ethnologist who visits a new tribe and first studies their customs thoroughly before judging them)**". *(Tamera, Guidelines & Basic Information for Guests, emphasis added).*

The more one knows about a place, the more one knows that one does not know it yet. I do not feel I have gathered enough evidence or insights of Tamera to make any final judgements. I do hope, however, that in this report, I have contributed to insights on Tamera and that I managed to honour this call for taking an enquiring attitude towards Tamera. I hope that readers will do the same.

6 Synthesis of the case study: Ecovillages

By Iris Kunze & Flor Avelino

In the following chapter we synthesize our empirical observations gained in the three case studies – the Global Ecovillage Network and the two local ecovillages of Schloss Tempelhof and Tamera – and compare them in view of the three cases' characteristics in terms of development, change, innovation and (dis)empowerment.

6.1 Condensed time-line

In this section, we summarize the chronological developments of our three cases. We observe similar phases the initiatives went through. Understandably, the challenges faced and the steps taken by local initiatives differ from those faced by GEN intending to set up a network. Still, there are some features that can be observed in all cases. In a nutshell, the seven phases can be called: (1) intention, (2) foundation, (3) growing, (4) networking, (5) dissemination, (6) formalization and (7) mainstreaming.

6.1.1 Seven phases of development

In the following section, these seven phases are explained in detail. For each phase the main characteristics are introduced, as well as specific observations in GEN and the two local ecovillages under study.

6.1.1.1 Intention: the initial foundation impulses

In order to understand the intentions at the basis of the two ecovillages and GEN, we have to refer to older communal movements, especially the intentional communities and the co-housing movement [38]. In combination with ecological movements, the first ecovillages were founded by people who were motivated to live more ecologically and more cooperatively. These pioneers further started experimenting not only with eco-technologies but also with new ways of living. Until today, the main intention of ecovillages is to create human-scale settlements which are rather independent from macro-systemic structures such as those on the level of the nation state and the global economy, which are perceived as intransparent. The ecovillagers want to control where their food is coming from and what their children learn at school. The aim is to build a resilient settlement (chap. 6.2).

__GEN__ was founded as a bottom-up network by members of established ecovillages with a desire to network amongst similar initiatives. A Danish-American couple interested in sustainable ways of community living functioned as the 'midwives' of GEN. They started a co-housing-project, and later financially supported national and international networking amongst ecovillages through their foundation. GEN conferences turned out to be extremely motivating events for ecovillage members, inspiring them in view of how to better deal with their daily life struggles and to reach their high ideals. GEN has been able to give a broader meaning and sense of a movement to these forms of ecovillage life and to support mutual learning and exchange between local ecovillages.

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[38] As an inclusive term, 'intentional community' was first coined in 1948 at a gathering of communities in Northern America. It covers many kinds of communities, from monasteries, kibbutzim and (rural) communes, to *ecovillages,* student cooperatives and cohousing groups. ("Fellowship intentional communities". http://wiki.ic.org/wiki/Intentional_Communities 15.01.15)

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Local ecovillages have been established by engaged private citizens long before the Global Ecovillage Network was founded in 1995. Every ecovillage started with particular intentions by like-minded people coming together for this purpose, intending to live more ecologically and more communally. Our two cases have different original intentions:

Schloss Tempelhof (TH) was started with a strong socio-economic focus, along with an emphasis on personal development and community building. The members had already been connected in Munich before, and had close contacts with networks like "Artabana" and "mehr Demokratie"[39], and to local credit unions aiming at building a resilient and intergenerational community.

Tamera (TAM) is a highly idealistic and philosophically motivated project with charismatic leaders. They strive for experimenting with intimate relationships and creating more honesty in relationships, as well as to contributing to peace-work across the world.

It is interesting to note that neither Tamera nor Schloss Tempelhof were founded as 'ecovillages'. They both started as intentional communities – Tamera focussing on love, relationship(s) and peace, Schloss Tempelhof on creative and socio-economic collaboration. They both became members of GEN after they had already become established communities.

6.1.1.2   Foundation: trust and community building, and setting up formal structures

The act of founding is obviously an important milestone for ecovillages, as it enables people to commit to a specific entity. One of the most important steps is giving it a name and visible identity. Formal structures often follow quite soon, for they help to obtain legal recognition. Setting up the legal form and internal governance structure is perceived as a sensitive process by the members because leadership and power structures become visible during this phase.

The **Global Ecovillage Network (GEN)** is a bottom-up network, founded as an association in 1995. GENs' infrastructure of office and event space is supported mainly by large and established ecovillages from around the world such as Findhorn (UK), 7Linden (Germany), Damanhur (Italy), EcoYoff (Senegal) and Wongsamit Ashram (Thailand). There is a great variety of more than 100 local ecovillages around the world who are members of GEN or loosely connected to it.

The community building process in **local ecovillages** often takes several years before the group feels ready to commit to purchasing a site together. Phases of social interaction and internal clarification alternate with actions around building houses, signing contracts, or adopting new members. Also regional collaboration becomes important for ordering - and later for offering - services.

Taking into account that more than 90% of the self-governed community experiments fail in the first 5 years (Christian 2005), **Schloss Tempelhof** had an extraordinarily fast and successful pioneering phase. Members interpret part of the great success by its constant work of community building and

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[39] Artabana is a self-organized network of communities organizing health care in solidarian ways, and functioning similar to health insurances. Hundereds of local communities are connected in a national network, contributing to a common solidarity fund www.artabana.de (Dec.15, 2014). "Mehr Demokratie is the biggest non-governmental organisation for direct democracy in the world, impartial, not-for-profit" – See at: http://www.mehr-demokratie.de/english-news-more-democracy.html#sthash.Nqk8TEnZ.dpuf

its smart governance structure of equal and collective ownership, and by the use of the foundation and the cooperative as legal forms.

Tamera started differently. The founders Dieter Duhm and Sabine Lichtenfels started in 1978 with a community experiment in Germany and later founded Tamera. One of the reasons why the group moved to Portugal was that they found that in Germany there was not enough space to experiment due to bureaucracy and "an immanent resistance against experiments" (interview TAM9). Another important reason to leave Germany was the political controversies that surrounded the community project, including press campaigns in which they were depicted as a "sex cult" (Lichtenfels 1995).

6.1.1.3   Growing

GEN primarily aims at enabling consistent networking between existing ecovillages, rather than growing in terms of increasing membership. The GEN conferences have become a highly frequented event for enthusiastic exchange.

Schloss Tempelhof is a case of extraordinarily fast growth in the first years. Starting on site with 20 members, they grew to 120 members in just 2 years. It required setting up more formal structures for internal governance, such as the village plenary, the so called coordination circle, working groups, and the need-based income for members working for the community.

In **Tamera** an important aspect of the growth and sustainability of Tamera was its 'opening up' to outsiders through explicit programmes, such as the annual Summer University and the Monte Cerro School where people from all over the world were invited to come to Tamera for 3 years, many of which stayed.

6.1.1.4   Networking and "Pollination" between ecovillages

GEN contributed substantially to broadening the approach of many ecovillages. The early communities and ecovillages often started off with just one or two intentions like eco-housing, ecological agriculture, relationships, gift economy, or spiritual intentions.

The "pollination" between **local ecovillages** works on multiple levels. First, individuals move to other projects or start a new one (two members of Schloss Tempelhof lived in the Tamera context before), carrying their previously gained experiences with them. Second, individual members have started partnerships between ecovillages to supervise and coach each other. Thirdly, GEN fosters exchange through its virtual forums, regular conferences and workshops.

Schloss Tempelhof as a very young community and GEN member is an interesting case in this respect. As a new and extraordinarily fast developing ecovillage, it could actively make use of the experiences of others. The founders traveled to five big ecovillages in Europe, including Tamera, to find best practice methods for ecovillages. Lessons that they took home included, for instance, avoiding high debts when buying land, aiming for smooth and early community building processes, regional cooperation and early replacement of the founding leaders. They adopted some tools like the social Forum (of ZEGG) and the building guidelines of 7Linden.

Tamera observed other ecovillages skeptically in the early phase of GEN. However, after a few years of networking with and within GEN, and after hosting one of the GEN conferences, they increasingly realized how much they could learn from each other.

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"I discovered what we can learn from each other: e.g. in transforming an ecovillage from a charismatic leader project to a democratic project and keep the love and trust to this founder. Other projects had the democratic structure from the beginning on but had other problems" (TAM1).

6.1.1.5   Dissemination: showing and teaching what has been grown

GEN emphasizes that restoring existing villages into ecovillages is increasing as compared to the foundation of new ecovillages. After the first years of internal setting and growing, GEN started presenting its work to the UN and later to the EU for getting funding. It also obtained an advisory status of the UN.

The **local ecovillages** run seminar and conference centers to teach and spread their values, knowledge and experiences.

From the beginning, **Schloss Tempelhof** is transparently and actively collaborating with the region and the networks they are connected with like Artabana, community supported agriculture, free schools and a foundation for a meaningful life. There was no active advertisement done. Nevertheless since state TV has broadcast some documentaries on Schloss Tempelhof, and major German newspapers have published reports about it, the number of guests is increasing. Schloss Tempelhof is a co-founder of the newly founded GEN Germany.

Tamera attracts more than one thousand guests each year from all over the world joining its summer universities, love school programs and other seminars on permaculture, love and community. On the other hand, community members and students of the global campus support eco-communities in areas of crises and violence like in Mexico, Columbia, Gaza, in a favela in Sao Paulo and in Kenia. Tamera seems to be bursting with international networking and outreach efforts, driven by exceptionally high levels of activism and idealism. The community harbours dozens of network organisations and initiatives across the world, a publishing house and numerous websites, as well as numerous educational programmes.

6.1.1.6   Internal differentiation/ formalization

GEN has gone through multiple internal differentiation processes. Those processes contain shifts of decision making procedures or working group structures. Moreover, the membership criteria and the sub-networks have been re-structured (chap.6.3.1). After the growing phase of getting established and known to political institutions, GEN has faced internal challenges such as a change of board members and lack of resources to maintain the administrative structures. At the same time the membership numbers had stagnated. A few years ago, GEN introduced its membership rules – mainly concerning GEN Europe.

The two **local ecovillages** started organizing a subsidiary governance system when they grew beyond 40-50 members. Working discussions and decision making processes are delegated in commissions. From the establishment phase on, it is common that ecovillages adopt joining processes for newcomers, because they receive more joining requests then they can handle (chap. 6.3.1).

Schloss Tempelhof started only three years ago on site and yet, the founders have resigned from managing positions voluntarily which intensified the process towards 'all leaders'. Engaged

members including the new managers re-structured the bodies of decision making towards increased possibilities of all members to exert influence.

Tamera went through phases of power shifts after the charismatic leaders stepped down, and younger generations are now leading several or the organizational units. Even though Tamera is proud of having 'handed over power' from the founders to the new generations, the influence of the founders on the community is still perceived as quite strong, especially in ideological terms.

In order to understand the re-structuration processes in the network and the local ecovillages, we draw on historical research on communalism, which addresses governmental and institutional structures as results of social processes and communal living (Blickle 1991). The same occurs in daily life in newly created flexible ecovillages like our two cases Schloss Tempelhof and Tamera. Their specificity is that the formalized structures remain responsive and flexible. While institutional structures are used to organize daily life, the leading structures remain the communal and personal communication processes (Kunze 2012).

6.1.1.7   Going mainstream

A GEN interviewee sees the **EV movement** as a part of a larger and very diverse movement:

> *"The ecovillage idea represents the extreme part of the message. It makes people think." (GEN5)*

This quote implies that ecovillages are less compatible with the mainstream than other like-minded movements. **GEN** distinguishes between ecovillages as newly founded intentional communities – like our two case studies – and traditional villages which aim at emancipating themselves from outside forces and intend to co-design their own path into the future (GEN1). The so-called "retrofitting", i.e. turning traditional villages into ecovillages, is increasingly common and will likely be the basis of the majority of ecovillages in the future, according to GENs' president. Indeed, this strategy has the potential for mainstreaming, scaling up or multiplying the ecovillage model. Such a process already happened in Senegal where the government had established a ministry for ecovillages. Thousands of villages are part of the national ecovillage network in Senegal. Another important step for the EV movement to enter the mainstream is to collaborate with like-minded networks and initiatives, such as the permaculture movement and the transition town network.

In the course of the mainstreaming process of the **local ecovillages** we can also observe their integration into the regions. It often takes several years to build trust and business contacts. When the connection is made, ecovillage values can be applied in business contacts in the region and may even have an effect on the regional customs.

Schloss Tempelhof considers itself to be a community 'grown out of the middle of society'. It was established by middle-aged and middle-class people. GEN observes Tempelhof as a new kind of ecovillage and appreciates its popularity in milieus different from the eco-alternative movement. Referring to the common image of communes and intentional communities as islands, 'drop-outs' of society, an interviewee says:

> *"We did not think that our project would attract so much interest out of the middle of society. Maybe it is our task and our possibility that this time: it is not just the freaks." (Interview TH11)*

Tamera is a different case in terms of mainstreaming. Its main interaction with mainstream society lies in (1) the increasing amount of visitors that have been coming to Tamera (currently more than a 1000 a year), which include people that could be considered to live a 'mainstream' lifestyle, (2) the

increasing connections with the Portuguese regional surroundings and the local population through e.g. local markets, and (3) the many international projects that Tamera is involved with in the Global South and in conflict areas, from e.g. Palestine to Brazilian favelas. The latter examples may not qualify as 'mainstream' contexts, but they certainly move outside the eco-alternative movements.

6.1.2   Summarizing the seven steps of development

The following table is a summary of the seven phases. In the first column all three cases are compared. In the third one we compare the two local cases. The seven phases are a result of our observations in the three case studies, while also drawing on previous empirical observations (Kunze 2006, 2009, 2012). Most of the seven phases follow a chronological logic, but they can also overlap or recur.

Table 6.1.: Phases of development in the three cases under study

cases / Phases	Common features in all 3 cases	GEN	Common features in local EV (TH & TAM)	S. Tempelhof (TH)	Tamera (TAM)
1.Intention	motivation, identity of being part of a world-wide movement for a more cooperative culture; Promoting this new culture	*Networking, education, dissemination, political acceptance of EV*	Opening an 'experimental space'; 'new culture' (TAM) and 'next culture' movement (TH)	*2007-2010: Personal bases for economy, insurances; personal growth; community building*	*1980: Idealistically and philosophically motivated; charismatic leaders, earlier community projects & activism in Germany*
2. Foundation	setting up a legal entity and finding names for their initiatives	*1995: Regular conferences; Central office, cooperation, council etc. membership payments*	setting up legal forms (e.g. foundation, cooperative) and purchasing site;	*2010/11: members of cooperative, renovation, settling; name: Schloss Tempelhof*	*1995: Foundation of Meiga project, purchasing land, settling in South Portugal*
3. Growing	Enthusiasm causes engagement and attraction of new people	*1999: 3 regional sub-networks; 2003: setting up and expanding website and starting database; 2005: GAIA education*	Restoring the site; setting up "rituals", internal structures; people are attracted as newcomers or guests;	*2011-: growing from 20 to 120 members until 2014; restoring old buildings and ground; opening the village school etc.*	*New eco-houses, cultivation of permaculture landscape (including lake in 2007), opening of several organizations (e.g. Global Peace Campus)*
4. Networking	Connecting with like-minded people and movements: searching for exchange and collaboration	*1996-: presenting at environmental events like the HABITAT conference; hosting/organizing events with like-minded organizations*	Regional: involvement in politics, local economy; national: other movements and attract customers; international: GEN, Interest to learn from other EV: "pollination"	*2011-: Regional: Annual open day, agricultural networking; national: GEN; hardly any international networking, yet.*	*Since 2010/2011: increasing global networking with GEN (hosting GEN conference in 2011) and numerous other networks; also regional/ local networks*

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cases / Phases	Common features in all 3 cases	*GEN*	Common features in local EV (TH & TAM)	*S. Tempelhof (TH)*	*Tamera (TAM)*
5. dissemination	Receiving more popular and media attention; teaching innovations and experiences	*From 2000 on: Success in collaboration with governments, funding partners, other movements (permaculture, transition town); 2001: own book publications on EV movement*	Publications; outreach: no explicit and broad advertisements; website, network promotion and "mouth to mouth" (publicity)	*2011-: German media reportings; hosting events involving multiple like-minded networks; spreading innovations like WE-process, Biomeiler.*	*Numerous dissemination activities from the beginning onwards. 2 examples: 2000: Start of international Summer Universities, 2006 Monte Cerro School for international students*
6. Internal differentiation/ formalization	Internal re-structuring; conflicts, disillusionments; shift to realistic action strategies	*Multiple headquarters; council and working group delegates; multiple national and cross-topical networks pop up; disillusionments*	Adapting governance structures; founders stepping back; structural conflicts and re-organization; reflecting aims and identity; disenchantments with original intentions	*2014: personal reference groups, many sub-initiatives; 2014: Limitations for elderly newcomers; attracting young families;*	*Internal governance structures with core group, government, and several working groups. Several stages of becoming a full member/ resident: student, newcomer, co-worker in training, co-worker.*
7. Going mainstream	Practical collaborations; extracting and spreading innovations	*Spreading tools like dragon dreaming; 2013: Opening up membership criteria*	Collaboration with the region as business partners and cultural sites (while?) spreading their values and experiences via the seminar house with hundreds of visitor a year	*2014/15: Collaboration with region in the field/area of tourism concepts etc. (just started);*	*Spreading concepts and methods through websites, books and programmes (seminars, courses, lectures, videos, etc.), collaborating with several international and local networks/ organizations.*

6.2 Aspects of 'innovation' and 'change'

Innovation and change are major intentions in all the cases we studied. They often use the term of a 'new' (Tamera) or 'next' (Tempelhof) culture rather than the term "innovation". Ecovillages follow very diverse paths for setting up this new culture. It starts with a tolerant attitude of 'unity in diversity', embracing differences as an enrichment. Ecovillages and intentional communities, including our two cases, create condensed fields of awareness and manifest their intentions by opening an experimental space. Their heterotopias of a 'new culture' are about creativity, experimenting, and collaboration.

We will discuss the five shades of change in a specific order adapted to our empirical observations of the causes and effects of developmental phases as explained before in the initiatives under study. We start with narratives of change, because they seem to refer to the initial intentions of EV and GEN. They are followed by the game changers as the challenges, obstacles and the impetus of change. Further, we describe the social and system innovations and end with the largest and most fundamental aspect – their work for societal transformation. Each aspect is discussed in a separate subchapter.

6.2.1   Narratives of change

The ecovillage movement emerged in the 1980s/90s out of older communal movements and in response to ecological and social challenges in modern societies.

> *"The Global Ecovillage Network envisions a world of empowered citizens and communities, designing and implementing their own pathways to a sustainable future, and building bridges of hope and international solidarity."*[40]

More precisely, the main narrative of change that the **ecovillage movement** is referring to is at the same time their action strategy: to build a network of resilient communities that is not easily affected or hit by negative developments of the macrosystems – the landscape, the society or game changers. They prefer to rely on micro- and mesosystems, because they can overlook, design and influence them. Ecovillages start with the attitude of trying to 'be the change you want to see in the world'. For them change has to start on the microlevel, i.e. with the individual life style, action and behavior.

GEN uses the butterfly as its logo – seen as a central symbol of change because the new cells of the butterfly have to cooperate. The cooperation of the many local ecovillages is a central narrative of change in GEN. it is a common view in the EV movement that the many local ecovillages are healing points or imago cells of a new culture. Narratives and stories are increasingly popular in ecovillage contexts. Findhorn just organized and hosted the "New Story Summit" and launched a resource hub[41] around exchanging narratives.

For the members of **Schloss Tempelhof,** change starts with overcoming the current alienation from a holistic life world by introducing cooperative forms of living, mutual support via a gift economy, personal growth and commitments to care for each other and more. In short, Schloss Tempelhof villagers aim at reclaiming the social security by strengthening personal relationships rather than by anonymous insurances. Opinions on the necessity of ecological behavior are discussed controversially. A majority of Schloss Tempelhof members believes that authentic communication can heal from alienation.

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[40] http://gen.ecovillage.org/de/page/vision-mission-goals 2015-01-15
[41] http://newstoryhub.com/ 2015-01-17

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In **Tamera,** a theory of change is expressed by the concepts of Terra Nova (New Earth), which contains the image of a post-patriarchal civilization free of violence and war. In our construction, Tamera follows five main elements, in which social change is seen as coming forth from:

(1) Personal transformation and 'inner work'
(2) Re-creating trust within social and intimate relations
(3) Living the change by example and through experimentation
(4) Holism: political, socio-economic and ecological change are inextricably intertwined
(5) Creation of 'healing biotopes' and 'morphogenetic fields' to (globally) foster a 'new culture'

6.2.2   Game changers

The ecovillage movement is highly sensitive and aware of system instabilities in practically all areas of economy, ecology, climate change, politics, and the crisis of the welfare state. Its approach does not just focus on one or several of these aspects. Ecovillages turn the tables because they do not try to heal single symptoms, but set up their own resilient systems. **GEN** does hardly react to game changers as this interviewee states:

> *"GEN wasn't really created as a response to a crisis; more as an enthusiastic expression." (GEN3)*

Local ecovillages rather perceive large scale system structures as non-resilient 'dinosaurs'. They prefer to build up human-scale and trust-full structures based on transparency and personal relationships. Some interviewees mention climate change as the biggest game changer. Others point to socio-economic and cultural issues like alienation from nature and communities.

Schloss Tempelhof was triggered by socio-economic problems of social alienation – the loss of community – and by demographic change. Being directly affected by an increasingly aging population in Germany – 65% of the joining requests to Schloss Tempelhof are from people aged 60plus – they started to attract young families. Another major sensitivity is about the economic crises. Schloss Tempelhof members see the mainstream attitude of stinginess, and self-enrichment as a major problem in this regard.

In **Tamera** awareness about global pain and despair is consciously used as a motivational driver for the village's activism. The main global events/ macro-developments that seem to be felt and referred to in Tamera, concern (1) wars and other outburst of violence, (2) ecological degradation (in whatever form) and (3) poverty, or any other forms of human or planetary pain and despair. Even if global connectedness is a widespread value across the ecovillage movement, some argue that the explicit political awareness, in particular its attention for and activism against war and violence, is a specific characteristic of Tamera that distinguishes it from (many) other ecovillages.

6.2.3   Social innovation

If social innovation is defined in terms of new social practices and new social relations, than our case studies are 'all about social innovation', in particular in terms of creating new kinds of social relations. In comparison to traditional communities, intentional communities and ecovillages reinvent community in a way that includes individual freedom (Kunze 2012). The additional social innovation ecovillages come up with is to improve the "cooperation" with nature by developing ecological ways of living, and an emotional connection to the earth.

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Tools of communication: One of the most renowned social innovations which has been developed at ZEGG and is practiced at Tamera, Schloss Tempelhof and many other ecovillages is 'The Forum', "a tool to create transparency with our true motivations and wishes, to find out and reveal deeper truth and insights, and process pending conflicts and questions"[42]. Many facilitation tools like non-violent communication (Rosenberg 2003), dragon dreaming[43], dialogue methods, and possibility management[44] have been applied and put forward by ecovillages. These methods are used in other contexts now too, for instance in the successful movement of "Let's do it!", a civil cleaning up initiative in many European countries.

Both ecovillages are striving for a "new" (TAM) or "next" (TH) culture, "A new WE"[45] – a reinvent of a culture of cooperation, honesty, emotional openness and trust. Living together also includes building homes with people the members feel emotionally close to. It is a fundamental innovation and need for the two ecovillages to 'reinvent relationship' in a 'modern world of alienation'. Tempelhof members, as well as members of ZEGG and Tamera have discovered that they are actually working on the same issues, even though expressed in different areas: how to build consciousness, trust, cooperation and love. In particular, Schloss Tempelhof could support whom? with its experience in social economy and ZEGG and Tamera coached Schloss Tempelhof members about love and intimate relationships.

Schloss Tempelhof members began by transforming their members' attitudes towards money and economy and to grow into a more cooperative and generous behavior. Schloss Tempelhof works on personal caretaking, also as a substitute to insurances and on socio-psychological development (the WE-process). Recently, it has started to work intensively with 'the Forum' to build more emotional intimacy in the community. **Tamera** began with healing the intimate relationships between the feminine and the masculine, seeing this as a key to working towards political peace in the world, as well as for a better relationship with nature and the earth. Tamera's specific philosophy on re-creating intimate social relations comes to meet the longing of many young, but also elderly people for experimenting with love, intimacy and sexuality. The ecovillages connect these issues to love, community, personal growth and even world peace.

We observe an atmosphere of trust and openness not only in the local ecovillages but also in **GEN as a whole**. The GEN team is highly motivated to create such an atmosphere at its conferences. At our visit to the GEN Europe Conference in summer 2014 in ZEGG, we witnessed moving moments in the plenary session with more than 400 people. Another important manifestation of social innovation are certain practices of communication and facilitating group meetings, which differ in each ecovillage. Such practices are shared between and/or taken over from each other at larger meetings.

In Latin America the organizers of the CASA network highlight the innovative nature of the combination between western, educated, mostly urban people with indigenous, tribal people:

> *"The new thing really is the relationship. For so long there was such a gap… racism, rejection of the old, colonialism: now there is acknowledgement… that is a really an interesting dynamic, recovering the old medical practices, agricultural techniques, spiritual – there is wealth of knowledge and examples there" (GEN4).*

In view of interpreting our observations and relating them to sociological studies, we can say that the growing popularity of intentional communities is indeed very much based on their hands-on

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[42] http://sites.ecovillage.org/node/4927, accessed 15.01.2015
[43] Dragon dreaming is a holistic team working method developed by John Croft
   http://www.dragondreaming.org/dragondreaming/what-is-it-exactly/ 2016-02-12
[44] Developed by Clinton Callahan who lived in TH. He gained practice and popularity by educating coaches in TH.
[45] Referring to the documentary „A new WE" showing a number of ecovillages: http://www.neueswir.info/

approach to overcoming some of the central negative aspects of modernity, such as unsustainability, alienation from nature and community, and forms of social and economic disembeddedness (Kunze 2012; Kunze/Avelino 2009). It is a result of the longing for more committed social networks which can be found in ecovillages, for example in how **Tamera's** members live a meaningful life of peace and love in and in innovative practices such as "plan-B retirement" and intergenerational living in **Schloss Tempelhof**.

6.2.4   System innovation

Building on the social innovations described above, we observe that ecovillages provide an experimental space in which system innovations are created. We found system innovations in the areas of social culture, of governance and regulation, of infrastructure, and concerning environmental impact.

Laboratories for a system change: Ecovillages in themselves are system innovations, because they can be real life laboratories of communal and ecological living in almost all areas. According to their goals, our two cases experiment with community management, small scale economies, eco-housing, community agriculture, caretaking, cultural norms, relationships, forms of household organization, education, and communication. Therefore they are using and developing diverse methods from permaculture to conflict resolution, from gift economy to energy efficiency. An interviewee refers to **Schloss Tempelhof** as a "Wunderwerkstatt" – a factory of miracles (Interview TH2), because of its high density of diverse qualified and experimental people. In all communications about **Tamera**, it is strongly emphasised that Tamera wants to create new social systems, or in fact, a new world, a "Realistic Utopia". Tamera is presented as "Test Field 1", indicating that the ultimate aim is to create more 'healing biotopes' across the world.

Autonomy, autarky and self-sufficiency: System innovation has a special meaning in ecovillages. They intend to build a resilient and often self-sufficient community. If an ecovillage manages to do so, it has created a self-sufficient 'system' with autonomous infrastructure and basic services. Concerning our two local cases we ask how successful they have been in terms of developing their own innovative systems e.g. in the areas of land use, ownership, energy, food, and water supply. The question in terms of system innovation is if and to which extent these systems can replace the current system, so that the ecovillage gravitates towards more independence and autarky.

The communal infrastructure in **Schloss Tempelhof** provides 60% self-sufficiency in the area of food, about half of the members can make their living by working in village units, and the land and real estate is owned by the community. A part of the energy is produced by community owned solar cells and compost heat systems. Schloss Tempelhof intends to partly use water of its own well, but it is not allowed to use it as drinking water due to sanitation laws. They are even obliged by German law to pay the water services of the municipality.

Tamera self-sufficiency work is focused on creating a "Water Retention Landscape", not only for its 100% autonomous water supply, but more generally for "healing the land". Tamera's man-made lakes, and their greening impact on the landscape, are renowned across the world. Although Tamera is not entirely autonomous in its food supply, it does gain a significant proportion (40%) of its food from its own gardens, where vegetables, fruits and herbs are hand-picked by residents and guests. In the area of technology, the 'Solar Power Village' is seen as test field for technological experiments, including 'low-temperature Stirling motors', Scheffler mirrors, biogas digesters, and other inventions by several involved scientists.

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System innovations for consensus decision making: The intentional community and ecovillage movement has worked a lot on improving and adapting consensus decision making methods to their needs (chap. 6.3). Ecovillages like Schloss Tempelhof, Tamera and many others have proven that the idea of decision making by consensus – sometimes smiled at as utopian – can indeed work. Understanding the larger picture, we observe that successful consensus decision making is related first, to a system innovation in the ownership structures (6.3.1) and secondly to social tools of conflict resolution. Supported by clear rules of commitment, power and responsibility, as well as by a culture of non-violent communication, ecovillages have designed methods that have spread out to very different organizations in society.

Socio-economic tools: Ecovillages have created governance structures that support gift economies. They are heterotopias were people can break the system logic of a 'homo economicus'. It is a common practice in Schloss Tempelhof and Tamera to lend or often even donate money to friends if they need it without expecting anything in return. They call it gift economy. This practice is manifested in their legal structures of cooperatives and foundations (chap.6.3). The cooperative of Schloss Tempelhof employs about half of the members in half-time positions, with a developed system of need-based salaries (chap.6.3.1). Furthermore some ecovillages apply complementary, regional currencies, which is not the case with Schloss Tempelhof and Tamera.

Collaborative organizations are emerging: Ecovillages are increasingly asked for advice by the business world. Their long-term standing practices of collaborative methods attract attention. A trend to more wholesome and communal organizations is observed by researchers:

> *"There is one important aspect that researchers have so far somewhat overlooked: every time humanity has shifted to a new stage, it has invented a new way to collaborate, a new organizational model. […] Here is where things become particularly intriguing: developmental psychology has much to say about the next stage of human consciousness, the one we are just starting to transition into. This next stage involves taming our ego and searching for more authentic, more wholesome ways of being." (Laloux 2014)*

Wholesome ecology: biotopes for healing the relationship between humans and nature: Both case studies apply the agricultural and gardening method of permaculture. Especially Tamera has been extraordinarily successful in transforming the dry landscape into a fertile land for agriculture with several lakes. It attracts landscape planners and farmers from all over the world to learn from Tamera's example. Furthermore, ecovillages like Tamera and Schloss Tempelhof are lively centers of creative and joyful work on healing our relationship with nature, including art, creativity, therapy, and rituals.

Peninsulas against the mainstream[46]: alternative systems and spreading of innovations: Ecovillages as a young form of intentional community chose the approach to build living alternatives rather than just criticizing or 'dropping out' of society. Striving for more than a simple rural life close to nature, they want to include the best aspects of modern society, such as art, research, education, and the efficiency of technology (McLaughlin/ Davidson 1985). A major effort of GEN is to shift the image of ecovillages as separate islands from society which has already been partly successful due to their efforts (GEN1): "*There is a lot more openness now in mainstream, politics and academia. This openness was not there in the beginning*" (GEN5).

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[46] Referring to the book by Habermann, F. (2009): Halbinseln gegen den Strom: Anders Leben und Wirtschaften im Alltag

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6.2.5 Societal transformation

Societal transformation is described as a "fundamental and persistent change across society, exceeding sub-systems and including simultaneous changes in multiple dimensions" (Avelino et al. 2014). Ecovillages definitely have the intention and engagement for societal transformation:

> "It is not enough to be little acupuncture points: there is the need for interconnection." (GEN3)

> "My vision to come through requires a system change (emphasis) and not a bit repairing here and there. Complete system change. And where to address that? This system change will probably not come out of the existing system." (TAM10)

The number of ecovillages in the world is still quite small. It is difficult to measure how far they contribute to transform the 'alienated' society into a 'new culture'. We can observe long-term effects of changing the way of living through a 'silent revolution' by small scale resilience which we interpret as a contribution to societal transformation. It starts holistically in daily life by reclaiming all areas of life like consumption, land tenure, economy, infrastructural planning, relationships, care taking, health, organization and governance. The tools for local resilient communities are regional agriculture and low tech life, while ecovillages are open for new technologies like the internet or eco-technologies which serve their needs. Often inventions and practices of ecovillages spread further afield in forms of economic spin-offs, individual experiences or even law changes.

GEN aims at creating political impact in order to pave the way for system innovations initiated by the local ecovillages. GENs' impact on societal transformation depends on its popularity and political influence. GEN has consultative status with UN ECOSOC.

Local ecovillages started off as islands of radical ways of ecological and communal living. GEN is observing a changing tendency from founding and building new ecological housing project by people that move together intentionally towards traditional villages being active in retrofitting more ecological, communal and self-organizing structures. This is happening in several GEN sub-networks in developing countries, but similar processes also start to emerge in the Western countries.

Expecting any substantial societal transformations caused by **Schloss Tempelhof** after only three years of existence appears unreasonable. Still, firstly, the newly state approved village school is a remarkable milestone. It pioneers a new model of responsible education that is unique even if compared to other forms of free schools and therefore attracts nationwide interest. Secondly, the Schloss Tempelhof foundation is developing a legal institution for collective ownership which other community initiatives in Germany can use as a legal frame to register their properties for 'freeing land' from speculation (chap. 6.3.1.1).

Even though **Tamera** was a relatively isolated island in the Portuguese context for many years, it still had a transformative impact on the surrounding region, for instance in terms of there now being a vegetarian restaurant in nearby villages, or a baker who learned to bake organic bread. The practice of "the Forum" is spreading to ecovillages and other communities as far as in the United States and Latin America. It's Water Retention Landscape approach attracts planners, farmers and scientists from all over the world, as well as its Love School concept involves NGO-leaders and students from different regions of the world.

Spatial and regional transformation: A specific and visible manifestation of societal transformation initiated/impacted by ecovillages are shifting landscapes and local economies. While **Tamera** was built anew by external people, **Schloss Tempelhof** is retrofitting the old buildings. On

the other hand, Tamera has transformed the surrounding landscape from a desert into a fertile agricultural landscape with lakes. Some developing countries seem to be pioneering in terms of retrofitting traditional villages, especially in Senegal. Many ecovillages have settled on abandoned or unused land. They transformed deserts into rain forests (Auroville) and agricultural landscapes (Tamera), sand dunes into gardens and tourist sites (Findhorn), military ruins into seminar centers (ZEGG), Nazi working camps into permacultural[47] vibrating settlements (Lebensgarten Steyerberg), a monocultural part of forest in a permacultural garden village (Ökodorf Sieben Linden), and so on. Almost all of them brought new businesses like organic farms, food stores or workshops for ecological building technologies, as well as young people, and sometimes new jobs and cultural facilities to formerly abandoned and dying areas (Kunze 2009: 124-29).

To conclude, we have observed three tendencies of mainstreaming or upscaling the ecovillage model:

1. GEN is observing a changing tendency from founding new intentional ecovillages towards retrofitting existing villages. Ecovillages as a younger form of intentional communities have the approach to build living alternatives rather than 'dropping out' of society.
2. 'Mainstream communities' and professionals adopt tools developed in ecovillages like communal decision making. Ecovillages have created small, rather unspectacular but practical innovations that have spread out; gradually changing some business sectors. There are simple low-tech eco-innovations like for instance a waste water treatment system of plants in a green house, applicable in cities (Findhorn), compost heating systems (Schloss Tempelhof), permaculture in dry regions (Tamera) or straw bale house techniques (7Linden and Eco-Youff in Senegal).
3. The 'new we-culture' practiced in ecovillages is spread out by the regular in- and outflow of guests. The larger ecovillages host hundreds of guests per year. They latter come to inhale an atmosphere of appreciation and cooperation and to transform their own lives while spreading the tools of ecovillage culture to their working environments and social networks in their cities of residence. Some large, well established ecovillages even have their own national networks and centers in numerous countries (like Auroville).

6.3 Aspects of empowerment and disempowerment

Just recently, in 2014, GEN has changed its membership criteria, adopting communal self-empowerment as the main criterion for an ecovillage's membership in GEN. The GEN-President emphasizes that a village is seen as an ecovillage and can become a full member of GEN "if its residents say: 'we do not want the future of our settlement or urban neighbourhood to be dictated by outside forces – we are going to co-design our own pathway into the future.'" (GEN1)

Individual empowerment is a main pillar of ecovillage philosophy. The self-understanding of ecovillages is radically self-organized and building up on the personal responsibility of its members. The community is based on self-organization and individual empowerment. In this perspective, empowerment goes hand in hand with self-sufficiency, a certain independence of the larger macro-systems, and a local economy helping to build up more resilience in view of ecological or economic crises. To live in such a project of self-organization requires of lot of personal engagement. Empowerment is work – that was emphasized by our interviewees again and again. One needs to be

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[47] "Permaculture is an ecological design system for sustainability in all aspects of human endeavor. It teaches us how to build natural homes, grow our own food, restore diminished landscapes and ecosystems, catch rainwater, build communities and much more." http://www.permaculture.org/nm/index.php/site/classroom/ 23.04.09

informed to decide and co-design the village; social competences and empathy is needed. Because the learning of such skills in individualized societies is limited, intentional communities provide fields of practical education in social competences, where members are socialized as social competent beings—something which is lacking in the education systems of individualized societies.

This constant learning of cooperation and social competence is a direct experience in the ecovillages. On the other hand, power struggles are happening. Members have conflicts and they search for methods to make those transparent, face them and work them through together. We observe power relations between the founders and the current leaders of the ecovillages, between the generations, and between ecovillages and the regional/local institutional contexts.

In the following subchapters we discuss the four aspects of (dis)empowerment as observed in our three cases: internal and external governance, social learning, resources and monitoring.

6.3.1   Governance

6.3.1.1   Internal governance: a small scale society with all features of life

"We have the same conflicts as people have anywhere – but we can deal with them in a different way" (Interview TH5)

There are differences between a network and local ecovillages in what needs to be governed. Local ecovillages have to govern practically all aspects of life. Nevertheless we have discovered basic principles that both GEN and the local ecovillages use. The specific approach to democracy is manifested in elaborated forms of consensus decision making. Furthermore *sociocracy* is a new trend in the EV movement. Working groups can decide autonomously and responsibly. The criteria of decision making include engagement, power and the degree of being effected.

Internal governance is a major part of **ecovillage** life and concerns basically everything: from land ownership to governing money for buildings and new businesses and enterprises, salaries, the character of the village school, commons, seminar programs, food and agriculture, construction work, strategic development, and the forms of decision making. In the following paragraphs, we discuss the four fundamental aspects of internal governance, ownership structures, decision making, subsidiary structures, and processes of exclusiveness.

Ownership structures: The structures of property ownership are the formal fundament for a **local ecovillage** aiming at self-empowerment and independency from speculation and land lords. The aim is to ensure equal (?) access to land and houses. In **Schloss Tempelhof** the internal governance was carefully worked out to ensure the empowerment of all members and the principle of *all leader*. The property belongs to the *Tempelhof foundation*. Hence a lot of communal decisions around spending money are part of the internal governance. Every member is co-owner of the cooperative and has to pay the same contribution to the cooperative while having one voice. In **Tamera**, the ownership structure includes a rule that for each infrastructure or other project in Tamera, 30% goes to the basis household of Tamera. The land of Tamera as well as all the real estate on it, is owned by a Tamera foundations, which is run by the co-workers. If one builds a house in Tamera, when one leave, the house remains property of Tamera.

Decision making processes: consensus, creation and responsibility: **GEN** applies consensus decision making in its meetings. The single working groups are autonomous in choosing their method of decision-making. The GEN council is the main body that is elected by the general assembly every year and contains delegates from the working groups. Established **ecovillages**, including

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Schloss Tempelhof and Tamera, have developed their decision-making structures collectively according to size and shared property degree of the community. We observe that in the majority of ecovillages, the residential assembly only decides in a final act. The actual working and discussion processes take place in working groups. The collective ownership structures just described are the basis for collective decision-making.

The members of **Schloss Tempelhof** intend to realize the principle of *all leader*. All interviewees mention that to achieve this is still a long way to go. The founders of Schloss Tempelhof stepped back voluntarily after just one year in order to foster the principle of *all leader* which is quite unusual in comparison to other ecovillages. After that a vacuum of power existed for a few months. No assembly was held and finally some new volunteers started to revitalize the formal bodies with slightly adapted structures. Today the village plenary and the coordination circle are open for every member[48]. Although the decision-making system is seen as elaborated – it has six modes of voting[49] and was adopted from the Artabana health care network – it was challenging to balance the right to vote with the motivation to create. The result is that Schloss Tempelhof is in the process of outsourcing most of the decisions to the working groups. **Tamera** has been organized differently, having its own "government" since 2010, which consists of three members who are responsible for taking final decisions. Besides 'The Government' there is also an extensive 'core-group' (which the 'Government' is part of), consisting of 10+ leading positions in some of the many project organisations.

Subsidiary structures: As mentioned above, many decisions are outsourced to thematic working groups in both GEN and in the local ecovillages. These subsidiary structures are perceived as empowering the single working groups and their members. On the other hand some groups can also be overwhelmed if the members are not competent in facilitating group processes. **Schloss Tempelhof** for instance has a system of external supervisors belonging to other working groups which regularly offer coaching to working groups. **GEN** started off with five continental sub-networks. Today cross-national networks also emerge and GEN accepts cross-topical networks that have appeared mainly in connection with the permaculture and transition town movements (GEN1). In **local ecovillages** subsidiary structures do not only refer to decision making and activities, but also to housing groups and emotional reference groups for *the Forum*. In **Schloss Tempelhof** members recently built up reference groups. This has been a "constructive result" of frustration and being overwhelmed with the need to take too many decisions. Many even perceived it as a relief to have to decide on fewer issues.

Processes of exclusiveness: Two basic rules for incoming members to **GEN** are that an ecovillage should have at least eight members that are not relatives and that it should have existed for a minimum of two years. GEN justifies these rules to avoid non-active members and also to balance the weight of voices with the large ecovillages that consist of a thousand members or more. Nearly all **ecovillages** have adopted well defined joining processes for newcomers, because they have more joining requests than they can handle. In controversial discussions and being aware that community is inclusive, successful ecovillages are compelled to choose and reject new applicants. A reason for exclusiveness is that successful ecovillages no longer only attract idealistic people but also people looking for a 'homey' community. Ecovillages were not founded with the intention to take care of certain categories of people, unlike, for instance, some church-related institutions which receive high amounts of state funding for this work. In **Schloss Tempelhof** they often reject elderly people

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[48] An exception people who live and work in TH but have not become members of the cooperative (yet) (see further down: process of exclusiveness).

[49] The six options of voting: unlimited agreement, light concerns, neutral, strong concerns, stand aside, and veto. The system was adopted from Artabana decision making, explained in a paper by Roman Huber.

because 66% of the joining requests are peopled aged 60+. Schloss Tempelhof members turn the tables by educating elders how to establish an ecovillage themselves. Becoming a member of **Tamera** is a process of several stages. If one wants to join Tamera, one first becomes a "student", and after that – when both parties agree that there is a fit – one becomes a newcomer. After that, one becomes a "co-worker in training", before becoming a full "co-worker".

6.3.1.2   External governance

GEN as well as local ecovillages start to set up legal forms and structures such as a cooperation, cooperative and foundation. **GEN Europe** is organized formally also because of the state, government and funding structures in Europe. It was set up as a legal cooperation in order to be allowed to charge membership fees. Furthermore, GEN Europe also has to be a registered institution to receive funding from the EU. GEN became a legal charity in the UK in 2013. Before, it was based in Italy and run from the USA. Already in 1997, after having given a presentation at the UN-Habitat II conference, GEN received consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Collaboration with like-minded networks and initiatives is another part of external governance for GEN, namely the permaculture movement and the transition town network. Connecting to transition town network involves some challenges because ecovillages are more rural and long-term initiatives while the transition town movement is very young, urban based, and politically interested network. Also having its base in the UK and other Western countries the transition town movement is different from GEN which, as a global network, is particularly strong in the global South (GEN1).

For **local ecovillages,** external governance is firstly related to the formal process of buying a piece of land and getting its permissions from the local institutions and municipality. They are dependent on permissions for their enterprises, their architectural plans and the use of land. Sometimes there are also conflicts with neighbors. In **Schloss Tempelhof,** this was the case concerning agricultural issues about weed treatment and pesticides. Also, it was a long way to get permission for the unique new model of the village school with the education ministry. Having built a trustful connection with the regional and local municipalities, Schloss Tempelhof got permission for some experiments with mobile homes and an 'Earthship' (chap. 6.2.3). **Tamera** had some conflict with government regulations, particularly regarding home schooling, planning and building permissions. Tamera has reached its construction limit, which is why currently, no construction is possible. Therefore many members live in trailers or other temporary living arrangements such as yurts. Tamera is currently working with the municipality and has applied for a change in official land use classifications.

6.3.2   Social learning

GEN and ecovillages push their members to learn a lot of new skills: from community building and management to social skills, taking responsibility and practical skills like gardening or cooking for a hundred people. In the ecovillage design education program (EDE 2005) conducted in several ecovillages around the globe, four dimensions are taught in an interactive process: Culture/worldview, society, ecology, and economy. GEN integrates cognitive exercises into the work flow of its conferences. Often members in ecovillages learn to successfully apply methods of consensus based decision-making and conflict resolution through practicing challenging negotiation processes. These processes are based on democratic principles and individual learning.

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Members of the **ecovillages** in Schloss Tempelhof and Tamera, as well as in many other communities, repeatedly emphasize that one can only live in such a community if he or she is willing to change her/himself. The collective transformation towards a new 'we-culture' also includes the ongoing transformation of every single member 'from a rough to a gentle individualist' (Peck 2005). All large ecovillages run seminar centers – so do Tamera and Schloss Tempelhof. The most popular courses mirror their processes and developments: social competencies, relationship, community building, peace work, gift economy, and solidary health care. Another example of social learning is the experimental space allowing to informally try out new jobs.

Schloss Tempelhof started with exercises to raise one's awareness, knowledge and social skills with regard to money. Every member has to list the amount of money they need, earn and possess – and, in a culture of economic transparency, present it to the community in an annual poster exhibition. Based on these data, Schloss Tempelhof pays *need-based salaries* enabling its members to live of what they "earn" for working for the community. In the area of childrens' education, the village school of Schloss Tempelhof is a new and unique model fostering intrinsic motivation. Social learning in Schloss Tempelhof also takes place during the community building and planning processes. Furthermore, individuals embark on new adventures like starting a self-employed business or getting involved in new working areas which is easily possible in Schloss Tempelhof's small scale businesses.

In **Tamera** the learning discourse is omnipresent, as the programmes at Tamera are filled with "schools" and "campuses" of all sorts. Members call Tamera a future laboratory that is about experimenting and learning.

6.3.3   Resources: a resilient combination of financial and social capital

GEN and the local ecovillages differ slightly in their needs for different forms of capital. **GEN** has two main areas of expenses: travel costs and payment of qualified workers. Due to a lack of financial resources, the payments for GEN activists are low which is why most of them work on a voluntary basis. During the first years of its existence, GEN was financed by the Danish business couple who set up the GAIA foundation. GEN never received large amounts of funding. During the last years GEN Europe received funding by the EU and the German ministry of foreign affairs. Members are another important source of funding. Today GEN lists about 500 ecovillages worldwide[50]. Other sources (Eurotopia, 1998-2009) reveal a high fluctuation and all together a quick growth in projects calling themselves ecovillage. Moreover, GEN provides a platform for ecovillages to exchange non-monetary resources.

Members of **local ecovillages** have to work to earn money like everyone else. The two cases we studied run enterprises and employ some of their members while others work as freelancers or live of properties or pensions. Ecovillages are creative in substituting money by other resources based on committed relationships which are perceived as the most important resource and "capital". Not only do ecovillages provide citizens with access to existing resources, they also empower citizens to create and invent *new* resources, rather than having to 'buy' or 'compete' over existing resources.

Schloss Tempelhof is based on a culture of philanthropy and could only be realized due to private donations of its members. They are practicing *gift economy*[51] – donating without expecting anything

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[50] See online web data base on GEN's sites: http://gen-europe.org/ecovillages/find-ecovillages/index.htm
    http://sites.ecovillage.org/en
[51] The term gift economy has been brought into discussion mainly by Genevieve Vaughan http://gift-economy.com The German activist Heidemarie Schwermer has been living without money for more than 20 years, authored several books

in return. It implies supporting each other in constructing houses in exchange for health and child care or borrowing books and tools. Members receive their income from either external sources they work for or from a creative patchwork of small jobs. Most members are on part-time *need-based salaries* working in one of the departments of Schloss Tempelhof while additionally earning their income by working externally for instance as yoga teachers, gardeners, business coaches, medical doctors, cooks or waiters. It remains a problem for newcomers to find a source of income in the rural area of the Jagstregion. Schloss Tempelhof enterprises are flourishing and new businesses are set up. The seminar house always has been a reliable source of income. Agricultural gourmet products and handicrafts are about to follow.

The main sources of income for **Tamera** comprise (1) accommodation/ sustenance contributions by all who are not full co-workers, (2) books and other products from Tamera (e.g. herbs, jewellery or other crafts), (3) events, trainings, seminars etc., (4) donations and fundraising, and (5) co-workers going abroad to earn money for a while with their profession (e.g. energy advice or writing). Full co-workers earn money for Tamera by their work at Tamera or outside of it, and receive daily sustenance and pocket money. All others pay for their presence in Tamera, for accommodation (different options and processes) and food.

6.3.4   Monitoring

GEN as well as the two ecovillages do not have systematic forms of evaluation or monitoring. Nevertheless all of them provide space to express reflections. Evaluation sometimes comes in the form of external research projects. An important platform for exchange, as well as reflection and monitoring can be seen in GEN's interactive websites and databases [52].

Schloss Tempelhof holds an annual retreat were members jointly reflect about how the community dynamics, organization, and finances went during the last year. More detailed reflection has only been done on a large project that had failed. Coincidentally, one of the managers worked with evaluation in her former job. She doubts that conventional methods of monitoring and evaluation can capture the holistic dynamics of an ecovillage like Schloss Tempelhof. She rather observes how single members and the 'collective field' of the community can learn and incorporate experiences that effect and enhance the next project, decision process or business. She notices that success and appreciation have remarkable effect on engagement and on creating successful projects (Interview TH1).

Tamera follows a specific concept of research, which is applied internally with regard to the village's main topics, i.a. peace, love and relationship, but also ecology, permaculture and eco-technologies like solar energy. Mainly by interest in these eco-technologies and in permaculture, external research institutions equally come in to study and evaluate. Moreover, the winter months (October – February) are described as a "time for reflection and study". There are several study groups around the many themes that have been mentioned in this report so far. This winter period is also reported to be an important phase "for the planning of the next year, and for restructuring everything that needs to be changed, improved, created, and so on" (Interviewee TAM1).

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about her experiment and is an inspiring voice for the German gift economy movement http://neueseite.heidemarieschwermer.com/

[52] The online database and interactive map of GEN Europe: http://gen-europe.org/ecovillages/find-ecovillages/index.htm Ecovillage Networking, global platform: http://sites.ecovillage.org/

6.4 Ecovillages and Challenges for Future Research

There are several interesting avenues for future research when it comes to ecovillages. One is to dive deeper into understanding the interaction between ecovillages, (local) governments and surrounding communities. Another would be to elaborate on how ecovillages build alternative economies within their communities. New economic concepts such as the sharing economy, gift economy, social economy, complementary currencies, and so forth, are topics that seem to emerge in many of the cases under study in TRANSIT (e.g. Credit Unions, Time Banks, Transition Towns, Impact Hubs, RIPESS, energy cooperatives, etc.). The interesting point about ecovillages is that they provide alternative communities that are willing to experiment with such innovative economic concepts, and have already done so in the past. It would be interesting to compare ecovillages to other networks under study in TRANSIT, and see what they can learn from each other in terms of new ways of building economies.

A similarly interesting field that ecovillages experiment with is governance. Based on collective ownership, the property needs to be ruled and governed by bodies formed by the community. Ecovillages have created a space for experimenting with decision-making methods such as consensus or the so called method of 'sociocracy'. Because of the strong influence of every single member within the decision making process, ecovillages have further elaborated diverse conflict resolution techniques (Kunze 2012).

The fourth topic that merits further attention concerns the 'radicalness' of the ecovillage movement in view of its aim to contribute to social innovation, change and transformation. We hypothesize – and this was also supported by GEN staff – that the ecovillage movement is more radical and that it aims for social transformation more explicitly than most/many of the other networks under study in TRANSIT. This has to do with its holistic approach that includes daily life, community and personal transformation, as well as with the underlying post-capitalist and post-material ideas. The interesting question is of course how and to what extent the ecovillage movement 'actually' contributes to social innovation and societal transformation, as compared to other networks, as well as how and to what extent it inspires and or interacts with those other networks (e.g. there are clear historical links between the ecovillage movement, the permaculture movement and the Transition Towns movement).

Concerning social innovation we observe circular dynamics of innovations and societal transformation around ecovillages as visualized in graph 6.1: Ecovillages provide laboratories of social innovation that trigger new systems of organization, governance and regulation which creates an autonomous infrastructure and basic services which again, provides a laboratory for social innovation. If system innovations spread outside the ecovillage and outside the ecovillage movement, they can foster societal transformation.

One way to approach further study on ecovillages is to view them as grassroots 'radical niches' (Smith 2006, 2007, Avelino & Kunze 2009, Seyfang & Haxeltine 2012). They allow for experiments that deviate radically from mainstream practices and norms, but in the end, might nevertheless end up being taken up by mainstream society. This idea of an ecovillage is nicely formulated in a documentary about the German ecovillage Sieben Linden, where one of the residents comments that what they are doing may be extreme and radical, but that this is actually quite similar to what e.g. the NASA is doing, which is also extreme, but a discovery it made might still end up in mainstream daily life in e.g. the food processor. In a similar way, ideas and experiments in ecovillages on e.g. ecological building methods or decision-making structures may appear "extreme" or "radical", but might end up inspiring the architecture sector or political philosophers, or they might even end up

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in mainstream products or practices. It would be interesting to trace back how ideas, practices and spin-offs that have been incubated in ecovillages as 'radical niches' end up in mainstream society, and how they get 'translated' into mainstream practices (Smith 2006. 2007).

Graph. 6.1: Ecovillage dynamic of social innovation towards societal transformation (source: Iris Kunze)
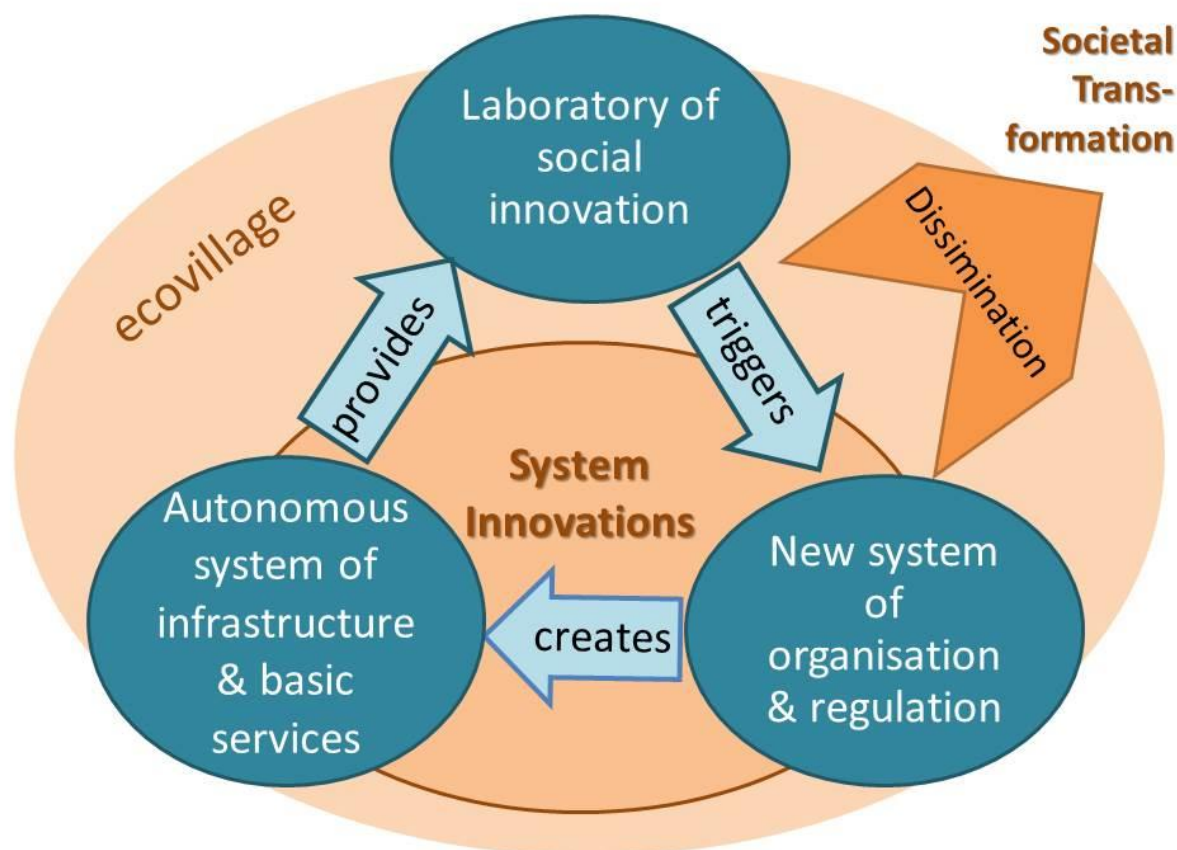
Besides the concept of (radical) niches and regimes, as found in transition theory, we also think it would be interesting to engage with other perspectives in social and political theory. We believe that one particularly interesting question revolves around the issue of 'Utopianism', ideology, and images of the future. Some scholars have discussed ecovillages in terms of "transformative utopianism" (Lockyer 2009). The Tamera ecovillage describes itself as wanting to create a new world, a "Realistic Utopia" (Tamera website). However, given the many challenges that we observe in ecovillages, we would argue that ecovillages as they exist today are not so much utopias, but rather 'heterotopias', i.e. places of 'otherness' and 'heterogeneity' (Foucault 1984), which deviate from mainstream society. Not only are ecovillages socio-spatial heterotopias in terms of creating deviant spaces and community structures, they can also been see in terms of "heterochrony" and "heterotopias of time", as places of temporal heterogeneity in which humans can "break with their traditional time" (1984:6-7), by explicitly engaging with old and 'lost' traditions (e.g. community life, handcrafts, etc.), but also by experiments with futuristic images (e.g. low-tech experiments with e.g. solar energy). Moreover, ecovillages can also be seen as 'geo-political terrains of resistance' (Routledge 1996), where global geo-political struggles are 'fought' at a micro-level, of which several ecovillages are typical examples.

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Interview with Wolfgang Sechser, one of the founders about his and Tempelhof foundation process (history)		http://www.gral.de/aktuell/ohne_anteilnahme_am_naechsten_kann_nichts_nachhaltiges_entstehen	
Vision und Werte etc.		http://www.schloss-tempelhof.de/gemeinschaft/vision-werte/	TH

By journalists/ media

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Ecovillage a model life? In: the Ecologist			http://www.theecologist.org/investigations/society/268714/ecovillages_a_model_life.html	Laura Sevier et al.	EN

Wiler Zeitung, CH	17.July 13	GEN meeting, Schweibenalp, CH, 2013: Seit vier Jahren entwickelt sich in Degersheim das Ökodorf Sennrüti. Weltweit haben sich Ökodörfer in einem Netzwerk (GEN) zusammengeschlossen. Vergangene Woche fand die europäische GEN-Konferenz erstmals in der Schweiz statt. Auch die Degersheimer nahmen teil – und viel mit nach Hause.	http://www.wilerzeitung.ch/ostschweiz/stgallen/wil/wv-fl/Gerechte-friedliche-Welt-ist-moeglich;art119832,3474009	Mario Fuchs	DE
Appenzeller Zeitung	20. July 13	GEN steht für Global Ecovillage Network (globales Ökodorf-Netzwerk). Die Mitglieder nutzen es zum kulturellen und pädagogischen Austausch und zum Transfer von Technologien. GEN Europe wurde 1991 gegründet. In der Schweiz ist die Organisation noch jung – GEN Suisse entstand 2011. Sie besteht derzeit aus vier Mitgliedern: Schweibenalp, Schloss Glarisegg, Clos du Doubs und Ökodorf Sennrüti. Der Vorstand ist mit weiteren 20 bis 25 Projekten bzw. Ökodörfern im Gespräch.	http://www.appenzellerzeitung.ch/ostschweiz/kantonappenzell/auszeitung/at-ap/GEN;art120091,3477031		DE
			http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/what-are-eco-villages/		
local case 1: Schloss Tempelhof/ Germany		main articles listed here, many more under this link:	http://www.schloss-tempelhof.de/service/presse/		
Stuttgarter Zeitung	25. Nov 11		http://www.stuttgarter-zeitung.de/inhalt.schloss-tempelhof-das-experiment-gemeinschaft.e4ef3daa-4373-4188-a759-545f2b11b224.html http://www.reporter-forum.de/index.php?id=22&tx_rfartikel_pi1[showUid]=293&cHash=b2453a03dd91ba27e00a3e37eb8ba83e	Frank Buchmeier	DE
Stuttgarter Zeitung	23. Apr 14		http://www.stuttgarter-zeitung.de/inhalt.schloss-tempelhof-das-hallische-dorf.226312b7-8475-4cc2-bdc9-fd2ca2f8a94a.html	Martin Theis, 23.04.2014	DE
Süddeutsche Zeitung, Magazin	47/2012		http://sz-magazin.sueddeutsche.de/texte/anzeigen/38953	Lars Reichardt	DE
Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung	27. Sep 13		http://www.schloss-tempelhof.de/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Aus-der-neuen-Welt-FAZ-3.pdf		DE
Doku-Film in WDR (west-German television) with famous Reporter Anke Engelke:	19.12.2013		http://www1.wdr.de/mediathek/video/sendungen/menschen_hautnah/videoeinfachglueckeinereisemitankeengelke100_tag-19122013.html	Anke Engelke	DE

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Menschen hautnah, einfach Glück					
Zeitschrift SEIN	Apr 2014	Tempelhof Gemeinschaft - Sekte? Gemeinschaft Tempelhof – Ein Glücksfall	http://www.sein.de/gesellschaft/gemeinschaften/gemeinschaft-tempelhof-ein-gluecksfall-.html	interesting comments to article	DE
Ebi-Woche, rund um gute Biolebensmittel	29. Sep 13	Dorfgemeinschaften und Mehrgenerationenhäuser	http://www.schloss-tempelhof.de/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/130926_ebi.pdf		DE
Südwestpresse	07. Aug 13	Schönheit für den Tempelhof - 100 Landschaftsarchitekten in Schloss Tempelhof	http://www.schloss-tempelhof.de/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/130807_suedwestpresse_schoenheit_fuer_den_tempelhof.pdf		DE
Heimatliebe	03. Sep 13	Ein Dorf gründen Zukunftswerkstatt Schloss Tempelhof – wir wollen anstecken	http://www.schloss-tempelhof.de/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Heimatliebe-2013.9.3.pdf		DE
Evolve	06/ 2015, p.62-63	Nicht-Wissen verbindet. Gemeinschaft als gelebte Vielfalt. Wolfgang Sechser über Schloss Tempelhof im Interview mit Thomas Steininger.		Thomas Steininger	DE

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Annex 2: List of interviews

Interviewee Nr.	Function/role/purpose of interview	date, time, place, duration of Interview	Language	Interviewer
GEN1	president GEN intern. and Europe, based in Findhorn	2014-06-24_12:27h_skype_50 min	EN, DE	IK, skype rec., transcript
GEN1a	president GEN intern. and Europe, based in Findhorn	2014-02-12_ talk on TRANSIT and GEN, local case selection	EN, DE	IK, not rec., notes
GEN2	Findhorn Conference office, (ex ICSA Board member, PhD on co-housing)	2014-07-08_21:09h_GEN, 58 min	EN	IK, FA (rec., notes)
GEN3	GEN international trustee	2014-07-11_17:37h_GEN, 60 min	EN	FA, IK (rec., notes)
GEN4	CASA network Latin America	2014-07-11_21:11h, GEN, 86 min	EN	IK, FA (rec., notes)
GEN5	GEN Europe office, 7Linden, leaving, further making projects in GEN, interested in research collaboration	2014-09-18_12:41h_skype_GEN, 118 min	EN, DE	IK, rec., transcript
TAM1	Tamera, GEN journalist	2014-07-10_17:22h_GEN, 75 min	EN	FA, IK (rec., notes
TAM2	Tamera/ Portuguese Strategy Group	2014-09-25_11:00, Tamera, 105 min	PT	FA (rec., notes)
TAM3	Tamera/ Peace Research Village	2014-09-25_16:00, Tamera, 40 min	EN	FA (rec., notes)
TAM4	Tamera, Aldeia da Luz	2014-09-26_09:00, Tamera, 80 min	EN	FA (rec., notes)
TAM5	Tamera/ co-coordinator of Global Campus	2014-09-26_12:00, Tamera, 42 min	EN	FA (rec., notes)
TAM6	Tamera/ coordinator of the education fund	2014-09-28_08:30, Tamera, 59 min	EN	FA (rec., notes)
TAM7	secretary of the Love School	30.09.14_11:00, Tamera, 92 min	EN	FA (rec., notes)
TAM8	coordinator of the political networking	30.09.14, Tamera, 59 min	EN	FA (rec., notes)
TAM9	long term member, member of the planning circle, coordinator of the Solar Village	30.09.14, Tamera, 40 min	EN	FA (rec., notes)
TAM 10	Tamera/ ecology	01.10.14, Tamera, 59 min	EN	FA (rec., notes)
TH1	managing secretary	2014-06-27_15:44h, TH, 77 min	DE	IK, rec., transcript
TH2	self-employed maintanance worker, permaculture	2014-06-29_14:12h, TH, 48 min	DE	IK, rec., transcript
TH3	WE-process, coach, GEN Germany co-founder	2014-06-30_09:14h, TH, 50+23min,	DE	IK, rec., transcript
TH4	freelancer metall workshop	2014-06-30_11:12h, TH, 63 min	DE	IK, rec., transcript
TH5	founder, PR-manager	2014-06-30_15:44h, TH, 60 min	DE	IK, rec., transcript
TH6	managing secretary	2014-06-30_19:32h, TH, 46+47 min	DE	IK, rec., transcript
TH7	artist	2014-07-02_09:12h, TH, 55+61 min	DE	IK, rec.
TH8	2. maire of the municipality Kressberg (where Tempelhof is part of)	15.09.14: 14.-14:24h, 24 min	DE	Sarah Mitternacht, rec., transcript
TH9	1. maire of the municipality Kressberg (where Tempelhof is part of)	15.09.14, 10:08-11:40h, 32min	DE	Sarah Mitternacht, rec., transcript
TH10	WE-process, coach, inner development, GEN Germany co-founder	Tempelhof, 2014-11-06_12-13h, GEN Germany	DE	IK, rec., notes
TH11	founder, supervisory board, PR-manager, seminar house	Tempelhof, 2014-11-07_11:45-12:45h, historical line of TH	DE	IK, transcribed notes

TH12	founder, supervisory board, more democ. Organisation	Tempelhof, empowerment	DE	IK, notes, not rec.
TH13	learning companion at village school TH	Tempelhof, 2014-11-5, school visit and talks	DE	IK, notes
TH13	learning companion at village school TH	Tempelhof, 2014-11-5, school visit and talks	DE	IK, notes
TH14	16year old pupil at village school, construction work	Tempelhof, 2014-11-5, school visit and talks	DE	IK, notes
TH15	fruit farmer in TH, possib. Manag.trainer, former Tamera-Co-community	Tempelhof, ongoing talks	DE	IK, notes
TH16	former managing board member, guest helper guide, community experiece around ZEGG, Tamera.	Tempelhof, ongoing talks	DE	IK, notes
TH17	elder, 72 years, architect	Tempelhof, Interview, notes	DE	IK, notes
TH18	Community elder, 67 years old	Tempelhof, ongoing talks	DE	IK, field notes

Annex 3: List of meetings and events attended

	Meeting and events attended as part of data collection, dialogues, etc. except the interviews	Purpose of attending	Date and duration	Methods and aim of field research	researcher
1	**Tamera**: participant observation, Seminar Sunday 11.05.14	Portuguese Ecovillage case	May 3-6, 3 days	pre-/ scoping visit	FA
2	**Schloss Tempelhof**, participant observation: talks, village plenary, work in kitchen (4 half day shifts), work in farming (2 half-day shifts), giving a lecture on research project TRANSIT and community research.	German Ecovillage case	June 26 – July 2, 7 days	Pre-/scoping interviews Participant observation and interviews to answer RQ	IK
3	**ZEGG Ecovillage: GEN Europe assembly 2014**: participation in many lecture of the Conference, talks and conversations on e.g. data base research.	GEN as a network	July, 9-12, 5 days	Field research GEN network, interaction with local ecovillages	IK, FA
4	**Dutch Ecovillage Festival** @ Ecovillage "Bergen"	GEN as a whole	Aug. 30	Participant observation	FA
5	**Tamera**: participant observation, including Seminar 28.09.14	Portuguese Ecovillage case	Sept. 24 – Oct. 1, 7 days	Participant observation and interviews to answer RQ	FA
6	**Schloss Tempelhof**, participant observation: Okt.30-Nov.2: attending the symposium "meaningful life" in cooperation with the "Sinnstifung" Nov.2, 15-17h: talk with Peter, Architect, founding member	German Ecovillage case: looking behind the scenes in working, decision making,	Nov.1 - Nov.11, 11 days	Participant observation and interviews to answer RQ	IK

Nov.2: Movie night privately at a members place "(meine (k)eine Familie", Otto Mühl Commune) and discussion with 4 Tempelhof members.	social atmosphere, ecological reality, justice etc.
Nov.3-6: 4 half-day shifts in farming	
Nov.3: participation in the village school meeting of learning coaches (teachers)	
Nov.5: 11:45-12:30h observation in the free village school, Lunch together, 13-14:45h discussion with elder pupils 10-17, 14:45h-16h: talk with 2 learning assistants.	
Nov.6: Coordination circle	
Events like Yoga, sharing circles of guest helpers and "Forschungshütte" (research hut), dozens of talks during meals	