



## NextGEN 2012

*Reported by Ethan Hirsch-Tauber*

In 2012, NextGEN, the youth movement of GEN made several big steps in generating youth specific projects and defining its existing efforts as a unique part of GEN.

At the GEN Europe conference at Krishna Valley, Hungary in July of 2012, preliminary meetings were held, which were intended as follow up from meetings held at the previous year's conference in Tamera 2011. Since only two original attendees came to Hungary, the direction of the meeting was to start again from the beginning. Several sessions of the conference allowed time for introducing NextGEN, including planning the next steps forward. The group decision was that a further meeting is needed to continue efforts in earnest.

From the 5th till 7th of October 2012, NextGEN convened a primarily European meeting in the community of [ZEGG](#), in Bad Belzig, Germany. Over fifty people from ten different countries gathered to discuss further steps and actions of NextGEN following the preliminary meetings in Krishna Valley.

<http://gen-europe.org/about-us/nextgen/nextgen-meeting-in-zegg/index.htm>



The NextGEN ZEGG meeting facilitators used the Dragon Dreaming process developed by John Croft as a way to begin looking at what its members, almost all of who are new to the group, believe NextGEN is. Participants shared their ideas and visions about what NextGEN could be in the future and what would best make the organization able to fulfill their dreams. The next step of the process led to grouping of these ideas into three crucial topics: connections, communication and education. From this process, other areas

emerged, which led to more detailed planning in smaller working groups. NextGEN members now intend to create a new and highly improved website, develop new methods of communication, generate a more effective way for participants to stay connected, and keep the heart-to-heart connections vibrant and alive. One more, great project that emerged during this meeting is a group of inspired NextGENers who plan to ride bicycles to or from the conference in Schweibenalp. After just two short days, attendees left ZEGG inspired, hopeful, and excited to form new friendships and social networks.



At the GEN Africa conference held in December of 2012, one of the greatest accomplishments was the election of the new GEN Africa council, which included two NextGEN representatives. A meeting was held to discuss the interests of the African youth, current efforts in Europe and other parts of the world, and the desire to create a connected international movement. Over 30 people attended the meeting and after the new council members were elected, it seemed clear that there was a lot of energy towards expanding the NextGEN network in Africa. Several countries, such as Ghana, Sudan, Zimbabwe, as well as others have existing youth programs, which seem ready and willing to share their efforts with NextGEN.

Plans continued to develop and shape the idea of a NextGEN EDE in Eastern Congo, to be held ideally in August 2013. The intention is to hold an EDE in Khauzi Biega National Park, with half of the forty attendees being local Congolese and the other half being youth from other African countries and other international locations. Organizers made a site visit to the park and created a proposal for fundraising efforts.



#### **Upcoming projects & events:**

In the upcoming year, NextGEN plans to continue efforts to grow and become a more stable movement, which has reach, but more importantly continuity. One of the key ideas to do this is to connect NextGEN to other existing youth movements to help strengthen and broaden its scope. One key event for the upcoming months will be the annual GEN Europe conference, which will be held in Schweibenalp, Switzerland in 2013. During the GEN conference, NextGEN will hold a parallel conference, which has some overlap, but also

gives time and space for specific development of NextGEN. At this conference, there will also be a chance to bring NextGEN representatives from all regions together to look at the organization from a fully international perspective.

*Ecorasmus/Traveling Youth:*

A group of youth from around the world is traveling to ecovillages with the intention of interviewing youth in an appreciative inquiry process. The group will be handing out evaluations, and then compiling the results and presenting them at two conferences: the International Communal Studies Association (ICSA) conference at Findhorn from June 26-28th, and the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) of Europe general conference in Schweibenalp from July 7-12th.

*StartSomeGood Crowdfunding:*

A group of NextGEN members has created a crowdfunding campaign for the Ecorasmus project that is starting on February 22, 2013. The group aims to raise the funds to allow them to travel to the ecovillages, interview the youth there, and attend the conferences with the intention of presenting about their findings.

<http://startsomegood.com/Venture/ecorasmus>

*Community Travel Caravan:*

Several NextGEN members are currently looking for interested participants to make a road trip between the ICSA and GEN-Europe conferences. The group would visit several intentional communities on the way from Scotland to Switzerland from June 29th-July 7th. The itinerary is still being planned.

*GENOA:*

NextGENOA organizers worked with nine schools in one area of Thailand to bring awareness around climate change. They have taught at four schools already, providing a two to three hour session for each group and school. A slideshow of the Climate Change School Tour Thailand can be viewed at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oFwXNQ3j4aE&feature=youtu.be>

Through teaching and having brainstorm sessions with the children the organizers realized that most saw the planting of trees as a solution. They set up the "1000 Trees Campaign" to collect and plant seeds, clips of which can be seen at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4M5jhlFYVfi>

Sunisa, one of the core NextGENOA organizers is starting an organization called Gaia School Asia. She wishes to work with youth in Asia and support the growth of the NextGEN movement. This organization is intended to allow continuation of work with youth and supporting NextGEN movement and help mentoring NextGENOA. They are still on the process of constructing the organization and website: [www.gaiaschoolasia.com](http://www.gaiaschoolasia.com)



NextGEN at Zegg Photos - *Alfonso Flaquer Carreras*

