

HARVESTING PERSONAL VISIONS TO CREATE A SOCIAL VISION AND VALUES
STATEMENT FOR THE MÕISAMAA ECOLOGICAL COMMUNITY IN ESTONIA

By

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We accept this Final Report as conforming
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Executive Summary

This inquiry harvested the values and visions of the Mõisamaa Ecological Community (MEC) in Estonia to support the creation of a Social Community Values and Vision Statement (SCVVS). Väike Jalajälg is the Estonian name for this community and throughout this report is interchangeable with the acronym MEC. The eco-community Small Footprint (Väike Jalajälg) was founded in 2012 and in August 2014 moved to the current location in Mõisamaa, Märjamaa parish in central Estonia. The MEC is an inter-generational ecological community located in the countryside surrounded by picturesque farmlands and forests. The community inhabits a 100-year-old Estonian manor with twenty-one additional buildings (in disrepair) that they purchased from the government of Estonia. The community manages thirty hectares of farm land that is now organically certified. Most of the members' time to date has gone into making some of the buildings liveable, tending the land, growing food and earning a living. The MEC was formed to create a family-oriented cooperative culture that is ecologically sustainable and resilient.

MEC is a small intentional eco-village community of fifteen adults and five children, embedded in a rural community of a few hundred people. At the time of this inquiry, there were eleven core members, one probationary member, and three long-term guests. This type of community is defined as rural residential as the location is in the countryside surrounded by farmland and forests. Väike Jalajälg is part of the Estonian Ecovillage Network that was founded in 2008 and is a full member of the Global Village Network in Europe.

The mandate for this inquiry was to help individual members and the community as a whole develop their purpose, vision, and plans for the immediate future and align their shared values. The primary purpose of the inquiry was to create an SCVVS for the Väike Jalajälg community. “*Purpose* is of ultimate concern. The purpose is a deep source of meaning, the reason we are alive; it generates energy and life direction” (Hudson, 1999, p. 187). To accomplish this end required an expanded view of the main purpose: To engage MEC members in a reflective process about why they chose to live at Väike Jalajälg. How does each member live their daily life at Väike Jalajälg? What does each member envision for their personal future and their community? What changes could each member make to self-actualize and become a transformational community leader? What changes does the community need to make to become a resilient, sustaining community in which loving-kindness (Baker & O’Mally, 2008) is the guiding principle?

The overarching inquiry question of this research project was: “How could the development of an SCVVS foster the growth of the MEC in Estonia?

The sub-questions that were addressed to answer the overarching question were:

1. What are the values, visions, experiences, successes, hopes, needs and wishes of individuals within the MEC for themselves and their broader community?
2. How do community members make changes so they can align their common values and socially-agreed-upon ways of behaving and relating?
3. What processes and practices would foster individual, interpersonal and community collaboration for the MEC?
4. What examples of innovation and culture change in other communities could serve as social models for MEC and influence the change strategy and recommendations?

The inquiry was broadly based and considered the following community themes: Community diversity, communications, group process skills, conflict resolution, self-leadership, interpersonal

relationships, community relationships, personal values and visions, community values and visions, system of governance, community development, community ownership, personal responsibility, and participation in the MEC community.

The emergence of ecovillages around the world began to increase in the 1970's (Bates, 2003; Christian, 2007); and by the turn of the century, the Global Ecovillage Network(GEN) had cataloged thousands of ecovillages. Christian (2003, p. 27)) gave a list of the major ecological communities worldwide till 2003. In 2001, GEN obtained consultative status at the United Nations Economic and Social Council. "The Global Ecovillage Network envisions a world of empowered citizens and communities, designing and implementing their pathways to a sustainable future, and building bridges of hope and international solidarity" (See GEN Vision, Mission, Goals, para. 1). GEN's overarching mission statement guides the MEC vision and goals. People around the world are seeking social justice, a sense of place, increased human connection, a feeling of belonging and living in harmony through loving kindness with all life forms.

Waerther (2014) stated that "shared principles are the key factor that keeps a community together. As the basis for community life, these are the unifying themes the community members commit to, despite diversity in individual values and priorities" (Sect. Reconceptualising Sustainability in Ecovillages). A clearly defined unifying values and vision statement (Stringer, 2014, pp. 192–193) for the MEC will identify common intentions, values, and visions to establish the commitment necessary to facilitate a more harmonious, loving and effectual community. The MEC members have realized that vision and values agreements are important, as stated by Levine (2009, pp. 161-169). Jaffe and Tobe (1993) stated that values are the root of all learning (p. 23) and that values exemplify the deepest and most powerful motivators of personal action (p. 22).

Barrett (2006) and Jaffe & Tobe (1993, p. 25) advocated a model in which *individual* personal values and beliefs *precede* establishing group values. Senge (2006) declared that a person's vision should be consistent with the values that people live by on a daily basis (pp. 207-208). Kleiner (2014) stated that "communities which support a well-defined vision stand out as being more harmonious and better functioning." "As people work toward a collective vision that clarifies the nature of the problems that have brought them together, they gain a greater understanding of the complexities of the situation in which they are enmeshed" (Stringer, 2014, p. 192). Spending relational time with other community members is essential to sustainability and was an ongoing theme in this inquiry. "Relationships are the very heart and soul of an organization's ability to get any job done" (Short, 1998, p. 15), (Senge, 2006, p. 372).

A qualitative action research approach was used to align the action research cycle (Coghlan & Brannick, 2012, p. 24) with an appreciative inquiry approach (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2008). The inquiry process was guided by the working principles of relationships, communications, participation and inclusion (Stringer, 2014, pp. 23-33). The inquiry used a mixed methods approach in its research design (Creswell, 2016A), and "promote[d] an ethical and humanistic approach to change, which saw learning and involvement as being the key processes for achieving behavioral change" (Burke, Lake & Paine, 2009, p. 244).

The eleven core members of MEC responded to the survey. The survey shed light on the degree of alignment and congruency between each member's values and vision for themselves and their community. The survey harvested valuable data to inform the community SCVVS and the Retreat. The survey design and the overall inquiry required a thoughtful and well-resourced understanding of community values and visioning; what Coghlan and Brannick (2010) call "Learning by Design" (pp. 72-73). The survey data analysis (Glesne, 2011, p. 188) generated the foundational data for this inquiry and was an insightful doorway into preparing for the Retreat.

In July 2016, a 5-day Retreat was held for the 11 core members of the MEC plus one long-term member; and including diversity was a priority (Bunker & Alban, 2006, p. 336). The Retreat took place in an Estonian Manor home fifty kilometers from Mõisamaa. In August 2016, fourteen members of the MEC attended the reflective learning circle (Adlam, 2014), (Baldwin, 1998), (Baldwin & Linnea, 2010), (Kolb, 1984). This Organizational Leadership Project (OLP) was influenced by the ethical code recommended by Howard and Korver (2008) and Wiles (2012) and by the ethical qualities suggested by (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002, pp.19-31), and (Gardner, 1995, pp. 308-309). The Social Vision & Values Statement (SCVVS) would establish common values and agreed upon ethical behaviors. These would speak to respect, dignity, honoring, reverence and consideration for self and other community members.

The study findings were based on a survey, a 5-day Retreat, and a reflective learning circle. The survey used both quantitative and qualitative data gathering methods. The qualitative data from the survey, Retreat and reflective learning circle were unitized, analyzed, and grouped into themes. Key statements by participants from the survey, Retreat, and reflective learning circle were included in the findings, conclusions, and recommendations. The primary aim of my data analysis was to identify and distil information that represented the viewpoints and experiences of all community participants (Stringer, p. 139).

The data were analyzed, coded, and themed, which resulted in the following six findings:

1. The MEC would benefit from valuing, appreciating, harvesting and including community diversity.
2. The MEC members would benefit from improving their interpersonal and group process communications, and their conflict resolution skills.
3. The MEC members would benefit from improving their interpersonal and group process relationships to create a heartfelt learning community. The MEC would benefit by addressing gender issues that are disrespectful.
4. Community members will need to create an SCVVS that aligns personal values and visions with community values and visions.
5. The MEC will need to review and improve their system of governance and find common ground between the individual and collective orientation and consciousness of members.
6. The MEC members will need to clarify the meaning of community ownership, personal responsibility, and participation in the SCVVS.

The critical elements of the findings were as follows:

- The community is still learning how to include and embrace all community members and accepts each other's uniqueness (Scharmer, 2009, p. 217); Weisbord (2012, p. 205).
- Members would be advised to improve their communication skills, conflict resolution skills (Rosenberg, 2003), and relating skills to create a heartfelt learning community.

- Aligning community values and visions will take time as members address the many social issues that arise when living cooperatively in a newly formed community.
- The MEC would also benefit from addressing gender issues (Estés, 1992).

The following six conclusions were developed as a result of these findings:

1. The community would benefit from spending more time as a whole community working and playing together to develop connection and intimacy between community members.
2. MEC members would benefit from improving their interpersonal and group process communication as well as their conflict resolution skills by participating in communication workshops, training, or personal and professional learning opportunities.
3. Members would benefit from taking more time for personal development and interpersonal relationships by being together as a community and using the practice of loving-kindness for self and others; putting more time and energy into the children's education and school with support from all community members inside and outside the classroom; and building mutual trust by establishing a common understanding of the meaning of respect.
4. Community members took their first steps toward creating an SCVVS that aligned personal values and visions with community values and visions.
5. The community would benefit from considering a new cultural paradigm regarding the amount of work, play, relaxation, personal development, reflection time and self-care members need. The community would also benefit from considering ways to improve the methodology of Sociocracy for community decision-making.
6. Members would benefit from coming to a consensus on what community ownership, personal responsibility, and participation mean when living in the MEC, and with this understanding actively participate in everyday community life. The MEC would also benefit from hosting learning circles to discuss authenticity, cooperation, transparency, teamwork, and collaboration.

The following six recommendations emerged from analyzing the associated literature and the findings and conclusions of the study. They are:

1. Each member spends time with every other community member. Community members creatively align their differences so the community can move as a unit. Members share their gifts, talents, and expertise generously. Members partake in daily community rituals and learn about embodied practices to discover their authentic selves.
2. Community members take courses to become skilled facilitators, counselors, therapists, educators, and leaders. Through joint consultation among all members, the community formulates a strategy for ensuring the community has qualified expertise in facilitation, communications, healing, touch, education, therapy, and counseling, so the community is self-sufficient and resilient. As the community grows, it can consider welcoming new members with specific skill sets such as trades personnel, doctors, dentists, nurses, etc.
3. Develop a rotating buddy system for all community administrative positions, and ensure that every member spends time working alongside every other member during the course of one year (Succession Planning). Make Gaia education a central theme in the daily life of the community. Create regular heart circles, women's circles, and men's circles, and make all three circles a community priority.
4. Community members continue to work on creating a Social Vision & Values Statement (SCVVS) that aligns personal values and visions with community values and visions.
5. The community considers gradually moving toward a gift economy. The MEC examines more closely the quality of daily living that members would like, including slowing down the process and enjoying the fruits of members' labors. Members give thanks for the blessings in their lives, the people, and the land that supports them. The MEC looks to the future and makes

wise decisions on its rate of expansion. MEC members actively pursue developing an SCVVS in 2017 and integrate the SCVVS into the Väike Jalajälg Ecovillage “Small Footprint” document. MEC members create a working and living environment for life-supporting endeavors (see Appendix E). The MEC develops an implementation plan that is regularly reviewed and updated.

6. Members need to decide if they want to live in Väike Jalajälg, and if they do, commit 100% to the advancement and purpose of their community. Having made the commitment, then collaborate with other members regarding what community ownership means, being a responsible MEC member, and how each member intends to participate and contributes to their community.

The critical elements from these recommendations were: MEC members are learning how to take care of themselves so they can live a healthy, balanced, creative and inspired life. Care for the children and their education needs further consideration and attention. I recommend that the MEC take more time to celebrate life and have fun. Singing and dancing and the engagement of many embodied practices (Appendices K and I) will serve the community well in the future. Embodied practices are the life force to create leadership aliveness, presence, meaningful change and loving connection (Frazier, 2012), (Hamill, 2013, p. 213), (Laslow, 2012), (Melina, 2013), (Ropo & Parviainen, 2001), (Walsh, 2012). The inquiry introduced in its recommendations an improved approach to community group process that uses a spiral within a learning circle as a system of governance (See Appendix G). This process fosters iterative emotional learning that harvests the wisdom of group chaos (Surowiecki, 2004).

This action research inquiry process and the report recommendations will also impact other ecological communities in Estonia, as well as intentional ecological communities elsewhere. The project will develop an understanding of the settings, the social dynamics, the key people, the nature and purposes of the community, the organizational structure, and the quality of relationships between and among individuals and groups (Stringer, 2014, p. 85). This Organizational Leadership Project (OLP) Report will be sent to all community members who participated in the study.

This inquiry focused on human social interaction: how can people live, work and play harmoniously together, harvest their differences and turn them into relational gold? The research documented members’ experiences, insights, feelings, thoughts and ideas for building common values and trust to help cultivate community. The inquiry helped identify community behaviors that fostered community well-being; that supported daily life routines and practices, interpersonal communications, relational interactions, and group dynamics among members of the MEC; and that facilitated more harmonious community living. As well, the inquiry encouraged MEC members to ask themselves penetrating questions about who they are and how they would like to live with others in their community.

The initial finding of the inquiry was about diversity and inclusion: when a community member looks into the eyes of another member, they are seeing an aspect of themselves that is reflected back to them. “The observer is the observed.” (Krishnamurti, 1946). What you see is you, and you are what you see. Living cooperatively in an ecovillage behooves an open heart, reflective listening, kindness, gratitude and embracing every community member.

This inquiry also identified behaviors that were not conducive to community coherence.

The social aspects of the MEC vision and mission statement, Ecovillage “Small Footprint” (Appendix E), briefly describe how members are committed to and in service to all four landscapes of service: personal, interpersonal, community and the community of humankind (Appendix I). The recommendations from this inquiry expand on the MEC vision and mission statement.

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I dedicate this Organizational Action Project to those who are committed to living a life well-lived. To those who choose to lead from the heart with loving kindness, practice gratitude in each moment and intentionally locate themselves at the center of any change process.

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Chapter One: Focus and Framing

This inquiry harvested the values and visions of the Mõisamaa Ecological Community (MEC) in Estonia to support the creation of a Social Community Values and Vision Statement (SCVVS). Väike Jalajälg (<https://www.facebook.com/vaiketalajalg/>) is the Estonian name for this community and throughout this report is interchangeable with the acronym ‘MEC. Väike Jalajälg is part of the Estonian Ecovillage Network (<http://www.kogukonnad.ee/>) that was founded in 2008 and is a full member of the Global Village Network in Europe (See GEN Europe).

The inquiry gathered data from individual core community members as to their personal values and visions for themselves and those they aspired to for their beloved community. In the recommendations to this inquiry, additional suggestions will be made to the minimal preliminary implementation plan established at the Retreat in July, 2016. The inquiry illuminated and identified the ways in which harmony could be fostered and social conflict could be addressed by the MEC. The Mõisamaa community ‘Small Footprint’ vision and mission guide (Appendix E) gave a cursory social outline on how the community could align their beliefs and actions, facilitate conflict resolution when needed, to facilitate community cohesion. This inquiry focused on human social interaction: how can people live, work and play harmoniously together, harvest their differences and turn them into relational gold? The research documented members’ experiences, insights, feelings, thoughts and ideas for building common values, and trust to help cultivate community.

In MEC’s first two years of operation, the community members minimally focused on or addressed issues related to social interactions and behaviors between members. The community was busy forming and attending to practical tasks and issues that required their attention. There were some guidelines to support conflict resolution (Appendix E), but without well formed and

established relational and communication practices that were mutually understood and agreed by all members.

THE ECO-COMMUNITY SMALL FOOTPRINT (VÄIKE JALAJÄLG) WAS FOUNDED IN 2012 AND IN AUGUST 2014 MOVED TO THE CURRENT LOCATION IN MÕISAMAA, MÄRJAMAA PARISH IN central Estonia. The community managed THIRTY HECTARES OF LAND AND inhabited a 100-year-old Estonian Manor with twenty-one additional dilapidated buildings they purchased from the government of Estonia. Most of the member's time to date has gone into making some of the buildings livable, tending the land and earning a living, either from small business operations within the community or by travelling away to continue their work life before moving into the MEC. "Forming a rural community involves more variables than other kinds of communities (for example, how members might make a living)" (Christian, 2003, p. xviii).

MEC is a small intentional ecovillage community of 15 adults and five children, embedded in a rural community of a few hundred people. At the time of this inquiry there were eleven core members, one probationary member and three long-term guests. This type of community is defined as rural residential as the location is in the countryside surrounded by farmland and forests. MEC is committed to working together collaboratively. The community is open to new ideas; their learning culture is curious about life (Short, 1998, pp. 10–11) and the ways leadership can serve them individually and as a community.

THE MAIN AIM OF THE MÕISAMAA COMMUNITY IS TO DEVELOP AN ECO-COMMUNITY THAT IS A HOLISTIC MODEL OF SUSTAINABILITY. THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPED A TRAINING AND VISITOR CENTRE, ORGANIC GARDENS AND FARMING, HOSTS events and has a small Gaia elementary school (See Gaia Education).

In the summer of 2014, ten members of MEC came to a one-week leadership training program I co-facilitated in Estonia. In 2015, three more community members attended a similar

training I co-facilitated in Finland. They appreciated learning and embodying some of the key leadership practices that are essential for readiness for organizational change and personal transformation. I was deeply touched by my experiences as I saw community member's transform and self-realize. In 2015, I lived in MEC for six weeks and in 2016, I was there for a similar time. My role in the inquiry process was as a partial insider action research consultant. The overarching working inquiry question was: how could the development of an SCVVS foster the growth of MEC in Estonia?

The sub-questions that were addressed to answer the overarching question were:

1. What are the values, visions, experiences, successes, hopes, needs and wishes of individuals within the MEC for themselves and their broader community?
2. How do community members make changes so they can align their common values and socially agreed-upon ways of behaving and relating?
3. What processes and practices foster individual, interpersonal and community collaboration for the MEC?
4. What examples of innovation and culture change in other communities could serve as social models for MEC, influence the change strategy and recommendations?

The Mõisamaa Organizational Leadership Project (OLP) followed in Lewin's (1947) perspective and "promote[d] an ethical and humanistic approach to change, which saw learning and involvement as being the key processes for achieving behavioral change" (Burke, Lake & Paine, 2009, p. 244).

Significance of the Inquiry

The need and opportunity were to formulate a sociological (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sociology>) values and vision statement for MEC. Waerther (2014) said that "shared principles are the key factor that keeps a community together. As the basis for community life, these are the unifying themes the community members commit to,

despite diversity in individual values and priorities” (Sect. Reconceptualising Sustainability in Ecovillages). With a limited social values and vision statement that clearly delineated community relational behavior, MEC was running into conflictual difficulties. These issues highlighted the need for this inquiry, and to use a consultative process to harvest member’s needs, insights, values, visions, and preferences. One of the four main goals for the MEC initiative was “We create a laboratory for relationships and cooperation” (Appendix E, p. 185, p. 187). This section needed development in the MEC mission and vision statement. The SCVVS will develop and contribute a significant missing piece that will align community behavior, values, and visions. A clearly defined unifying values and vision statement (Stringer, 2014, pp. 192–193) for the MEC will identify common intentions, values, and visions as well as incongruence to establish the commitment necessary to facilitate a more harmonious, loving and effectual community.

The findings and recommendations that come from this inquiry will weave into an implementation plan with procedures, and timeframes for periodic reviews. The MEC have realized that vision and values agreements are important and this is supported by Levine (2009, pp. 161–169). “Agreements define how you coordinate the activities of people working together – how they collaborate, and collaboration is the foundation of any accomplishment!” (p. 162). “If efficient front-end agreements and resolution processes are created at the beginning of a project, they will keep a team focused on goals” (p. 57).

The core members of the MEC have recognized that for their community to thrive, it is vital to establish a comprehensive SCVVS. This project is necessary because in the first year of operation some community relationships changed and this created stress, trauma, and uncertainties for community members. The SCVVS would establish common values and agreed upon ethical behaviors. These would speak to respect, dignity, honoring, reverence and consideration for self and other community members. The change goal of this inquiry is to

support the creation of a community SCVVS. The mandate of this inquiry is to help individual members and the community as a whole find their purpose, vision, plans for the immediate future and align shared values. “*Purpose* is of ultimate concern. Purpose is a deep source of meaning, the reason we are alive; it generates energy and life direction” (Hudson, 1999, p. 187). This OLP illuminated members’ understanding of personal values and vision, and community values and vision. There will be an opportunity for each member to contribute to the process; improve their leadership personal abilities and develop their community leadership skill-sets.

Differences in beliefs and perceptions among community members are natural and to be expected. The community is familiar with learning circles (Baldwin & Linnea, 2010) and the spiral group convening process (Adlam, 2014) to support harvesting the values and visions of all stakeholders. There is a high probability that this process will enhance agreement between members. If there are dissenting voices, then the spiral group process within a circle will need to address that issue, before they can move forward. A consequence of not addressing this opportunity for change could be unhealthy interpersonal relationships, and an inability to resolve conflicts and challenges. The community would lose its cohesion, goodwill between members and deconstruct.

The benefits to participants from this inquiry would be greater awareness, aliveness, and wakefulness. As future leaders, they would better serve their community. This OLP will help MEC evolve as a community. The intention of this inquiry is to reduce suffering through facilitating human relationships that create lives well lived, equality and justice in the community and having healthy life-enhancing daily experiences. When there is no separation between self and others, life becomes meaningful, balanced and enjoyed.

Organizational Context

An undeveloped general vision for the community exists for practical matters (See Appendix E). The success of any community is dependent upon wholesome human relationships.

In July 2016, the MEC were in a five-day group process retreat to establish the concerns and interests of community members and to develop a SCVVS. The MEC community is aware that creating an SCVVS is essential to the survival and well-being of their community. Similar to Follett (1919), this inquiry recognized that community is a process. Creating a SCVVS would be an on-going process.

This research topic increased the level of knowledge and understanding for each MEC member of both their personal values and vision and the desired one being sought for their community. This opportunity generated greater energy, motivation, and the potential for positive change to occur within individuals and the community. The process identified and developed the core competencies required to facilitate the community to function at its best, to collaborate effectively, and solve issues together.

Bringing out the very best from a diverse group of individuals can be challenging, and requires a subtle mix of compassionate support, sensitivity and insight. This transforms and aligns divergent viewpoints and competing interests into agreed solutions.

Systems Analysis of the Inquiry

An appreciative inquiry approach focused primarily on the successes people already had within MEC, integrated with a curiosity about what is in the way, is the way. Together these processes can create fertile ground for change. There is a common understanding by the core Mõisamaa stakeholders of the value of this OLP and the need for this inquiry. The inquiry addressed some of the issues that have surfaced living in the community and shed light on how to address them. The inquiry helped identify community behaviors that fostered community well-being; supported daily life routines and practices, interpersonal communications, relational interactions, group dynamics among members of the MEC, and facilitated more harmonious community living. This inquiry also identified behaviors that were not conducive to community coherence. The change goal the community would like to address was to agree upon and align

common values and socially agreed upon ways of behaving so members could live more harmoniously together and build community resilience.

“Relationships are the very heart and soul of an organization’s ability to get any job done” (Short, 1998, p. 15). Spending relational time with other community members is essential to sustainability. Life enhancing sustainability was the purpose of this inquiry, for both individual members and for the Mõisamaa community. All organizations and businesses need to develop interpersonal relationships especially during the developmental stage of a community forming. This inquiry provided a social focus and forum for the community to spend learning and growing time together. It is not possible to build a plane while flying it. Two of the social forces driving change are uncertainty and as yet undefined acceptable community relational behavior. When ‘in common’ social acceptable behaviors have not been clearly identified, there is conflict, undermining community cohesion, community members are upset, compromising the quality of daily community living. Without a common agreed SCVVS, trust between community members was undermined. Lack of trust affects the daily life of members and the economic well-being of the community. “Trusting is an open process, and any high-trust group can’t help but be open to highly unpredictable and emergent outcomes” (Dimock & Kass, 2007, p. 26). Taking mindful and heartfelt risks into the relational unknown, gives birth to new ways of being and relating, strengthening inner trust and confidence in community.

One of the cultural and structural forces driving change appears to originate from how women and men interact socially. Part of this inquiry explored and supported the MEC to define social guidelines for socially acceptable gender behavior. Stakeholders began to document their social vision and values statement by completing the survey, retreat engagement and reflective learning circle inquiry. The community can now proceed as they move forward to work together to come up with and document a joint community social vision and values vision and statement. Now some of the initial social factors that were important to community members are identified

for a SCVVS, the MEC can begin to hone their statement of intent, way of being and embodiment practices, and concurrently determine an on-going implementation plan.

The major factor influencing the resistance to change in the MEC is fear, originating from issues of safety, survival originating from past woundings that need healing; personal, interpersonal, family of origin, community and cultural. Members expressed a quietness and uncertainty, stemming from hundreds of years of foreign occupation in their country; because their lives were always under duress from occupational forces. Twenty-five years ago Estonia became independent. Independence created opportunities for increased openness and change, especially in the under fifty population. This inquiry addressed how this resistance to change showed up, personally, in a group, the community, and culture-wise.

This action research (AR) inquiry process and the report recommendations will impact other ecological communities in Estonia and intentional ecological communities elsewhere. The project developed an understanding of the settings, social dynamics, key people, the nature of the community, the purposes, the organizational structure and the quality of relationships between and among individuals and groups (Stringer, 2014, p. 85). He suggested on entering the field, pay close attention to establishing contact, identifying stakeholders and key people, establish a role as a process consultant, plan an agenda, stance, and position (pp. 76-82). Scharmer (2009) suggested inclusion is a key factor in readiness for change to influence “greater stakeholder understanding of how their ‘actions may influence the whole system’” (p. 217). Weisbord (2012) suggested the quickest way to empower people was to ‘get the whole system in the room’ (p. 205), and establish a collaborative endeavor that provided common ground and conditions for favorable community outcomes (Weisbord & Janoff, 2010, p. 42). Weisbord (2012) theorized that learning from experience (pp. 203-205) meant making systems thinking experiential (p. 303). That is why embodiment practices are the life force to create leadership aliveness,

presence, meaningful change and loving connection. Mental models and thinking are the discerning administrators that nourish an embodied leader.

Chapter Summary

The MEC was formed to create a family-oriented and ecologically sustainable lifestyle. “Finding community is as critical as obtaining food and shelter since the need to belong is what makes us human” (<http://www.newsociety.com/Books/C/Creating-a-Life-Together>).

The project sponsor was Liina Järviste who conceived the community with Riinu Lepa in 2011. They were then joined by other people who were also interested in creating and intentional ecological community. A considerable amount of time was spent searching for the property. In 2013, they responded to an Estonian Government sale of old manors. The Mõisamaa property, with twenty-one buildings on it and considerable farmland, was previously a government-run home for the elderly and infirm that became too costly to operate. The MEC purchased the land in September 2014, and the core members are on title. They are a debt free community and own the property outright. Approximately fifteen adults, five children, and two volunteers moved to the community and became full-time residents in the fall of 2014. The growing broader community of about 200 people and prospective community members attend events and contribute to monthly community work bees.

“As people work toward a collective vision that clarifies the nature of the problems that have brought them together, they gain a greater understanding of the complexities of the situation in which they are enmeshed” (Stringer, 2014, p. 192)

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

The overarching working inquiry question was: how could the development of an SCVVS foster the growth of the MEC in Estonia? The intention for this organizational action research project was to initiate a reflective community dialogue to begin formulating an SCVVS that was additionally shaped by data gathered from community members.

The literary review explored four areas relevant to the inquiry.

- Intentional ecological communities
- Community social values and vision statements
- Individual embodied practices that foster leadership traits that impregnate and cultivate authenticity and presence
- Community embodiment practices that engender support, appreciation, gratitude, generosity, kindness, caring, inclusion, respect, collaboration, trust, cohesion, resilience, sustainability and effective loving communications between MEC members.

Intentional Ecological Communities

Ecovillages (see <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecovillage>) are intentionally shared living communities whose goal is to become more socially, economically and ecologically sustainable. This research project used Christian (2003) hypothesis that ecovillages are a form of intentional community (p. 5). Van Schyndel Kasper (2008) gave a general definition that eco-village members were united by shared ecological, social-economic and cultural-spiritual values. Bates (2003) suggested, "...ecovillages work from the bottom up, making individual lifestyle change the cornerstone of global transformation—a sustainable balance of human and ecological needs" (p. 26). The Global Ecological Network (GEN) said, "...ecovillages are now being created intentionally, so people can once more live in communities that are connected to the Earth in a

way that ensures the well-being of all life-forms into the indefinite future” (See GEN, What is an Ecovillage, para. 2).

“Ecovillages today are typically small communities with a tightly-knit social structure united by common ecological, social, or spiritual views” (Bates, 2003, p. 27). GEN described an ecovillage as, “an intentional or traditional community using local participatory processes to holistically integrate ecological, economic, social, and cultural dimensions of sustainability in order to regenerate social and natural environments” (See GEN, What is an Ecovillage, para. 1). The ecovillage movement has been blessed with diversity, so ecovillages come in many shapes, forms and sizes. Huigen, Meijering and Hoven (2006) categorized intentional communities into four areas; religious, ecological, communal and practical communities (pp. 44–46). The MEC in Estonia has elements of the ecological, communal and practical as defined by Huigen, Meijering and Hoven.

The global village network of intentional communities has its roots going back to small hunter-gather bands: “99 percent of our history as a species has been spent in groups of 15 to 50 individuals where each knew all of the others, and where resources were shared in a *gift economy*” (Richard Heinberg, as cited in Christian, Forward, 2007, p. xii). The emergence of ecovillages around the world began to increase in the 1970’s (Bates, 2003). Robert and Diane Gilman (1983 – 1995) publish stories and interviews in their journal, In Context, that catalyzed theories, ideas, the herstory of communal living communities and gave insight into the fast growing ecological movement (See Context Institute). They described ecovillages as a living way to create a more sustainable and resilient culture. In 1987 Ross and Hildur Jackson created the charitable Gaia Foundation (<http://www.gaiafoundation.org/>) to support the development of ecovillages. Gaia means goddess of the earth.

In September 1991, Gaia Trust brought together people from eco-communities to discuss strategies for further developing the ecovillage concept. “This led to a series of additional

meetings to form national and international networks of ecovillages, and a decision, in 1994, to formalize networking and project development under the auspices of a new organization, the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) (Bates, 2003, p. 27). GEN supports and encourages the evolution of sustainable settlements worldwide with information and networking. (See Global Village Network)

In October 1995, Gaia Trust and the Findhorn Foundation co-sponsored the first international conference, “Ecovillages and Sustainable Communities—Models for the 21st Century,” held at Findhorn in Scotland. After the conference, GEN held a formative meeting and organized three worldwide administrative regions: Europe and Africa; Asia and Oceania; and the Americas (Bates, 2003, p. 28).

By the turn of the 21st century, GEN had cataloged thousands of ecovillages, and Christian (2003) gave a list of the major ecological communities worldwide till 2003 (p.27) (See Appendix H). GEN also made the ecovillage concept heard in the corridors of government. By 2001, GEN had obtained consultative status at the United Nations Economic and Social Council. “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” (See GEN Vision, Mission, Goals, para. 1). This is the overarching mission statement that guides their vision and goals. People around the world are seeking social justice, a sense of place, increased human connection, a feeling of belonging and living in harmony through loving kindness with all life forms. “Ecovillages are now providing both an individual vessel and a cultural vehicle for rapid evolutionary transformation” (See Ecovillage Roots, para. 20).

How does MEC fit into this ecovillage overview, sustain a transformative process, become a leader in the evolving ecovillage movement and create a new culture? A culture that has not existed before and is unique to this group of people, this time and this place! The social

and philosophic orientation of the MEC is well described by Christian (2003) when she said, “the people interested in intentional communities aren’t extremists. They’re the people next door. Many are in their 40s and 50s; they’ve raised families, built careers” (p. 18) and they have regular jobs inside and outside the community.

The MEC is an inter-generational intentional ecological community located in a rural area. Some studies (Huigen, Meijering & Hoven, 2006; Halfacree, 2006), have referred to these communities as withdrawing from mainstream society. This study appreciatively viewed the MEC with having an intention to live a fuller life in harmony with people and nature and to create a new culture. The community welcomes visitors, offers programs, events, celebrations, and dances to people residing outside the community. Community members participate in programs in their local community, nationally and internationally and see themselves as integral members in all of these regions. The social aspects of their vision and mission statement, Ecovillage “Small Footprint” (Appendix E), briefly described how they are committed to and in service to all four landscapes of service: personal, interpersonal, community and the community of humankind (See Appendix I). The recommendations to the MEC from this inquiry will offer further possibilities of how they can be of greater service to themselves and to others.

The MEC has used Sociocracy (See Sociocracy 1) as a governance model, as a way to self-organise, cooperate, and to accomplish shared objectives. “Sociocracy is a system of governance using consent decision making [different from consensus] and an organizational structure based on cybernetic principles (a system with closed feedback mechanisms)” (para. 1). Sociocracy has four defining principles for dynamic governance, consent, circles, feedback loops (double linking), and election by consent (<http://thesociocracygroup.com/home/basic-principles/4-principles/>). Sociocracy originated as a business management system that distributed leadership and power throughout an organization. Sociocracy is a corporate, capital based business model that is not rooted in a cooperative community setting. Schaub (2014) had eight

major reservations about using Sociocracy as a governance model for cooperative group dynamics. The number one reason he gave was that Sociocracy “does not address emotional input” (para. 6) and therefore is not an “integrated model of working with the whole person (rational, emotional, intuitive, kinesthetic, spiritual)” (para. 9). Honoring emotions and feelings in group processes are complex matters that need consideration. That is why this inquiry is so important to MEC to recognize the importance of feelings and emotions in group dynamics and find wholesome ways incorporate them. For now, MEC uses this method of governance that has many merits for governing and decision-making.

This inquiry hopes to advance, and introduced in its recommendations, an improved approach to community group process that uses a spiral, within a learning circle as a system of governance (See Appendix G) to include emotions and feelings. Also, this inquiry documented how the process of governance is enhanced through embodiment practices (See Appendix K), individually and collectively, to initiate change in human behavior and foster iterative emotional learning that harvests the wisdom of group chaos (See Appendix G).

The MEC set four main goals for their community: to create an ecologically sustainable village, to share effective social and economic solutions, to offer open learning and experiential space, and to create a laboratory for relationships and cooperation. These are in alignment with GEN’s guiding principles for an intentional ecological community. “The Ecovillage Design Education (EDE) trains ecological educators in “the full spectrum of design considerations for implementing truly sustainable communities. The curriculum focuses on the social, the cultural/worldview, economy and ecology, as four dimensions that all need to be addressed in a holistic approach to sustainability” (See Gaia Education, para. 3).

The MEC Gaia School is an important part of the community and is affiliated with the central Gaia School in the capital, Tallinn (See Gaia School, Estonia). The MEC elementary school integrates Gaia education with the official Estonian state curriculum. The educational

intention for the MEC elementary school is to inspire the children to realize their unique potential, to fulfill their dreams and follow their bliss.

What is different in our school is the way we teach. Freedom and responsibility - these are the keywords of our teaching process. We believe that children should be free to make their own choices and everybody should be encouraged to discover his or her talents. At the same time, we admit that freedom without responsibility is chaos. Our aim is to give children the freedom to choose and the understanding of responsibility (See Gaia School, Estonia, p. 5).

The children's Gaia Education (<HTTP://GEN-EUROPE.ORG/PARTNERS/GAIA-EDUCATION/INDEX.HTM>) integrates the principles and philosophy of the Gaia Education program for adults. Gaia Education was created by a group of educators called "GEESE" (Global Ecovillage Educators for a Sustainable Earth) (para. 1). Gaia Education is partners with GEN.

The MEC is a member of GEN Europe and the Baltic Ecovillage Network (BEN) (<https://www.facebook.com/BalticEcovillageNetwork/>) and aligned with their vision, mission, and goals of cultivating trust and solidarity with all communities. "GEN builds networks of friendship, hope, and mutual understanding in order to heal the past and move towards global consciousness and global intercultural citizenship together." (See GEN Vision, Mission, Goals, para. 4). MEC's mission statement stated: "our goal is to create a working and living environment that is a space for conscious and brave living, learning and testing. It is an ecovillage where we commit to co-creating sustainable life by valuing the care of Earth and people" (See Appendix E).

Values and Visions, Personal and Community

Personal Values

Values provide the social landscape within which we live. The members of MEC in choosing to live in an intentional community sought to connect with other people who wanted to

help them in their daily life while aspiring to nurture and nourish themselves. Living life as a collaborative family creates a sense of wellbeing, aliveness, invites co-creative possibilities, nurturance, and a feeling of belonging that are all life sustaining. A person's values define the nature of the way they relate with self and with others.

"Values represent an organizing principle for our lives, as well as for an organization.

What is most important to us to accomplish, and to do, at work, in our family and in our personal life and career, can be described in relation to the values we want to achieve"

(Jaffe & Tobe, 1993, p. 22).

More profoundly Jaffe and Tobe, 1993 described values as being at the root of all learning (p. 23), and values exemplified the deepest and most powerful motivators of personal action (p. 22). Barrett (2006) advocated a model in which individual personal values and beliefs precede establishing group values and Jaffe & Tobe (1993) supported this approach. "First we clarify our values for ourselves, and then for our team and organization" (p. 25). This inquiry applied this understanding and supported community members identify their personal core values before seeking to define and create a shared community values statement.

This inquiry focussed on discerning personal values before community values, on identifying values before visions and discerning personal visions before collectively coming up with a community vision. Jaffe and Tobe (1993) clearly stated that values are the foundation for vision (p. 19). Concurrently this inquiry made undiscussed personal and community values more visible to community members. "Sometimes our most important or most neglected values remain obscure. Unclear or unknown values can produce conflicts and contradictions that can make people feel confused, blocked and frustrated" (Jaffe & Tobe, 1993, p. 25). When personal and community values hidden by the unconscious encultured, patterned self are revealed, healthy aligned behaviors emerge. "Values that are upheld and practiced become behaviors. Values are

expressed by how you behave now, and how you intend to behave on a daily basis, as you live in community” (Christian, 2003, p. 37).

When people or organizations are identifying their values, there is the possibility they are naming their adopted values and not their authentic values. In determining the values of MEC members, the survey attempted to capture authentic values rather than adopted values. Authentic values arise from one’s gut and heart, honestly reflecting one’s true nature. Authentic values are the foundations for wholesome behaviors. Adopted values are those learned and mimicked from culture and family and favored by the mind. Adopted values might be aligned with one’s true self! Authentic values are sacred; they are in service to personal needs of what is important and meaningful and to the greater community. For MEC members it is not about agreeing to values and words written or expressed in a statement; it is the authentic practice of values that needs an abundance of practice to align behavior with the documentation.

George, McLean & Craig (2008) believed “putting values into practice is crucial for authentic leaders” (p. 72). The way community members conduct themselves and behave needs to be congruent with the values they aspire. A community member needs to be clear about their authentic values and to have the integrity and skills of how to put them into action. To accomplish trust among community members, “integrity is the one value that is required in every authentic leader” (p. 66).

Community Values

“When there are clearly defined community values, group process, decision-making and governance become easier (See Sociocracy 2). When personal and community values are clarified and aligned they become a great resource for the community. The process of aligning community values provides the foundation for the strategy, the vision, and the structure. Jaffe and Tobe (1993) articulated that “Values represent an organizing principle for our lives, as well

as for an organization. One of the most important keys to greater effectiveness is a close link between personal and organizational values” (p. 22).

The MEC is committed to creating an SCVVS because they realize that shared values and vision will bring them together and create a sustaining and resilient community. The SCVVS will unite and provide the link between diverse people and activities. Jaffe and Tobe (1993) felt “a shared essence is the expression of what people have in common, of what they, in community, are committed to. People who share values or vision are more likely to take responsibility” (p. 21). When community values are aligned and honored, people's motivation, desire, and will are heightened, empowered and more effective. A survey by Posner and Schmidt (1987) substantiated that shared values between the individual and the company are a major source of both personal and organizational effectiveness.

Values are a set of understandings in an organization about how to work together, how to treat other people and what is most important. These understandings are the core values...Bringing them into the light of day enhances agreement and connection” (Jaffe & Tobe, 1993, p. 25).

For a community to be able to turn their agreed upon values into action, they need to have documented policies, practices, and standards for behavior. Kouzes and Posner (2012) proposed that “a common understanding of shared values emerges from a process...unity comes about through dialogue and debate, followed by understanding and commitment” (p. 68).

This inquiry began a process with the MEC of identifying their core values, defining and giving examples of what this meant to each member and how they become actionable in community settings. This inquiry supported the MEC to “have a strong sense of shared values, often characterized in spiritual terms” (See Ecological Network of the Americas), ones that foster foundations for deep friendship. Embodied group practices that celebrate and mourn, support and heal are the spiritual keys that hone community values, aligning member’s words, thoughts, and

conversations, so they become living behaviors. Integrating the group dialectic with embodied group heart experiences to determine personal and community values become the underpinnings that generate personal and community visions.

Personal Visions

“Your visions will become clear only when you can look into your own heart. Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakes.” Carl Jung (1963)

Personal visions come from embodied feelings that manifest as a felt sense, from dreams, the imagination, insight, intuition, visualizations or from thinking. These ideas appear to surface from contemplation, reflection and a profound sense of caring. Senge (2006) said “personal visions derive their power from a common caring” (p. 192). “Vision links past with future and communicates the present” (Olsen, 2013, p. 242). “A vision is a snapshot in our mind’s eye of how we want to be, look, act, achieve, and interface with others at some given date in the future” (Hudson, 1999, p. 188).

Personal visions are guidelines for living that invoke wakefulness helping community members be present to what life offers each moment. There is a weave between values and visions, the weft of a community tapestry. The warp is made up of embodied personal madamery and mastery. The fabric becomes a relationship of unique colors that infuses and adorns community. Senge (2006) declared a person’s vision should be consistent with the values people live by day by day (pp. 207–208). The MEC community is becoming more cognizant of the vital importance of aligning values with visions.

The MEC was aware of the need for each community member to take personal responsibility for everything we do and say and the imperative need for each community member to take full ownership of Väike Jalajälg, the place they live and call home. “The only reality we can ever change is our personal one. Only from there comes the change in the bigger picture” (<http://allfilm.ee/work/small-footprint/>). New awarenesses by MEC members is helping them to

develop their human potential and ability to serve themselves and their community. They recognize that community evolution goes hand in hand with personal leadership madamery and mastery and shared community leadership. Laslow (2012) wrote “Evolutionary leadership is shared leadership” (p. 102).

Through this inquiry the MEC has been asking the question: “What would I like my future to look like?” Creating and identifying personal visions is an empowering embodied process that takes responsibility for one’s learning and increases self-awareness. Identifying personal visions also begins the process of communicating personal preferences, dreams and goals to others. As personal visions are made visible, a learning community is created that has the potential to manifest a collective and inclusive community vision statement.

Community Visions

When a community vision, mission, and values are integrated, they can improve community alignment, connection, and trust between members. Senge (2006) said “shared visions emerge from personal visions” (p. 197). “When people truly share a vision they are connected, bound together by a common aspiration” (p. 192) and most of all, “shared visions derive their power from a common caring” (p. 192).

Jaffe and Tobe (1993) were clear that values are the foundation for visioning (p. 19). Christian (2003) recognized that in any community the “visioning process is one of the single most important tasks you’ll undertake as a forming community” (p. 45).

All your community members need to be on the same page from the beginning, and must know what your shared community vision is, and know you all support it. Your shared vision should be thoroughly discussed, agreed upon, and written down at the get-go” (p. 7).

The community vision is made up of the governing ideas, the purpose, and the accumulated core values. Christian (2003) described most of the important elements of a well-crafted community vision statement as follows:

- The vision informs the ‘who’ the ‘what’ and the ‘why’ of the community
- The mission and purpose express a vision in concrete, physical terms. It’s what the community will be physically doing as well as experiencing as they manifest their shared ideas of what is possible
- The community vision reveals, specifies, incorporates and builds upon the group’s shared core values
- The community vision sets the intention and ignites the commitment of members to their community
- Community aspirations are strong desires or ambitions that arise from values. These inspire members, illuminate goals, and unify community endeavors
- Community interests arise from values and can be expressed as goals
- Community goals are measurable and attainable objective milestones that the community commits to accomplish in a reasonable period of time
- Defines the meaning of community ownership, personal responsibility and levels of participation [Added by Kosky]
- The values and vision statement expresses something each member can identify with that cultivates a feeling of belonging in their community
- Community values and vision gives a reference point to return to during confusion or disagreement

Finally, a community strategy needs to be set in place that affirms a series of goals in a particular time frame. The strategy incorporates the ‘how,’ ‘where,’ and ‘when’. The

implementation plan reinforces the process and the way community members relate and communicate their values (pp. 25–39).

Christian (2003) said: “The community visioning process can offer your group an excellent opportunity to flush hidden expectations to the surface and examine them rationally,” (p. 46) and that can be challenging.

Getting a group of people to agree on a common vision, make decisions collaboratively and fairly, and combine their money with others to own property together can bring up deep-seated emotional issues — often survival-level issues — that can knock a community off its foundations. I want you to have all the help you can get (Christian, 2003, p. xix).

Christian (2003) was adamant that community conflict is the major factor that destabilizes communities, recommending community’s “learn good communication and group process skills. Make clear communication, and resolving conflicts a priority.” (p. 8). In the opinion of the writer the quality of the connection between community members, the success of a community, its coherence, resilience, and sustainability become manifest when loving kindness and gratitude are infused within feeling, thought, actions and behaviors by community members. Senge (2006) felt that for a community to successfully collaborate in creating a vision required that they “allow multiple visions to coexist, listening for the right course of action that transcends and unifies all our individual visions” (Senge, 2006, p. 202).

Senge’s perspective on collective and shared visioning was orientated to the corporate world that is individually structured, hierarchical, capital based and competitive. Visioning within this paradigm is contradictory to the collective consciousness, group visioning, shared processes, and concepts of an egalitarian community. This is a common myth of leadership that fairness, equability, and inclusion can exist in an organization that is hierarchical. Laslow (2012) wrote: “The most prevalent understanding of leadership is narrow and hierarchical” (p. 102). It is

not possible to create effective social and economic outcomes from a culture that promotes greed and individual gain. When there are ‘power over’ structures in any group or organization, Senge, 2006, p. 202) understanding of listening was undermined by the social structures he advocated. Sacred listening becomes the receiving sense that unites a community or group by harvesting everyone’s insights and wisdom (See Appendix G).

Christian (2003, 2007) could have given greater emphasis to social behaviors of relating, connecting and spending time together. Senge (2006) said a “vision can die if people forget their connection to one another” (p. 213). One of the deepest desires underlying shared vision is the desire to be connected, to a larger purpose *and* to one another” (p. 214). This vitally important quality of the connection between community members is fostered by loving kindness and gratitude.

The MEC started out trying to create a way of life based on ideals of friendship, will, cooperation, love and fair decision-making. The MEC vision and mission statement was a good beginning and was inspired by the GEN. GEN’s vision statement is: “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” (<http://gen.ecovillage.org/en/page/vision-mission-goals>).

The MEC vision needs to paint a picture for what the community will look like in the future. A purpose that honors both the community and “contribute[s] to the world in some unique way, to add a distinctive source of value (Senge, 2006, p. 208), and agreed upon core values that answer the question “How do we want to act, consistent with our mission [purpose], along the path toward achieving our vision?” (p. 208).

Summary

Kleiner (2014) stated that “communities which support a well-defined vision stand out as being more harmonious and better functioning. We found the communities that are strongly

united in intention or vision possess ample amounts of 'social glue,' a magical ingredient commonly discussed amongst Intentional Communities" (p. 68). Senge (2006) stated that shared visions "create a sense of commonality that permeates the organization and gives coherence to diverse activities" (p. 192). He believed community visions become a reality when shared values and visions are married to systems feeling and thinking. (p. 214). The SCVVS should be a well-crafted, clear, concise, a compelling expression of the community vision and mission that identifies social behaviors that nurture connection, cohesion, respect, and consideration.

An ongoing change takes place from the moment of conceiving a community vision to its manifestation. It is important to understand the nature of how humans change from one state of behavioral being to self-realize into their magnificence through their dreams and visions. In the quest for personal mastery, an intuitive knowing, a felt sense or dream is more likely to be realized by knowing the embodied stepping stones of change that lead to living the vision. Stringer (2014) referred to the collective vision as a unifying vision (p. 192). A unifying vision brings community members closer and more connected, feeling they are part of a family, with a sense of belonging and a place they can call home.

While the MEC community is moving toward their vision, they are metamorphosing and living in a creative process that needs to consider their everyday reality. Senge (2006) called this "creative tension," the spaces between reality and the vision (p.132, 139-144). The yet unfulfilled promise becomes a reality through acceptance, perseverance, patience, and holding true to the vision. It is the writer's opinion that individual and community embodiment practices provide transformative solutions for a community as it grows into its vision. Embodiment practices respond to this tension; they become the imaginative soup that births the vision described in the next two sections

Individual embodied practices that foster leadership traits that impregnate and cultivate authenticity and presence

In the field of leadership, there has been a slow growing awareness with the promise of a new leadership paradigm shift, from believing that leadership traits can change or evolve out of mental models to a curiosity about how embodiment is the pathway to leadership excellence. Ropo and Parvianen (2001) investigated how leadership knowledge had a bodily dimension and pointed out that bodily knowledge is acquired through negotiation, discovery and incidental learning. They felt that bodily knowledge was not directly transferable from one person to another, and that leadership traits were individually learned and developed. Melina (2013) in referring to Ropo and Parviainen pointed out that:

Leadership practice originates in and is informed by bodily experiences—experiences situated in social, cultural, historical, and deeply personal contexts. This practice is conveyed through the leader's body and experienced through our own, in a profound exchange of knowledge mediated and informed by, among others, identity, beliefs, fears, race, age, gender, psychology, family dynamics, birth order, language, illness, and appearance. (p. xiii).

According to Walsh (2012), “we are embodied creatures and this is a core part of our being. Traditional theories of leadership have, however, ignored embodiment, coming from what is a hyper-rational cognitively biased world-view.” He concluded that in enhancing leadership and organizational development the body is the guide and the teacher and embodied practice is the pathway to excellence and personal transformation. “Embodiment is relevant to all aspects of an integral model of leadership: whatever we do, we do it with a body!” (para. 3)

Various body theories have been put forth about the significance of embodiment to effective leadership. Melina (2013) described how Mary Parker Follett first introduced body wisdom, sense-making, and other essentials of leadership. Follett (1918) suggested leadership traits and characteristics originated in the body, emerged through the activities of our daily lives (p. xiv), and were complemented by diverse group experiences. Shusterman (2008) proposed a

practice and theory of somaesthetics (a philosophical sub-discipline of aesthetics) that was analytical, pragmatic and practical. He believed that cultivating bodily practices heightened our sensations and perceptions helping us expand our felt-sense awareness and created a soma energy field that fostered better self-care.

Ladkin (2008) advanced similar ideas on how to acquire leadership mastery with no mention about how a leader's behaviors become enacted. Another perspective came from Laslow (2012) who put forward a systems approach to embodied leadership and said, "systems being and systems living bring it all together: linking head, heart and hands" (p. 101), linking competencies with systems thinking (p. 105). He referred to a new way of seeing (p. 97), combined with practicing systems feeling and systems being (p. 105). Excellent ideas, however, there was no reference or understanding of how to embody this knowledge of being present in the 'now' (Tolle, 1997) or how a leader could acquire the competencies he or she espouses. Embodiment and transformation were keywords in the article title (Laslow, 2012). However, his writings were descriptive, existential and did not delineate the nuts and bolts of embodied leadership. An embodied state is a way of being that comes from the inside out (Short, 1998, pp. 22–25), attained through daily practice and cannot be '*thought into existence.*' Embodied Wisdom informs the mind, raises awareness, and supports people in becoming more present and awake.

Ropa and Parviainen (2001), Shusterman (2008), Ladkin (2008), and Laslow (2012) represented a change in understanding of how to become an effective transformative leader. The change was from an existential mental model into a partial realization that leaders needed to go beyond thinking as a way of initiating change and involve their body's intuitive wisdom. Even so, their understanding of embodied personal mastery, the behaviors, and actions of an embodied leader and the practices that cultivate embodied leadership lacked a comprehensively embodied

approach. What was missing was the how, what, when, where, and why of attaining embodied leadership competencies and behaviors.

Only through daily sustained practice, diverse life experience, healing the dysfunctional past, replacing old patterns with new life-sustaining patterns, and creating wholesome relationships with self and others can a leader's body and whole being re-configure, transform, come into alignment and serve humanity as a transformational servant leader (see Appendix K for an explanation of Individual Embodiment Practices).

Community embodiment practices that engender support, appreciation, gratitude, generosity, kindness, caring, inclusion, respect, collaboration, trust, cohesion, resilience, sustainability and effective loving communications between MEC members.

Embodied authentic behaviors are the foundation stones for self-mastery, leadership development, and living in the community. Diverse life experiences enable one's cellular earth to be composted, tilled and be nourished, preparing the way for interpersonal, group and community dynamics to take place.

Follett was known as the mother of modern management and wrote about organizational theory and behavior. Follett (1924) recommended that leaders moved toward creative experience and away from the illusion of being an expert. She suggested that creative experience informed the feeling body and developed circular or integrative behaviors that caused a person to behave differently. Follett (1918) felt that only through diverse group experiences could leadership traits be embodied and honed. In the development of leadership and group process, Follett (1924) advocated for a model that was inclusive of shared experiences. She believed that inclusion was the pathway to group success, so it was necessary "to build up a society which shall embody the experience of all" (p. 30).

Surowiecki (2004) suggested that to collaborate effectively in the community we need diversity and decentralization, an aggregation that embraced uniqueness (p. 39). He favored a

model that sourced the wisdom of the crowd (p. 41), which included all the different perspectives in any group or community. The principle is that all people have something unique to contribute to the daily life and growth of their community, that their contributions are valued equally, and that they deserve equal rights and opportunities. The doorway is then open to exploring community embodiment practices that cultivate interpersonal, group and community processes.

In the 1980's, Richard Strozzi-Heckler, through the Strozzi Institute (<https://strozziinstitute.com/>), began to offer programs in embodied leadership, somatic coaching and the cultivation of self. The somatic practices in their embodied leadership program focussed on presence, thinking and mindfulness. He was curious about posture, facial expression and tone of voice. What was missing was a broad range of experiential practices to facilitate embodiment. Hamill (2013) studied with Strozzi and defined embodied practice as 'deliberate practice' that required attention and presence (p. 4). Hamill (2013) expanded upon Strozzi's work and focussed on centering, physicality, postural alignment in the vertical, lateral and horizontal plane, relaxation with a whole body scan approach, breathing practices that assisted relaxation, receiving massage and bodywork, and addressing feelings that arose from conflict, mindfulness meditation and exercising.

Both Strozzi and Hamill (2013) embodied a leadership perspective related to the corporate world of managers emphasizing high-level performance, expertise, coaching, the comparative excellence of trying to be better than another, and stressful striving. Developing leadership self-mastery has nothing to do with a coach or coaching. Embodied self-mastery is a long and committed personal journey that an individual takes solo. A person practices different ways of expressing and being; they change themselves from the inside out; and no one can do it for another. Strozzi and Hamill's viewpoint on group process was hierarchical and competitive, a masculine managerial perspective that looked at leadership from a leader/follower paradigm. The MEC is invoking a new paradigm for group process, what Raelin (2003) called a leaderful

community in which everyone is a leader. “In the twenty-first-century organization, we need to establish communities where everyone shares the experience of serving as a leader, not serially, but concurrently and collectively” (p. 5). He advocated that the heart-body was the leader and not the mind. If egalitarian organizational structures serve the greater good, then group community experiences become key to creating support, appreciation, gratitude, generosity, kindness, caring, inclusion, respect, collaboration, trust, cohesion, resilience, sustainability and effective, loving communications between MEC members. When everyone is considered a leader, then all people have something to contribute to the whole, all community members are valued equally and deserve equal rights and opportunities.

Raelin, Strozzi, Hamill et al., primarily saw making changes in thinking and mindset as the way to develop embodied collaborative leadership. See Appendix K for a fuller explanation of how community embodied practices can cultivate interpersonal, group and community interaction, the connection between members and a feeling of belonging to a family and community. A holistically embodied approach that involved the whole body/being of individuals and a group has not been comprehensively described. Group/community embodiment practices and social dynamics are a complex subject, not easy to describe and define. A new language will need to be formed that gives clarity and understanding to group relationships that are formulated on body and heart urges and feelings and less on the ‘monkey mind.’

What would be a broader approach to group or community embodiment practices that focussed on the body’s responses and the group rather than the individual within the group? Firstly, authentically embodied expressions are not a response to external stimuli or cultural pressures (See Appendix K). Embodiment practices are intended to inspire and to self-motivate people from the inside out. The engagement and choice to consistently participate in embodiment practices are self-initiated to become familiar with one’s feelings and then act authentically. Authentic embodied leadership becomes manifest when any form of embodied practice, is

infused with kindness, caring and love toward oneself. Infusing these qualities and traits into an embodied self-leadership practice can then be shared with the community. There is a heartfelt congruency between how a person leads themselves and how they step forward and contribute in their community. A community member then makes a unique contribution to their community that is a leaderful way that has no followers. The leading is intended to serve the greater good of the community, to contribute to the whole, bringing people closer and more connected and increasing intimacy between members. Leading then becomes a community pathway that moves toward union and away from separation. This type of leadership values co-creation, collaboration and cooperation as the behavioral means to relate in a relationship, with family or in the community.

The practice I am talking about here has a very different intention than Hamill's. His practices were primarily about being better. The authentically embodied leadership I am referring to is a feeling state that arises from one's core that guides a person to live and behave in their highest and best interests and to serve others in the same way they honor themselves. Hamill needed to prove his ideas using neuroscience. Again, embodied leadership does not originate in the brain or the mind (See Appendix K); this has been a misnomer in leadership theory and development for a long time.

What are the diverse community experiences and group practices that empower and enable group collaboration and alignment? Community living embodiment practices are those done with other members of the community. They include yoga, dance, gardening, cooking, somatic meditation, music, creative arts, singing, collaborative writing, somatic felt sense explorations, the practice of being together, rituals, healing circles, heart circles, appreciation circles and appreciative learning circles. They include collective reflection, ceremonies, nature explorations, playing, group drama, group breath work, community dreaming, working together, tithing and service, oneness exercises, the art of touch, both giving and receiving, group therapy,

group emotional release of feelings, brotherhood and sisterhood time together and the list goes on....

Chapter Summary

The literature review explored four areas relevant to the inquiry: intentional ecological community, personal values and visions, community values and visions, personal and community embodiment practices. Individual change, organizational change and group processes were also fundamental to this inquiry. The literature review took a broad perspective that considered both individual and community. How could community members inhabit themselves through embodied practice, give birth to their authentic self, and co-create in their community? The process of embodying leadership behaviors, skills, and traits, and relating in authentic, meaningful ways with other members, requires behavioral intimacy, personally and interpersonally. To develop intimacy, community members need to practice and develop relational and communication skills, by participating in daily embodiment practices that become Lifelong teachers. These are grounded in expressing heartfelt feelings and honest thinking.

Embodied communication and relationship skills are essential for intentional communities to flourish. Practicing and acquiring embodied leadership skills and effective core leadership behaviors are essential to developing leadership presence. Leadership presence is the ability to be self-aware, able to create constructive relationships with others, and practice ethically, responsibly, and with accountability. Leadership presence comes from daily embodied leadership practices and cyclically contributes to community collaboration and teamwork. Appendices I and K offer a fuller explanation of how community embodied practices can cultivate personal, interpersonal, group and community interaction; connection and a feeling of belonging to family and community. “We long to be around people whose presence awakens our divinity” (Ronski, April 2016.)

The new vision of wellness must include everything we currently understand, yet look beyond techniques and treatments to the true source of healing and wholeness: presence. With presence, we come into balance by merely being, and not interfering with life's natural self-healing ability. With presence, our every move is guided in an infinite process interconnecting and harmonizing all of life" (Liberman, 2001, p. 39).

The process of living collaboratively in the MEC community and being authentic community citizens is complex and requires an on-going iterative approach. This review barely touched the surface because a whole systems approach was needed. Olivares, Peterson, and Hess (2007) expressed the enormity of the challenge: "Although individual-based leader development is necessary for leadership, it is not sufficient. Leadership requires that individual development is integrated and understood in the context of others, social systems, and organizational strategies, missions, and goals" (p. 79).

The MEC has aligned itself with the strategic goals, objectives, and targets of GEN. Their mandate is to cultivate relationships of trust and solidarity throughout their organization in communities worldwide. "GEN builds networks of friendship, hope, and mutual understanding in order to heal the past and move towards global consciousness and global intercultural citizenship together" (See GEN Vision, Mission, Goals, para. 4).

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

(Attributed to Margaret Mead, source unknown)

Chapter Three: Inquiry Project Approach

Inquiry Project Methodology

This Organizational Leadership Project (OLP) sought to harvest the personal values and visions of community members to support them in creating a draft SCVVS for the MEC in Estonia. This OLP used three data collection methods: an on-line survey, a five-day retreat, and a reflective learning circle. Throughout this OLP, Stringer's (2014) methodology was engaged of using "procedures that are systematic, cyclical, solutions-oriented, and participatory, providing the means to devise sustainable improvements in practice that enhance the lives and well-being of all participants" (p. 5). A qualitative Action Research (AR) approach was used, and it aligned the AR Cycle (Coghlan & Brannick, 2012, p. 24) with an Appreciative Inquiry (AI) approach (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2008) for this small rural community. "Appreciative inquiry is about the systematic discovery of what gives 'life' to a living system when it is most alive, most effective, and most constructively capable in economic, ecological, and human terms" (p. 5). Through discovery inquiry, envisioning, innovating and imagining what might be, the inquiry was able to support community member's dreams and begin the process of turning them into realities.

The Action Researcher (ARr) used and was guided by the working principles of AR, relationships, communications, participation and inclusion (Stringer, 2014, pp. 23–33). Reason and Bradbury (2008) stated that AR was "a family of practices of living inquiry...it is not so much a methodology as an orientation to inquiry" (p. 1). This inquiry was a social study that sourced the individual values and visions of community members about themselves and for their community. This OLP sought to discern what happened, make sense of what occurred, and then reflected on the potential action or sought after change (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010).

This OLP was a reflective process for myself as an ARr, as well as for participants in the project, and identified stakeholder's core values for both themselves and their community. Three

data gathering processes informed this inquiry. An on-line survey was sent to community members who voluntarily chose to participate. The sponsor sent out the survey to community members in late June 2016, via e-mail. Information gleaned from the survey provided valuable information on how to best serve and guide the community process at the Mōisamaa Retreat, 2016.

The purpose of the inquiry was to facilitate a process that clarified and began to align community members' values and visions that would lead to the community forming a social statement of intent. The research inquiry documented members' experiences, feelings, thoughts, ideas and beliefs for building common values and trust. This OLP supported effective collaboration and participatory decision-making at all stages of the project.

Gathering the survey data was the first phase in informing the content for the SCVVS. In July 2016, I facilitated a 5-day retreat for the MEC that explored and informed the SCVVS. In August 2016, after the retreat, a reflective learning circle was held, and community members were invited to share their reflections, insights, experiences, suggestions, and recommendations from their time at the retreat. During the reflective learning circle, I took verbatim notes as well as an electronic recording. Clarifying and synthesizing the ways community members want to relate and communicate was the purpose of this action research inquiry. The OLP process was democratic and participatory at every stage of the inquiry (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010; Stringer, 2014) with the ARr attending to "task, organization, and to the emotional quality of interaction" (Wicks & Reason, 2009, p. 249).

To advance this intention required a critical review, examination, and articulation of the community's social development and landscapes to make new agreements. Glesne (2011) said: "Qualitative inquiry is a search that leads into others' lives, your discipline, your practice, and yourself" (p. 274). The data gleaned from the survey, the retreat and the reflective learning circle informed the findings and the recommendations. The methodology I chose allowed me to

successfully engage the MEC members to gather data about their personal values and visions to begin the process of defining and informing a SCVVS.

Project Participants

Twenty full-time members lived in the community when this study was conducted; five were children. Fifteen adult community members will be invited to take part in this OLP. All the project participants live in this small rural farm community. Most of the community members work at Mõisamaa, either on the land or engaged in a home-based industry. A few members work in urban employment and commute or are students.

All eleven core members of MEC voluntarily responded to the survey. In July 2016, I facilitated a 5-day retreat for the 11 core members of the MEC plus one long-term member, all of whom voluntarily attended. The retreat took place at a different location in an Estonian Manor home fifty kilometers from Mõisamaa. Choosing a different location offered an immersion process for the community and allowed members to be away from daily tasks. The children were kindly taken care of by a friend of the Mõisamaa community. In August 2016, fourteen of the MEC members attended the reflective learning circle.

Inquiry Project Methods

This inquiry used a mixed methods approach in its research design (Creswell, 2016A): a survey, a retreat and a reflective learning circle. The survey established a baseline of information. The retreat explored deeper the values and visions of core community members, allowing community members to inter-pollinate their feelings, ideas, and beliefs. The reflective learning circle harvested the accumulated insights, perspectives, viewpoints and desired future directions. For the Mõisamaa community to find meaningful and lasting solutions to their real-life social challenges will require continued engagement, collaboration, a fuller shared understanding of respectful behavior, and the advancement of Sociocracy – their participatory decision-making process of governance. Cresswell (2016B) suggested thirty essential skills that

assist and educate a quality researcher, and this inquiry followed those guidelines. Additional guidance came from Ravitch and Carl (2016) ensured this qualitative research project was rigorous and valid, through design, implementation, analysis, and to writing up the research. Marshall and Rossman (2014) discuss the value and essential qualitativeness of research: research methodologies that are culturally sensitive, generating patterns that are contextual and consistent, educating as well as sourcing valuable information, and supporting informed research that serves the participants, their community and the greater good. This inquiry followed their advice.

The Survey

The survey shed light on the degree of alignment and congruency between a member's values and vision for themselves and their community. The survey data began to map the context (Stringer, 2014, pp. 85–88) by identifying the position, stance, ideas and beliefs of all community members. The range of preferences and desired outcomes were revealed, assessed and understood.

The survey began a process of clarifying and identifying (McConnell, 2003, p. 7) community members' values that underpinned the way they lived their life and clarified their understandings of the issues they faced living in a community (Stringer, 2014, p. 120). The survey had four parts or landscapes: personal, interpersonal and their immediate family, the Mõisamaa community, and the cultural values they wish for the greater community that surrounds them. The survey also began the process of clarifying and identifying community members' vision for their life. For an explanation of the relational field of being in service to self, others and life, see Appendix I.

The survey harvested valuable data to inform the community SCVVS. Stringer (2014) described this as the look phase of gathering information (pp. 101–103), a phase that broadens the ARr understanding of the experience and perspective of community members (p. 101). The

survey data opened the door to revealing “the reality that makes up people’s day-to-day experience, bringing their assumptions, views, and beliefs out in the open and making them available for discussion” (p. 102), both at the Retreat and during the reflective learning circle.

The Retreat

Twelve members of MEC attended the Retreat. Christian (2003) said the “coalescing of interests usually works best if a founding group is fairly small” (p. 44). The Mõisamaa Retreat included the first two phases of an AI cycle, that of discovery: “an extensive, cooperative search to understand ‘the best of what is and has been’” (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010, p. 7). And dreaming, or an “energizing exploration of ‘what might be’” (p. 8). The underlying themes for the Retreat were:

- Total community discussion and participation
- Encouraged everyone to be involved
- Practiced participatory democracy
- The process was educational
- The process was reflective and iterative
- The process used embodiment practices
- The process was premised on not knowing
- The processes encouraged self-responsibility
- The Retreat focused on beginning the process of creating a Social Community Values and Vision Statement (SCVVS), balanced with celebratory fun activities and individual reflection time. I wove all four sub-questions (p. 17 of this report) into all three stages of the Retreat.

The first stage of the retreat was to create an energetic field of community openness, Appreciative Inquiry, deep listening, relaxation, dancing and singing together, encouraging

playfulness, having fun, remembering why people chose to live in the MEC, building and rebuilding trust between community members.

The second stage had two parts: the light and the shadow, the blessings and the losses. In keeping with an AI, the MEC held an appreciation and acknowledgment circle that honored the blessings. Each member talked about what had worked well for them, remembering personal times of happiness and leadership when they were proud of something they did. The second part addressed loses and began a process to heal conflict and speak to what community members called ‘the elephants in the room.’ I rephrased this from Marshall Rosenberg’s (2003) work and from AI, describing the challenges the community faced as ‘the giraffes in the room,’ which means the image alone creates a different energetic field, encouraging community members to unravel, compost, heal and grow anew into heartfelt ways of relating. This stage rekindled friendships and facilitated flowing connections between MEC members, which are essential for a community to thrive. Christian (2003) reinforced this observation and stated: “the community visioning process can offer your group an excellent opportunity to flush hidden expectations to the surface and examine them rationally” (Christian, 2003, p. 46).

The third stage was to move toward building a community shared vision. A community vision is made up of the governing ideas, the purpose, and the accumulated core values. In alignment with the survey, the Retreat exercises and practices firstly addressed personal leadership and then engaged community servant leadership. These facilitated sessions required a sacred visioning attitude, creating an atmosphere of reverence, appreciation, gratitude, generosity, and respect. The community soon discovered that their individual understandings of what respect meant, and their behaviors toward each other, were different. A beginning was made to dialogue more about this issue, identify ways to address it, set intentions and make commitments. The process involved unearthing, revealing, birthing, listening, being guided from within, saying I am sorry and I love you and acknowledging that community members have

chosen a journey together. The questions that then arise are: ‘How can I serve myself so I can live life more fully as a blessing and a celebration?’ and ‘How can I primarily be of service to my immediate family and community and secondarily to my diaspora community?’

By the third day of the Retreat, the community was moving into the third stage of building a community shared vision. The MEC then came up with a general question to inform the SCVVS: “What social actions are now needed by the Mõisamaa community to move forward together? This question became the primary focus for the remainder of the Retreat. The Retreat process became more inclusive and generated a kinder and more loving, relational atmosphere. Christian (2003) described what happened at the Retreat when she said: “If a group is small and based primarily on deep connections or shared friendships, most members will tend to stay in the group and alter any expression of community vision to fit everyone’s interests and desires” (p. 43). Finally, the community spent a small amount of time on strategies for implementing their findings.

The Reflective Learning Circle (See Appendix G for additional information)

Kolb (1984) developed the foundations of contemporary experiential learning circles. Kolb (2015) then updated and expanded his ideas, integrating different collaborative learning processes rooted in AI. Bunker & Alban (2006) recommended incorporating AI into a reflective learning circle because combining the two “builds the future on recognizing and expanding existing strengths” (p. 26).

Bunker and Alban (2006) described the core characteristics of large group methods as the inclusion of all stakeholders, the engagement of multiple perspectives through interactive activities, the opportunity to influence, and the search for common ground (pp. 19–21). “People simultaneously discover mutual values, innovative ideas, commitment, and support” (Weisbord & Janoff, 2010, p. 3). The ARr, through the sponsor, invited fifteen community members to the reflective learning circle, and fourteen attended.

The circle is an ancient symbol of wholeness and power (Baldwin, 1998). In the context of human inquiry, “we need a language of interrelationships, a language made up of circles” (Senge, 2006, p. 73). Using learning circles in organizational systems is an effective way to understand the whole system. A wide variety of large group learning models currently exist; but while they are similar in some ways, there are certain distinguishing factors that guide learning circles. The key elements in an appreciative learning circle that differentiate them from other group learning models are:

- The use of a talking piece, “a designated object passed from hand to hand” that “grants the holder the chance to speak without interruption” (Baldwin, 1998, p. 67).

The talking piece acts as a symbolic reminder to listen with intent, an empowering tool that favors sharing by all participants. The talking piece encourages deep listening, respect, and reverence for the person who is speaking.
- Learning circles tend to be more focused, based on common resources, and intended to have an action outcome.
- The learning circle is an integrated process that brings individuals together to have an open conversation about a specific topic or issue. These circles generate authentic conversations to navigate disputes, support conflict resolution, enhance team collaboration, and build relationships (Fitzgerald, 2006).
- The learning circle is a highly interactive, positive and participatory structure for organizing group work. It can be framed using Bolman & Deal’s (2013) human resource and symbolic lenses to support the learning throughout the process.
- A learning circle is an ideal approach to the inquiry because it creates an opportunity for individuals within an organization to express their opinions, concerns, and feelings in a sacred space.

- The guiding principles for learning circles are equal participation, reciprocity, honoring collective wisdom, trust, and diversity (Baldwin & Linnea, 2010).
- Learning circles invite openness of expression, ending our collective and individual silence, empowering people to work together.
- The learning circle does not assume or require expertise, welcoming everyone's contribution.
- “This process makes it clear that we see everybody in the community as an asset. Most of all, we all have a personal responsibility to participate in our society to make it better” (Weisbord & Janoff, 2010, p. 6).
- The intent within a learning circle is for participants to share knowledge and express feeling through a process of open dialogue, deep reflection and story-telling about a relevant issue or problem with a focus on shared outcomes. In a corporate or community setting this is an opportunity for a group to have a “courageous yet compassionate conversation” (Fitzgerald, 2006, p. 11) among equals and to foster continued conversation outside the circle.

Although the learning circle is an organic process, there is some structure. The learning circle consists of a facilitator, a guardian, a recorder, a timekeeper, witnesses and the participants. The facilitator welcomes the group, sets the intention for the Circle, encourages the participants to express themselves with feeling ‘I’ statements, and to speak from their feelings and experiences using “neutral language” (Baldwin & Linnea, 2010, p. 134). The role of guardian is to ensure the group’s energy remains balanced, to offer support when participants are having difficulties or conflicts arise, and to call for pause if needed. Overall, a key element in creating an ideal learning circle environment is to choose a comfortable, informal, neutral and quiet location (Fitzgerald, 2006). An effective facilitator opens a learning circle using an Appreciative Inquiry (AI) approach to set the tone for the conversation. The facilitator invokes

expressions of gratitude for the participants' presence when the circle begins, during the circle process, and while closing the circle. All of the above concepts were incorporated into the MEC reflective learning circle.

Learning circles can bring people together to discuss what is working well within their organization, focusing on where there may be opportunities for improvements. Using a learning circle is a fast method to "get to the real root of the problem" (Fitzgerald, 2006, p. 10) through honest and positive conversation. The circle is meant to promote learning, understanding and professional development. According to Fitzgerald (2006), a learning circle is an effective method for leaders to foster organizational problem solving. Similar to an appreciative inquiry where the focus is on "generative and life-giving forces in the system" (Watkins & Mohr, 2001, p. 22), the focus of the learning circle is to create an "experience of synergy" (Baldwin & Linnea, 2010, p. 6). Integrating AI and deep emotional reflection into the learning circle process are the golden keys to effective outcomes.

Another model of adult learning is 'communities of practice': "groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area on an ongoing basis" (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002, p. 4). While the concepts of communities of practice and learning circles seem very similar, what distinguishes the two is that while learning circles revolve around a subject of common interest or concern to all participants (who may or may not be experts on the subject), communities of practice assume a certain degree of expertise or familiarity with the focus of discussion. Other large group methods have varying qualities that are best suited for organizations or groups in which the participants as a whole are brainstorming or exploring the subject matter more pragmatically. In these large group methods, there is a likelihood that not all participants are deeply resourced or willing to emotionally and psychologically engage more intimately. The level of engagement increases in groups once a common understanding is recognized and the

relationships and communications are developed to the point of establishing a climate of trust (Kouzes & Posner, pp. 219–222; Lencioni, 2005, pp. 13–18).

A learning circle offers an increased level of intimacy between self and others – the opportunity to travel down ‘veins of gold’ that reach deeply into the root structures of community living. When dealing with a community water system, it would be wise to consult an expert. When dealing with trauma or severe human dysfunctionality, an experienced, trained therapist would be helpful. When exploring social relationships in a community, (Weisbord, 2012) recommended involving everyone to improve the whole (p. 269). In this inquiry, a learning circle was used to build quality relationships among participants, explore collaborative thinking, harvest and align community member’s ideas, and establish collective action. A learning circle offers participants “experiences of great depth and fulfillment” (Baldwin and Linnea, 2010, p. 128). The Reflective Learning Circle will provide additional data to inform the inquiry recommendations, support readiness for a change and consolidate the community vision (Bunker & Alban, 2006, pp. 10–33).

In conclusion, Baldwin and Linnea (2010) suggested that a learning circle is an ideal space to share “our not knowing and hear each other out” (p. 196). In other words, it is an opportunity to be authentic leaders and “call forth people’s good hearts and willingness to cooperate” (Baldwin & Linnea, 2010, p. 196”) with the intention of building a greater more aligned community tapestry.

Data collection tools

Survey

This inquiry and the design of the survey sought to identify community members’ authentic values and visions, feelings and needs, beliefs and thoughts. Fundamental to learning, knowing thyself, the ability to change and the ability to respond **authentically** in the ‘here and now’ is a recognition that “the engagement with the present happens from within a body”

(Frazier, 2012, p. 141). Our senses keep us attuned to ourselves. Our primary response to reality is through sensing embodied feeling.

We *feel*—one another, ourselves, the world around us. The visceral experience of aliveness happens via feeling. Feeling shows up not only in response to something external. It's also generated [an urge] within, experienced as the spontaneous will to do something (p. 142).

The secondary response to reality happens within the mind, and Frazier (2012) calls this “a second-generation ‘feeling’ that may bear little resemblance to the original, authentic, deeply felt response” (p. 142). A second generation feeling comes from one’s family of origin, culture, and past experiences; feelings triggered by issues related to previous safety and autonomy experiences, and these feelings are often different from what is happening to a person in their present reality. The survey was designed to source authentic values and visions, both for individual members and for their community. A person’s authentic values quite often differ from their adopted values. Adopted values come from the influences of culture and the values acquired from a family of origin.

To be authentic means being one’s true self. Authenticity also requires a person to source, experience and be connected to those magnificent and profound urges that arise from within the marrow of their bones, heart, and hearth; and it requires that their behavior (actions) that follows be aligned and congruent with their somatic felt feelings and urges. Determining authentic personal values is a dedicated process of attunement, curiosity about the mystery and purpose of one’s life, and a commitment to self-realization bathed in contemplation.

Where and how I came up with the survey!

In 1980 I needed an assessment tool to help clients identify their needs, the ones that helped them feel fully alive. I called the assessment tool *Waking Up ~ Needs that Help Us Feel Fully Alive*. This assessment tool used an affirmative Appreciative Inquiry approach that differed

from Rosenberg (2003), who primarily was interested in unmet needs and the use of non-violent communications as a way of communicating. The survey also differed from most Action Research in leadership, which has been problem-centric. There is a growing recognition in AR that for people and organizations to evolve, make a change, or aspire to excellence, an affirmative and appreciative approach is exceptionally beneficial.

Maslow (1943) put forward a theory of human motivation that included five basic needs related to each other and arranged in a hierarchy. From that point, psychologists and psychiatrists applied a needs-based approach to the resolution of social conflict. The theory slightly varied in the ensuing years on how primary human needs were defined and how they impacted people's lives, using a masculine 'fix-it' approach through individual and group therapy, More recently, Marshall Rosenburg (2003) put forth the idea that *feelings* are the best way to identify unmet needs. A person identified their feelings by describing life situations which were unfulfilling, emotionally or psychologically disturbing or missing, and these feelings were then recognized and named. The unmet needs and accompanying feelings were considered to be hindrances to a person cultivating their full potential.

The human potential movement that began in the 1960's has continued to expand, and there is a belief that people can experience a quality of life filled with happiness, creativity, and satisfaction that leads to self-realization. The MEC members believe that the combined effect of individuals cultivating their potential will bring about positive social change in their community and elsewhere.

Since 1980, this ARr has been adding to and refining this assessment tool. For this AR project, the first part of the survey focused on personal values, community values, personal visions and community visions. The survey was particularly interested in identifying community members' primary needs, feelings and preferences from both an unconscious and conscious place. The intention was to source information from a member's authentic core self rather than

from solely a thinking assessment. Senge (2006), in describing personal mastery, said, “The subconscious seems especially receptive to goals in line with our deeper aspirations and values” (p. 155). Senge’s (2006) viewpoint also gave support to the design of the survey and to the Organizational Leadership Project, which sequenced individual mastery before community mastery, preparing members to decide upon personal visions that would then be followed by community visions. “The key to developing higher levels of mastery in subconscious rapport comes back to the discipline of developing personal vision” (p. 156). The survey design approached sourcing data from a whole person systems perspective: “integrating reason and intuition; continually seeing more of our connectedness to the world; compassion; and commitment to the whole” (p. 156). Senge (2006) said we can find solutions to life’s offerings through synthesizing intuition and rationale (p. 157), a marriage between hearts and minds, thoughts and feelings.

The dialogue between intuition and linear rational systematic thinking can be very helpful in attaining successful outcomes. Linear rational systematic thinking offers discernment and illuminates the guiding forces that govern all existence. Our intuition comes from matured innocence. Intuition knows that what seems impossible or is unknown, is possible and can become apparent. The survey followed the principle of intuitive knowing similar to the way a person chooses a card from a Tarot deck. According to Jung (1936) the human collective unconscious is populated by instincts and by archetypes represented by universal symbols.

This survey recognized that universal wisdom is ever present and is sourced without thinking. The Tarot deck is a very old, a very comprehensive representation of the human condition. Within the Tarot deck of cards, just about everything we go through in our lives is energetically represented. Far beyond the words and images, each card embodies different archetypes and states of being that include: loss, love, mystery, happiness, alienation, creativity, struggle, sex, death, pleasure, grief and more.

The survey identified values. Woven within the values were basic human needs. Within human needs are feelings both expressed and unexpressed, behaviors and traits, states of being, states of mind, relational needs, attributes/qualities, environmental and material needs. The researcher identified ten primary needs in the survey that imbued aliveness and wakefulness in human behavior. In questions 1–10 and 1a–10a, those needs were as follows:

1. and 1a. Purpose and Meaning
2. and 2a. Self-Connection
3. and 3a. Well-Being
4. and 4a. Autonomy
5. and 5a. Interdependent Partnerships and Immediate Family
6. and 6a. Interdependent Relationships with Community/Tribe/Work
7. and 7a. Creativity
8. and 8a. Safety and Protection
9. and 9a. Healing
10. and 10a. Celebration and Spirituality.

The survey intended to source information from community members from an inner place of knowing that originated in people's creative womb and cellular DNA and less from a mind perspective. A person's mind tends to repeat beliefs, values and visions that were either previously adopted from, or related to, past experiences and might not be aligned with a person's present circumstances, feelings, needs or future quest. The survey wanted to find out members' feelings and urges that emanate from their inner mystery and were birthed spontaneously from an inner need. When a person is present in each moment, they are more able to recognize, feel or act upon their authentic feelings. These feelings and urges inform awareness and create aliveness. Frazier (2012) indicated that feelings that originate from one's core are experienced as a felt sense and they "precedes thought, or any kind of emotional or behavior reaction. A felt response

is what gets thinking to start up in the first place, with emotion quickly following” (p. 145).

Thinking is an abstract explanation of the past or future as the mind only has the capability of noticing and discernment. Thinking informs a person on how to experience their life, making it more meaningful, enjoyable, and pleasurable. Thinking is like an educator opening doors of curiosity to the not known, a guide to healing the past that haunts the present, thus creating opportunities to decrease suffering. The mind becomes a wise life-enhancing director that encourages a person to embody stillness, silence, and simplicity, with doing and being practices that foster presence and intimacy, nurture the physical and emotional body, calm the mind and inspire the spirit.

For the most part, our bodies operate in a non-conscious way during our waking day. There are trillions of life processes going on in our bodies every second that do not require either a mind or thinking. That might be a clear indication that there is an inner knowing of what we need and here lies the real source of wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. If we resourced guidance from the nature of our bodies, we would be in alignment with our true purpose and be able to serve ourselves and others.

The survey encouraged MEC members to respond from a place of self-leadership and community leadership presence. When a person is present, they become clearer about what they feel, think and believe so authentic values can surface, be expressed without censorship and allow their visions to come into view.

Retreat

By the third day of the Retreat, the community came up with a general question to inform the SCVVS. “What social actions are now needed by the Mõisamaa community to move forward together? The community responded to this general question by asking the following three questions:

1. What social actions can **you** take to help this happen? ('I')

2. What social actions do you feel and think **other** community members need to make so the community can move forward together? (“You”)
3. What general ideas, social actions, and activities will help the **Mōisamaa community** to move forward together? (“We”)

The community documented in some detail their responses to these questions and this reiterated and highlighted the four sub-questions put forth in this inquiry (p. 17). The MEC spent most of the remaining Retreat time collecting and organizing the information that came from responding to these three questions. The OLP recommendations included community members' responses to the three questions above. The MEC's collective vision was beginning to take shape and form what Stringer (2014) called “a unifying vision” (p. 192).

Learning Circle

The benefit of the learning circle process is that it has *everyone* in the same room. (Weisbord & Janoff, 2010). Fourteen of the fifteen adult community members voluntarily attended the reflective learning circle in August 2017. Four questions were asked to inform the SCVVS.

1. What is the best thing that has happened to you since coming to live in the Mōisamaa community?
2. What were the key themes that came up for you at the Retreat?
3. Now that you have had time to reflect, can you think of any ideas or issues that were missing or not addressed at the Retreat?
4. In conclusion, give one word or one sentence to describe how you feel about living in the Mōisamaa Ecological Community.

The survey design and the overall inquiry required a thoughtful and well-resourced understanding of community values and visioning, what Coghlan and Brannick (2010) called

“Learning by Design” (pp. 72–73). This OLP organized the data collection into its significant parts and simplified a complicated process.

Study Conduct

McConnell (2003) recommended to assess the survey content (Hudson, 1999, pp. 187–193), develop the design questions (Fowler, 2014, pp. 75–96), create a survey instrument, incorporate a pilot test, conduct an on-line survey (Ritter & Sue, 2007), and administer, tabulate, and compile the survey data and formulate results (McConnell, 2003, p. 7). Some adjustments were made to the survey after it was pilot tested on three people.

Stringer (2014) said credible research required participants to be able “to trust the integrity of the process” (p. 92). Community members would then be able “to make the personal commitments essential to a well-founded inquiry” (pp. 92–93). Authenticity for this inquiry was well established through informed consent, ensuring that participants were fully informed and aware of the content, intentions, and value of this inquiry.

Questions 1–10 and 1a–10a in the survey asked participants to underline three words in each section that best aligned with the way they lived their life; words that resonated with their core feelings and beliefs. The survey design encouraged participants to respond to the questions from their present state of being and less from their past. The design of the survey questions caused participants to go inside and resource both their feelings in the present moment and their thoughts that were most probably from the past and present. The four main themes were about personal values, community values, personal visions and community visions. Within each of these themes, there were ten sub-questions. The words listed in each of the ten sub-questions were the significant aspects of the ten primary human needs the researcher had identified. These were:

1. Purpose and Meaning
2. Self-Connection

3. Well-Being
4. Autonomy
5. Interdependent Partnerships and Immediate Family (Intimate – Partnership & Immediate Family)
6. Interdependent Relationships with Community/Tribe/Work
7. Creativity and Healing
8. Safety and Protection
9. Celebration
10. Spirituality

The above words represented the ten primary human needs the researcher had identified.

These words were randomly located among a list that included words characterizing values, needs, ideas, feelings, beliefs and traits closely associated with that particular core human need. The ten sub-questions in the survey were designed to obtain a more authentic intuitive response from community members. The words in each list covered a range of values, needs, ideas, feelings, beliefs and traits that were significant aspects of the ten core human needs the ARr identified above. Questions 11–17 in the survey were open-ended and descriptive and gave participants an opportunity to express in detail their experiences living in the MEC, their individual preferences, and their ideas for the Retreat.

Data was also harvested from the reflective learning circle, held approximately one week after the retreat, while members' thoughts about the SCVVS were still fresh. The learning circle process will be a time of synthesizing, crystallizing and seeing what new information is germinating. At each stage of this inquiry, community members were invited, with the help of the sponsor, Liina Järviste, to voluntarily participate.

A letter of invitation to participate in a Mõisamaa ecological community survey (Appendix A & A1) was sent electronically to all community members by the Sponsor. An

informed consent letter (Appendices B & B1) accompanied the survey and was sent electronically by the sponsor to all members of the Mõisamaa ecological community. The on-line survey was conducted within a two-week timeframe. After evaluating the survey data, more in-depth questions and unanswered questions prepared the way for the Retreat, influencing the content and facilitation.

After the Retreat, community members received an invitation by e-mail, and posted on the community notice board to attend the Reflective Learning Circle (See Appendices C & C1) for the MEC. Accompanying this invitation was an informed consent letter (See Appendices D & D1) sent electronically by the sponsor to all community members. Within GEN, the organization encourages communities to participate in “Surveys and Open Forum meetings conducted amongst members of GEN to ensure a constant process of participative learning and feedback” (see GEN Vision, Mission, Goals, para. 4). This inquiry supported those recommendations for MEC with a survey, 5-day Retreat, and a reflective learning circle.

Data Analysis

The purpose of the survey, the Retreat, and the reflective learning circle was to collect data and information about the values and vision for each community member so as to inform a desired future community state. The generated data was intended to identify the personal and social values and visions community members felt were vital to having a thriving process-orientated community.

This section provided an overview of the way the data was collected from the survey, the Retreat and the community reflective learning circle. The results from each participant’s engagement were individually analyzed and coded using Stringer’s (2014) framework to condense, categorize, and theme all data provided. The resulting themes were categorized by (a) highlighting word repetitions; (b) data comparison across the data groupings; and (c) extraction

of consistent topics, phrases, or narratives that emerged from the survey questions 11-16, the Retreat and the reflective learning circle.

The analyzed data provided valuable information and generated findings and recommendations for the needs and desires of community members. Glesne (2011) stated the following:

Data analysis involves organizing what you have seen, heard, and read so that you can figure out what you have learned and make sense of what you have experienced. Working with the data, you describe, compare, create explanations, link your story to other stories, and possibly pose hypotheses or develop theories (p. 184).

Survey

The survey data analysis (Glesne, 2011, p. 188) generated the foundational data for this inquiry and was an insightful doorway into preparing for the Retreat. In phase one of my data analysis, I spent time considering, reflecting, examining and evaluating the survey data, looking at it through different lenses of inside out, back to front, upside down (spherical 360 degrees). I asked questions of the data (Glesne, 2011; Bernard & Ryan, 2010; Stringer, 2014, pp. 164–165). What needs to be investigated, analyzed and potentially in need of change? (Stringer, 2014, p. 135).

Consideration at this stage was given to interpreting and developing an understanding of social processes and dynamics by asking general questions like: What was working? What seemed to need attention and could be improved, matured, or expanded? What direction is the MEC moving in? and What do they hope to accomplish? Concurrently, I reflected on the overarching question of this inquiry: “How could the development of an SCVVS foster the growth of MEC in Estonia?”

There were two main questions in the survey. For questions 1-10 participants were asked to: Underline **3 words** in each section that are the best fit for how you live your life.

For questions 1a-10a participants were asked to: Underline **3 words** in each section that are the best fit for how you want to live with others in community.

Having only two questions that were repetitive, one for section 1–10 and another for 1a–10a, kept the process simple. Simplicity was maintained by participants repeatedly choosing only three words in each of a total of twenty questions. Repeating the same question allowed survey participants to focus more on choosing the words that best fit for them and less on the question. Questions 1–10 were seeking information about what participants valued in their daily life. Questions 1a–10a were seeking information about participants' collective community vision. In the data analysis, personal values and collective values were cross-referenced with personal visions and collective visions.

The survey data was tabulated to identify the number of identical responses for each word in questions 1-10 and questions 1a-10a. Then the range of differences was assessed wthin each question. I gave a value rating for each member, which indicated how aligned they were with other members. I then took the mean of all members, so that this could be used as a benchmark should the MEC wish to continue evaluating how well they are doing as a community in the future. I categorized the responses to each question, placing the responses into a framework of needs, values, feelings, traits, ideas and concepts so I could better understand the community perspective. “These systematic processes of analysis provide the means for a deeper or more extended understanding of the situation that lead to a more effective and sustainable resolution of the problem or issue investigated” (Stringer, 2014, p. 136).

The primary aim of my data analysis was to identify and distil information that represented the viewpoints and experiences of all community participants from the survey. (Stringer, p. 139). This meant identifying themes held in common across participants. Stringer

(2014) stated that “Research participants, therefore, need to identify themes – issues, experiences, or perspectives that people have in common – by comparing categories and subcategories across stakeholding groups” (p. 143). The corollary to this was also to identify from the survey the full range of differences that are the many pieces that go into making a complex puzzle called the MEC community.

To analyze survey questions 11–16, which were descriptive, required coding and categorizing. These questions were as follows:

- Q11. Would you please describe a positive story about a time at Mōisamaa, a memorable high point, when you experienced an event where you felt supported? Who was there? What happened?
- Q12. Would you please describe a positive event you experienced at Mōisamaa, a memorable high point, when ***the Mōisamaa community*** felt supported? Who was there? What happened?”
- Q13. ***List 5 things*** you are creating or wanting to create in your personal life in the future.
- Q14. What is ***your vision*** for the Mōisamaa community? List the ***5 most important*** criteria you desire for living in community.
- Q15. Why did you ***choose to live*** in the Mōisamaa community?
- Q16. If you had three wishes for how you would change the Mōisamaa community; if you could make any necessary changes; what would these three changes be?

Question seventeen in the survey was seeking information from MEC members who might choose to participate in the Retreat. The information gleaned from question seventeen was tabulated and then shared with the sponsor. Community members’ suggestions, ideas, and requests were incorporated into the Retreat.

- Q17. ***Contribute your ideas*** to the upcoming ***Mōisamaa Retreat, 8-12 June***. The purpose of the retreat is to help you clarify your values and vision for yourself and the community. It

will be a time for healing, reconciliation, celebration, self-nurturing, connection and alignment. Please share what you need and what you would like to experience during our time together.

The Retreat

From day 3 to 5, Retreat participants began a variation of World Café (Brown & Isaacs, 2005). A collaborative dialogue ensued to decide upon the following question: “What social actions are now needed by the Mōisamaa community to move forward together? The community responded to this general question by asking the following three questions they felt would inform the SCVVS.

1. What social actions can **you** take to help this happen? ('I')
2. What social actions do you feel and think **other** community members need to make so the community can move forward together? ('You')
3. What general ideas, social actions, and activities will help the **Mōisamaa community** move forward together? ('We')

Community members documented their responses to these three questions and posted the data on the surrounding walls. I collected this data and sent it by e-mail to Retreat participants so they would have a copy. I used a simple analytical coding scheme recommended by (Glesne, 2011, p. 191) that searched for patterns and relationships. She stated that “Qualitative researchers code to discern themes, patterns, processes, and to make comparisons and build theoretical explanations” (p. 194). The process of identifying, organizing, categorizing and locating the data bits into categories created an informational landscape about community members’ values and visions (p. 191). Responses that represent similar descriptive ideas, theoretical understandings, feelings, and gestures were placed in data clumps “to create a thematic organizational framework” (p. 194). The data provided by participants in Phase two of the Think stage on Days 3-5 of the Retreat enriched the analysis.

Reflective Learning Circle

A week after the Retreat, I hosted a reflective learning circle for the MEC. I made an audio recording of the reflective learning circle, and I took written notes of what was said by community members. I transcribed the audio recording and added, where necessary, my written notes. The data was then coded, categorized and analyzed.

The purpose of the think stage was to examine all the data that emerged from the look stage and identify the major themes, traits and behaviors that seemed to have a significant influence on events (p. 136). “People need to be able to think about all aspects of the situation, to critically examine all features of the setting so they are able to fashion effective solutions” (p. 135) to the challenges and opportunities they face.

Adding the analysis data from the Retreat and the reflective learning circle incorporated more information and added to the holistic analysis of this inquiry. During this inquiry, I wrote copious amounts of notes, reflected into the night, and read avidly, all of which helped move the analysis forward, and required considerable patience. (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008; Coghlan & Brannick, 2010; Glesne, 2011). The data analysis informed the content and timeline of future implementation plans. Flick, Metzler & Scott (2014), and Saldana (2013) influenced the qualitative analysis of the data collected in this inquiry.

Rigor and Limitations

Stringer (2014) said credible research requires that participants be able “to trust the integrity of the process” (p. 92). Community members will then be able “to make the personal commitments essential to a well-founded inquiry” (pp. 92–93). Establishing participant trust for this inquiry was fostered through ensuring there was informed consent, whereby participants were fully informed and aware of the content, intention, the value of this inquiry and what it would mean to their community in the future. Trust was created from empathetic understanding that comes only through close involvement with participants (Stringer, 2014, p. 95). The

trustworthiness of this research was based upon some of Glesne's (2011) summary insights into creating trustworthiness in qualitative AR (p. 45).

- Prolonged engagement and persistent observations
- Triangulation and use of multiple data-collection methods
- Clarification of research bias
- Member checking
- Recognizing the limitations of this study (pp. 212–214)
- My reflective practice as an ARr.

I established trustworthiness in this inquiry through prolonged engagement with every participant by repeatedly checking in with them during my time in their community. The trustworthiness of the data directly related to how a researcher interprets the data (Glesne, 2011, p. 49, p. 210). Hollway and Jefferson (2000) linked trustworthiness to a researcher's analytical interpretation and suggested asking four fundamental research questions: What do you notice? Why do you notice what you notice? How can you interpret what you notice? How can you know that your interpretation is the “right” one? (p. 55).

I achieved verification by using three different methods of data gathering. Reflexivity was ensured by attending systematically to the context of knowledge construction. Glesne (2011) believed the authenticity of data related to the ability of the researcher to make meaningful connections with the data (pp. 208–210) and the collaborative interaction with participants (Coghlan and Brannick, 2010, p. 48). I was attentive to the effect I was having as the researcher at every step of the research process and to my biases that were hindrances. Costello (2003) was used as a guide to follow in establishing the validity, reliability, credibility of the data, and the research process (p. 44).

This type of survey introduced a unique approach to surveying. It is the researcher's intention to improve this survey tool at every level in the future, and a wiki approach would

make this possible. The accuracy of the survey will be reflected back by how the community responds to the findings and recommendations. If the MEC decide to implement some of the recommendations, then how well the community does in the future will in part reflect the value, validity and accuracy of this survey. Once the MEC reviews the findings and recommendations, I am sure they will explore new approaches to address challenges, re-consider their process of governance, and involve expressive and creative practices that they decide will enhance community living and more. There is a probability that the community will give feedback and feedforward on how to improve the survey in 2017.

The high level of engagement and participation, that included all core members of the community in the survey, Retreat and reflective learning circle, gave credence to the findings and recommendations. In analyzing the data, I followed Stringer's (2014) guidance by honoring participants' inherent intent and meaning when they provided the data.

All analysis is an act of interpretation, but the major aim in analysis is to identify information that clearly represents the perspective and experience of the stakeholding participants. Those involved in data analysis must "bracket" their own understandings, intuitions, or interpretations as much as possible and focus on the meanings inherent in the world of participants (p. 139).

Ethical Issues

This research followed the Royal Roads University (RRU) Research Ethics Policy (2011), the RRU Policy on Academic Integrity and Misconduct and Procedures for RRU Students (Revised – 9 October 2013), and the Tri-Council Policy Statement TCPS 2 (2010). 2nd Ed. Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans. The TCPS2 overarching guideline seeks to ensure that human dignity is the underlying value of all research.

I followed Stringer's (2014) advice and maintained the rights and privacy of research participants and their anonymity regarding the survey. Procedures and safeguards were put in

place that guarded against unwarranted intrusion into their lives. Processes throughout the inquiry were sensitive to cultural values, and individual permission was sought at every stage of the inquiry (p. 222). This OLP was influenced by the ethical code recommended by Howard and Korver (2008) and Wiles (2012). Participants in the study were informed, ongoing consent was sought and honored, and respect for community members was consistent throughout the research project. This inquiry adhered to the principle of concern for people's welfare that imposed an ethical obligation to design, assess and conduct research in a way that protected participants from any unnecessary or avoidable risks. Stringer (2014) said it was essential for researchers to "take specific steps to ensure that participants come to no harm as a result of their participation in the research project" (p. 89).

Ethical leadership is about human relationships. Ethics is a deep-seated feeling and way of being that comes from genuine practices that embody a leader's actions and interactions. Ethical leadership is expressed from a natural embodied authentic place from within every cell of the leader's body and it is ill-advised for the mind to make ethical choices. Some of the traits that accompany and aid the transparent ethical leader are openness, frankness, honesty, resonance (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002, pp.19–31) truthfulness, candor, integrity, clarity, concern, full disclosure, honesty, receptivity, fairness, and authenticity (Gardner, 1995, pp. 308–309).

This AR inquiry followed the ethical action-based principle that governs making ethical judgments. "In action-based ethics, the action, in and of itself, has ethical value; and it is on this basis that we should make our ethical decisions" (Hamill, 2013, p. 204). Transparency and honesty were practiced impeccably throughout this inquiry. All inquirers in research projects have a humanistic and a scientific obligation "to do research in the best way . . . [they] know how" (p. 81). The humanistic obligation is "to treat people with dignity and safeguard their interests" (p. 81). I carried out the research to the best of my abilities by adhering to the RRU policies and the TCPS 2 (2010) policy statement. The guiding principles from these three sources

were: respect for persons, concern for welfare, and justice. The following subsections outline how I addressed those three core principles.

Respect for Persons

According to the *Tri-Council Policy Statement* (CIHR, 2010) policy, respect for persons recognizes the inherent value of human beings and the respect, consideration, and confidentiality that are due to participants in the research. All community members had the opportunity to exercise control over their personal information by consenting to or withholding consent for, the collection, use, and disclosure of information. I spoke with the sponsor, and she was not aware of any community members who faced an impediment to giving free and informed consent or were incapable of exercising autonomy. As an ARr, I had the responsibility and obligation to ensure privacy and confidentiality for all community members at every stage of the inquiry. The procedures for withdrawing from the study were outlined in the invitational letters for the survey and reflective learning circle, and no participants chose to withdraw from either. For the reflective learning circle, participants were told they could not withdraw their data from the study, as their comments had influenced subsequent comments in the group.

I showed respect and consideration to all participants by communicating openly, transparently and respectfully throughout my research, seeking permission at every step of the way. I safeguarded and created a respectful environment for all the participants by establishing engagement guidelines for the Retreat and the reflective learning circle gathering. I clearly explained the reflective learning circle method of communication and the accompanying confidentiality.

I was a consensual facilitator in my role as an AR consultant in this inquiry. I employed Stringer's (2014) action research working principles of relationships, communication, participation and inclusion to generate trust and cooperation with all participants throughout this inquiry (pp. 23–33). I sat in circle side-by-side with participants, and there were no differential

power issues between the facilitator and the participants. Listening and receiving what participants had to say was one of the foundational cornerstones of this inquiry. I have been a consultant for the MEC for the past three years and I have established a respectful trusting relationship with every member of the community (p. 76).

I informed all community members of the measures I was taking to safeguard their information and securely protect it. I clearly explained the purpose of the research, its ethical implications, the research methods, and transparency around the use of the data in the future (TCPS, 2010, pp. 28–45). Holman et al. (2007) stated that respect for persons could be maintained throughout the change process by the leader "being clear about their true intentions and acting with integrity in carrying out those intentions.... [This] is not only ethical but also fundamental to success" (p. 8). I informed community members that they would receive a report of my findings and recommendations.

Concern for Welfare

The voluntary nature of the study and the requirement of informed consent gave the participants the autonomy to choose to participate in the study. Participation in the survey process was kept confidential to ensure privacy. Survey information was coded and original documents kept in a secure location. The survey incorporated Fowler's (2014) ethical issues for survey research regarding how to inform protecting and protecting participant respondents (pp. 140–145). Salant and Dillman (1994) emphasized that ethical surveying means ensuring confidentiality. "Any time you ask people to participate in a survey, it is your responsibility to respect both their privacy and the voluntary nature of their involvement" (p. 9). The design and sequencing of the research methods showed concern for the welfare of participants. The introductory letter, consent forms, and the survey were translated into the Estonian language and designed so they were understandable and easy to read.

A 5-Day Retreat was held between the Survey and the reflective learning circle, and it provided an opportunity for healing to take place between community members. The Retreat generated a relational field in which community members saw one another anew, listened more attentively, began to enjoy each other's company, and revived the spirit of the community that had been there in the formative days and lost because of ensuing conflict. Reconciling conflict and past behaviors that created upset between members requires considerable time. In the future, substantially more time will be needed to support dialogue and connection so that members are on the same page. The recommendations will suggest how the community can create more congruency, harmony, respect and trust in the future.

Participants at the Retreat were encouraged to share only to the extent that they felt comfortable. The Retreat was for the benefit of members and the well-being of their community. The ARr, in facilitating the seminars, created an atmosphere of reverence and respect, applied the principles of AR (Stringer, 2014, pp. 23–33), and focused on listening with quiet compassion. The community members chose how they wanted to proceed on the path to forming an in-depth SCVVS. Building and re-building trust between members was a foremost theme prevalent throughout this inquiry.

A learning circle followed the Retreat, and it was a natural, safe container for a community to explore alignment and differences (Baldwin & Linnea, 2010), to encourage heart-fullness and mindfulness. Conversely, participants in a learning circle often require time to build relationships and develop trust. Some issues can lead to deep, personal and emotional experiences and may require more time or further follow up. Through sharing personal stories, learning circles can be effective in bringing awareness to deeper emotional issues that may influence an organizational environment. Attending to emotional and psychological issues requires a skilled, experienced, well-trained facilitator to address and navigate sensitive or highly

charged issues when they arise. I have the experience, training, and credentials for this assignment, including extensive training in NonViolent Communications.

I ensured the welfare of participants through maintaining privacy and confidentiality of respondents, and I refrained from including any data that would identify a participant in the reporting processes. The community sponsor received the summarized research data, and the anonymity of participants was preserved. There were five children in the community, ages four to ten years old. The inquiry data gathering processes were not suitable for children between these ages, and children were not included.

Concern for Justice

According to TCPS2 (CIHR, 2010), "Justice refers to the obligation to treat people fairly and equitably" (p. 10) and this highlighted my obligation as an AR to treat people fairly and equitably. All community members of the MEC were given equal opportunity to voluntarily participate in the research (TCPS, 2010, pp. 47–53) or withdraw from the process. All members of the MEC received an invitation to participate in the research, which guaranteed fair treatment. No vulnerability issues were raised throughout the research process.

The Retreat and the reflective learning circle provided a structure for justice and equity. Respect and consideration were honored throughout these processes and were vital to the success of the research and to ensure justice. All participants will have access to the results of the inquiry.

Risks and Benefits

Participants were informed of the risks and benefits in the introductory letter, the consent forms (TCPS, 2010, p. 22), and verbally at the Retreat and reflective learning circle. There were no physical risks by being involved in the Retreat or Reflective Learning Circle. Some participants were more comfortable expressing themselves than others. There was no pressure placed on participants to speak or participate. However, the circle process used throughout this

inquiry lent itself to patient listening and inclusion and it created opportunities for all participants to be heard.

The benefits to participants from this inquiry were to increase body-mind awareness, aliveness, and wakefulness. This research project helped the community to grow and evolve as a cohesive community, become more resilient, facilitate collaborative leadership and governance, enhance trust between members and engender faith in their community. The Retreat helped with conflict resolution and created opportunities for reconciliation and healing. As future leaders, participants became more informed and better able to serve their community. The intention of this inquiry was to reduce upset and conflict by facilitating human relationships that created lives well lived, facilitated equality and justice in the community, and opened doorways to a healthier lifestyle resulting from positive daily experiences. The benefits of this OLP will help MEC evolve and grow as a cohesive community, become more resilient, facilitate collaborative leadership and governance, enhance trust between members and engender faith in their community.

Conflicts of Interest

As an action researcher, I had a consensual approach to the inquiry that worked from the assumption that cooperation, consensus, and informed consent were the guiding principles and orientation of this research project. During the inquiry, I did not have any perceived or actual conflicts of interest or power differential circumstances occur with participants, the sponsor or the community. I repeatedly consulted the sponsor and all participants in this inquiry to source their input and address their requests.

My primary role as an ARr for this inquiry was to serve, support, receive, listen, reflect, facilitate and act as a consultant. With the rise of ethnographic AR, Glesne (2011) and many of her peers are acknowledging the value, contribution and inherent responsibilities of an ARr to educate participants during the AR project. Concurrently, the ARr has a responsibility to become

more informed and educated about their AR project and to do personal work that attends to their self-realization through practices that lead to increased embodied self-awareness. Personal improvement is a chosen on-going way of living and does not stop during an AR project. I was an educator action research consultant throughout the inquiry. Being an educator action researcher created the potential for there to be a conflict of interest between myself and participants. I aspired to be impeccable throughout this OLP and be aware of the possible conflict of interest.

The AAr who is an educator does not necessarily compromise or invalidate the accuracy of the data. If the **intention** of an AR project or OLP is to create readiness for change and to help individuals and organizations affirmatively grow and evolve; and providing the AAr is impeccable in delivery, data gathering, documentation, reporting, and recommendations; there is an inherent obligation to educate. If the AAr is solely a documenter consultant, this will lead to stagnancy, an abundance of noticing with little organizational change taking place and reports gaining dust on bookshelves.

To avoid conflict of interest, the AAr needs to be concerned, aware and continually re-educating themselves on cultural systems ethics, gender representation, ethnicity and social issues. Three areas of ethical concern that are universal in nature and require consideration by the AAr of the twenty-first century are:

1. Healing and fully expressing the balanced inner and outer feminine and masculine.

The AAr would be well advised to read Estés (1992). Understanding how to birth both aspects of being feminine and masculine that are in everyone and everything in existence is essential to an awakened life. Healing and maturing masculine and feminine behaviors and dynamics in the MEC was one of the major concerns that were addressed in this AR project.

2. An embodied body-mind approach is imperative for the ARr to engage their AR ethically. Hamill (2013) said: “our emotions and moods, which are expressed in our bodies, drive our behaviours and tell us ultimately what we care about (p. 218).
3. An inclusive and comprehensive systems approach to AR mandates that the ARr believes in and practices educating and re-educating themselves and research participants. An embodied systems approach to AR addresses concerns for the well-being, equality, justice, safety and relational quality between the ARr, participants, the community, and the whole environment.

Hamill (2013) said:

If we connect to ourselves and the felt experience of being alive, we can feel our connection to the entire ecological system and feel the implications of our actions. As integrated human beings, we must see ourselves in a community of beings and connected to a biosphere of which we are a part. Any view of leadership [AR and ARr] that does not include this is likewise incomplete (p. 218).

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I outlined the methodology for this OLP project, including a description of participants, the methods that were implemented to gather data, the reasons for choosing these methods, and a commentary on the data analysis techniques. The methodology also took into consideration the ethical requirements of the project, along with the processes that were implemented to mitigate any potential ethical issues.

Coghlan and Brannick (2010) stated: “Ethics procedures are part of life and so they are part of research” (p. 132). Glesne (2011) said: “Ethical considerations are inseparable from your everyday interactions with research participants and with your data” (p. 162). These authors described AR as a methodology based on principles of participation, democracy, justice, and

freedom. I upheld these principles in my role of ARr. I was also responsible for protecting the physical, social, and emotional welfare of all participants.

The survey, the retreat and the reflective learning circle (Open Forum meetings) were in alignment with GEN's vision, mission and goals statement (See GEN Vision, Mission, Goals). The benefit of a survey and reflective learning circle to this inquiry was "to ensure a constant process of participative learning and feedback" (para. 4) both within a community and between communities (<http://gen.ecovillage.org/en/page/vision-mission-goals>).

The following chapter outlines the AR findings, along with conclusions drawn from the survey, the Retreat, and the reflective learning circle.

Chapter Four: Action Inquiry Project Findings and Conclusions

Study Findings

In this chapter, I present the findings, develop sound conclusions, and describe the scope and limitations of the inquiry. The data collected from the survey, the Retreat and the reflective learning circle, provided the information for the findings and conclusions. The data addressed the primary research question for this inquiry – “How could the development of an SCVVS foster the growth of MEC in Estonia?” – and also the following sub-questions:

1. What are the values, experiences, successes, hopes, needs and wishes of individuals within the MEC for themselves and their broader community?
2. How do community members make changes so they can align their common values and socially agreed-upon ways of behaving and relating?
3. What processes and practices foster individual, interpersonal and community collaboration for the MEC?
4. What examples of innovation and culture change in other communities could serve as social models for MEC and influence the change strategy and recommendations?

This chapter begins with a summary of the findings that were gleaned from the analysis of the data. It then adds to the data analysis findings by including relevant literature in the conclusion section. Finally, it outlines the scope as well as the limitations of the inquiry.

The quantitative findings from the survey, the Retreat and the reflective learning circle were calculated by the number of participants who choose similar responses, the diversity of responses, comparisons between responses to different questions in the survey, and mean responses. The qualitative findings were reported as overall themes within six broadly based study findings and were supported by direct quotations from the participants. I captured quotations in their exact form, including any grammatical errors, and have removed any

identifying information to protect the anonymity of the participants. The data analysis revealed the following six findings:

1. Community Diversity: The MEC would benefit from valuing, appreciating, harvesting and including community diversity.
2. Communications, Group Process Skills, and Conflict Resolution: The MEC members would benefit from improving interpersonal and group process communications and their conflict resolution skills.
3. Self-Leadership, Interpersonal Relationships, and Community Relationships: Improve interpersonal and group process relationships to create a heartfelt learning community. The MEC would benefit from addressing gender issues that are disrespectful.
4. Values and Visions, Personal and Community: Community members would benefit from creating a Social Vision & Values Statement (SCVVS) that aligns personal values and visions with community values and visions.
- 5: The System of Governance and Community Development: The MEC would benefit from reviewing and improving their system of governance, and finding common ground between the individual versus collective orientation and consciousness of members.
6. Community Ownership, Personal Responsibility, and Participation: The MEC members would benefit from clarifying the meaning of community ownership, personal responsibility, and participation in the SCVVS.

In this chapter, MEC members have been quoted and remain anonymous. Every community member was quoted, and many of the quotes were expressed multiple times and in varying ways by different members. The quotes were numerous because this was *their* inquiry process. When the MEC members read the report, they will feel included and more committed to creating an SCVVS that will serve them and their community.

Embracing a democratic mindset begins when you recognize that people support what they have had a hand in creating. Energy is created when people are included in decisions about what to change and how to change it, and when they know that their contribution counts. (Bunker & Alban, 2006, p. 336)

Stringer (2014) said that AR means including every member's voice (p. 31–33), their needs, values, visions, and beliefs. Including every stakeholder will help make the SCVVS

become a reality. My task as the Action Researcher (ARR) in this phase of the research process was to interpret, focus and bring into view a wide range of findings that covered many aspects of the MEC members' way of life. Stringer (2014) gave clear direction in this matter when he said:

The purpose is to show clearly how stakeholder perspectives illuminate the issue investigated and to suggest changes in organizational or programmatic practices implied by the outcomes of the research. In the academic world it may also propose ways in which existing theoretical perspectives are enhanced or challenged by the new understandings emerging from the research process (p. 226).

As an ARR, I was open and curious about multitudinous community viewpoints (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2008, p. 478) rather than triangulation. When the MEC first formed, the members believed they shared some common understandings regarding the values and visions of other members of the community. However, the community members had not yet explored and discussed in depth and detail their values, visions, needs and beliefs with each other to evaluate the places of common understanding. Nor had they had sustained interpersonal dialogue, or engaged fully in embodied group practices, activities, and events that would help them appreciate, recognize and value their similarities and differences. Crystallizing (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2008, p. 478), synthesizing and harmonizing diversity in social groups using a systems approach has been minimally explored by research. McKenna, in Sheldrake, McKenna and Abraham (2005) described diversity as a wonderful thing because "diversity itself confers adaptive advantage" (p. 116) and "variety itself becomes a premium in the evolutionary game" (p. 116). Their conversations in this book provided an appreciation and understanding of the part *diversity* played in evolution and gave it validity. The recognition of the part that diversity has played in evolution on Earth highlights the imperative importance of *inclusion* as a vital ingredient for effective group process, community living and a whole systems approach to engaging life.

Including everyone in a group, process requires new ways for people to communicate, relate and participate with themselves and with others. New community processes necessitate the emergence of a new collective culture that is cooperative – one that moves towards a shared gift economy and away from money. This culture would include embodied group practices that include everyone, would source and express both feminine and masculine traits and attributes, and would practice reflective listening from the heart with gratitude and appreciation. This culture would use the whole body to look with reverence for the blessings of living in the community, would value and respect nature, would attend to healing the past, and would celebrate ritual, embrace the healing arts, support creative, and co-creative expressive arts and engage a balanced body-mind approach to daily living.

Within any of these domains, the development of personal intimacy is the golden portal into the mystery mandala of self. Self-realization requires a thirsty questing to become more familiar with everything that is not known. In a community, this means spending time working, playing and sharing with every single member of the community. In Waldorf education, the teacher has a child maximize their learning potential by sitting at a desk next to another child with whom their differences are many. Members of a community will naturally tend to like some members more than others; but when community members move toward and spend time with those that they do not naturally gravitate toward or may even dislike, community crystallization is facilitated and becomes more possible. When a community member purposely engages other members whom they might not know very well, or feel uncomfortable around, they can notice these feelings as they arise and make a wise choice to stay engaged. Krishnamurti (1946) called this: the observer is the observed. The observer can take the time to heal their shadow self by observing and then addressing their reflections that do not serve themselves or others. Through this intentional process of spending time with every other community member, a person expands

their relational connection and compatibility, welcoming the “diversity of truth” (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2008, p. 479).

Community sustainability and resilience comes from healing, reconciling and embracing differences that create wholeness, whole beings, and whole systems. The inclusion of diversity is the key to whole effective systems. The human body is living proof of this amazing phenomenon, and that is why this inquiry seeks to source participants’ embodied urges and feelings, needs, values, and visions. The challenge to comprehend and grasp the nature of individual humanity, and how the authentic self emerges, is enormous.

This AR was to support the MEC in forming a detailed Social Vision and Values Statement (SCVVS). Supporting the formation of a detailed SCVVS is a complex matter to address in an inquiry process. There were many aspects to consider, given that living in a community is a multifaceted social dynamic, so a broad whole systems approach was used. Because there were many social factors to consider, I narrowed them down into six findings that were specifically pertinent to the MEC. Within these six findings, I included the main challenges the community has faced, as identified from the data. I have drawn conclusions from these findings, and they follow later in this chapter.

This OLP inquiry was appreciative and affirmative in its design, in the data gathered, and in my engagement with participants. The findings, conclusions, and recommendations were also appreciative and affirmative. An ethnological interpretive approach was used in this inquiry, as recommended by Stringer (2014), who said:

Interpretive research presents narrative accounts that reveal the ways people experience the issue being investigated and the context within which it is held. This section presents richly detailed, thickly described accounts that enable readers to empathetically understand the lived reality of research participants. These accounts are constructed from

information collected and analyzed during the study. They should include the perspectives of people from all major stakeholding groups (p. 222).

Community members' spoken and written words were included in the report findings, conclusions, and recommendations. Community members will read this report and hopefully take ownership of it. The MEC members will be able to consider the recommendations in this report and then take action that is aligned with their specific understanding of what needs to change.

The findings, conclusions and recommendations of this report focused on the ethnographical aspects of what people said, what they valued, the visions they sought and how they felt. The MEC is made up of ordinary people living a simple rural lifestyle, and their first language is Estonian. The ethnological approach used in the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of this report makes the report readable for MEC members and exemplifies the meaning of 'readiness for change.' A report that empowers and inspires members will hopefully ignite their passion and will support the MEC in the creation of an SCVVS that will serve them well in the future.

Finding 1: Community Diversity: The MEC would benefit from valuing, appreciating, harvesting and including community diversity.

One of the many findings of this inquiry was the need for MEC members to wake up to how they need one another; the realization that the community is a whole system made up of many parts, and all are needed for the community to thrive. In some areas, the data indicated the noticeable diversity of values, feelings, needs and visions among members. Differences in member's values, visions and behaviors reflected the diversity one can expect when any group of individuals gets together. However, the community would benefit from becoming familiar with their differences; accepting, valuing, and embracing the diversity of other human beings in their community; and responding with inclusive behaviors.

Diversity can be a blessing or a complex challenge that can undermine or de-construct a forming community. MEC community members were beginning to recognize they are living in a community of unique individuals. Uniqueness is a foundational life principle to be acknowledged, understood and embraced when two or more people collaborate. Any group, organization or community that is made up of unique individuals benefits from each person's presence and gifts that contribute to the whole (Surowiecki, 2004). Valuing of individual uniqueness is important to loving oneself, and the same is true when valuing and caring for other people. They are one and the same. One member said, "I look inside. I create love. I cooperate with others." Because the mind often chooses to notice other people as being different from oneself, reviewing the way we look at others becomes essential for relationships of partners, families, and communities to thrive. One member suggested that to embrace diversity one must "Honor other people's opinions and take the time to find mutual ground and agreement to make things work."

During the Retreat, community members made it clear that they were seeking more opportunities for working and playing with their fellow communitarians. When community members view each other as different rather than unique, then a primal competitive trait tends to arise. When we see ourselves in our neighbor, then our instincts invoke cooperation. In the words of one community member: "We complement each other with co-operation, not competition."

Finding 2: Communications, Group Process Skills, and Conflict Resolution: The MEC members would benefit from improving their interpersonal, group process communications, and conflict resolution skills.

The MEC members would benefit from improving their interpersonal and group process communications as well as their conflict resolution skills. The inquiry found that two diametrically opposite behaviors were prevalent and expressed in the MEC. These were kindness, consideration, caring and respect inter-mixed with blaming, unkindness, lack of

consideration and disrespect. Naming the places of resonance and disharmony within the community created transparency and the potential for healing. The cultures we all grew up in have these conflictual behaviors. Blaming, unkindness, lack of consideration and disrespect between people disturbs the psychological, emotional and physical well-being of anyone who is in the energy field of this behavior, and especially if one is the recipient or directly involved.

A major issue confronting MEC was mistrust from inappropriate social behaviors between men and women, women and women, and men and men in the community. It is important to add that this is a universal problem and very common in most communities and cultures. These gender and relationship behaviors can create havoc in a community as they are hurtful and take time to heal. Even then there needs to be a *willingness* by all parties to address the issues. The inquiry also found that when differences arose between members of the community, there was a tendency to retreat from the challenge to disengage, which left the matter unresolved. A serious conflict between members can disturb a whole community if the matter is not addressed.

Concurrently, the inquiry found that loving presence, caring, kindness, consideration, and respect were very common in members' actions and words. During this inquiry, the Mōisamaa community used these words in the survey, the Retreat and the reflective learning circle (as expressions of how they felt) more frequently than any other words. Here are a few of the members comments: "Have more compassion and connection to myself;" "Be kinder and caring in my communication with others;" "To grow and learn and to become wider and kinder every day, step by step;" "Do what makes your heart sing and eyes shine;" "I notice feelings and needs of others;" "To reduce my automatic reactions and increase the heart space;" "I am gentle and supportive."

One finding of this inquiry was that there was not enough communication of information to and from persons who had positions of responsibility for the community. To varying degrees,

members of the community were stretched to the maximum because of their commitments and diverse responsibilities. Some community members had too much to do and were overloaded with assignments, so they had less time for communicating community information that needed to be shared. Agreements are important for there to be clear communications between members, and sometimes it is advisable for these agreements to be in writing. One member recognized the value of having better documentation for written agreements and said: “Clear communications for the sharing of information and agreements” would be helpful. Another suggested the practice of “observing the dynamics of the community, make it known to others and make changes.”

The MEC is a warm-hearted community. However, it will take a commitment by every member to improve their communication skills. If they do address this issue and work toward becoming good communicators, then relationships in the community will be better supported, and members are more likely to get along.

Finding 3: Self-Leadership, Interpersonal Relationships, and Community Relationships:
To improve interpersonal and group process relationships to create a heartfelt learning.
The MEC would benefit from addressing gender issues that are disrespectful.

This section reviewed the findings on how to improve self-leadership and interpersonal and group relationships to create a heartfelt learning community. At the Retreat and the reflective learning circle, members stated that they wanted more alignment between members – a common understanding that would unify the community as they moved forward. “Now is the need to grow the feeling of unity of home and us as one group with common goals.”

“Relationships are the very heart and soul of an organization’s ability to get any job done” (Short, 1998, p. 15). Community members would like to have more togetherness and connectivity. Many community members mentioned the behaviors of loving-kindness and authenticity: “To be authentic, honest, clear, kind, loving.” It was clear that MEC members aimed toward being authentic and having authentic relationships with other community

members. Members also wanted to develop their abilities to communicate and relate. “I will practice communicating non-violently and from an ‘I’ perspective.” The inquiry noticed that most members were comfortable with being touched and offering touch that builds connection and relationships. Self-reflection was valued by community members and one member noted that they felt it was vitally important for members to “...analyse how our behavior and habits are aligned with the purpose of the community.”

The MEC has typical societal gender issues that are disrespectful. Community conflict was apparent between some MEC members at the Retreat. Ethical boundaries need to be agreed upon and clearly defined by community members, particularly regarding gender issues. Participants expressed their desire to better understand gender issues. There were some relationships between community members that were conflictual, unclear, and stressful; other community members got along well, trusted one another, and enjoyed each other’s company. During and after the Retreat, there was less conflict and a willingness by community members to heal and work things out. Resolving and healing conflict takes time and requires patience. During the inquiry, it was noticeable that community members were committed “to showing up even in uncomfortable times and despite the discomfort.”

One of the most significant findings of this inquiry was that the MEC would be advised to review how they include and consider their children in daily community living. This was well described by a member who said “Notice children and their needs, ideas and questions. Children are the future of this planet.” How the community takes care of its children will be a major influence on whether or not the community realizes the vision they believed in and are working toward. It takes a whole community to raise a child.

A comment from one member, “I notice the children in the community,” was a significant factor during this inquiry. Another member asked the community for a “...commitment to creating a really nurturing and safe environment for everybody, but start with

children.” Considering the well-being of the children and how they are included in community living came up at the Retreat and the reflective learning circle. For a community to stay in balance requires that it is inter-generational. The children are as important, if not more important, than getting jobs and work done and creating the dream.

The findings from the survey data highlighted members’ challenges regarding balancing their need for being alone, for individual, interpersonal time with one other, and for a collective time. How to integrate and find balance and harmony between individual preferences within a communal lifestyle? This is a universal challenge for humanity in a community context because every human being is like a snow crystal; each person is unique and has their own purpose and path in life. Concurrently, there is a need for connection and belonging. The MEC would do well to give this concept consideration as they move forward. Generally, community members expressed a need to create a more balanced lifestyle in which there was more time for personal development, interpersonal relationships and being together as a community.

Finding 4: Values and Visions, Personal and Community: Community members create an SCVVS that aligns personal values and visions with community values and visions.

The findings and conclusions integrated the survey data with the written comments from participants at the Retreat and the verbatim comments and recording from the reflective learning circle. My findings come from one interpretation of the data. MEC community members would have other interpretations from living in the community.

The number after each word in the first list below represented the number of times one member in the survey chose the same word as another member, and I called this *a connection*. The following list identified the total number of connections between members who chose the same word in the survey in each specific needs category. The list below ordered them from the most connections to the least. There were 1,715 connections in which a member chose the same values or feeling word in the survey from Questions 1-10 and 1a-10a. There were 814 shared

connections between MEC members for values and feelings, and 901 connections for shared visions. This inquiry found that the MEC members were more connected and aligned with their *visions and dreams* and less with their common *values*. Becoming more harmonious and aligned with common community values would facilitate the MEC community realizing their visions and dreams for what they want to create for their community.

1. Safety & Protection 272
2. Celebration 257
3. Autonomy 253
4. Self-Connection 192
5. Purpose and Meaning 191
6. Interdependent Relationships with Community/Tribe/Work 143
7. Spirituality 122
8. Creativity and Healing 100
9. Interdependent Partnerships and Immediate Family 90
10. Well-Being 95

The following table identifies the top three values and feeling words most frequently chosen from the survey questions 1-10 and 1a-10a. The ten primary needs for human wellness are listed from 1 to 10 in the same format as above for simplicity. The number after each word represents the number of times one member chose the same word as another member, and I called this a connection. Under each human need category, the values or feeling words most commonly chosen by participants are listed as a connection. The connections were then tallied and combined with the values in Q1.responses and the visions in Q1a. responses. The same procedure was followed with each category, e.g., Q2 responses were added to Q2a responses giving a total number of connections between members in any given category.

Values and feelings that MEC members shared in common from the Survey:

1. Safety & Protection

Healing (14) Dreaming (13) Mentoring (3)

2. Celebration

Gratitude (15) Happiness (8) Fun (4)

3. Autonomy

Authenticity (14) Integrity (9) Freedom (5)

4. Self-Connection

Kindness (5) Acceptance (4) Connection (4)

5. Purpose and Meaning:

Awareness (11) Evolving (7) Simplicity (7)

6. Interdependent Relationships with Community/Tribe/Work

Co-create (11) Honesty (4) Harmony (4)

7. Spirituality

Intuition (9) Inspiration (4) Devotion (4)

8. Creativity and Healing

Imagination (4) Reflection (3) Creativity (3)

9. Well-Being

Centeredness (Balance) (8) Touch (3) Honesty (3)

10. Interdependent Partnerships and Immediate Family

Respect (3) Communications (3) Partnership (3)

Safety & Protection (272) Healing (14) Dreaming (13) Mentoring (3)

This inquiry found there was a need for the MEC to look at ways they can make it safe for members to be open and transparent so the community can give support and members can move forward as a unit. The connectedness in this category was the highest of any of the primary needs categories. Members agreed 272 times on similar values they believed in or visions they share with other members for how they want to live in the community. The high need for *safety* in the MEC is valuable information because recognizing and accepting this reality opens the way for *respect* to be established as a foundational pillar for the community temple, and for healing to

take place. Most cultures use force to maintain safety. Cultures and communities of the future that want to be sustainable and honor humanity will use kindness and love.

Celebration (257) Gratitude (15) Happiness (8) Fun (4)

The inquiry found that celebrating was highly valued by community members (257 connections). Celebrating was a notable part of the MEC culture. Gratitude was chosen by many of the members as a value they held in high esteem. The feeling ‘happy’ was considered important. The MEC adult community knows how to play and have fun. I saw them play together, invent games out in the field, dance on and around the kitchen table, and sing together while they worked.

Autonomy (253) Authenticity (14) Integrity (9) Freedom (5)

The inquiry found that personal autonomy ranked second as a significant need for MEC members (with 253 connections). Personal freedom was also valued by members. Many members also had strong feelings about authenticity and integrity.

Self-Connection (192) Kindness (5) Acceptance (4) Connection (4)

The inquiry found that community members had kind natures and sought a deeper understanding of themselves. During these formative years, the community has been in a state of continual change and the community as a whole has been doing a good job of riding the dragon’s tail. Members were open to “new opportunities to learn, to grow and evolve, and to live differently.” This view was supported by another member who wanted to raise their awareness regarding: “Coaching, counseling, mediating, training, especially concerning communication, and relationships. Further personal growth and learning about life on this planet.” Community members were supportive of my organizational leadership project and enthusiastically participated in each stage of the inquiry.

Purpose and Meaning (191) Awareness (11) Evolving (7) Simplicity (7)

The MEC community members are committed to living their lives ‘on purpose.’

Members live with intention and passion. They consciously choose to be aware and appreciate being included, especially in community decision-making. Members are working toward leading a meaningful existence, well described by one member: “My vision is a community that truly comes together to co-create a sustainable life. What I mean by ‘truly’ is deep trust, respect, and care for each other, supporting each other through the difficult times and sharing the joy.”

Interdependent Relationships with Community/Tribe/Work (143)

Co-create (11) Honesty (4) Harmony (4)

Community members would like to spend more time together, sharing and connecting with each other, both socially and workwise. Each member chose to live at the MEC because relationships, family, and tribe held significant meaning for them. The data showed that co-creating with other community members was a primary need for living and one to be enjoyed.

Spirituality (122) Intuition (9) Inspiration (4) Devotion (4)

In the survey, the Retreat, and the reflective healing circle, there was minimal mention by community members of the part spirituality could play in their life. I am not talking about religion. I am referring to how the following qualities are included in a person’s daily life and the practices or activities that support a qualitative way of living. These are: beauty, harmony, balance, inspiration, order, peace/tranquility, union, reverence, mystery, magic, mystical (enchantment), ritual, timelessness, patience, grace, communion, devotion, intuition, reverence, sacredness, and wonder. Incorporating the many aspects of spirituality into daily living and holding community ceremonies engenders feelings of oneness. One member stated: “I would like us to do common spiritual practices to create unity.”

Creativity and Healing (100) Imagination (4) Reflection (3) Creativity (3)

MEC members have the propensity to be very creative when it comes to work and problem solving. I witnessed the community move a gigantic greenhouse using human ingenuity.

The task seemed impossible, and their inspired creativity, collaborative imagination, and perseverance manifested a solution. Community members also have the capability to be creative artistically and craft-wise. In the words of one member at the Retreat, it was apparent that all community members were "...committed to personal, collective and environmental healing." This attitude will help the MEC become resilient and sustaining.

Well-Being (95) Centeredness (Balance) (8) Touch (3) Honesty (3)

The survey data indicated that most community members tended to be more outwardly focused than inwardly focused. Work and getting jobs done would take precedence over personal self-care. Of the ten identified essential needs for living, the connections between members were the lowest in the 'well-being category.' Throughout the inquiry, self-care was minimally identified by participants and not fully honoring one's basic health needs was ill-advised.

Interdependent Partnerships and Immediate Family (90)

Respect (3) Communications (3) Partnership (3)

The survey findings showed differences between a member's personal values and feelings and those they envisioned with their family, partners and their community. The deeply submerged feelings could make communications and relating challenging at times. The connections score of 90 for interdependent relationships and immediate family were low and suggested this is an area that needs more attention. When community members are having personal differences with another member, the pattern in the past was to isolate and to disengage, quite often from both the person involved and from the community. As one member said, "I realize that it is sometimes easier to be and to live alone, but together we can do so much more."

In the survey, only one person chose 'collaboration,' and one other chose 'teamwork' from questions 6 and 6a. Although the words collaboration, cooperation, and teamwork were located in the needs category for Interdependent Relationships with Community, Tribe, and Work; the responses have relevance about partnerships and relating one-on-one, as will be

described in the conclusions. At the Retreat, community members did use the word ‘collaboration,’ and in the community, there are many ways members collaborate.

Finding 5: The System of Governance and Community Development: The MEC reviews and improves their system of governance and finds common ground between the individual v collective orientation and consciousness of members.

Although the MEC system of governance, organization and community development was not a direct focus of this inquiry, these deserved some review because they impact the MEC social dynamics and relationships. The old cultural work ethic model might not be the one MEC chooses to pursue in the future! The ratio of work to general living might need to be turned upside down! Some MEC members expressed a need to decrease the amount of work being taken on by the community and to take longer working on a project. This inquiry was curious as to whether the community was expanding too quickly. Groups often expand too quickly, especially in the formative stages, and this can cause many challenges. One member advocated that the community “Keep things small and make cooperation based upon agreements.” The inquiry found that the community would benefit from slowing down the rate of expansion, the number of projects being taken on at any given moment in time, and the inflow of new members. Slowing down would allow the MEC to consolidate and grow healthy roots, and members could feel more spacious in their everyday lives.

The inquiry found that it would be beneficial for the MEC to re-evaluate the process they have for choosing new members and closely examine the rate of expansion. Community members felt the integration of new members could be improved.

Sociocracy (<http://thesociocracygroup.com/>) includes some major characteristics of good governance.

Sociocracy is a whole systems governance method that makes collaboration, self-organization, and distributed authority practical and effective in all organizations. It

requires transparency, inclusiveness and accountability—the characteristics of good governance. Combining the values and traditions of democracy with the methods of sociocracy will produce a deeper democracy.

The MEC is using Sociocracy as a part of its governance system. I found certain aspects of this system questionable and worthy of further consideration by the community.

The MEC could benefit from doubling up on each community position. Succession planning is the path of responsibility and ensures consistency with community development. Succession planning spreads and shares the workload, democratizes the community process, and ensures that valuable learning is retained and available to the community when needed. Other advantages of succession planning are team building, collaboration, and improved community relationships.

One member was seeking an economic, cultural paradigm shift. They wanted “to share in community our talents and gifts without putting money in between.” Decreasing the role money plays individually in MEC members’ lives, changing the community’s monetary relationship both within the community and with the greater community to a more collective approach over time, is a big issue. Christian (2003) pointed out that forming a rural community involved more variables than other kinds of communities, like how members might make a living (p. xviii).

The community was asking for there be a process for conflict resolution that was documented and commonly understood. One member said: “What is the common agreement that we can rely on when conflicts arise?” Another member said: “Honor other people's opinions and take time to find mutual ground and agreement to make things work.” I recommend that the MEC look at ways the community can make it safe for member’s to divulge, be open and transparent so the community can give support, appreciation and move forward as a unit.

Finding 6: Community Ownership, Personal Responsibility, and Participation: The MEC members clarify the meaning of community ownership, personal responsibility, and participation in the SCVVS.

The inquiry found that MEC members did not have a common understanding of what was meant by fully embracing the MEC as ‘**their own home.**’

When members fully embrace their beloved community members as their kith and kin, treat the land sacredly and with reverence, take personal responsibility for all they think, say and do, participate with their whole being in community life, a feeling of family emerges, a deep sense of belonging and members have found a place they can truly call home. Ownership is about setting down roots so that people can grow together in the same garden. “To accept and redefine our definition of home so that it would include the whole community,” was advocated by one member

Taking ownership is not clearly defined or understood by MEC members and needed further consideration. What does it mean to take full ownership of the community you have chosen to live in? The inquiry found that community members were still familiarizing themselves with living in the MEC and connecting with other members. Members were in the early stages of inhabiting the land and connecting socially with other member’s and had not taken full ownership or present to their surroundings. Members were seeking more intimacy and connection in the living environment as well as between each other. One member was encouraging other members to “Be more involved ~ take Mōisamaa more as a home and the community more as a family.” Another member said, “I will contribute my time and energy to make the surroundings feel more like home for me.”

The inquiry found that there was an intention to embrace the MEC as a member’s home and for some members, this has yet to happen. An agreed statement of intent and plan for

personal involvement would be helpful. At the Summer Retreat, July 2016, the MEC community began the process of formulating and documenting an SCVVS.

The inquiry also found that members would like to spend more time on collaborative projects that improve the quality of life for the MEC and in particular work projects that beautify the buildings and the land.

This inquiry found the following behaviors, qualities of being, and ways of relating were repeatedly expressed by community members in the survey, at the Retreat and in the reflective learning circle: Respect, ownership, personal and community responsibility, participation, authenticity, cooperation, transparency, teamwork, and collaboration.

Study Conclusions

The study conclusions materialized from the findings described after analyzing the data from the survey, the Retreat, and the community reflective learning circle. The six conclusions will inform the MEC so community members can develop their SCVVS. My task as the ARr in this phase of the research process was to:

- Interpret and bring into view the degree of alignment between MEC members for the choices they made about their personal values and visions and their community values and visions
- Identify general themes or areas where there is alignment between community members
- Identify general themes or areas where there are differences between community members
- Identify experiences and beliefs in which members are in agreement
- Explore diversity and forming a balanced system and community.

The six conclusions were as follows:

1. The community spends more time as a whole community working and playing together, to develop connection and intimacy between community members.

2. MEC members would benefit from improving their interpersonal and group process communication as well as their conflict resolution skills by participating in communication workshops, training, or personal and professional learning opportunities.
3. Members take more time for personal development, interpersonal relationships, through being together as a community using the practice of loving-kindness for self and to others. Put more time and energy into the children's education and school with support from all community members inside and outside the classroom. Members build mutual trust by establishing a common understanding of the meaning of respect.
4. Community members took their first steps to creating an SCVVS that aligned personal values and visions with community values and visions.
 - 4a. The MEC uses learning circles to engender a common understanding of considerate social behavior to facilitate a safe social environment.
 - 4b. Expand the number of celebrations and ceremonies that bring the community together as one.
 - 4c. Understanding the individual and collective needs of MEC members is crucial for community cohesion and how well members work together.
 - 4d. Members are encouraged to be self-reflective and engage in new learning experiences.
 - 4e. Members preferred a simple lifestyle and to experience balance in their daily regimes.
 - 4f. Members re-evaluate how they spend their time between work, family, community, and creative play.
 - 4g. The MEC creates a culture of spiritual practice.
 - 4h. Members take time for their creativity and personal healing.

- 4i. Spend more playful intimate time with partners, children and friends would nurture members emotionally and psychologically.
- 4j. Members learn to ask for help, support and guidance.
5. The community considers a new cultural paradigm for the amount of work, play, relaxation, personal development, reflection time and self-care members need. The community considers ways to improve the methodology of Sociocracy for community decision-making.
6. Members come to a consensus on what community ownership, personal responsibility, and participation mean living in the MEC and with this understanding actively participate in everyday community life. The MEC host learning circles to share about authenticity, cooperation, transparency, teamwork, and collaboration.

The conclusions are described in more detail below with many of the conclusions in this report coming from what MEC members wrote and said during the three data gathering methods.

Conclusion 1: Diversity: Valuing, appreciating, harvesting and including community diversity

The MEC is in the early stages of valuing and embracing the diverse nature of their members. “Realizing the value in all ways by embracing everyone, no matter how challenging that might sometimes be.” Community members formed many of their conclusions on how they could embrace community diversity. “Notice more what is around us and who are those people.” “Come together regularly, so we know who we are living with ~ more participation.” “Connect more on an individual level with community members.”

The community also realized that by participating in activities together, they spend more time with each other. Togetherness builds connection and can lead to the compassionate understanding that develops interpersonal intimacy. Interpersonal intimacy breaks down barriers

between people so they can see themselves in each other. Community members were hungry to participate in group activities such as dance, circles, and forums. Their conclusions were to “Encourage more participation in events, better inclusion” “Take a lead in activities that create a common field such as dance, circles, and forums, etc.” Including everyone in a community creates a vibrant co-creative state. The community needs to mature in this area.

Conclusion 2: Communications and group process skills

The MEC members would benefit from improving their interpersonal and group process communications as well as their conflict resolution skills. Christian (2003) said that newly forming communities can flounder and sink when they do not spend enough time devoted to research or group process (p. xix). She was adamant that community conflict is the major factor that destabilizes communities and recommended that communities “...learn good communication and group process skills. Make clear communication and resolving conflicts a priority” (p. 8).

Communications and group process skills: When community members do not have a broad tool chest of interpersonal communication skills, differences will be amplified, disagreements will occur, and frustration will be felt. Communication skills **by every member** of the community could be improved and warrant their attention. Clarity in communicating is a person’s best friend and one member said, “You can love things you understand. Make yourself clear, repeat until you are sure that others can understand and see you. Ask and be curious about others. Love yourself or make an effort to reach it.”

Community conflict highlighted the need for conflict resolution processes to be clearly delineated, known and understood by every member. The inquiry concluded that for communications to improve in the community members needed to spend more time being together. Most of the MEC members were indicating they wanted to participate in communication workshops, training or learning opportunities in the future.

Taking communication classes and programs would be helpful to members and in particular to be curious about oneself and “To learn, to be honest, and authentic in every moment.”

Conclusion 3: Self-leadership, interpersonal relationships and community relationships

The MEC community is a relatively newly formed community, and the sage advice from one member might serve the community well. To establish quality relationships between all members of the community first, and to make this a priority above all else, they said, “focus on connection and personal growth, love, and compassion. Everything else (physical world, guests) can come after that.” Another member added, “Good relationships come first.”

MEC members would benefit from spending more interpersonal time together, working, playing, relaxing, learning together and simply hanging out. One to one relationship builds a tribe, community, a connection that is supportive and creates a sense of belonging and rootedness. Consistent affirmative and appreciative communications between members promote kinship and relationships that people enjoy. Living together then becomes a pleasure.

Community members were seeking “Closer and more intimate connection.” Closeness fosters a sense of belonging, community wellness and resilience. MEC members frequently said they wanted to live in a community in which people felt loved. The inquiry concluded that it would be beneficial for the practice of loving-kindness to be incorporated into the learnings and personal development agendas for relationship and communications programs for all community members. As one member expressed, “I will be in love, I will be caring, I will be gentle.”

Community members expressed a need to create a more balanced lifestyle in which there was more time for personal development, interpersonal relationships and being together as a community. The inquiry concluded that members consider taking workshops and experiential courses that hone the ability and comfortability to relate with a diverse range of people. These learning experiences will nurture healthy relationships that meet members needs for mutuality and reciprocity, connection, belonging, beeing seen, heard (listened to), loved and cared.

The inquiry concluded that serious consideration is given to putting more energy and time into the children, their education and schooling and support from all community members both inside and outside of the classroom. Children need diverse adult experiences. Every community member has gifts to share with the children in the community. These are learning opportunities for everyone in the MEC. The uncles and aunts are friends of the children; they contribute to their well-being and generate a community family.

Kleiner (2014) said “Challenges in inter-personal relations are a major problem in community living. Living in such close proximity and intimacy with a group of people highlights differences of opinion, transforming small issues into much larger, ongoing problems” (p.71). Building trust between members from having a common understanding of respect and consideration will develop nurturing respectful relationships. The glue that holds a community together is founded upon relationships that build trust over time. Relationships need to be nurtured on an on-going basis. When choosing to live in a community, this is essential. A community is all about relationships. The whole community takes full ownership of what gender respect means, uncover the challenges and imbalances that pre-exist with the masculine and feminine and find new ways to create harmony. This inquiry concluded that ethical boundaries need to be agreed upon and clearly defined by community members, especially about gender issues.

This report highlighted the challenge for MEC members to balance personal self-care with work and service to the Mōisamaa community. One member expressed this challenge by saying “...taking care of their personal well-being, but not locking themselves up...(with a purpose to heal, so relations can heal – not (so much) by diving deeper, but higher (upwards). And asking for help/support if needed.” Most members of the community were open to “asking for help and support” and to receiving help. How can this be accomplished? Include a time in the MEC meetings for requests to be expressed, responded to, and honored. How can members find

a balance between self and others that serves them well? How does a community include every member and integrate them into one vibrant community body? These are important questions for the MEC members to consider.

Conclusion 4: Values and visions, personal and community

Community members took their first steps to creating an SCVVS that aligned personal values and visions with community values and visions. Conclusion 4 expressed the personal values and visions, and the desired community values and visions of MEC members using the ten needs categories used in the survey. The ***ten conclusions*** were as follows:

Safety & Protection 272 Healing (14) Dreaming (13) Mentoring (3)

The community would be wise to host as many circles as are necessary to discuss the meaning of respect and come up with a common understanding of respectful social behavior. Establishing mutual respect between members will facilitate healing and re-build trust between people in the community. Once members are on the same page regarding respect, “when discomfort arises in me (it is) a realization that something needs to change in one’s behavior or habits.” Personal ownership of a feeling combined with self-reflection is the first step to finding a solution to feeling safe living in the MEC.

Healing from traumas that occurred to community member’s before coming to the MEC is why many members found themselves living at Väike Jalajälg. Living in any community has issues regarding safety and protection. The MEC is an extremely safe community, and the children live in one of the safest places I know and play freely. Members can improve their relational behaviors by being even more respectful and considerate of other member’s feelings. Living in proximity with a many other people can evoke past wounds and unresolved upset, and this can lead to healing. One member said, “Growth and development are uncomfortable most of the time. The feelings that arise are less uncomfortable when one accepts this is a part of living with other people.” In the safety and protection needs category, there were fourteen connections

between members for healing to take place for each member. This study concluded that MEC members were in the right place and very wise to choose Väike Jalajälg as their home at this time in their life.

Celebration 257 Gratitude (15) Happiness (8) Fun (4)

Members of the community expressed a desire to have more celebrations and ceremonies to come together and connect. They said, "I would like to have more dancing and celebrations," and "I enjoy very much making music or singing together. It gives me a feeling of unity. I would very much like to have more of it."

Autonomy 253 Authenticity (14) Integrity (9) Freedom (5)

The inquiry was curious as to the impact of having personal autonomy rank second as a human need by MEC members in conjunction with the strong feeling for freedom. The inquiry data raised some thought-provoking questions for MEC members to consider. How collective are members because of their enculturation? How does a strong need for individuality affect the collective community consciousness?

The fundamental needs of the members of a community will influence the group's behavior. Understanding the individual and collective needs of the MEC is crucial to community cohesion and how well members work together. If the need for autonomy and the important feeling of freedom is not understood and honored in a collective living environment, then there is the possibility that members might unconsciously sabotage the cooperative efforts of community endeavors. Kleiner (2014) was aware of the hidden urges that can reside within community members and the consequences when these feelings and needs are not met. "We also observed that when a community places a high value on the importance of individual freedom of choice, this detracts from the strength of the community and shared ideals, and often these groups appear less functional, more disorganized and prone to unresolved personal problems amongst

members” (p.69). The community will be well-served by the strong feelings of authenticity and integrity held by many members.

Self-Connection 192 Kindness (5) Acceptance (4) Connection (4)

The inquiry found that members needed to connect deeply with themselves through new learning experiences and this need was being met. Members are encouraged to practice self-reflection, be curious about themselves and engage in new learning experiences. Community members also expressed a hunger to “Attend learning and growing workshops” in the future, and this should be supported and encouraged.

Purpose and Meaning 191 Awareness (11) Evolving (7) Simplicity (7)

About both values and visions, the quality of awareness was important to community members. Members indicated they were attracted toward a simple lifestyle and at the same time wanted to evolve. Living in an active and growing community can be challenging because life can get busy and sometimes multifaceted. Keeping one’s life simple and finding a harmonious daily rhythm is important. Awareness was the second most favored word expressed by the community. The MEC community has the awareness on how to live harmoniously together and members do know what to do.

Interdependent Relationships with Community/Tribe/Work 143**Co-create (11) Honesty (4) Harmony (4)**

The inquiry found that community members wanted to be engaged with other members. Community members would benefit from a paradigm shift in how they valued and allocated importance for personal time and work time. How much time do community members want to spend working? Do they want to take more time to intimately get to know their fellow community citizens, partners, and children? The inquiry found that the MEC and members would benefit from working cooperatively and collaboratively together, rather than on individual work projects within the community. Finding a balance is important and would vary from one

community member to the next. One member was requesting that others would “be transparent about their expectations.” Community members were asking for more honesty and transparency from every community member. Honesty and transparency can happen when community members spend more time together outside of work

Spirituality 122

Intuition (9) Inspiration (4) Devotion (4)

One community member suggested the MEC “create a culture of spiritual practice.”

Another complemented this view and said “It is an amazing energy that is raised when the group meditates together,” especially ceremonies in the tepee. Another member added “I would very much like if we joined together more in spiritual sessions. I would like to have more discussions and meditations about spirituality, happiness, abundance, and how to co-create it.” Members of the MEC are very intuitive, and they would be wise to pay more attention to their intuition.

Incorporating more time and space for spirituality and ceremony in the daily lives of members would inspire them and provide abundant energy for community projects and personal areas of interest. One community member reminded everyone that “Common rituals and journeys with particular community members or with the whole community have created feelings of deep connection and presence.”

Creativity and Healing 100

Imagination (4) Reflection (3) Creativity (3)

Living in the picturesque Estonian countryside is healthy and healing. One member said they decided to live at the MEC because of the healing properties of living a “Communal lifestyle in an environment close to countryside, in the wisdom of a community” The healing effect from being an MEC member was “I have sometimes experienced here in this community to be who I am, with ease, this is a special experience.” Members would be well advised to breathe in the fresh air, appreciate the organic food and fresh water. Through the intentional practice of gratitude, MEC members could support their personal healing by celebrating the spirit of the land. They are living in paradise.

There is the opportunity for member's to be creatively inspired by the landscape when surrounded by nature's beauty. There is a longing in MEC members "to feel the power of co-creative, co-operation." A desire for "Long embraces shared with human love." Members are reflective, listen well and eager to learn.

Well-Being 95 Centeredness (Balance) (8) Touch (3) Honesty (3)

Most members of the community were open to asking for help and support and to receiving help. How can this be accomplished? Include a time in the MEC meetings for requests to be expressed and establish a format for how this can be responded to and honored. Take a few minutes before a meeting to massage a member's shoulders or feet. One member expressed what they needed to stay balanced and to nurture their well-being. "Centeredness and presence, loving kindness towards myself and others, physical and emotional well-being and enjoyment, deep and nurturing intimate partnership."

Interdependent Partnerships and Immediate Family 90

Respect (3) Communications (3) Partnership (3)

The inquiry concluded there was a need for deep empathetic listening to other community members. Senge (2006) said, "Experience suggests that visions that are genuinely shared require ongoing conversation where individuals not only feel free to express their dreams but learn how to listen to each other's dreams" (p. 202).Community members gradually recognized the need to change personal behaviors that have not served them and are realizing these same behaviors would not serve their community. A recurring theme throughout this inquiry was the expressed need for cooperation and collaboration. "I felt supported by doing and planning things together." Members not only valued these behaviors they envisioned them for their future state. Members would be emotionally and psychologically nurtured by spending more playful intimate time with their partners, children, and best friends.

Conclusion 5: Community Organization, Development, and Governance

Once members decide on the rhythm, they would like for their daily lives and their community; this will help clarify and determine the community's rate of expansion. Projects would then be taken on in an orderly way, and the community would be deciding what they do and how they chose to live their lives each day and not have the projects dictating their existence.

The inquiry concluded that the MEC would be wise to consider a new cultural paradigm for the amount of work, play, relaxation, personal development, and reflection time and self-care members wanted and needed. A few members were explicit and wanted the community to reduce work time. "Stop working yourself to death ~ I need you alive and kicking." Another member added. "The most important work is resting. Resting from everything and everybody." There is a great difference between resting vs. being lazy/vegetating/doing nothing. Let's learn how to rest!" Resting is a key quality that allows a person to recuperate, restore and come back into balance. Resting is a forerunner for any form of change. Spending time resting does not mean less work gets done. When members are fresh and awake, there is the possibility that more work gets done in less time with fewer mistakes. Another member suggested the community "Replace some of the overworking action with reflection time and connecting to others."

Members were requesting that the community slows down and gets grounded. They felt too much was continually happening, and many of the projects were done in a rush. Christian (2003) said that "If a group is small and based primarily on deep connections or shared friendships, most members will tend to stay in the group and alter any expression of community vision to fit everyone's interests and desires" (p. 43). The inclusion of everyone in the community then becomes the key factor for a thriving community.

The members of MEC have created 'a family of choice,' consciously or unconsciously. In future, choosing new members requires careful consideration persons who will serve the community over the long term. The inquiry concluded that the community needed to be more selective in whom they brought in as a new member. For new members, there needs to be a

clearly delineated probationary period with guidelines, timelines, support and accountability.

Having a detailed SCVVS would be helpful.

Some of the member's felt that there should be a change in the MEC work ethic to allow time and space for what they considered more important matters. Changing the work ethic was eloquently expressed by one member who said. "Replace some of the overworking action with reflection time and connecting to others."

Community members were requesting that when the community takes on any new projects clear documented guidelines are in place before the endeavor begins and regular re-assessments especially in the early phase of any project. The inquiry concluded that improvements in administration and general operations would help in the areas of follow-up for assignments, consistency with meetings, improved order, job rotation, and support. Community members were asking for "improved and better order, with supportive follow-up/interest if things are done." "Regular meetings in the community to build the foundation," and "More rotation of assignments." To build trust and respect, every community member needs to feel safe and that the community and individual members honor each other by "keeping promises without exceptions."

The MEC might consider ways to either improve the way they use Sociocracy in the community decision-making process or create a democratic governance model that comes from a balanced inner feminine/masculine presence that resides in every community member.

The conclusions from the findings were that creating an MEC community manual with all the basic information in one place would be useful and serve the community. The MEC would benefit from succession planning for all major community positions.

To support conflict resolution, one member suggested to "Form a consultancy body for personal conflict resolution. So that not everybody would be involved in all process, but the conflict parties would have a support structure, reflections, space."

The inquiry felt that it would be advisable to gradually find ways to help members economically integrate into the community, so every community member felt appreciated and safe. This would demonstrate caring for each other and a cultural shift that moved away from money and valued people for their presence and contribution.

Conclusion 6: Community Ownership, Personal Responsibility, and Participation

A member expressed a profound comment that was the essence of this inquiry. “Know why you are living and why you want to live in this community.” Similar to a marriage ceremony between two people, living in the MEC is a personal commitment to other members to live as a family. Being a member of your chosen family and community village has responsibilities and necessitates that members willingly contribute and actively participate in everyday community life.

The inquiry concluded that if members they took full ownership of ‘being’ in this magnificent community, they would feel differently. When MEC members plant two feet into the Mōisamaa earth like the trees in the orchard, they will experience a sense of home, family, belonging, and pride. The outcome would be abundant blossoms and fruit in their personal life. Making the community a sacred space, beautifying the spaces would help to make Mōisamaa feel more like home. Beautifying the MEC inner and outer landscape could be simple and does not necessarily mean major renovations.

MEC members expressed a desire to be responsible. “To participate, to really take responsibility.” A clearer understanding among members as to what responsibility means, personally, interpersonally and to the community, would help the community in work and play. There is a strong feeling in the community about taking personal responsibility, and it would be wise to get on the same page and understand what this means in everyday community life, personally and community-wise. Personal responsibility requires a member to look deeply into their process, address issues that are troubling them and requires their attention. In so doing they

contribute to the well-being of the community. Taking personal responsibility was aptly described by one member, “To show up.” To show up requires each member to reflect and be open to changing patterns of behavior and states of being that do not serve them. The community would be well advised to be patient during these growing years

Being an MEC community member has responsibilities and obligations. This inquiry concluded that to take personal responsibility and be a supportive community citizen requires a commitment by each member to exploring and develop self-leadership, communication skills, and their relational behavior. Members have a responsibility to heal themselves through embodied practices and seeking support, guidance, and individual help. The community would be wise to take time and space for members to heal so they can take ownership, responsibility and fully participate. Allowing time in meetings for members to heal will open doorways into realizing the shared vision. Allowing time for social relationships to flourish is essential and warrants the same priority as work and accomplishing tasks. “Just as we would not begin to rake our garden bed until we have dug it fully, we do not turn our tripartite morning meeting to “business” (decision making; both evaluating previous decisions and making new ones) until we have fully dug up and processed all the emotional clods and feeling rocks that exist” (Millenson, 2015, para. 25).

This inquiry concluded the community would benefit from spending time together each week on a collaborative work project. Regular collaborative projects would offer opportunities for members to, “Come together regularly so we know who we are living with ~ more participation.” Another said “I will remember that I am the creator of my reality. I take responsibility for it, and I don’t blame myself for it.” By working together, community members can create a homey and comfortable atmosphere. The quality of life is more important than buildings and work projects and members expressed a desire to make Väike Jalajälg their home and take ownership. “I will contribute my time and energy to make the surroundings feel like

home for me.” “I will contribute to making social rooms beautiful and cozy (example dining room).”

This inquiry concluded that members had different understandings of the following behaviors, qualities of being and ways of relating, that were repeatedly expressed by community members in the survey, at the Retreat and in the reflective learning circle. These were respect, ownership, personal and community responsibility, participation, authenticity, cooperation, transparency, teamwork, and collaboration. This inquiry encourages the MEC members to continue the process of creating a well-defined SCVVS and to finish the first draft in 2017.

Scope and Limitations of the Inquiry

The scope of the inquiry was vast. An inquiry into personal and community social behavior, states of being, how to change oneself and how communities change from the inside out was an extensive topic. The terrain and territory covered by this inquiry were not for the faint of heart. The findings and conclusions from this inquiry uncovered many new questions and inquiries for the MEC; a lifetime’s work and more. There was an abundance of information to integrate into this OLP to ensure every member’s views were fully and accurately represented.

The limitations of the inquiry were self-apparent and substantial. There were many assumptions in this inquiry. The degree to which I assumed in this inquiry bordered on a state of dementia. At the same time, the inquiry offered a level of authenticity and presence that invited the unseen and unknown to become more visible.

This inquiry was the beginning of a long voyage for the MEC. The community is still in the formative stage. They have the potential to go over the horizon into a new community culture, beyond the limits of the mind. This inquiry considered that possibility and provided a small beginning for the MEC to step further into the unknown. This inquiry used a whole body, whole systems approach to change and to support MEC members realize their dreams.

There was an imbalance of choices for the # of words in questions 1-10 and 1a-10a, and this invalidated certain comparisons of the data that would have offered valuable insight. These comparisons were not used in this inquiry. The survey served a useful purpose in this study and will need to be improved for future use. In the survey, typing errors left out the words ‘emotional safety’ and the word ‘physical’ before safety in questions 8 and 8a, which were about safety and protection. The word earnestness was missing from question 1a.

Bunker and Alban (2006) said sustained follow through is essential to keep the vision alive, that is reflective of a changing community dynamics (pp. 389–392). Not enough time was set aside at the Retreat to plan next steps. The MEC members are looking forward to reading this report with its findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

Chapter Summary

The three engaging research data gathering processes were valuable to the MEC members as the report’s findings and conclusions because the community members were re-evaluating their foundations – why they came together in the first place and what kind of community living situation they wanted to live in as they moved forward.

The MEC will determine the validity and usefulness of these findings in the future. At this juncture, the findings described the social terrains and territories that potentially needed attention and consideration in readiness for change. Should the MEC decide to explore some or all of these findings, then the validity of each finding will be determined by the improvements in social dynamics and community well-being that are outcomes from living, being, relating and communicating in ways that serve and create a collective culture that is kind and caring. These findings could also offer stepping stones for MEC members to consider other approaches to living in a community not identified by this inquiry.

This inquiry considered Jaffe and Tobe (1993) who stated that “Our beliefs and value systems are deeply connected. We are motivated and make decisions based on these belief

systems and values. Often these values are unconscious" (p. 19). Values penetrate deeply into our emotional and psychological body. MEC is a community whose members have diverse values and beliefs. This inquiry attempted to identify the range of values and needs that were influencing their decision-making process and find ways to clarify, embrace and prioritize them. Clarifying values and visions will help MEC work better as a team and make decisions that lead to commitment, action, and ultimately more harmony. The MEC's SCVVS document and mission statement should be a well-crafted, clear, detailed, and a compelling expression of the community vision and mission.

In this chapter, I outlined the key findings of the data collected from the survey, the Retreat, and the reflective learning circle and detailed the conclusions drawn from those findings. The study scope and limitations were also examined.

The methods used in this research created a sense of belonging for the MEC, understanding, safety, healing, and respectful communication. The methods provided an opportunity for participants to shape the community's future. In the next chapter, the study conclusions will be used to develop recommendations to assist the MEC in establishing clear, aligned social guidelines in the form of an SCVVS. The process the community embarked upon through participating in the inquiry honored, affirmed and celebrated the uniqueness of all members, and through agreement shaped a more inclusive culture. The following chapter presents the recommendations for change, the organizational implications relevant to that change, and the research implications for future study that came from the inquiry findings and conclusions.

Chapter Five: Inquiry Project Recommendations and Implications

Study Recommendations

In this final chapter, I present recommendations based on the data collected from the survey, the Retreat, the reflective learning circle and the literature review. Also, this chapter describes the processes to implement the recommendations and addresses organizational implications if the recommendations are not implemented. Finally, the last section of the chapter discusses implications for future inquiry followed by a report summary. The study recommendations were comprehensive and outlined many of the social factors that the MEC will need to consider and include in their SCVVS.

The overarching inquiry question this research asked was how could the development of an SCVVS foster the growth of MEC in Estonia. The sub-questions were:

1. What are the values, experiences, successes, hopes, needs and wishes of individuals within the MEC for themselves and their broader community?
2. How do community members make changes so they can align their common values and socially agreed-upon ways of behaving and relating?
3. What processes and practices foster individual, interpersonal and community collaboration for the MEC?
4. What examples of innovation and culture change in other communities could serve as social models for MEC, and influence the change strategy and recommendations?

This chapter begins with a summary of the recommendations that were harvested through the analysis of the data.

1. Each member spends time with every other community member. Community members creatively align their differences so the community can move as a unit. Members share their gifts, talents, and expertise generously. Members partake in daily community rituals and learn about embodiment to discover their authentic selves.

2. Community members take courses to become skilled facilitators, counselors, therapists, educators, and leaders. Through joint consultation between all members, the community formulates a strategy for ensuring the community has qualified expertise in facilitation, communications, healing touch, education, therapy, and counseling, so the community is self-sufficient and resilient. As the community grows, it can consider welcoming new members with specific skill sets such as trades personnel, doctors, dentists, nurses, etc.
3. Develop a rotating buddy system for all community administrative positions. Every member spends time working alongside every other member during the course of one year (Succession Planning). Make Gaia education a central theme in the daily life of the community: regular heart circles, women's and men's circles, and make all three circles a community priority.
4. Community members continue to work on creating an SCVVS that aligns personal values and visions with community values and visions.
 - 4a. Community members cultivate transparency in decision-making, values, and relationships, through clear communications that foster self-respect and mutual respect. Acceptance of differences among members is important for the community.
 - 4b. MEC members take more time to celebrate life, have fun and be playful.
 - 4c. Members are curious about their authentic expression and how that contributes to cooperation and collaboration in the MEC.
 - 4d. Community members are supported in getting to know themselves and waking up. Members set intentions for their daily existence and life journey, make commitments to themselves, and take actions with accountability.
 - 4e. Members clarify their personal values and visions and collaborate with other members to discover their common purpose and meaning. Members document this union of needs and feelings, values and visions in the SCVVS.

4f. Members are in service to each other and generously give and receive support and appreciation to and from other members. The community takes pleasure in working together, fostering teamwork, a feeling of **family**, a strong sense of **belonging** to a tribe, and being proud of Väike Jalajälg, the place all members call **home**.

4g. Members take the time needed to develop their unique spiritual practice.

4h. Members seek support, help, and guidance to heal their past traumas and upset, and cultivate a quality of patience. Members explore their creative passions with enthusiasm.

4i. Members review their personal behaviors so their needs, feelings, and values are congruent with how they behave with their immediate family.

4j. This inquiry recommends that MEC members take care of themselves by developing a daily well-being routine.

5. The community considers gradually moving toward a gift economy. MEC examines more closely the quality of daily living that members would like, slows down the process and enjoys the fruits of members' labors. Members give thanks for the blessings in their lives, the people and the land that supports them. The MEC looks to the future and makes wise decisions on its rate of expansion. The MEC members actively pursue developing an SCVVS in 2017, and integrate the SCVVS into the Väike Jalajälg, Ecovillage "Small Footprint" document. The MEC creates a working and living environment for life-supporting endeavors (See Appendix E). The MEC develops an implementation plan that is regularly reviewed and updated.

6. Members should decide if they want to live in Väike Jalajälg, and if they do, commit 100% to the advancement and purpose of their community. Having made the commitment, then collaborate with other members about what community ownership means, being a responsible MEC member, and how a member intends to participate and contribute to their community.

Recommendation 1: Diversity: valuing, appreciating, harvesting and including community diversity

I recommend the community recognizes the importance of diversity among its members, and values, honors and appreciates their uniqueness. The community hosts circles and ceremonies in which they value, honor, appreciate, have gratitude for and say thank you for who you are and the contributions you make. Community members begin a lifetime process of including all of themselves. They recognize that each one of them has many gifts to share with their community members and they are committed to personal mastery, to improving themselves so they can contribute their gifts and capabilities to their community. Being proud of what they do well and like about themselves.

It behooves the community to spend more time getting to know each other's authentic selves and to creatively align their differences so the community can move as a unit. Creating an SCVVS is the guiding vision. It is created by the whole community, and this, in turn, creates cohesion among the beautiful, unique and diverse members that make up the MEC community.

A fuller understanding and acknowledgment by MEC members of their shadow self would be helpful to community cohesion and collaboration. An acceptance of their shadow self is a part of who they are, and an intention and detailed practical commitment to healing the wounded self and re-patterning cultural behaviors that they are aware of or unaware would be part of the process. In recognizing their dysfunctional patterned self, a community member chooses to take programs, workshops and personal times with a counselor, therapist or friend to heal their past and through embodied practices discover and express their authentic self.

By each member spending time with every other community member, there is the opportunity for people to get to know the diverse treasures that exist in their community chest. During the Retreat, community members made it apparent that they were seeking more opportunities for working and playing with their fellow communitarians. The implications of this recommendation are that this is going to take time, substantial amounts of time. There is no way

around this. (In Finding, Conclusion and Recommendation #5, there is an expanded look at how the community spends its time.)

Some members wanted to participate in “More common useful activities with results ~ real/practical.” Other members were wishing for planned events, new learning experiences, trainings, retreats and planned community holidays away from Mōisamaa with workshops in the healing arts, or focused on communications, relationships, governance, and therapy.

This report recommends that members consider partaking in daily ritual practices that benefit both members and the community as a whole. Kouzes & Posner said: “Celebrations and rituals, when they are authentic and from the heart, build a strong sense of collective identity and community spirit that can carry a group through extraordinarily tough times” (p. 24, p. 271–299). Daily repetition of an embodied practice and being together as a community will create individual grounded-ness, alignment and the connection between members because they have shared an experience together. This, in turn, creates a sense of belonging and improved health, (<http://www.camphillresearch.com/choice-for-intentional-community/>) decreased stress, trust, and increased intimacy. The quest for intimacy leads to personal maturation and stems from self-caring, interdependence, differentiation, surrendering to one’s teachers, self, and nature. There is a thread that connects these different states of being that makes both personal and community living more meaningful and pleasurable.

At the Retreat and the reflective learning circle, community members announced they were willing to step forward to facilitate circles or offer a variety of classes or learning experiences. Community members were hungry to participate in group activities and take responsibility to “Take a lead in activities that create a common field.”

One member said they needed to take responsibility and that a community benefits when members learn about each other. Circle gatherings are recommended as they reveal the talents,

attributes, skills, and areas of expertise that members are willing to share. What are the gifts that you bring to our community? How can you share your gifts with other community members?

This report recommends that the community makes a list and harvests the gifts that community members would like to share. These could be classes, events or activities they feel comfortable to lead, facilitate, coach, share, teach or peer counsel or whatever they would like to manifest. Suggestions that were suggested by members were: yoga, massage, and sharing in touch, dance, hiking, resting and relaxing. Other suggestions included: first a pizza oven ~ then pizza nights; meditations, making music, theater, art, sports trainings; women's and men's day circles and heart circles. One member suggested that to develop a "loving attitude, hold heart circles before every meeting." Here are some other community circles, events or activities that facilitate connection, learning, and self-care: a morning practice to at the beginning of every day, feedback and feedforward circles, women's and men's overnight get-togethers or campouts.

The MEC is encouraged to create more celebrations that honor community members, plus rituals and ceremonies that give gratitude to the land and the seasons. The community has become too serious, immersed in work projects, and would benefit from making life more celebratory. Celebrations would inspire the community to create an atmosphere of engaged aliveness. One community concisely expressed their need for "More dreaming, celebrating and fun." The MEC could consider having informal gatherings that are more relaxed, a place for sharing, hanging out, eating fruit or popcorn, and simply enjoying the members' beautiful MEC family.

Krishnamurti (1946) understood the relationship between diversity and inclusion. The observer is the observed. What you see is you, and you are what you see. A principle of universal oneness. When MEC members relate with this premise, they will feel closer to each other and their community family. I recommend that members of the community view other members

with soft eyes, a receptive heart, noticing, accepting, and appreciating them for who they are and how they contribute to the community.

Recommendation 2: Communications and group process skills

The MEC members would benefit from improving their interpersonal and group process communications as well as their conflict resolution skills. Make clear communication and resolving conflicts a priority (Christian, 2003, p. 8). More members of the community need to take programs in conflict resolution, mediation, peer counseling and non-violent communications (NVC) (Rosenberg, 2003). Some members of the community already have taken courses of study in some of the communication techniques previously mentioned, and this was reflected when a member wrote: “I will practice communicating non-violently and from an ‘I’ perspective.” This inquiry recommends that community members explore some of these methods.

Christian (2003), a pioneer in forming new ecological communities, stated that “Community founders must cultivate both heart and head skills. This means learning how to make fair, participatory group decisions; how to speak from the heart; how to face conflict when it arises and deal with it constructively; and how to make cooperative decisions and craft fair agreements” (Christian, 2003, pp. 8-9). The MEC members are learning lessons from difficult relational experiences and from not spending the time needed to have clear written agreements. They can change the culture by changing their behaviors in the future. The golden rule in addressing conflict, differences of opinion, and upset feelings between people is for them to move toward the discomfort fairly soon after the incident takes place. The second rule is to ask for support and help from other community members. Resolving matters sooner rather than later is easier on the soul and saves an infinite amount of suffering and energy.

The inquiry recommended that community members pursue an interest in taking communication type workshops and courses of study that develop self-leadership skills and

traits. The way to become an excellent communicator is to practice communicating at every opportunity. Sustain a practice and understand how repetition is the way to develop leadership qualities. These improved communication skills will help the MEC to operate effectively. The report also recommends that members cultivate being a life learner that comes from being in a continuous state of not knowing and curious about everything and everyone.

Community members are encouraged to develop and practice inner kindness by caring for other community members. For a community to thrive both kindness and caring, need to exist in daily community life. Loving-kindness is an appreciative way of nurturing self, a state of being that radiates outwards. Kindness is one of the universal laws of nature that is without agenda. The quality of the connection between community members, the success of a community, its coherence, resilience, and sustainability, become manifest when loving kindness and gratitude are imbued with feeling, thought, actions and behaviors.

There was general agreement from the community that they wanted to “Stop the circle of blaming others for blaming” and “no judging ~ asking myself, do I really see that person.” The antidote for this is the practise of loving kindness and developing a practice of non-judgement. To show up when there is discomfort between people takes courage and as one member aptly described requires a member to “Show up despite the discomfort,” a healthy response to conflict.

Another member added to the conversation by recommending the MEC “Create a culture in which critical feedback about group function is valued and encouraged.” Affirming reflections, observations, and feedforward are other communication techniques that support qualitative communications. Additionally, the recognition by community members of the value in addressing personal issues that are part of a member’s shadow-self. Improving self-communication is as important as communicating with others. Taking ownership of these matters, and taking action to heal the past, creates space for the authentic self to be shared in the community.

Developing an SCVVS will help to address gender social conflict. To embody the SCVVS will require other programs be put in place to create healthier gender respect. Also, all members need to consider healing hurtful experiences from their past, to partake in reconciliation healing circles that are affirmative, appreciative, and for the MEC to consider a culture transformation is woven into their SCVVS. One member offered sage advice, “Everybody (including me) forgives the words and deeds that have hurt so far and take the best care of yourself.”

Recommendation 3: Self-Leadership, Interpersonal Relationships, and Community Relationships

This section reviewed the recommendations for improving self-leadership, interpersonal and group process communications to create a heartfelt learning community. Participate in workshops and experiential courses that hone the ability and comfortability to relate with a diverse range of people. Members spend individual time during the year with every other community member including children. Members spend work time with every other member in their area of earning a living and in the area in which that member presently contributes to the community the most. Working alongside another will inform and teach every member about what goes on in their community. The work does not have to be their favorite; understanding what others do and how they contribute is fostered through collaboration. Recreational pursuits are a great place to get to know other community members. Official positions need to be rotated, and over the course of a few years, everyone experiences every facet of community life. Every position also has a community helper e.g. Treasurer and a helper for the treasurer. The helper eventually becomes the treasurer and a new helper volunteers to be the treasurer’s helper. In any given area of community life, there are community members who are knowledgeable and have experience and expertise about any given topic or matter that needs attention. These persons can be the wisdom council or advisors when more information is needed. For general community

matters, call an inquiry circle. If the community is unsure about the next steps to take there are many people to ask outside the Mōisamaa community who would be happy to help you. The community can figure out how much and in what ways they would like to become a more integrated community, one built on healthy relationships.

Make Gaia education a central theme in the daily life of the community. This inquiry highly recommends the whole community considers a new approach to raising children in the MEC community. An integrated broadly based family way of relating. I am referring to the children's education during school time and parenting out of school time. The upbringing and parenting could be more broadly based and involve all community members. I noticed happy children in the MEC who have a lot of freedom to play in nature. I saw parents who cared for their children and were concerned for their welfare. A gardener knows the vital importance of taking care of the seeds, how they germinate and how they grow. This inquiry hopes the MEC will take steps to create a new culture that is more inclusive of the children. There is an opportunity here for the MEC to offer a Gaia education program they are proud of and serves the children.

During the Retreat the community recognized the value and importance of having regular Women's (Sisterhood) and Men's (Brotherhood) Gatherings. What takes place at these gatherings would be for the group to decide. However, in the early stages gatherings would focus on how to create respect, consideration, valuing, reverence, and honoring one's relational behavior with one's gender. What does this mean to community members and how do they intend to behave? Consider including an individual/group meditation at each gathering and embodied group practice(s) to create an energy field of connection and intention, preferably before dialoguing. Also recommended for the women and men to have periodic gatherings to focus on gender respect and gender equality. Reconciliation, healing and 'I am sorry' would be part of the between gender gatherings. Kleiner (2014) suggested that it is wise for a community

to take “strong initiatives in dealing with personal issues, approaching the matter through continuous group learning” (p.71).

Organize whole community embodied experiences such as synchronized community breathing combined with meditation, mindful movement, and yoga. Have everyone breathing rhythmically together. A community that breathes together will vibrate with a common purpose. The community body encourages a harmonic energy field that fosters collaboration. The community spends one night a month in the school house collectively dreaming (Bryant, 1997). In the morning the community has a sharing circle. The inquiry recommends collaborative experiences that build teamwork. “Find common interests to do more things together/share our gifts.”

Practices like singing and dancing bring people together. Implement regular gatherings for singing and dancing. These were transformative in the history of the Estonia people. “Our ceremonies and rituals are such fun and often surprise people.” Holding ceremonies and rituals is a beautiful way to foster community relationships and build a wholesome connection between members. Members focus on valuing, acknowledging and appreciating other members. “Before every meeting/gets together, we will hold hands and say the prayer (which we create together of course) to remember ourselves why we are here and why we are together” Community members would like to have “One common meal per day where everybody can meet each other.

Members ask for specific support from other community members? The question, ‘what support do you need from your community?’ should be a regular question that is asked at least once a month at a circle gathering. A common question could be: “How can I help or support you?” or “I would like you to share more about...?” Asking for support then offers the opportunity for co-created relational responses. In the community, this builds commitment and leads to joint ownership and non-separation. Support can come in the form of touch. Sacred touch is essential to life. Provide time for safe, respectful, loving ways that ground members in

their feeling body, heal, relax, and support good health, and nurture connection and a sense of belonging.

A community member suggested that members “observe the dynamics of the community, make it known to others and make changes.” Shared noticing creates transparency and community members asked for more transparency from every community member. Transparency happens when community members spend time together outside of work. A paradigm shift in how community members allocate importance to and value their personal time would be advantageous. Do they spend it working or take the time to get to know their fellow community citizens? Similar to many cultures, the Estonian culture is work focussed, and excessive work behavior is propagated and promulgated by fear. The origin of fearful feelings comes from a cultural belief that there is not enough of everything, so people are pushed by and respond to this cultural tsunami of fear. Spending imbalanced amounts of one’s life working based upon a fear of not enough causes a person to isolate and work excessively. The essence of community and family is a cooperative and collective movement toward other people and to be in service of the community or tribe. This report recommends community members re-evaluate the way they spend their time each day. MEC members can choose to align with their values and visions if they engage a new cultural paradigm. As the SCVVS takes shape in the future, the community can move from default cultural behaviors to defining, deciding and enacting a new culture that is kinder, more loving and takes care of the needs of everyone.

Members choose to build relationships with other members to bond. This report recommends that during a year an individual spends time with every other community member including children. This report recommends members pair up and intentionally set aside time to share, to talk about personal vision, community vision, personal values, community values, and relate what is going on in your life. Spending intimate time together with everyone is community member’s homework for creating a quality SCVVS that will provide a social infrastructure upon

which the community can understand each other, and align, work and play cooperatively together.

Members can spend work time with every other member in their area of earning a living, and in the area in which that member presently contributes to the community the most. Doing this will inform and teach every member about what goes on in their community. The work does not have to be their favorite, but it does need to be experienced to foster understanding of what others do and how they contribute. Recreational pursuits are a great place to get to know other community members. Official positions need to be rotated, and then over the course of a few years, everyone can experience every facet of community life. Every position can also have a community helper; e.g., treasurer and a helper for the treasurer. The helper eventually becomes the treasurer and a new helper volunteers to be the treasurer's helper. In any given area of community life, there are community members who are knowledgeable and have experience and expertise about any given topic or matter that needs attention. These persons can be the wisdom council or advisors when more information is needed. Call an inquiry circle for general community matters. If the community is unsure about the next steps to take, there are many people to ask outside the Mōisamaa community who would be happy to help. The community can figure out how much and in what ways they would like to become a more integrated community, one built on healthy relationships.

This inquiry proposes that the children's education involves the whole community and becomes a priority. Every member can contribute or participate in some way. Parents and the school teacher need help with both Gaia education and parenting. A collaborative approach is needed. The school space is a sanctuary for the children, so put the same amount of energy into the school space as one would into a garden. The schoolroom needs a facelift, a renovation. Host a community learning circle for 'the future education and parenting of children in the MEC.'

There is the exciting possibility for the MEC to offer an improved Gaia education program that benefits the children, one that becomes a place for connection, unifies the community and will support everyone into perpetuity.

Consider planning extra-curricular activities for the children at least once a week inside the community arranged by both parents and non-parents. These activities would be in addition to the activities children attend outside the community. Children's activities outside the community are important as they form one of the links between the MEC and the community at large. One member mentioned "weekly sports days with children," and having circles to discuss this would result in many ideas. Ideas need to have agreements and implementation plans. At some stage, involve the children and have them express what they would like.

Members are encouraged to recognize and acknowledge their uniqueness so they can identify their personal need for time alone and their need for connection and be with others. Knowing the individual time preferences of other members is valuable relational information. Each person needs to reflect on their need to remain balanced between personal and communal. Also, it would be beneficial for this to be expressed to all community members, so community members come to understand, respect and honor the diversity of individual needs and preferences. Some members want more closeness and communion, which is the active expression of community.

Balance is important, and one member said, "To spend more time together as quality time and at the same time take time for ourselves to be in balance equals leaving space for each other." Another member needed to "give more space to myself and to others." There is a generous sensitivity in Mōisamaa community members, and they show a deep caring for the other community members. "I will be in love, I will be caring, I will be gentle." During the inquiry, loving connection was frequently mentioned, and it would be a good idea to incorporate these behaviors into the learnings and personal development agendas for all relationship and

communication programs for all community members. When it comes to community relationship skills, Christian (2003) said: “Learn the head and heart skills that are needed to live in community. This is leadership presence” (pp. 8–9). “The heart of healing is the healing of the heart” (Liberman, 2001, p. 46). Healthy relationships grow out of expressions of gratitude and appreciation between members. “What am I grateful for, what do I have to offer to others?” and “Be open-minded and with open hearts. Solving and letting go of hard feelings.”

All the learning circles mentioned in this report are essential for the community to flourish. Two of the circles require special mention: heart circles and women and men’s circles, as these build heartfelt understanding and respect. This report recommends that the community has “regular heart circles” and women’s and men’s circles and makes this a priority.

Recommendation 4: Values and visions, personal and community

Based on the findings and conclusions in this report, the recommendations to help MEC members align their personal values and visions with the community values and visions to create an SCVVS used the ten needs categories used in the survey. The ten recommendations in this category were as follows:

Safety & Protection 272

Healing (14) Dreaming (13) Mentoring (3)

Most of my recommendations to create a safe social living environment were expressed by members. “No ‘power-over’ structures or hierarchies, except following the spirit of community (i.e., cooperation, mutual respect, authenticity and working groups.)” “Some principles, guidelines, agreements to rely on when conflict arises.” “Transparency in decision-making, values, and relationships.”

The vocabulary and awareness are growing in MEC members for what they have to do to create a safe space to live. A member said there was a “need to build necessary trust between the people: self-awareness and self-respect, authenticity, clear communication, acceptance of differences and compassion.”

Celebration 257**Gratitude (15) Happiness (8) Fun (4)**

I recommend that the MEC take more time to celebrate life. Having fun and being playful creates smiles, pleasure and a happy community. Singing and dancing are two of the many embodied practices that celebrate living. In 1987, the Estonian people began a singing revolution, in which national songs were sung at music festivals. On 11th September 1988, 100,000 people gathered for five nights and sang protest songs until daybreak. It was here that citizens and political leaders expressed their intention for independence, which was finally won on 20th August 20, 1991. It was called the singing revolution (See Estonian Singing Revolution and Song Festival 1) (<http://picamov.com/play.php?movie=tt0954008>)

Since then a yearly song festival called "Song of Estonia," with choirs from many other countries in attendance, commemorates and celebrates the social power of embodied creative expression by the people. The festival is held at the Tallinn Song Festival Arena, and a dance festival now accompanies the song festival. The MEC are a new community, a new generation, part of a social movement that was birthed out of a culture that learned to breathe again in which singing and dancing played a significant part in creating social change. "First the song comes, then we sing it, then we act on it. It is a simple law of human nature and revolution." (See Estonian Singing Revolution 2.) (<http://www.snatamkaur.com/single-post/2016/12/15/Singing-Revolution>)

Autonomy 253**Authenticity (14) Integrity (9) Freedom (5)**

The inquiry recommends that the MEC considers the important question of the individual need for authentic expression by members and reflects on the ways those needs and feelings can be met. Acknowledging and attending to the desire for unique expression would create space for collective action. One member described the sought-after outcome they wanted for the MEC: "We complement each other with co-operation, not competition."

MEC members value authenticity and integrity as behaviors they appreciate. Being authentic and acting with integrity will provide healthy foundations for positive communications between members, and lead to successful relationships and effective outcomes on community projects.

Self-Connection 192 Kindness (5) Acceptance (4) Connection (4)

This inquiry recommends that members continue to pursue diverse opportunities for self-improvement. Members could consider including embodied practices that support awareness in their daily regime. Practices that foster stillness, quietude, gratitude, and kindness will help members stay in balance and prepare them for the many changes that will invariably happen at Väike Jalajälg in the future.

Purpose and Meaning 191 Awareness (11) Evolving (7) Simplicity (7)

MEC members are to be commended for their quest to have a meaningful life while living in an ecovillage. Creating a new way of living requires that members consider how they can contribute to creating a new culture that is cooperative, respectful among members and the environment, kind to themselves and others, and inclusive without exception. There was a purpose and a meaning as to why MEC members found themselves living in a community together. It would be to the advantage of individual members and the MEC to clearly identify in the SCVVS their common purpose and the meaning that underlies this magnificent community.

Interdependent Relationships with Community/Tribe/Work 143

Co-create (11) Honesty (4) Harmony (4)

There was a desire and a need for members to co-create and to be in harmony. One member said this could be accomplished through the “Feeling of support, appreciation, and inspiration that has come from teamwork, accomplishing common projects, and running common events (workshops for others like Gaia Academy), working bees, building or gardening

projects)" and simple things like "getting help with mending my bike." Another member appreciated "Morning yoga practices, swimming in the river in the morning, collective biking."

Spirituality 122**Intuition (9) Inspiration (4) Devotion (4)**

Each community member would benefit from describing their spiritual practice to the other members of the community. Describing one's daily self-care practices in a learning circle would be purposeful and meaningful to community members. Community members would learn from each other by sharing how they take care of themselves and honor their sacred body.

Members of the MEC are very intuitive, and it would be sensible to pay more attention to their intuition. Incorporating more time and space for spirituality and ceremony in the daily lives of members would inspire them and provide abundant energy for community projects and personal areas of interest. Devotion was a quality that was readily apparent among MEC members, and a few members were attracted to this trait. It is recommended that community members go to group practices like morning yoga to foster a deep connection with themselves.

Creativity and Healing 100**Imagination (4) Reflection (3) Creativity (3)**

Members are encouraged to be patient with their healing process. At the same time, this inquiry recommended that MEC members seek support, help, and guidance to heal traumas and wounding experiences from the past that are still being lived out through their feelings, thoughts and behaviors. Creativity is one of the gateways into healing oneself, such as creating art, poetry, writing, dancing, playing music, as these modalities create a forum for all forms of unexpressed feelings to be birthed and shared.

This inquiry recommends that the community continues to host lovely dinners and do karma yoga together, such as stacking wood in a community line, and singing along while they work. There are many ways a community can make life sacred. Community members would be well advised to put more time and energy into both personal and community spiritual practices.

Members are encouraged to open to the mystery of who they are and let their intuitive wisdom guide them.

Well-Being 95 Centeredness (Balance) (8) Touch (3) Honesty (3)

One member suggested, “Taking care of their personal well-being, but not locking themselves in, more with a purpose to heal, so relations can heal – not so much by diving deeper, but higher upwards.” This inquiry recommends that MEC members take better care of themselves and develop a daily well-being routine. MEC members would enjoy better health if they practiced stillness, breathing deeply, being grounded and centered.

Stillness and quietude play an important role in the health and life of members and the community. Participating in stillness and quietude creates inner space for change and for balanced responses to change in the community. Stillness and quietude are especially needed in a culture that has a strong work ethic.

Interdependent Partnerships and Immediate Family 90

Respect (3) Communications (3) Partnership (3)

This inquiry recommends that members review their personal behaviors, so their needs feelings and values are congruent with how they behave with their immediate family. Moving toward discomfort means spending time with the member you are having a conflict with and addressing the issue until resolved. The shorter the duration of conflict the healthier it is for individual members and the whole community.

One of the ways community members recommended to improve their relationships was through “peer listening and awareness practices for change.” Another member suggested focusing on placing more intention on making their relationships “loving and sacred.” A member beautifully described their commitment to healing and recommended “the practice of loving kindness, nurturing self and others, creating grace and an energetic field that leads to harmony and resolution between people living in the community.” Life’s mandate for living in a

community is to practice kindness with intention and to earnestly quest to lovingly find a way that embraces everyone.

Recommendation 5: Community Organization, Development and Governance

The inquiry recommends that individual members and the MEC meet to review and analyze how they spend their time and decide how they would like to in the future. What is allocated to personal, interpersonal, leisure, work, personal and professional development, family, community, recreational, holidaying, taking a time out, retreat or vision questing? This inquiry recommends that the MEC examine more closely the quality of daily living that members would like.

There is a wonderful feeling to working hard and accomplishing projects, renovating buildings, changing the landscape back to organic and sowing seeds for the future. To some degree, this was necessary, as the MEC needed to get their roots firmly planted and systems in place, and to experience basic comfort. The community has become well established. The MEC has successfully navigated through the formative stage for a group to coalesce and they are to be congratulated for their efforts.

This inquiry recommends that the MEC examine more closely the quality of daily living that members would like. One member suggested that the MEC “slow up the community process.” Change it from rushing, doing and fixing, at least some of the time, to nurturing, nourishing, tending, loving, and caring for oneself and others. By slowing down, members will have time to nurture themselves and have time to enjoy and explore interpersonal relationships with other community members.

Christian (2003), an experienced writer and advocate for ecological villages, recommended that the “coalescing of [community] interests usually works best if a founding group is fairly small” (p. 44). The community would be well advised to become informed about human groups and their critical numbers, what worked, what didn’t work, and how not to

reinvent the wheel. This inquiry recommended that the MEC keep the community small at this moment in time while it is coalescing, forming, solidifying, crystallizing, synthesizing, and learning to listen to the heartbeat of the community. Also, to honor the heartbeat of self and other community members, respect differences and be patient.

Before a new member comes to live in the community, the MEC should have a definite process to evaluate their alignment with the community. The new member would be advised of the application process and what to expect, and given guidelines and assessments made before they apply to join the community. Evaluate the congruence between the new member and the community, and during the probationary period, the community should have an ongoing role so the new member is kept well informed of how they are doing, so all parties can make adjustments and changes.

The inquiry recommends that before a new member arrives, their financial and earning capability is assessed as well as how well they would be able to sustain their income if they were to live in the community. The community decides if there is financial viability or if the community can afford the present financial arrangement for other reasons because they value the potential contributions of the new member.

The inquiry recommends that when choosing new members select for emotional maturity to ensure a new member is in alignment with the vision and values of the MEC. The new member should have skills and abilities the community needs and these should fit with the existing social structure. Other factors that would influence a decision to embrace a new member would be children, whether they in a relationship, schooling, availability of housing, skillsets the community values and needs, entrepreneurial skills, communication and relational abilities, emotional maturity, proven commitment and responsibility. New members would benefit from having community mentors, buddies, and regular meetings with community members to support them. To integrate new members into the MEC, one member thought more “support for new

members” would be a good idea. A welcoming ceremony for new members and an honoring ceremony into full membership would also be a good idea.

This inquiry recommends rotational facilitation for all community meetings, and every community member is sharing equally in the facilitation of meetings. The community holds regular meetings about community operations and development; support is given generously, and follow-up to agreements takes place. Solidifying the core group is essential before the community accepts new members. Who are those members that make the major decisions at the MEC? Are all community members involved in major community decisions?

Community ethical boundaries need to be agreed upon and included in the SCVVS and the community manual. The MEC needs to come to an agreed understanding of what respect means to each member and, as one member expressed, an honoring and “valuing of sexuality and intimacy in life.” This report recommends the development of peer counseling training and having at least three or four members who have experience in mediation or counseling, constellation work, process group work or forming a consultancy group.

Sociocracy originated as a business management system that distributed leadership and power throughout an organization. Sociocracy is a corporate, capital-based business management model that is not rooted in a cooperative community setting. Schaub (2014) had eight major reservations about using Sociocracy as a governance model for cooperative group dynamics. Schaub’s primary concern was that Sociocracy does not properly address emotional input or feelings. As the MEC goes deeper in democratizing its practices of decision-making and working collaboratively as a community, the MEC might consider a more feminine approach that reaches into the emotional egalitarian body, a decision-making process that has a different root system.

I recommend that the MEC find ways to move toward a gift economy, an intentional process to change the principle way humanity relates. The MEC could make a conscious choice to move away from capital as a means of value exchange to one of contribution and

participation. This approach creates safety for every community member and cares for their well-being.

Create a MEC manual that has policies and procedures that every member can refer to, including new members. The inquiry recommends the MEC institute succession planning for all major community positions. As the SCVVS is documented and takes shape in 2017, then the MEC can create an implementation plan that is regularly reviewed and updated.

Recommendation 6: Community Ownership, Personal Responsibility, and Participation

A clear recommendation was expressed by a member who said, “Decide if you want to live in Väike Jalajälg and commit to the advancement and purpose of our community.” The inquiry recommends that each member takes personal responsibility to explore and develop self-leadership, communication skills, and their relational behavior. Members actively seek out support, guidance, and help to become self-realized and fully engaged community citizens.

Waking up and becoming engaged in community life is supported by “Regularly sharing what work you have done with yourself,” including your personal journey, successes, trials, and tribulations, is important for personal growth. Sharing your daily experiences, dreams and aspirations invites reflection, and develops transparency and then intimacy between community members.

This inquiry recommends that the community spends more time collaboratively working together to build community spirit and connection, that all members show up for practical collective work projects and cooperatively work together. The community needs to decide the frequency. Common collaborative work projects could include making frequently used common spaces more comfortable and attractive or adding central living space for relaxation, reflection, and learning. Also consider the eating area, kitchen, terrace, schoolrooms, meditation and quiet area, healing space for massage and other healing arts, and a common resource/library area in which the community manual and SCVVS reside. A whole community approach would be

available by request for home improvements in members' individual living spaces. Change and transformation happen when everyone is involved, working together and going in the same direction.

This inquiry recommends that community members make an Ownership Pledge. An ownership pledge describes the member's intentions and commitments on how they presently contribute to the community and their intentions and commitments for the future. Each member documents, in writing and art form, their intentions and commitments to support their MEC includes their name. Post these personal statements of intent in a visible location for all members to see. Host a circle of intention and commitment to the MEC at which members express how they presently contribute to their community and their intentions as they move forward, elaborating on their understanding of ownership, personal responsibility and participation in their community. A celebration pledge circle becomes a periodic community ritual at which members can reaffirm their pledge to the MEC and update the community on their involvement and engagement. Circle gatherings are an excellent way to develop community pride and cohesion.

Huigen, Meijering, and Hoven (2006) supported this viewpoint and said, "A sense of community, and a sense of home are created between the members through communal 'rituals,' such as celebrations...spiritual gatherings, but also common meals and work" (p. 45). Celebrations and circle gatherings are ways to witness and appreciate community members. Consider having a whole day community celebration to honor every person in the community, and this could be the community's annual birthday party. Invite members to regular accomplishment and gratitude circles.

A key recommendation of this report was that members hold learning circles to discuss what the following behaviors, qualities of being and ways of relating mean to MEC members, so that they can align their values and visions: respect, ownership, personal and community responsibility, participation, authenticity, cooperation, transparency, teamwork, and

collaboration. Acting upon this recommendation would be one way community members could aggregate their values and visions to draft an SCVVS.

Once the MEC has a first draft for their SCVVS, then every member signs a document that says they agree with the community's values and vision statement. A threshold crossing ceremony and ritual signing that indicates agreement, commitment, responsibility and community ownership would follow. This inquiry encourages the MEC members to continue the process of creating a well-defined SCVVS and to finish the first draft in 2017. For the community to realize their visions, a SCVVS is essential.

Implications for Future Inquiry

Glesne (2011) described ethnological research as a revolving doorway into the infinite mystery of people's lives and relationships. "True research does not end. Instead, it points the way for yet another search" (p. 275).

This action research inquiry process, the report findings, and the recommendations will impact other ecological communities in Estonia and intentional ecological communities in Europe and elsewhere. The project will develop a beginning understanding of the settings, social dynamics, key people, the nature of a resilient, sustainable and vibrant community, the purposes, the organizational structure and the quality of relationships between and among individuals and groups who choose to live in an intentional ecological community.

I have been invited by the sponsor and the MEC to return in 2017. The form of how I can best serve their community has yet to be determined. Community members said they would like regular retreats because it brings the whole community together and they found it inspiring and healing.

The possibilities for future research in supporting the emergence of a new culture in community living are unlimited. I am considering what part I could play to support the MEC and other intentional ecological communities in the future.

Report Summary

The spirit of community I experienced in the MEC was well described by Kleiner (2014). “Despite the constant hard work and many challenges that community living demands, we witnessed the astonishing beauty and inspiring innovation of people who commit to a shared life and care deeply for one another” (p. 72). Working with the MEC was a pleasure and honor.

The aim of this inquiry was to help the MEC solidify their values and create a resilient community. A fuller and deeper understanding of how people in community communicate and relate will help and inspire other communities and society at large. A general intention of this inquiry was to investigate the social structures and processes that guide intentional ecological communities, and this inquiry focused on the MEC. This inquiry was curious about how individual leadership and community leadership contributed to a resilient community. This inquiry considered embodiment practices as avenues to harmonize the collective consciousness in the daily life of the MEC.

My assignment as the ARr in this inquiry was to analyze data gathered from the survey, the Retreat, and reflective learning circle, and from the data findings make conclusions and recommendations in a report to the MEC. This report will provide valuable information to the MEC and was solely intended to make available new vistas of possibility in readiness for change for the community’s future social landscapes.

Yukl (2013) suggested that “success as a leader in the 21st century will require a higher level of skill and some new competencies” (p. 367). In this inquiry, I have indicated that the higher level of skill would be in communication, relationships, inclusion, participation, authenticity, transparency, gratitude, appreciation and the practice of loving kindness. Four of the new competencies would be:

- 1). The practice of daily embodiment practices that lead to self-realization.
- 2). Developing a practice of deep emotional intimacy with self and with others.

3). The practice of emotional listening that sources the whole mind-body that opens the heart to empathy and understanding.

4). Together, these three foster self-leadership presence.

Stillness and quietude generate an energy field for these four competencies to flourish.

When leaders decrease thinking and busy doing, mature their skill-set, and develop new competencies as suggested by Yukl, then they become transformational leaders who serve their community. “Visionary leaders help people to see how their work fits into the big picture, lending people a clear sense not just that what they do matters, but also why” (Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee, p. 57). This report was intended to inspire every member of the MEC to become their own transformational leader. The Retreat encouraged members to look inside (Short, 1998) for answers to questions they held about how they felt and to do likewise with their community.

A key finding that came out of this inquiry was: members of the MEC realized they had different ideas and understandings for engaging the following behaviors, rights, and responsibilities of living in their community. These were respect, cooperation, personal responsibility and participation, authenticity, ownership of the MEC, transparency, teamwork, collaboration, and personal intimacy. At the Retreat, I facilitated a learning circle to discuss what ‘respect’ meant to community members. The next step will be for the members of MEC to review this Organizational Leadership Project. Then, in 2017, to continue with sharing circles that align the community, so they have a common understanding on many topics, and to document their findings. Over the course of 2017, the SCVVS will begin to form. Forming a SCVVS could take a few years.

This research inquiry provided valuable findings, conclusions, and recommendations to help the MEC grow and evolve. The report was broadly based and raised many questions for the MEC to consider as they move forward. The methods used in this inquiry – a survey, the Retreat,

and a reflective learning circle – provided an opportunity for participants to shape the community's future. The community was appreciative of the inquiry process, and they are looking forward to receiving the findings, conclusions, and recommendations. The process the community embarked upon through participating in the inquiry honored, affirmed and celebrated the uniqueness of all members and through agreement shaped a more inclusive culture.

This organizational leadership project was in the early stages of defining the important characteristics of how a group or community operate collectively and effectively. Cooperative group behavior is a complex subject to understand. Each group is made up of distinct individuals who bring their unique qualities to the group process. The MEC members are learning to work, play and live together. May there be abundant blossoms, fruit, and outcomes for the MEC community in the years to come. I am grateful and appreciative of the opportunity I had to serve each one of you and your magnificent community. Namaste, Ronski

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Appendix A: Invitation to Participate in a Mōisamaa Ecological Community Survey

Dear Community Member,

My name is Ronski Kosky, and I am a friend of the Mōisamaa Ecological Community. This letter invites you to participate in an on-line survey to help your community. In the next six months, I will be a research consultant supporting you and your community to harvest your personal values and visions to help you create a social vision and values statement for your Community. In June and July, I will be staying in your community at Mōisamaa.

This survey will be the first stage in helping you identify and clarify your values and visions, provide valuable information to help design the structure and exercises for the Mōisamaa Community Retreat in July 2016. The results of this survey will also inform my recommendations and report to help guide the community in the future. The intention of this inquiry and survey is to align the social values and visions between and all community members so you are on the same page.

This research project is part of the requirement for a Master of Arts in Leadership degree (MAL) at Royal Roads University, BC, Canada. My credentials with Royal Roads University can be established by contacting *Dr. Catherine Etmansi, Acting Director, School of Leadership Studies at Catherine.etmanski@royalroads.ca; 250-391-2600 Ext. 4162.*

Purpose of the study and sponsoring organization

Liina Järviste has been the Sponsor on behalf of the Mōisamaa Community, working with me on this action research project. You are invited to participate in this process by completing the paper and pencil survey. Your participation is voluntary, confidential and anonymous. The data gathered from this survey will inform the making of a future draft social vision and values statement for your community. The survey will take between 1-2 hours to complete.

The desired benefits and risks of participation in this project

Differences in beliefs and perceptions among community members are natural and to be expected. By having a clearly defined unifying values and vision statement, you and your community will identify common intentions and values to establish the commitment necessary to facilitate a more harmonious, loving and effectual community. The social vision and mission statement would establish common values and agreed upon ethical behaviors. These would speak to respect, dignity, honoring, reverence and consideration for self and other community members.

The benefits to participants from this inquiry would be greater awareness, aliveness, and wakefulness. This research project will help your community grow and evolve. As future leaders, you will be more informed and able to serve your community. The intention of this inquiry is to reduce upset and conflict by facilitating human relationships that create lives well lived, equality and justice in the community and having healthy life-enhancing daily experiences. When there is no separation between self and others, life becomes meaningful, balanced and enjoyed. There are additional risks related to confidentiality of the data collected, and steps to mitigate this risk are explained and outlined below. I disclose this information here so that you can make a fully informed decision on whether or not to participate in this survey and research project.

Confidentiality, security of data, and retention period

I will work to protect your privacy throughout this study. All information collected from the on-line survey will be stored confidentially in a password protected computer. Information will be, summarized in an anonymous format, in the body of the final report. At no time will any specific comments be attributed to any individual. All documentation will be kept strictly confidential.

Raw data will be retained until August 2017 or later.

Sharing results

In addition to submitting the final report to Royal Roads University in partial fulfillment for a Master of Arts in Leadership degree, I will also be sharing the research findings from this survey

with you and Mõisamaa community members in December 2016. In the future, the anonymous raw data from this survey might be used for a professional or scholarly paper or conference presentation.

Procedure for withdrawing from the study

You are not required to participate in this research project. Research participants can withdraw from participating in the study at any time up until they leave the survey in a blank envelope at the community office mailbox.

By leaving your survey in the community office mailbox, you will be indicating that you have read and understand the information above and give your free and informed consent to participate in this survey and research project. Please keep a copy of this information letter for your records. If you have any concerns or questions, please contact me.

Thank you,

Ronski Kosky

ronski@shaw.ca

Appendix A1: Estonian Letter of Invitation in Estonian to participate in a Mõisamaa Ecological Community Survey

Kutse osalema Mõisamaa ökokogukonna küsitluses

Minu nimi on Ronski Kosky ja olen Mõisamaa ökokogukonna sõber. Ma kutsun sind osalema netiküsitluses eesmärgiga abistada teie kogukonda. Viibin teie kogukonnas Mõisamaal 30. maist 2016 kuni 30 juunini 2016. Järgneva kuue kuu vältel olen uuringukonsultant ning aitan sinul ja kogukonnal teie väärtsusi ja kogukonna visiooni ühtlustada ning toetada kogukonnas tervenemist.

See küsitlus on esimeseks sammuks aitamaks sul määratleda ja välja selgitada sinu isiklikke

väärtusi ja visioone ning et anda väärtsuslikku infot aitamaks kujundada 8.-12. juunil 2016

toimuva Mõisamaa kogukonna retriidi struktuuri ja tegevusi. Küsitluse tulemused annavad sisendit ka minupoolsete soovitustele ja aruandele jaoks, aitamaks kogukonda tulevikus toetada.

Uuringu ja küsitluse sihiks on ühtlustada kõikide kogukonnaliikmete sotsiaalsed väärtsused ja visioonid, et oleksite nö „samal leheküljel“. See uuring on ühtlasi vajalik minu magistritööks juhtimise alal ülikoolis Royal Roads University, BC, Kanadas. Ühendust saab kindlaks teha kasutaja Royal teede Ülikool Dr. Catherine Etmansi, juhataja, kooli juhtkond õpinguid

Catherine.etmanski@royalroads.ca 250-391-2600 Ext. 4162.

Uuringu eesmärk ja toetav organisatsioon

Liina Järviste on olnud toetajaks Mõisamaa kogukonna esindajana ja koos minuga selle tegevusuuringu projekti kallal töötanud. Oled kutsutud küsitluse täitmisega selles protsessis osalema. Sinu osalemise on vabatahtlik ja konfidentsiaalne. Küsitluse täitmine võtab aega umbes 1-2 tundi.

Soovitud kasu

Erinevused kogukonnaliikmete uskumustes ja tajumustes on loomulikud ja eeldatavad. Selgelt määratletud ühtlustavad väärtsused ja visioon võimaldavad kogukonnal määratleda ühised kavatsused ja väärtsused, et luua pühendumus, mis on vajalik, aitamaks luua harmoonilisemalt, armastavamat ja tulemusrikkamat kogukonda. Sotsiaalse visiooni ja missiooni lausung kehtestab ühised väärtsused ja kokkulepitud eetilised käitumised. Need käsitlevad respekti, eneseväärikust, austamist, väärustumist ning arvestamist iseenda ja teiste kogukonnaliikmetega.

Kasu küsitluses osalejatele oleks suurem teadlikkus, elusus ja ärkvelolek. See uurimisprojekt aitab teie kogukonnal kasvada ja areneda. Tulevaste juhtidena olete informeeritud ja võimekamad oma kogukonda teenima. Küsitluse sihiks on ka vähendada pahameelt ja konflikte toetades inimsuhteid, mis loovad kogukonnas hästi elatud elusid, võrdsust ja õiglust ning eluterveid elutoetavaid igapäevakogemusi. Kui enda ja teiste vahel puudub eraldatus, muutub elu tähendusrikkaks, tasakaalukaks ja nauditavaks. Seoses kogutavate andmetega esineb ka täiendavaid riske ning järgnevalt kirjeldan nende riskide maandamiseks vajalikke samme. Avaldan selle teabe, et saaksid teha täielikult informeeritud otsuse, kas osaleda küsitluses ja uurimisprojektis või mitte.

Projektis osalemise riskid, konfidentsiaalsus, andmete turvalisus ja säilitusaeg

Ma töötan selle nimel, et kaitsta kogu uuringu välitel sinu privaatsust. Kogu küsitlusest saadud teave salvestatakse konfidentsiaalselt parooliga kaitstud arvutisse. Teabest tehakse lõpparuandes anonüümses vormingus kokkuvõte. Ühelgi ajahetkel ei seostata nimesid ega spetsiifilisi kommentaare ühegi inimesega. Kogu dokumentatsioon hoitakse rangelt konfidentsiaalsena. Toorandmed hävitatakse kaks nädalat pärast küsitluste esitamist.

Tulemuste jagamine

Lisaks lõpparuande esitamisele ülikoolile Royal Roads University osana juhtimisalase magistrikraadi saamisest, jagan antud uuringu tulemusi ja soovitusi sinu ja teiste Mõisamaa kogukonna liikmetega detsembris 2016.

Uuringus osalemisest loobumise protseduur

Uuringus osalejad saavad uuringus osalemisest igal ajal loobuda teavitades sellest Ronski Kosky't meiliaadressil ronski@shaw.ca Sa ei ole kohustatud selles uuringus osalema. Võid ka paluda oma uuringuandmete eemaldamist uuringust kuni kahe nädala väljal pärast küsitleuse esitamist.

Isikliku nõusoleku vormi allkirjastamisega annad nõusoleku, et olete läbi lugenud ja mõistnud ülaltoodud teavet ja annad oma vabatahtliku ja informeeritud nõusoleku osaleda antud küsitoluses ja uurimisprojektis. Palun hoia üks käesoleva kirja eksemplar alles. Küsimuste või kahtluste korral palun võta minuga ühendust.

Tänan,

Ronski Kosky

ronski@shaw.ca

**Appendix B: A Survey to Harvest Valuable Information to help the Mōisamaa Community
in the Future**

By completing the questions in this survey, you are indicating your agreement with the contents of this notice. This is an implied consent with the terms of the informed consent. You may withdraw your participation up to the point of returning the survey to the community office which is the final submission point.

Please return the completed survey in a blank envelope to the sponsor in the community office. After that point, the survey data joins the anonymous data of this inquiry, and cannot be withdrawn.

Age _____

Underline: Female Male

Underline **3 words** in each section that are the best fit for how you live your life.

1. Contribution, Service, Gifting/Tithing, Receiving and Giving, Evolving, Intention, Commitment, Awareness, Purpose, Challenge, Clarity, Curiosity, Imagination, Change, Silence, Meaning, Stillness, Simplicity

2. Acceptance, Kindness, Self-Empathy, Sensitivity, Mindfulness, Focus, Presence, Embodiment, Self-Expression, Passion, Connection, Self-Respect, Empowerment, Accomplishment, Perseverance, Self-Realization, Successful

3. Self-Nurturance, Sustenance, Nourishment, Food(organic), H20, Fresh Air, Sunlight, Clothing, Housing/Shelter, Movement and Exercise, Rest/Sleep, Sexual Expression, Touch, Presence, Grooming, Nature, Elements(wind, rain, snow, water), Light, Colour, Rhythm, Growing, Warmth & Shade, Well-Being, Honesty, Competency, Learning, Mourning, Blessing, Self-Expression, Understanding, Balance, Centeredness (Balance), Peaceful, Congruency, Flexibility, Adaptability, Pleasure, Relaxation, Resourcefulness

4. Choice, Freedom, Space, Choice, Independence, Autonomy, Individuality, Goals, Authenticity, Integrity, Spontaneity, Discovery, Values, Exploration, Destiny, Assertiveness

5. Empathy, Intimacy, Family, Trustworthiness, Understanding, Acceptance, Embraced, Affection, Appreciation, Closeness, Contribution, Reassurance, Respect, Support, Caring, Warmth, Consideration, Stability, Friendship, Companionship, Sharing, Nurturance, Comfort, Truth, Contact, Planning, to Share, Power, Order, Sensuality, Sexuality, Spaciousness. Acceptance, Communications, Compassion, Interdependence, Consistency, Inclusion, Love, Mutuality, Nurturing, Respect, Acknowledgement (to know and be known, to see and be seen, to understand and be understood), Care, Connection, Partnership, Dependability, Desire, Encouragement, Family, Friendship, Fidelity, Inspiration, Loyalty, Solidarity, Support, Warm-Heartedness
6. Empathy, Compassion, Co-create, Co-participate, Connection, Relationships, Relate, Honesty, Authenticity, Integrity, Community, Cooperation, Teamwork, Inclusion, Openness, Clarity, Communication, Information, Acknowledgement, Dependability, Accountability, Reliability, Competence, Value, Belonging, Collaboration, Company, Completion, Work, Help, Recognition, Solidarity, Structure, Community, Stability, Equality, Harmony, Order, Participation, Accountability, Availability, Camaraderie, Contribution, Dignity, Diversity, Ethics, Helpfulness, Harmony, Integrity, Engagement, Privacy, Reliability, Resilience, Respect, Responsibility, Teamwork
7. Self-Empathy, Contemplation, Reflection, Privacy, Meditation, Musical Expression, Sing & Chant, Artistic Expression, Building, Creativity, Movement, Imagination, Aloneness, Quietness and Stillness, Ease, Passion, Change, LifeLong Learning, Exploration, Variety, the Void, Structure, Inspiration, Unity, Language, Recreation, Play, Grace, Honouring
8. Dreaming, Learning, Self-Reflection, Healing, Laughter/Crying, Security, Mentoring, Expression, Journaling, Feelings, Art, Safety, Spaciousness, Mourning, Counselling, Retreats, Protection, Music, Holidays, Blessings
9. Fun, Rites of Passage, Enjoyment, Happiness, Communion, Celebration, Cycles, Laughter, Gratitude, Play, Joy, Humor, Generosity, Bliss
10. Spirituality, Beauty, Harmony, Balance, Inspiration, Order, Peace, Tranquility, Union, Reverence, Mystery, Magic, Mystical, Ritual, Communion, Timelessness, Patience, Grace, Enchantment, Devotion, Intuition, Reverence, Sacredness, Wonder

Underline **3 words** in each section that are the best fit for how you want to live with others in community.

- 1a.** Contribution, Service, Gifting/Tithing, Receiving and Giving, Evolving, Intention, Commitment, Awareness, Purpose, Challenge, Clarity, Curiosity, Imagination, Change, Silence, Meaning, Stillness, Simplicity
- 2a.** Acceptance, Kindness, Self-Empathy, Sensitivity, Mindfulness, Focus, Presence, Embodiment, Self-Expression, Passion, Connection, Self-Respect, Empowerment, Accomplishment, Perseverance, Self-Realization, Successful
- 3a.** Self-Nurturance, Sustenance, Nourishment, Food(organic), H2O, Fresh Air, Sunlight, Clothing, Housing/Shelter, Movement and Exercise, Rest/Sleep, Sexual Expression, Touch, Presence, Grooming, Nature, Elements(wind, rain, snow, water), Light, Colour, Rhythm, Growing, Warmth & Shade, Well-Being, Honesty, Competency, Learning, Mourning, Blessing, Self-Expression, Understanding, Balance, Centeredness (Balance), Peaceful, Congruency, Flexibility, Adaptability, Pleasure, Relaxation, Resourcefulness
- 4a.** Choice, Freedom, Space, Choice, Independence, Autonomy, Individuality, Goals, Authenticity, Integrity, Spontaneity, Discovery, Values, Exploration, Destiny, Assertiveness
- 5a.** Empathy, Intimacy, Family, Trustworthiness, Understanding, Acceptance, Embraced, Affection, Appreciation, Closeness, Contribution, Reassurance, Respect, Support, Caring, Warmth, Consideration, Stability, Friendship, Companionship, Sharing, Nurturance, Comfort, Truth, Contact, Planning, to Share, Power, Order, Sensuality, Sexuality, Spaciousness. Acceptance, Communications, Compassion, Interdependence, Consistency, Inclusion, Love, Mutuality, Nurturing, Respect, Acknowledgement (to know and be known, to see and be seen, to understand and be understood), Care, Connection, Partnership, Dependability, Desire, Encouragement, Family, Friendship, Fidelity, Inspiration, Loyalty, Solidarity, Support, Warm-Heartedness
- 6a.** Empathy, Compassion, Co-create, Co-participate, Connection, Relationships, Relate, Honesty, Authenticity, Integrity, Community, Cooperation, Teamwork, Inclusion, Openness, Clarity, Communication, Information, Acknowledgement, Dependability, Accountability, Reliability, Competence, Value, Belonging, Collaboration, Company, Completion, Work, Help, Recognition, Solidarity, Structure, Community, Stability, Equality, Harmony, Order, Participation, Accountability, Availability, Camaraderie,

Contribution, Dignity, Diversity, Ethics, Helpfulness, Harmony, Integrity, Engagement, Privacy, Reliability, Resilience, Respect, Responsibility, Teamwork

- 7a. Self-Empathy, Contemplation, Reflection, Privacy, Meditation, Musical Expression, Sing & Chant, Artistic Expression, Building, Creativity, Movement, Imagination, Aloneness, Quietness and Stillness, Ease, Passion, Change, LifeLong Learning, Exploration, Variety, the Void, Structure, Inspiration, Unity, Language, Recreation, Play, Grace, Honouring
- 8a. Dreaming, Learning, Self-Reflection, Healing, Laughter/Crying, Security, Mentoring, Expression, Journaling, Feelings, Art, Safety, Spaciousness, Mourning, Counselling, Retreats, Protection, Music, Holidays, Blessings
- 9a. Fun, Rites of Passage, Enjoyment, Happiness, Communion, Celebration, Cycles, Laughter, Gratitude, Play, Joy, Humor, Generosity, Bliss
- 10a. Spirituality, Beauty, Harmony, Balance, Inspiration, Order, Peace, Tranquility, Union, Reverence, Mystery, Magic, Mystical, Ritual, Communion, Timelessness, Patience, Grace, Enchantment, Devotion, Intuition, Reverence, Sacredness, Wonder

Q11. Would you please describe a positive story about a time at Mōisamaa, a memorable, high point, when you experienced an event where you felt supported? Who was there? What happened?

Q12. Would you please describe a positive event you experienced at Mōisamaa, a memorable, high point, when **the Mōisamaa community** felt supported? Who was there? What happened?"

Q13. List 5 things you are creating or wanting to create in your personal life in the future.

Q14. What is your vision for the Mõisamaa community? List the 5 most important criteria you desire for living in community.

Q15. Why did you choose to live in the Mõisamaa community?

Q16. If you had three wishes for how you would change the Mõisamaa community; if you could make any necessary changes, what would these three changes be?

Q17. Contribute your ideas to the upcoming *Mõisamaa Retreat, 8-12 Jun 2016*. The purpose of the retreat is to help you clarify your values and vision for yourself and the community. It will

be a time for healing, reconciliation, celebration, self-nurturing, connection and alignment. Please share what you need and would like to experience during our time together.

Please return your survey in a blank envelope to the mailbox in the community office.

Thank you.

Appendix B1: A Survey in Estonian to Harvest Valuable Information to help the Mõisamaa Community in the Future

Täites selle küsitleuse küsimused, kinnitat teie nõusolekul käesoleva teadaande sisu. See on kaudne nõusolek teadvat nõusolekut tingimustega. Võite tühistada oma osaluse kuni uuring tulles ühenduse amet, mis mõtet on lõplikku esitamist.

Palun tagastada täidetud uuring tühja ümbrikus ühenduse kontoris sponsorile. Pärast seda, kui see käsk uuringu andmete liitub see küsitlus anonüümseid andmeid ja ei saa tagasi võtta.

Vanus _____

Allakriipsutus: naine mees

Kriipsuta igas sektsioonis alla **3 sõna**, mis kirjeldavad kõige paremini, kuidas sa oma elu elad.

1. Panustumine, teenimine, kinkimine/kümnise andmine, vastuvõtmine ja andmine, areng, kavatsus, pühendumine, teadlikkus, eesmärgistatus, väljakutse, selgus, uudishimu, kujutlusvõime, muutus, vaikus, tähendus, tüünus, lihtsus
2. Aktsepteerimine, lahkus, enese-empaatia, tundlikkus, ärksameelsus, fookus, kohalolu, kehastus, eneseväljendus, kirg, ühendus, eneseauustus, väestatus, saavutus, sihikindlus, eneseteostus, edukas
3. Enese toetamine/hellitamine, ülalpidamine, toitumine, toit (orgaaniline), H₂O, värske õhk, päikesepaiste, riided, eluase/peavari, liikumine ja sport, puhkamine/magamine, seksuaalne väljendus, puudutus, kohalolu, hooldamine, loodus, loodusjõud (tuul, vihm, lumi, vesi), valgus, värv, rütm, kasvamine, soojus ja vari, heaolu, ausus, pädevus, õppimine, leinamine, õnnistus, eneseväljendus, mõistmine, tasakaal, keskmesolek (tasakaal), rahumeelne, ühilduvus, paindlikkus, kohanemisvõime, nauding, lõõgastus, leidlikkus
4. Valik, vabadus, ruum, sõltumatus, autonoomia, individuaalsus, eesmärgid, autentsus, terviklikkus, spontaansus, avastamine, väärtsused, uurimine, saatus, enesekindlus
5. Empaatia, intiimsus, pere, usaldusväärsus, mõistmine, aktsepteerimine, omaksvõtmine/embamine, kiindumus, tunnustamine, lähedus, kaasabi, kindlustunne, austus, tugi, hoolivus, soojus, teisega arvestamine, stabiilsus, sõprus, kaaslaseks olemine, jagamine, toetamine/hellitamine, mugavus, tõde, kontakt, planeerimine, jagamine, võim, kord, sensuaalsus, seksuaalsus, avarus, kommunikatsioon, kaastunne, vastastikune sõltuvus, järjepidevus, kaasamine, armastus, vastastikkus, austus, tunnustus (teada ja olla teatud, näha ja olla nähtud, mõista ja olla mõistetud), hool, ühendus, partnerlus, usaldusväärsus, iha/soov, julgustus, pere, truudus, inspiratsioon, lojaalsus, solidaarsus, südamlikkus

6. Empaatia, kaastunne, koosloomine, koososalemine, ühendus, suhted, suhestumine, ausus, autentsus, terviklikkus, kogukond, koostöö, meeskonnatöö, kaasamine, avatus, selgus, kommunikatsioon, teave, tunnustus, usaldusväärsus, vastutusvõime, pädevus, väärthus, kuulumine, koostöö, kaaslased, lõpuleviimine/valmis saamine, töö, abi, tunnustus/tuntus, solidaarsus, struktuur, stabiilsus, võrdsus, harmoonia, kord, osalemine, kättesaadavus, seltsimehelikkus, panus, väärlikus, mitmekesisus, eetika, abivalmidus, harmoonia, terviklikkuse, rakendamine, privaatsus, vastupidavus, austus, vastutus
7. Enese-empaatia, mõtisklus, peegeldus, privaatsus, meditatsioon, muusikaline väljendus, laulmine ja mantrad, kunstiline väljendus, ehitamine, loovus, liikumine, kujutlusvõime, üksolek, vaikus ja tüünus, lihtsus, kirg, muutus, elukestev õpe, uurimine, vaheldus, tühjas, struktuur, inspiratsioon, ühtsus, keel, vaba aeg, mängimine, arm, austamine
8. Unistamine, õppimine, enesepeegeldus, tervendamine, naer/nutt, turvalisus, mentorlus, väljendus, päevikupidamine, tunded, kunst, ohutus, avarus, lein, nõustamine, retriigid, kaitse, muusika, pühad, õnnistused
9. Löbu, siirderiitused/üleminekuriitualid, nauding, õnn, osadus, pühitsemine, tsüklid, naer, tänulikkus, mängimine, rõõm, huumor, suuremeelsus, õndsus
10. Vaimsus, Ilu, harmoonia, tasakaal, inspiratsioon, kord, rahu, hingerahu, ühendus, hardumus, mõistatus, maagia, müstika, rituaal, osaduse, ajatus, kannatlikkust, arm, lummus, pühendumine, intuitsioon, pühadus, ime

Kriipsuta igas sektsioonis alla **3 sõna**, mis kirjeldavad kõige paremini, kuidas soovid koos teistega kogukonnas elada.

- 1a. Panustamine, teenimine, kinkimine/kümnise andmine, vastuvõtmine ja andmine, areng, kavatsus, pühendumine, teadlikkus, eesmärgistatus, väljakutse, selgus, uudishimu, kujutlusvõime, muutus, vaikus, tähendus, tüünus, lihtsus
- 2a. Aktsepteerimine, lahus, enese-empaatia, tundlikkus, ärksameelsus, fookus, kohalolu, kehastus, eneseväljendus, kirg, ühendus, eneseauustus, väestatus, saavutus, sihikindlus, eneseteostus, edukas
- 3a. Enese toetamine/hellitamine, ülalpidamine, toitumine, toit (orgaaniline), H₂O, värske õhk, pääkesepaiste, riided, eluase/peavari, liikumine ja sport, puhkamine/magamine, seksuaalne väljendus, puudutus, kohalolu, hooldamine,loodus, loodusjõud (tuul, vihm, lumi, vesi), valgus, värv, rütm, kasvamine, soojus ja vari, heaolu, ausus, pädevus, õppimine, leinamine, õnnistus, eneseväljendus, mõistmine, tasakaal, keskmesolek (tasakaal), rahumeelne, ühilduvus, paindlikkus, kohanemisvõime, nauding, lõõgastus, leidlikkus
- 4a. Valik, vabadus, ruum, sõltumatus, autonoomia, individuaalsus, eesmärgid, autentsus, terviklikkus, spontaansus, avastamine, väärtsused, uurimine, saatus, enesekindlus
- 5a. Empaatia, intiimsus, pere, usaldusväärsus, mõistmine, aktsepteerimine, omaksvõtmine/embamine, kiindumus, tunnustamine, lähedus, kaasabi, kindlustunne,

austus, tugi, hoolivus, soojus, teisega arvestamine, stabiilsus, sõprus, kaaslaseks olemine, jagamine, toetamine/hellitamine, mugavus, tõde, kontakt, planeerimine, jagamine, võim, kord, sensuaalsus, seksuaalsus, avarus, kommunikatsioon, kaastunne, vastastikune sõltuvus, järjepidevus, kaasamine, armastus, vastastikkus, austus, tunnustus (teada ja olla teatud, näha ja olla nähtud, mõista ja olla mõistetud), hool, ühendus, partnerlus, usaldusväärsus, iha/soov, julgustus, pere, truudus, inspiratsioon, lojaalsus, solidaarsus, südamlikkus

- 6a.** Empaatia, kaastunne, koosloomine, koososalemine, ühendus, suhted, suhestumine, ausus, autentsus, terviklikkus, kogukond, koostöö, meeskonnatöö, kaasamine, avatus, selgus, kommunikatsioon, teave, tunnustus, usaldusväärsus, vastutusvõime, pädevus, väärthus, kuulumine, koostöö, kaaslased, lõpuleviimine/valmis saamine, töö, abi, tunnustus/tuntus, solidaarsus, struktuur, stabiilsus, võrdsus, harmoonia, kord, osalemine, kättesaadavus, seltsimehelikkus, panus, väärlikus, mitmekesisus, eetika, abivalmidus, harmoonia, terviklikkuse, rakendamine, privaatsus, vastupidavus, austus, vastutus
- 7a.** Enese-empaatia, mõtisklus, peegeldus, privaatsus, meditatsioon, muusikaline väljendus, laulmine ja mantrad, kunstiline väljendus, ehitamine, loovus, liikumine, kujutlusvõime, üksiolek, vaikus ja tüünus, lihtsus, kirg, muutus, elukestev õpe, uurimine, vaheldus, tühjas, struktuur, inspiratsioon, ühtsus, keel, vaba aeg, mängimine, arm, austamine
- 8a.** Unistamine, õppimine, enesepiegeldus, tervendamine, naer/nutt, turvalisus, mentorlus, väljendus, päevikupidamine, tunded, kunst, ohutus, avarus, lein, nõustamine, retriigid, kaitse, muusika, pühad, õnnistused
- 9a.** Lõbu, siirderiitused/üleminekurituaalid, nauding, õnn, osadus, pühitsemine, tsüklid, naer, tänulikkus, mängimine, rõõm, huumor, suuremeelsus, õndsus
- 10a.** Vaimsus, Ilu, harmoonia, tasakaal, inspiratsioon, kord, rahu, hingerahu, ühendus, hardumus, mõistatus, maagia, müstika, rituaal, osaduse, ajatus, kannatlikkust, arm, lummus, pühendumine, intuitsioon, pühadus, ime

Q11. Palun kirjeldaksid positiivne lugu aja Mõisamaa, on meeldejääv, kõrgema punkti, kui olete kogenud sündmus, kus sa lootsid toetatud? Kes oli seal? Mis juhtus?

Q12. Palun kirjeldaksid positiivne üritus kell kogenud Mõisamaa , on meeldejääv, kõrgema punkti, kui ka Mõisamaa ühenduse tundis toetatud? Kes oli seal? Mis juhtus?

Q13. Loetle 5 asja, mida sa oma isiklikus elus lood või soovid tulevikus luua.

Q14. Milline on sinu visioon Mõisamaa kogukonnale? Loetle 5 kõige olulisemat kriteeriumi, mida sa kogukonnas elades soovid.

Q15. Miks sa valisid elama asuda Mõisamaa kogukonnas?

Q16. Kui teil on olnud kolm soovid kuidas te muutub selle Mõisamaa ühenduse; kui te saaksite teha vajalikke muudatusi, mida need kolm muudatust oleks?

Q17. Panusta oma ideid 8.-12. 2016. juunil toimuvaks Mõisamaa retriidiks. Retriidi eesmärgiks on aidata teil selgust luua oma väärustest ja visioonis nii iseenda kui kogukonna osas. See saab olema aeg tervenemiseks, leppimiseks, tähistamiseks, enese toetamiseks, ühenduse loomiseks ja ühise suuna leidmiseks. Palun jaga, mida sa vajaksid ja mida sooviksid meie ühise aja välitel kogeda.

Palun tagastage oma uuringu tühja ümbrikus postkastiga ühenduse kontoris.

Aitäh.

Appendix B2: Consent Form for the Mõisamaa Ecological Survey

By signing this form, you agree that you are over the age of 19 and have read the invitation and information letter for this study. Your signature states that you are giving your voluntary and informed consent to participate in this survey and research project.

You can withdraw from participating in this survey at any time and ask that the data you provided for the survey be removed up to two weeks after giving your initial consent. If you decide to withdraw from your initial participation, your withdrawal will be held in confidence and anonymity. The information you provided will be removed from the study.

Name: (Please Print): _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Please send a signed copy to Ronski Kosky at ronski@shaw.ca with the completed survey.

Appendix B3: Estonian Consent to Participate in the OAP and Survey**Nõusolek Mõisamaa ökokogukonna uuringus osalemiseks**

Allkirjastades käesoleva dokumendi nõustud, et oled üle 19 aasta vanune ja oled läbi lugenud uuringu kutse ja kirjelduse. Allkirjastades annad vabatahtliku nõusoleku küsimustikule vastamiseks ja uurimisprojektis osalemiseks.

Võid igal ajal küsimustikule vastamisest loobuda ning paluda sinu antud uuringuandmete eemaldamist kuni kaks nädalat pärast esialgse nõusoleku andmist. Kui otsustad oma esialgse osalemise tühistada, siis hoitakse sinu tühistus konfidentsiaalse ja anonüümsena. Sinu antud andmed eemaldatakse uuringust.

Nimi: (palun trükkida): _____

Allkiri: _____

Kuupäev: _____

Palun saata allkirjastatud koopia koos täidetud küsimustikuga Ronski Kosky'le aadressil ronski@shaw.ca.

Appendix C: Invitation to the Reflective Learning Circle for members of the Mōisamaa Ecological Community

You are invited to participate in a Reflective Learning Circle on _____ at _____.

The reflective learning circle process will be an opportunity to synthesize, crystalize and see what new information is germinating since the retreat.

Participants may withdraw at any time from the **learning circle method**. If you choose to withdraw once it has begun, your spoken comments made prior to leaving have impacted the group conversation and were witnessed by the others in the group and will, therefore, remain as part of the anonymous data from the inquiry. Your decision to withdraw from the learning circle, either before or during the method, will be kept completely confidential.

**Appendix C1: Invitation in Estonian to the Reflective Learning for members of the
Mõisamaa Ecological Community**

Kutse reflektiivsesse õppimisringi Mõisamaa ökokogukonna liikmetele

Oled oodatud reflektiivsesse õppimisringi kell _____, toimumiskoht:

_____.

Reflektiivse õppimisringi protsess on võimalus sünteesida, kristalliseerida ja näha, missugune uus teave on alates retriidist idanenud.

Osalejad võivad õppimisringi meetodist igal ajal lahkuda. Kui valid pärast alustamist lahkuda, on sinu lahkumise eelselt öeldud kommentaarid juba mõjutanud grupivestlust ja teised gruvi liikmed on neile tunnistajaks olnud, seega jäavat need uuringu anonüümsete andmete osaks. Sinu otsust õppimisringist lahkuda, kas enne meetodi alustamist või selle ajal, hoitakse täiesti konfidentsiaalsena.

Appendix C2: Informed Consent for Reflective Learning Circle for Mõisamaa Ecological Community

Participants may withdraw at any time from the **learning circle method**. If you choose to withdraw once it has begun, your spoken comments made prior to leaving have impacted the group conversation and were witnessed by the others in the group and will, therefore, remain as part of the anonymous data from the inquiry. Your decision to withdraw from the learning circle or interview, either before or during the method, will be kept completely confidential. By signing this form, you agree that you are over the age of 19 and have read the information letter for this study. Your signature states that you are giving your voluntary and informed consent to participate in this Reflective Learning Circle and research project.

- I consent to the audio recording of the learning circle
- I commit to respecting the confidential nature of the learning circle by not sharing identifying information about the other participants

For this group method, participants may not withdraw their data from the study, as your comments have influenced subsequent comments in the group. Should you choose to withdraw your participation in the study, your comments would become part of the anonymous data set in the research.

Name: (Please Print): _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C3: Informed Consent for Reflective Learning Circle in Estonian for Mõisamaa Ecological Community

Saagikoristus isiklikke visioone luua sotsiaalne visioon ja väärtsused avaldus Mõisamaa ökoloogilise ühendus Eestis

Osalejad võivad tühistada alates selle **ringi meetod õppimise**. Tühistada, kui ta on alanud valimisel teie öeldud kommentaare enne lahkumist on mõjutanud ka Selle vormi allkirjastamisel nõustute on üle 19-aastased ja lugenud käesoleva uuringu kirja teavet. Teie allkiri väidab, et annate oma vabatahtliku ja teadliku nõusoleku osaleda selles reflekteeriv õppimine ringi ja teadusuuringute projekti.

- Ma nõusoleku helisalvestis õppimise ring
- I kohustuse järgides konfidentsiaalsuse põhimõtet õppe ringi jagades ei tuvastavaid andmeid teiste osalejate

Selle rühma meetodi kohaselt osalejatele võib Tühista nende andmete uurimusest, nagu teie kommentaarid on mõjutanud hilisemad kommentaarid rühma. Kui otsustate tühistada oma osalemise uuringus, teie kommentaare veinitootja anonüümne andmekogumi teadustööga.

Nimi: (Palun printige): _____

Allkirjastatud: _____

Kuupäev: _____

Appendix E: Mõisamaa Vision and Mission Statement**Ecovillage “Small Footprint”****A working and living environment for life-supporting endeavors**

Our goal is to create a working and living environment that is a space for conscious and brave living, learning and testing. It is an ecovillage where we commit to co-creating sustainable life by valuing the care of Earth and people.

Our wish is to be the pioneers of sustainable life

Environmental conditions are rapidly deteriorating in the world. The economy is unstable and interpersonal relationships are brittle. By acting together, we wish to find answers to these challenges.

We wish to contribute to solutions that help to improve the conditions of the environment, that increase the adaptability of the nature and people to climate changes, decrease the over-consumption of non-renewable natural resources, stop the destruction of biodiversity, bring people closer to each other and the society, foster safe and integrated development of children and value people's health.

We have carried the interest of creating a really sustainable life for some time. We have studied, experienced and discovered this subject. Now time is ripe to carry out this vision by consciously acting together.

Our goal is a living environment that helps to restore the balance between natural environment and human needs. We will create a village with zero load on the environment, where people can creatively realize both their dreams and community's common goals.

Important prerequisites for creating such environment are social sustainability and courage for change. We'll create synergy between people acting together, based on intentional cooperation, non-violent communication, and openness. We have set four goals for our activities.

We set four main goals for our initiative

We create an ecologically sustainable village.

We share effective social and economic solutions.

We offer open learning and experiential space.

We create a laboratory for relationships and cooperation.

1. We create an ecologically sustainable village

We contribute to the development of ecologic solutions. We design a village the load on the environment of which is brought to zero. We share our knowledge and experiences with the world.

Our goal is:

- to produce the energy we need and sell the excess;
- to clean our own wastewater;
- to grow 80% of the vegetables and fruits we use and also sell our products;
- to use raw materials of as low load on the environment as possible for building new facilities and renovating the existing ones;
- to achieve consumption with full recycling of waste.

We will design the living environment according to the principles of permaculture. We will develop and employ wise and relevant technologies; we use the principles of permaculture for growing food in the garden, field and food forest; we will create an organic food restaurant for residents and guests, refurbish the water purification system, develop sustainable transportation solutions for residents and guests. We will create energy saving and beautiful living and working spaces with natural materials, and for supporting the communal lifestyle.

We will find and involve cooperation partners – universities, research institutions, environmental organizations, ecologic solution providers, other communities from Estonia and abroad.

2. We share working social and economic solutions

We observe the processes in the society and create solutions for alleviating the problems with the environment, economy, and social life. We participate in public discussions, bringing out the necessity and efficiency of the solutions developed by us.

Our goal is:

- to create a working model for the community where each member is valued from birth to death;
- to create a model village of local economy, to include community enterprises, ethical loans, and investment, etc.;
- to offer services that contribute to the creation of sustainable life on planet Earth;
- to develop alternatives to products that have been produced from non-renewable materials;
- to interpret and evaluate the long-term effect of our activities and solutions;
- to initiate and participate in public discussions on solutions (on different levels, including academic).

To achieve this, we will develop and offer sustainable services, e.g. local food circle, organic catering service, recycling design, nature-friendly building and renovating service, community childcare service, etc. Our goal is to create our own school and in a longer term also a retirement home. We are an active partner to local municipalities, showing how we can satisfy our basic needs (food, energy, shelter) in a life-supporting way and also create supportive and deep human relationships in our everyday neighborhood.

3. We offer open learning and experiential space

We wish to share the different aspects of sustainable life with all interested people. In addition to local seminars and workshops, we will share our knowledge actively elsewhere in Estonia and abroad.

Our goal is:

- to create and offer trainings, practical workshops, seminars and opportunities for practice and volunteering in all aspects of sustainability;
- to offer a chance for our guests to experience sustainable and intentionally communal life;
- to create cooperative relations with environmental and educational organizations by complementing their teaching and training activities by offering them a practical learning center.

To achieve this, we will develop training services, renovate the training and lodging spaces, create a studying garden and other practical examples to use in action (buildings, technologies, purification systems, etc.).

4. We create a laboratory for relationships and cooperation

We will create an environment for activity where the importance of evolving both personally and together are commonly valued. We will look consciously and bravely in the depths of ourselves and our relationships. We will strive continuously towards honest, non-violent and open communication and cooperation that will provide social sustainability.

Our goal is:

- to create opportunities for regular sharing by fostering open and non-violent communication;
- to support residents and guests in employing a personal practice;
- to create space and opportunities for self-reflection and evolution;
- to be guided in every activity by the principle of cooperation, not competition.

To achieve this we use participatory decision-making methods, we consistently employ methods for preventing and solving conflicts; we intentionally develop our skills of non-violent communication and cooperation; we will create traditions, and we celebrate! (P. Eensalu, personal communication, February 19, 2016)

Appendix F: The Mõisamaa Retreat July 2016 to Begin Drafting a SCVVS

In July 2016, the community set aside five days to retreat. I facilitated the retreat. The retreat was primarily an opportunity for members to clarify their values and vision for themselves and their community. Self-reflection, insight meditation, embodiment practices, dialogue sharing, peer learning circle experiences and community ritual were some of the ways the community harvested their common wealth.

The sponsor sent a formal invitation to attend the retreat to all community members. Eleven community members attended the Retreat. Three long term guests declined in conversations with the sponsor.

At the Retreat, a group process, Harvesting Embodied Wisdom (HEW), was used to resolve differences and to facilitate agreement on an SCVVS. HEW is a dynamic group process (Beck & Cowan, 1996; Siddique & Adeli, 2014) that engages a spiral participation (Adlam, 2014; Salters, 2011). HEW is an experiential learning process that fosters how members of a group relate, communicate, participate and include one another. These include the practices of emotional listening, stillness, receiving, harvesting what is felt and heard from everyone in the group (Surowiecki, 2004), reflective thinking, insight meditation, and mindfulness in the dialogic process.

Embodiment practices were used during the Retreat to help the MEC begin to create their SCVVS, focused on personal mastery, self-leadership, and community leadership. Community members benefited from doing embodiment practices during the retreat and became clearer on their personal needs and how they could contribute to the SCVVS. A small amount of time was spent on how to proceed with drafting the SCVVS and this was insufficient.

The community recorded and documented the community's insights, wisdom, preferences, orientations, directions, intentions, and commitments for how they would like to live together. "As people work toward a collective vision that clarifies the nature of the problems that

have brought them together, they gain a greater understanding of the complexities of the situation in which they are enmeshed" (Stringer, 2014, p. 192).

Appendix G: Spiral Learning Circles; Harvesting Embodied Wisdom

The key elements in an appreciative learning circle that differentiate them from other group learning models are:

- The use of a talking piece, “a designated object passed from hand to hand” that “grants the holder the chance to speak without interruption” (Baldwin, 1998, p. 67).

The talking piece acts as a symbolic reminder to listen with intent, an empowering tool that favors sharing by all participants. The talking piece encourages deep listening, respect, and reverence for the person who is speaking.
- Learning circles tends to be more focused, based on common resources, and intended to have an action outcome.
- The learning circle is an integrated process that brings individuals together to have an open conversation about a specific topic or issue and includes everyone in the same room (Weisbord & Janoff, 2010). These circles generate authentic conversations to navigate disputes, support conflict resolution, enhance team collaboration, and build relationships (Fitzgerald, 2006).
- The learning circle is a highly interactive, positive and participatory structure for organizing group work. It can be framed using Bolman and Deal’s (2013) human resource and symbolic lenses to support the learning throughout the process.
- A learning circle is an ideal approach to the inquiry because it creates an opportunity for individuals within an organization to express their opinions, concerns, and feelings in a sacred space.
- The guiding principles for learning circle are equal participation, reciprocity, honoring collective wisdom, trust, and diversity (Baldwin & Linnea, 2010).
- Learning circles invite openness of expression, ending our collective and individual silence, empowering people to work together.

- The learning circle does not assume or require expertise, welcoming everyone's contribution.
- “This process makes it clear that we see everybody in the community as an asset. Most of all, we all have a personal responsibility to participate in our society to make it better.” (Weisbord & Janoff, 2010, p. 6).
- The intent within a learning circle is for participants to share knowledge and express feelings through a process of open dialogue, deep reflection and story-telling about a relevant issue or problem with a focus on shared outcomes. In a corporate or community setting this is an opportunity for a group to have a “courageous yet compassionate conversation” (Fitzgerald, 2006, p. 11) among equals and to foster continued conversation outside the circle. The reflective learning circle must be conducted in accordance with the Tri-Council’s regard for those with the least power in the situation.

Although the learning circle is an organic process, there is some structure. The learning circle consists of a facilitator, a guardian, a recorder, a timekeeper, witnesses/observers and the participants. The facilitator welcomes the group, sets the intention for the Circle, encourages the participants to begin with “I” statements and to speak from their experiences using “neutral language” (Balwin & Linnear, 2010, p. 134). The role of the facilitator is to promote mutual understanding, inclusiveness, collaborative and participatory engagement and encourages the circle to build sustainable approaches and agreements. An effective facilitator opens a learning circle using an appreciative inquiry approach to set the tone for the conversation. The facilitator invokes expressions of gratitude for the participants’ presence when the circle begins, during the circle process and while closing the circle.

The role of guardian is to ensure the group’s energy remains balanced and to offer support to participants when conflicts arise or to call for a pause if needed. Overall, a key

element in creating an ideal learning circle is choosing a comfortable, informal, neutral and quiet location (Fitzgerald, 2006). Learning circles can bring people together to discuss what is working well within their organization, focusing on where there may be opportunities for improvements. Using a learning circle is a fast method to “get to the real root of the problem” (Fitzgerald, 2006, p. 10) through honest and positive conversation. The circle is meant to promote learning, understanding and professional development. According to Fitzgerald (2006), a learning circle is an effective method for leaders to foster organizational problem solving. Similar to an appreciative inquiry where the focus is on “generative and life-giving forces in the system” (Watkins, Mohr, & Kelly, 2001, p. 22), the focus of the learning circle is to create an “experience of synergy” (Baldwin & Linnea, 2010, p. 6). Sacred listening creates community synergy by harvesting everyone’s insights and wisdom.

Sacred deep listening is a way people listen to one another that is emotionally and psychologically inclusive. Sacred listening is an internal receiving state that embodies gratitude and appreciation for another’s feelings, ideas, dreams, values, contributions, and presence. Sacred listening is a generous way a person listens with heart empathy that accepts the person as they are and can vision which they are becoming as they evolve into their higher self. Sacred listening is a receptive way that unites a community or group by harvesting everyone’s insights and wisdom. Practicing empathetic listening is one way to foster self-leadership presence. Being open to receive what others have to share requires an open heart and listening deeply. Susan McHenry in Nepo (2012) said: “Deep listening is more than hearing with our ears, but taking in what is revealed in any given moment with our body, our being, our heart” (p. 83). Deep listening comes from seeing and hearing with the intuitive third eye married to a gut felt sense. Sacred deep listening is an embodied state of being, an open channel that receives another person’s feelings, insights, and needs. Harvesting the accumulative wisdom of everyone in the circle is the destination that nourishes the community.

Harvesting Embodied Wisdom helps a group to work together and move toward solutions that resonate with every member of the group. Harvesting Embodied Wisdom is a group process that transforms and aligns divergent viewpoints and competing interests into agreed solutions. Harvesting embodied wisdom is an accumulative process of receiving. Firstly the circle is cast in a sacred manner so that each person in the circle is emotionally connected to their feelings and their inner sense of knowing. At this stage, each person is becoming grounded and present to themselves and the facilitator reminds everyone to have gratitude for showing up. The facilitator then encourages members to appreciate and become emotionally and empathetically present to the other people in the circle. Expressing silent gratitude builds a connection between people without words. The facilitator raises the appreciative awareness in the circle by saying that the presence of others in the circle will make a difference to their life if they can receive another's inner wisdom. An intention is set by all those in the circle to quest for an answer or solution that is in the highest and best interests of all. The intention setter can be anyone in the circle and initiates the process of creating an energetic field that celebrates harmony that comes from being a collaborative participant in the learning circle. By definition, a learning circle is a place of learning that comes primarily from receiving the wisdom of everyone in the circle.

The key to this process is to receive the feelings, intentions and ideas of what was shared by the person(s) who have spoken previously and be a receptive vessel. Each person in the learning circle is encouraged to come from a place of not knowing. They are curious about what needs to be known and have a patient mind. The mind is the reflective observer that is the discerning voice of experience. Thinking plays a small role when harvesting the wisdom of others. Each member of the circle honors and shares the feelings and urges birthed from their core, from their inside out. Their contribution to the learning circle process comes from a whole body response that does not source or engage pre-meditated thoughts.

The learning circle process I prefer is a spiral within two circles. The facilitator sets the intention when the circle first forms. Then the facilitator asks the circle community to name the issue or topic under consideration. A question is then set based upon the present needs in the circle. Inside the main circle, another set of pillows or chairs is arranged. Only persons in the inner circle can speak. Circle members decide where they want to sit based on how strongly they are feeling. There can be two or more persons in the inner circle. The facilitator invites any person from the inner circle to begin sharing about the circle question. Once they are complete everyone in the room acknowledges that person's contribution with a 'ho.' Then the person to their left says thank you, using only a few words, appreciating the previous speaker and showing gratitude for what they said. Relating this way honors the process and awakens everyone in the circle and supports harvesting the embodied wisdom that is in everyone. The person who has spoken then moves to the outer circle. Anyone from the outer circle can join the inner circle when this person leaves. Once everyone has found their place, then it is the turn of the person who said thank you for giving their response to the circle question. The next speaker values what has been said by the previous person(s) and to the best of their ability includes the essence of what they said and adds to it with their inner understanding.

The process of harvesting other people's wisdom is an accumulative way of gathering information and understanding. The reflective learning circle continues within the agreed timeframe. A person can return to the inner circle as many times as they like. At the end of the circle, the facilitator asks those who voluntarily chose to witness the circle give their observations and what they noticed. These observations might include key themes, conclusions to the question, recommendations they heard expressed, emotional and energetic states generated in the room or identify missing subject matter.

The reflective learning circle is a quest for common ground (Bunker & Alban, 2006, pp.

Appendix H: Established International Ecovillage Projects

Here is a sample of some of the more well-known ecovillage projects to date. Some of them were formed as spiritual, social, or service-oriented intentional communities in the '60s, '70s, or '80s, and began calling themselves ecovillages later, as they became more aware of and committed to ecological, social, and/or spiritual sustainability in the 1990s.

Europe:

Solheimar, Iceland, 1930
Camphill Communities, 1930's-Present
Findhorn Foundation, Scotland, 1962
Damanhur, Italy, 1977
Svanholm, Denmark, 1978
Lebensgarten, Germany, 1985
Torii Superiori, Italy, 1989
Munkesoegaard, Denmark, 1995
Ok6dorf Sieben Linden, Germany, 2000.

The Middle East and Africa:

Yoff, Senegal, 1400's.
Thlolego, South Africa, 1990
Green Kibbutz Group, Israel, 1996.

Asia, Pacific, and Australia:

Tanamalwila, Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement, Sri Lanka, 1970's
Crystal Waters, Queensland, 1988
Jarlambah, Australia, 1990's.

South America:

Reserva Integral Sasardi, Colombia, 1985
Institute for Permaculture and Ecovillages in the Cerrado, Brazil, 1990's
Marquina Ecovillage, Bolivia, 1998
Centro Venezolano de Ecoaldeas y Permacultura, Venezuela, 1990's
Ecoaldea Fronteriza El Pauji, Venezuela, 1990's.

North America:

Camp Hill Communities, 1930's-Present
The Farm, Tennessee, 1970
Huehuecoyotl, Tepoztlan, Mexico, 1973
Sirius, Massachusetts, 1978
Earthaven, North Carolina, 1990
Ecovillage at Ithaca, New York, 1992
Dancing Rabbit, Missouri, 1993
Los Angeles Ecovillage, California, 1993
O.U.R. Ecovillage, British Columbia, 1990-99.

(Christian, 2003, p. 27).

**Appendix I: The Four Relational Landscapes for Embodied Service. Self-leadership,
Interpersonal Leadership, Leading in Community and Service to Humanity and the
Environment**

Appendix I describes the four embodied landscapes for the transformational servant leader. I used the Soul Motion™ (SM) (<http://soulmotion.com/>) landscapes developed by Vinn Arjuna Marti (2014) and used these relational behavioral movement landscapes to explain the four ways a leader can serve.

Self-leadership is the first landscape and is an intimate physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual dance which focusses on personal mastery. The idea here is to develop self-leadership, skills, traits, and behaviors that are in the highest and best interests of the person and prepare them for serving in the other three domains of leadership service. The fundamental question a leader asks of themselves when developing self-mastery skill sets that prepare them for knowing themselves and serving is.“What is the nature of my unique contribution?”

From this well-grounded clear sense of self, the leader steps out into the world to serve and interact with one other, either in a family, community or an organization. Leading with one other is the second landscape in which a leader can serve. Inspired by interior impulses, sensations, feelings and images the leader begins to relate and communicate outwardly developing interpersonal relationship competencies.

The third landscape is where a leader contributes to a group, community or organization. In their role as a community leader, they are in service to everyone and consider the whole group. In the second and third leadership landscapes, there are two questions the servant leader needs to be curious about and frequently ask themselves. “What is the character of my relationships?” and “How can I help and be of service?

The fourth landscape is when a leader is in service to the universal. Here the leader serves from a humanitarian perspective and takes care of nature and the environment. The question a

leader needs to ask in service to the greater good of all is. "How can I contribute to the material, emotional and spiritual well-being of everything, one sacred step at a time." Pepper (2007) stated what matters in life and for leaders. "That service must guide our every action" (p. 266). Being in service is an action. Thinking service and mental models of service without action do not create change in people's lives or serve the greater good.

The embodied transformational leader serves in a spiral pattern that comes from their center. They receive and transmit information and inspiration to the other three landscapes, and there is a flow of energy in both directions along this spiral pathway. The wise servant leader is resourceful and repeatedly returns to the first landscape for reflection, insight and self-development. Acts of service flow in an iterative pattern between all four landscapes of leadership.

SM is an embodied dance practice, a transformative movement program that opens the heart, rests the mind, and relaxes the body. SM is a practice that cultivates the capacity for listening to the deep wisdom of the body and the silent whisperings of the soul in motion. This movement practice, from stillness into creative movement and back again into stillness is an inquiry process that stirs the spirit of all who step onto the dance floor. It is a combination of movement meditation, body awareness practice, and expressive dance art. A dancer learns to surrender to the present moment; allow their body to move from their mystery, listening to their breath and heartbeat, and every being around them. There are three major platforms, pause presence, orbit orientation and echo inspiration that guide the inquiries.

Clarifying and synthesizing the way community members want to communicate and relate was the purpose of this action research inquiry. The four landscapes provide a framework for service; personally, interpersonally, community-wise, and for the community at large in spirit and action. When a leader wholeheartedly embraces all four landscapes they can inhabit the gifts they were born with, serve others and live more fully.

See with compassionate eyes

Walk with kindness and understanding in the soul's of your feet

Feel with a generous, loving heart

Celebrate gratitude for the gift of life

Embody inner peace ~ the foundation for world peace (Ronski, Aug 2016)

I am a certified teacher of Dance and Leadership from the Soul Motion School of Dance and Leadership Studies.

Appendix K: Embodied Practices

Human awareness increases when the chattering mind temporarily disappears and the emotional body and felt sense somatic body wakes up and is expressive. “To experience the essential self, we have to see life as a whole, rather than through a hole.” (Liberman, 2001, p. 59). Embodiment practices or living experiences offer opportunities to feel, express and see with the whole of the body-mind. Embodiment practices foster self-realization, relational harmony, community collaboration, cohesion, resilience, kindness, gratitude, and sustainability. Embodied practices teach us to experience and become familiar with who we truly are so we can live authentically, and so our behaviors are congruent with our core urges and feelings.

Here are the three portals of embodiment that cultivate self-mastery and self-realization and nurture an individual’s inner mandala.

Repetitive Embodiment Practices Incorporated into Daily Living.

Repetitive embodied practices with oneself create energy channels (similar to birthing canals) from which an abundance of feelings emerge from one’s essence and inner mystery. The form of embodied practices is a kaleidoscope of living engagement that shows up in many shapes, forms, and colors. These include authentic movement and practices such as dancing, singing, gardening, playing music, somatic and mindful meditation, yoga, expressive arts, healing arts, stillness, silence, ritual, an inquiry into shadow self, and exploration of the joyful, celebratory self. These are but a few; the list is endless and can include any form of creative expression or contemplation. The beauty in this is that a person can choose whatever is alive for them, and through engagement ignite their passion or creative juices.

How does the body begin to wake up to her/his inner rhythms and cycles that are intimately related to the cycles and rhythms in the external world? By becoming a major engaged player in one’s life through participation, ownership, taking personal responsibility, setting intentions, making commitments and enjoying one’s chosen embodiment practices. In repeating

any practice, the body begins to come alive and wakeful. What arises is a feeling awareness of *oneness* and *dissonance*. Oneness is the waking up to the fact that our bodies are made from the same essence as the ocean and the earth, and using our consciousness to honor these relationships. When we notice dissonance in how we organically feel, this is the contrast –and the opportunity to come back into homeostasis with ourselves and with our everyday world. As an addendum, sleep-time is when our whole being can potentially come back into balance through unconscious evolution.

Embodiment means a state of being such that behavior is grounded in every cell of a human body. Embodiment occurs through repetitive practices that awaken new traits or behaviors, honing feeling states like gratitude or wonder. Then the desired embodied state becomes cellular wisdom that permeates the whole person. When this happens, a person's authentic feelings and urges are congruent with their behaviors. The repetition is the birthing place for change and creation to take place. Nature's metaphor would be ocean waves that create beaches that are made up of sand granules. The foreshore is the evolutionary place where the ocean meets the land. The repetitive ocean waves and “the repetitive comings and goings of the sea” (Sheldrake, McKenna & Abraham, 2005, p. 117) embodied the land with their rhythmical wisdom. The ocean’s rhythms created a beach landscape that allowed sea creatures to inhabit the land and earth being here today.

Embodiment practices are the positive actions of what Sheldrake (2005) called “habit formation.” “Habit formation and the inheritance of these habits by morphic resonance could enable evolution to occur more rapidly than neo-Darwinians suppose possible because they ascribe almost everything to slow statistical changes in gene frequencies” (p. 122). There is a paradox in understanding how change takes place, and both are true. In the dialogue between Sheldrake, McKenna, and Abraham (2005), they were saying change takes place over millions of years and concurrently it is possible for change to take place instantaneously when species reach

a critical mass or alignment. Their opinions about how life changes and evolves open doorways for us to look at time in new ways; the past, present and future being one and the same.

Symbiotic Embodiment Practices

Symbiotic embodiment practices come from witnessing and being a co-creative participant and explorer with the earth and with nature. Examples of this might be swimming in the ocean, hiking in the mountains, walking through a forest, relaxing in hot mineral springs, vision questing, hot rocks sweat lodge, experiencing a range of elements, honoring the directions as in the native traditions, rites of passage. Repeatedly being in the presence of an energy field that is life enhancing will change the nature of a person's behavior through osmosis and diffusion. The relational energy field that Rupert Sheldrake (2009) was referring to was 'morphic resonance' that permeates the earth and the whole universe. Morphic resonance is the communication system within the universal field that connects all life forms and infuses authentically embodied feelings with love. Jung (1936) perceived this universal field from a mental perspective and called it 'universal consciousness.'

Life-Affirming Relational Embodiment

Relational embodiment comes from direct interactions between people. One can experience life-affirming relational embodiment from touch, kindness, empathy, compassion, trust, gratitude, generosity, breathe, sensuality, and sexuality. Our bodies primarily learn and heal from experiences that nourish our well-being, not from thinking, knowledge or 'mental models'. It is the writer's opinion that mental models are the mythical emperor with no clothes' of leadership. Hopefully, this comment will be the beginning of an honest dialogue in leadership circles about the honing of leadership traits that truly serve humanity.

Similar to learning any skill, embodiment practices such as expressing gratitude, self-love, or a desire to serve, require daily practice; in fact, years of practice. Leadership is a path that is not for the faint of heart. Effective leadership requires discipline, determination, courage,

intention, commitment, passion and taking action. As one acquires these attributes through relational embodiment, leading becomes a pleasurable and deeply satisfying experience.

Personal embodiment practices create inner balance from healing one's past life and up to the present through emotional release practices; by regularly emoting feelings of hurt, sadness, anger, joy and then re-harvesting this emotional energy. Additionally, there is wisdom and benefits in having a greater understanding of the part dreams play in our everyday lives. Experience and acknowledge intuition; celebrate life with a different understanding of time; make daily life sacred through ritual and reverence, and explore altered states of mind and consciousness. Embodied practice provides a forum to learn about oneself, to notice and appreciate intuition, to pay attention to synchronicity, and to encourage insight-fullness and curiosity. Embodied practices offer men and women an opportunity to reclaim and get to know their integrated feminine and masculine. Surrendering, relaxation and all of the above-mentioned embodied practices are keys to finding inner balance.

Least understood and most needed on the path to self-mastery is the development of a spiritual practice. A spiritual practice encompasses all of the healing art modalities mentioned above and much more. Like any practice, to become good at it, you have to awaken awareness and then expand your awareness with thousands of hours (Hamill, 2013, p. 40) of embodied practice. Establishing and sustaining embodied practices that nurture self-care will create the foundations for a life well lived. It is important to note that for the relational embodiment to mature, a person needs to iteratively engage the other three landscapes (see Appendix I), continually returning to self. The three landscapes are: one other; a family, community or tribe; and the universal. The visual structure for this process is a *torus*, a spiral within a circle. The sacred geometry of this pattern is the Golden Mean, the principle mathematical building block of *everything* in the universe. Daily embodied living practices that awaken the body and mind are the building blocks for an effective, visionary leader.

Embodied Leadership

Embodied leaders and embodied action researchers encourage the *invisible* in people to become *visible*. A leader can create an energetic field that supports and allows people to birth their gifts to humanity. Individual and group embodiment practices help a leader to:

- Increase self-awareness, body and mind, being and doing, feeling and thinking
- Create constructive relationships with others
- Practice ethically, responsibly and with accountability
- Develop competencies that support a lifelong commitment to personal mastery (Senge, 2006, pp. 7-8; p. 12; p. 262). For competencies recommended in the Royal Roads

University Leadership program, see:

<http://moodle.royalroads.ca/moodle/mod/book/view.php?id=47743>

- Align and incorporate nature and spirit into your feelings, thoughts and actions
- Develop a daily spiritual practice
- Become more intimate with self and others; this intimacy generates presence and authentic expression.
- Be patient and encourage participation
- Create and support a relational energy field that builds collaboration and cooperativeness
- Work toward facilitating community harmony through alignment and congruency
- Encourage healing for community members and the community as a whole
- Embodiment practices, both individual and group, are the foundation stones for transformational servant leadership.

Embodied servant leadership is a paradigm shift that welcomes and values the unique leadership qualities that are present in each person. In an egalitarian community, everyone is a leader. The concept of leader/follower that has been so prevalent in leadership theory, books,

academia, organizations and our culture is a masculine hierarchical power over tactic of controlling other people that do not serve individuals, organizations or community. Holding a leader/follower perspective denigrates and dishonors the primary human need for personal autonomy and authentic expression. Embodied leadership goes hand-in-hand with servant leadership.

Kouzes and Posner (2012), in describing effective leaders, said: “it is all about how that individual behaves as a leader...if you want to have a significant impact on people, on organizations and communities, you’d be wise to invest in learning the behaviors that enable you to become the very best leader you can be” (p. 26). This appendix (K) has described the embodied practices to create these behaviors.

Senge (2006) suggested three gateways into visionary leadership. (However, he missed the most important gateway: embodied practice.) “The first involves opening ourselves to see and hear what is in front of us but we have not yet been able to see” (p. 372). “The second threshold involves seeing with the heart” (p. 373). The third is letting go of the ego and replacing it with service and appreciative inquiry (p. 373). A leader who can complement this with vulnerability and surrender to the greater good of all has developed presence through embodied practice. That is a leader who truly leads.

Being and Presence; Birthing Feelings

The creative wisdom seeds of being – of presence to self, or being present outside of self – emerge from the void, from the place of stillness, non-thought and silence. Embodied wakeful doing is birthed out of non-doing. Presence or becoming present or being is a behavior that is a best friend of the embodied state; together they help one another. Being in the ‘here and now’ is called presence. A few of the actions that support presence are: micro-movements, slowing down, pausing, stopping, stillness, silence, listening, somatic and mindful meditation,

contemplation and reflection, dreaming, loving, kindness, gratitude, and generosity. These are the companions that nurture presence.

There are steps to go through and enjoy when a feeling or urge arises from one's heart and inner core. A dance of intimacy is set in motion as a person feels into their being. The first step in this inner dance is to welcome and receive the feeling. The second step is to fully feel the feeling and give it time and space to permeate the whole body. The next step is to express the feeling to yourself through movement or gesture, and this grounds the feeling. After going through the inner process of feeling, there is the choice to share the feeling with others or with the world around. That could be people, nature, the elements (rain, wind, sunshine), earth and ocean wisdom, the directions specific and general (orbital 360 degrees), the rhythms of the universe. This last step of expressing a feeling outwardly is the body's social need for connection, belonging and reflection.

The practice of presence or being develops an embodied state. An embodied state provides a landscape for awareness to blossom. Awareness informs and encourages wakefulness. Wakefulness illuminates the living possibilities in each moment and creates aliveness that nourishes compassion, healing and loving kindness. When a person feels embodied, they are empowered and more likely to make choices and decisions that are in their highest and best interests. They will be able to serve people around them better and be more conscious of their environment.

Life is a marriage of being and doing. While participating in embodied practices, there is the possibility of a shift from being to doing and then back to being. Being allows the mystery from one's inner void to reveal itself through urges and feelings that have space and time to surface, thus awakening awareness and quiet noticing that will, in turn, inform traits and behaviors. There is a spiral pathway from the source of one's authentic self to doing embodied practice. Along this pathway, feelings flow outwardly from one's center. Embodied practices are

a combination of doing and being and they cultivate presence. Waking up happens when being informs doing and doing informs one's authentic self. Presence lives along and within this spiral path of flowing energy and travels in both directions.

Embodiment practices foster being, a state of self-presence. Being is a feeling body state that an individual notices and the mind observes, and it is free from control or agenda. It is an inner energy field that does not feel separate from the outer universal energy field. One could say that the state of 'BE-ING' is a synthesis of the body that is given life through the process of grounding into Mother Earth. The relationship between a person's body and their environment – and in particular, the Earth – creates their moment-to-moment reality. The way the soles of our feet engage with the ground informs our 'under-standing' and ability to be responsive to what life presents, moment to moment. Grounding brings one's reality into focus.

A community benefits from doing embodied practices together. These practices empower members and facilitate alignment between them so that the community can grow and evolve. Community embodiment practices offer members connection, healing, understanding, compassion, a feeling of belonging, a safe and enjoyable place they can call home. Loving kindness (Baker & O'Mally, 2008), gratitude, and generosity of spirit are a community member's best friends. Embodiment practices change every living cell in the body and the mind. Participating in embodied practices is our gift and creative contribution to people, community, and our beautiful planet.

Staying current and transparently communicating with other community members is vital 'because it enables compassionate understanding and a social atmosphere for help and support to be given and received. Informing others and sharing about unresolved issues from past upsets, traumas, and unmet needs with other community members is essential. We are part of humanity and need to contribute to and participate in the healing of pain and suffering for each other. As such, community members are part of the universal trauma, located in the universal

consciousness, which needs healing for everyone. Service to each other is fundamental to community life, for community members to thrive and for a community to be resilient and stay well.

A few words about the relational field of gratitude. While engaged in embodied practices, one can receive the great fullness that life offers. Returning this energy back into the field through the practice of feeling and mindful gratitude generates an outward generosity of spirit. This outward appreciation is a natural response; it responds to nature's continual gifts to all people. Gratitude completes the cycle of kindness, an appreciative reverence for this life and everyone and everything in it. What follows from the practice of gratitude is that authentic expression becomes readily visible. In turn, this informs knowing thyself, knowing one's gifts, the path of right livelihood, and how to be of service in this lifetime. Purposefulness encourages every servant leader to show up and share themselves, to participate fully and to include others, to welcome and embrace everything that appears in their life. A transformational servant leader who has practiced stillness and silence (a state of being), integrated and balanced with celebratory movement (a state of doing), creates an openness to change. Taking one sacred step at a time is an embodied and conscious path.

The answers we seek to the important questions in life reside in our core. Our perceptions, assumptions and 'monkey-mind' will deceive us if we rely solely on our mind for discernment. Intimacy is a key factor in expressing one's authentic self and is one of the golden keys to waking up. Personal intimacy and interpersonal intimacy help birth the authentic self.