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EROLES PROJECT
BORDERS RESIDENCY
2016 Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Contact details

Email: info@erolesproject.org

Website: www.erolesproject.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/erolesproject

Twitter www.twitter.com/erolesproject

Introduction

The Eroles Project is a community of change-makers that 1) organise annual creative and participatory residencies exploring a collectively chosen issue present in today's society and how to create systemic change within that issue 2) organise non-residential workshops throughout the year for people unable to attend the residencies, 3) organise action based projects that were developed during the residencies and 4) stay connected and support each other and each others projects through an online networking platform currently in the making.

Background

Eroles Project was founded by a group of individuals interested in putting values and learnings from various transformative learning centres such as Schumacher College and Ecodharma into practice, using collaboration, creativity and community as its main principles. The first residency took place in summer 2015 with the focus on Climate Justice, resulting in workshops, actions and performances executed in Paris during COP21.

Borders Residency 2016

The theme Borders was chosen after interviews with past participants and following the energy of the core team members who had all spent time working with refugees in Calais and in Hungary. The team reached out to a wide range of organisations, individuals and refugees across Europe to gain a variety of perspectives on the crisis, and to spread the word of Eroles' coming residencies. Social media channels, Facebook and Twitter, were also used to increase outreach.

The residency consisted of three contained programmes; Radically Thinking as a Species (exploring and working for inclusion/integration), Creating Resilience (burnout prevention and tools for oppressive situations) and A Camp as if People Matter (exploring shortcoming of aid & development and creating a project).

There were between 10 and 16 people per programme (including facilitators).

In total we had 39 participants and facilitators from 15 countries over 7 weeks.

17 people came on either full or partial bursaries, amounting to €5275.

Key Learnings

A more diverse group of participants deeply enriched the learning experience, enabling us to use the group itself as a microcosm of the issues we were looking at. Inequalities and othering was happening even amongst the group.

Engaging in ways of knowing other than discussing on an intellectual level created more transformative learning experiences.

More structured schedules created a larger division between facilitators and participants.

2017 and beyond

- Eroles Community consultation for theme for 2017 residency
 - Securing funding for residency 2017
 - Securing funding for setting up of new website, also hosting community platform
 - Regeneration project Granada: we are in the research phase of a project consisting in regenerating an abandoned village together with and for refugees.
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EROLES PROJECT

Vision

Eroles Project's vision is to catalyse and support personal and political change towards a sustainable and equitable world, through building community.

Mission

Our mission is to grow a resilient network of change-makers who bring radical systemic change to environmental, social and humanitarian work. Annual summer residencies at La Casita de Colores in Northern Spain provide transformative learning experiences tailored to a specific challenge we face in the world today, with the aim of catalysing action based projects. Through our online network platform we keep people connected, where they are able to share ideas, projects and support.

Values

Complexity
Head-Heart-Hands
Collaboration
Creativity
Interdisciplinarity
Diversity
Sustainability
Community
Leadership

Background

Inspired by having lived and studied together at [Schumacher College](#), a transformative education centre in the UK focusing on holistic science, new economics and community, the Eroles Project was designed to take these learnings into activism. Being given the opportunity to use a house in a mountain village in Spain - Eroles, the first residency took its theme as "Climate Justice", amidst the upcoming UN Climate Change Conference (COP21). Inspired by the project success in 2015, the project launched the second residency - "Borders", responding to the popular concern of the

humanitarian refugee crisis. Bringing again the defining Eroles Project approach of experimentation, collaboration and experiential learning, three programmes ran during the summer of 2016.

What we do

Residencies

Each summer, the Eroles Project core team co-ordinate and facilitate residencies with a collectively chosen theme. The theme, whilst different each year, consistently relates to a topic of concern in the fields of environmental, social and political change. Each theme is approached from the model of complexity; no issue of environmental, social or political basis seen in isolation. The residencies are aimed to provide participatory learning experiences, where the content of the residencies and the process of community building are equally important.

The [Climate Justice residency](#) in 2015 brought together 45 participants over nine weeks, exploring and planning creative actions in relation to the UN Climate Change Conversations in December 2015. Please find the full 2015 residency report [here](#).

This year's residency 'Borders', had a particular focus on personal, geographical and political borders. Our programmes were titled:

- 1) Radically thinking as a species
- 2) Creating Resilience
- 3) A camp as if people matter

Projects

One aim of the residencies is to catalyse action; initiating concrete projects that take place after the summer.

- The Climate Justice residency resulted in [workshops, events and creative actions](#) run in Paris in parallel to the UN climate negotiations. These activities ranged from organising activist & artist gatherings, to running immersive theatre performances and workshops on reimagining activism. Eroles Project collaborators were instrumental to the creation and running of a temporary community [L'Annexe](#) which became a vibrant, creative home to over a hundred people from all corners of the world, during their weeks at COP21.

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- During the summer 2015, Eroles Project set up and ran the creative action area at Frackampada, an anti-fracking camp in the Basque country, sharing creative tools for increased impact.
 - The 2016 Borders residency resulted in the creation of a collective of individuals with a desire to take action together. This 'collective' is currently in the midst of setting up a platform for sharing academic work on the idea of a world without national borders. It is also in the very early stages of a project concerning the regeneration of an abandoned village together with, and for, refugees. There is more information about this in the section [2017 and beyond](#) of this report.

Workshops

Acknowledging the limited potential outreach of running residencies during the summer months in Northern Spain, Eroles members organise and facilitate non-residential workshops outside of these times.

For example, during the Newbridge Project's [Hidden Civil War festival](#) October 2016, Eroles ran 5 days of free workshops including systems thinking, creative tools for social change, group dynamics and theatre of the oppressed.

Networking

In response to the feedback from participants, Eroles project is currently in the process of setting up an online networking platform for people associated with Eroles (past residency/ workshop/project participants, partners and funders) to be able to connect, share ideas and experiences, create events and support each other.

Eroles gatherings are also organised when several members live in the same city, for example the UK gathering which took place in London in October 2016.

Our organisation

After the first year of developing Eroles Project, a core team took on the administration, fundraising and day-to-day tasks of the organisation, supported by the wider community of participants and sponsors, and the advisory board.

Core team:

Mona Rathsmann (Sweden/France)
Maria Llanos del Corral (Spain)
Ruth Cross (Spain/UK)
Dr Alexandra Lagaisse (UK/France)

Partnering organisations:

[Reboot the Roots](#)

[Ecodharma](#)

Advisory board:

Dr Patricia Shaw

Visiting professor at the Business School of the University of Hertfordshire, and fellow at Schumacher College within the field of organisational leadership, learning and change based on Complexity Sciences.

Eve Mitleton-Kelly

Founder & Director, Complexity Research Group, London School of Economics & Political Science, London, UK; Senior Fellow in LSE IDEAS, Centre for the study of International Affairs, Diplomacy & Strategy.

Jill Mackechnie

Humanitarian worker, linguist, editor and facilitator at UNHCR, from where she has recently retired. Now works as a facilitator on models of leadership and community organizing.

Augusto Shantena.

Theoretical physicist, farmer and translator. Scientific advisor for the Eranos Foundation. Associate director of the Pari Center for New Learning.

BORDERS RESIDENCY 2016

Research and communication

The research process for shaping the Borders residency consisted of the following activities:

- 1) Contacting organizations and individuals across Europe working on migration and refugee issues in order to include and cover a wide range of experience and perspectives within the residency themes and approaches.

Some of the people / organisations we connected with:

- Counterpoint Arts (UK) - art by refugees in the UK
 - Refugee Week (world wide) - to celebrate the lives of refugees
 - Heaven Crawley (UK) - Researcher, Senior Lecturer, founder of MEDMIG, advisor to Parliament on refugee situation
 - Bienvenidos Refugiados (Spain) - grassroots help for refugees
 - Alison Wynn (USA/ France) - researcher into mass media's influence on legislation around migration
 - Útilapu Hálózat - The Hungarian branch of Service Civil International
 - Plataforma beyond borders- Arts and refugees network.
 - RefuGEN - Global Ecovillage Network group to support refugees.
 - Esteban Velazquez (Spain) - Jesuit activist working in the spanish/moroccan border and founder of "Cambio personal Justicia Global".
 - Singa (France) - Organization that creates spaces for meeting, exchanging and collaborating between refugees and their host society.
- 2) Field trips and personal experience. The core team members volunteered in "the Jungle" in Calais, and have previous experience in humanitarian and development work, and in providing psychological support for refugees in the UK who are in the asylum seeking process.
 - 3) Analysis and study of documentation regarding the topic; reports, articles, alternative media, conferences and talks.
 - 4) Participant interviews: In January 2016 the core team gathered information from 11 interviews with participants who had taken part in the 2015 residency. The conversations served firstly as a post 2015 residency & COP21 reflection and evaluation, and secondly to ask a series of questions about their vision for the future of Eroles Project, and what social, environmental, and political focus did they feel was 'needed' in 2016.
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Communications:

Our communications strategy has consisted of:

1. Spreading the word of the residency when making connections with other organisations as mentioned above.

2. Our main online communication channels are our website and social media platforms on Facebook and Twitter. We have had a clear strategy of publishing blogs regularly on the website, which are then shared through Facebook and Twitter. On our social media platforms we actively seek to increase our amount of followers by “liking” like-minded and relevant organisations and individuals, and publishing or linking to relevant content. Throughout the summer we have also been creating more visual content, mainly videos, to communicate the ideas behind the residencies. According to the statistics this has proved to be our most engaging content and we have tripled our outreach on Facebook, from 1000 to over 3000 people reached.

Application process

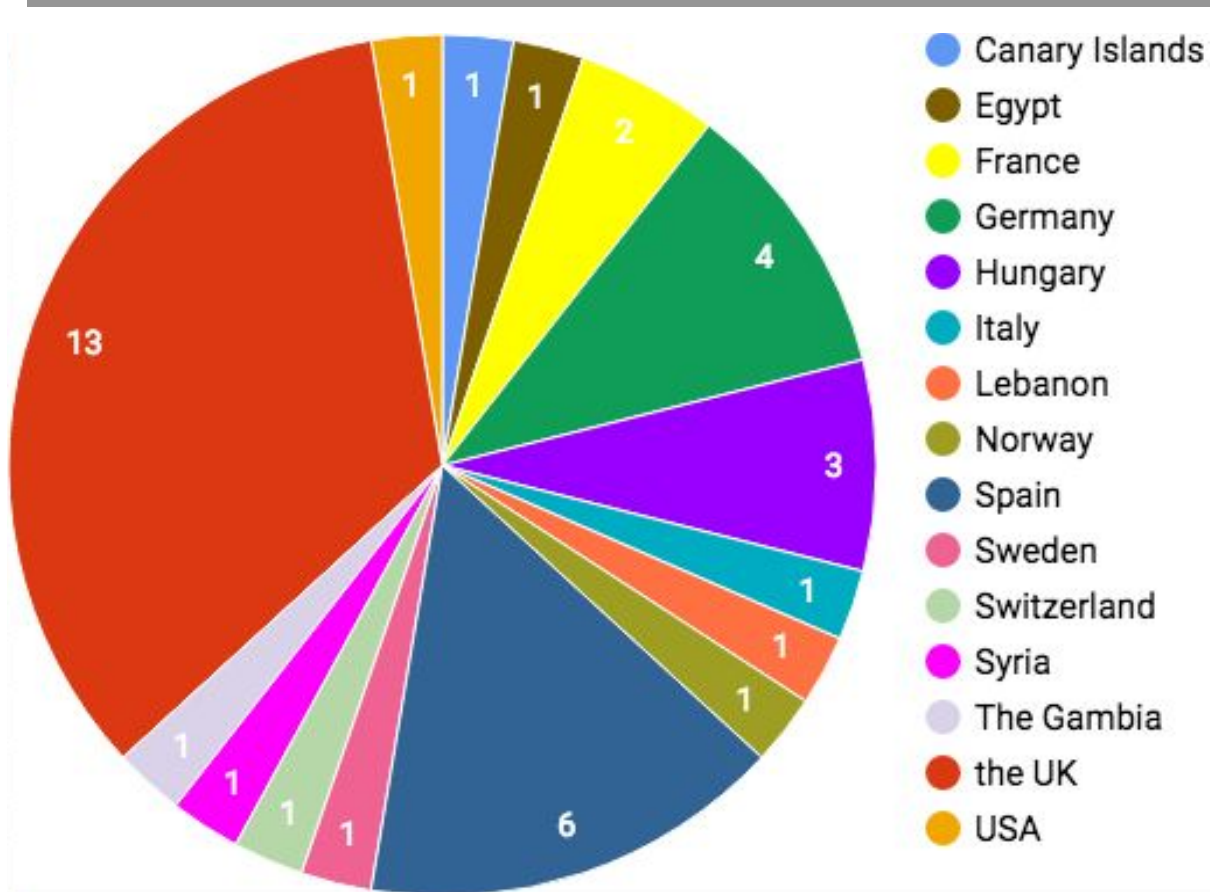
Potential participants were asked to fill out an application [form](#). We communicated with participants shortly after they applied to allow enough time to prepare for the residency. Individual skype calls were held with each participant, and we also organised group calls so the participants could start to get to know each other and talk about expectations before arriving.

We found that the efforts this year - being more active online and reaching out to other organisations across Europe already in the research phase - resulted in having a much wider range of nationalities, professional backgrounds and ages at this year's residencies compared to 2015. Post-residency evaluations showed that the participants found out about the residency mainly through Eroles Project social media channels, [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).





Number of participants and country of origin

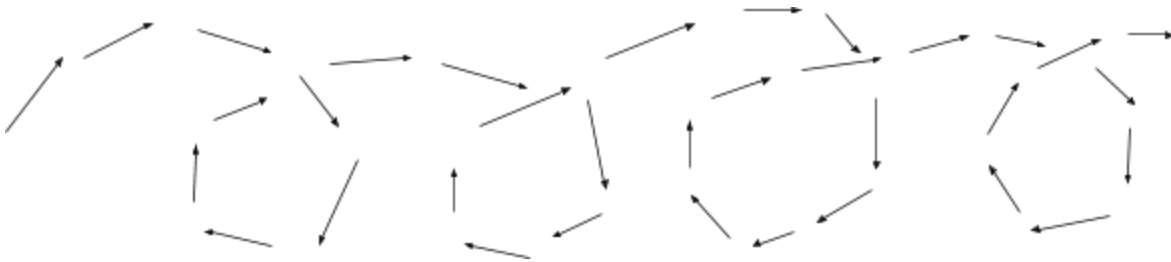


There were between 10 and 16 people per residency (including facilitators)
In total we had 39 participants and facilitators from 15 countries over 7 weeks.

Structure of the residency

Understanding the ways in which communities learn most efficiently is a key goal of Eroles Project. Hence, each year we structure the residencies in a slightly different way, to experiment and explore the impact of structure on group relationships, on tasks executed and on processes undergone to perform the tasks.

In the first residency in 2015, we had a very open collaborative and participatory format, whereby what we were doing together and how we were doing it was decided by everyone, facilitators and participants. There was a constant in- and out- flow of participants, loosely defined themes shaping each week, but a clear end vision of creating something in Paris during COP21. The benefits of this were that we could practice a political organising structure where there were no elected leaders, but a community who collectively made sense of their environment and each other, learning how to make decisions, by following what was emerging between them. In the 2015 report, you can find some of the learnings, benefits and challenges of this model.

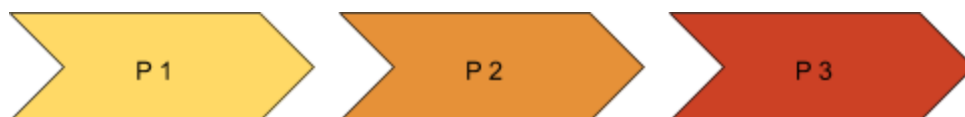


continuous flow of themes, participants and structure

During 2016 we wanted to be more task-focussed and have a tighter structure due to:

- Some of the challenges and learnings we faced in 2015 and the enquiries that it instigated, such as: *What type of leadership is needed within collaborative context? What is the most constructive environment we could provide for a rich inner process?*
- Last year the project to come out of the residency was much more restricted in terms of place and time (Paris, COP21); a more open, creative, experiential process suited this frame and envisioning of the project. This year we had a frameless project in many aspects, with no specific predefined time or place or focus. We wanted to explore whether a more bounded and structure residency could counterbalance this.
- The reflections and ideas of 2015 participants influenced our decision to use more structure. (More about this can be found [here](#))

We, therefore, experimented by having three contained programmes, each with more defined theme, approach and pre-determined structure. This presented both benefits and challenges for the programme, we extend these further [here](#).



contained independent programmes that fed the accumulative learning

Key ingredients to all three programmes

These were components that were reoccurring in all three programmes, that upon daily evaluation conducted amongst the core team, were understood as either important for community & relationship building, or effective in terms of a workshop methodology. Put together, these components contributed to a holistic approach to learning, inviting transformation on several levels; personal, organizational and social.

Building community:

Creating the container - safe spaces

Sharing our personal intention.

Moving beyond our comfort zone, into our learning zone, (while understanding & respecting our panic zone)

Reconnecting with land.

Collective decision making about what needs to be done, how and by who and then doing it in a caring way.

Improvisation, games & creative group activities:

Creative thinking and arts for social change

Games such as Yes and/Yes but....

Performance making & Theatre of the Oppressed

Story telling

Social presencing theatre

Inner work:

Reconnecting with our values and purpose.

Ecosophy - "why are you here?"

Meditation & movement practice

Journalling

Complexity theory in practice:

The Iceberg model of systems thinking applied to understanding systemic correlations within migration and development.

The quadrant: personal belief / collective beliefs / personal behavior / societal behaviour.

(Used to explore the interrelation of the four quadrants and the positive and negative feedback loops between them)

Complex Living Systems Theory applied to ways of organising

Timing	Activity	Rota (Sign up)
7.30	Water veg garden Stretching / yoga (both optional)	One person to water garden
8.00 - 8.30	Meditation (silence)	Bell ringer for beginning and end of meditation
8.30 - 9.00	Breakfast	One person to make breakfast and clear up
9.00 - 9.40	Morning check-in & Practicalities	Facilitated by Eroles team
9.40 - 10.15	Work group - cleaning, gardening, maintenance	EVERYONE
10.30 - 13.30	SESSION ONE	Facilitated by Eroles Team
13.30 - 14.30	Lunch prep	3 people
14.30 - 16.00	Lunch & siesta	Two people to clear up lunch
16.00 - 19.00	SESSION TWO	Facilitated by participant(s)
19.00 - 20.00	Free hour for walks, reflection, writing, conversations	3 people to make dinner
20.00 - 21.00	Dinner	Two people to clear up dinner
21.15 - 22.30	Evening Session / film or resting time	

Example of the daily schedule



Radically Thinking as a Species

The Radically Thinking as a Species programme was an invitation to think widely and look systemically at the symptoms, structures and mental models that sustain our beliefs about this crisis. We looked into where fear of the unknown, focus on difference, and a culture of separation come from. We looked into our own hidden beliefs, using personal experience to begin to understand how the construction of societal beliefs, in relation to systemic structures (media, policies, political systems...). This honest enquiry lead to examining how we deal with power and privilege, exploring the roots of inequality (access to decision making and power), conflict in the Middle East both in relation to colonialism and today's (post) colonialists expressions such as The International Development, World Bank, IMF, WTO etc.

Towards the end of the residency we went returned to looking at how this affects a culture of separation and difference in our own communities, and we finished by exploring different ways to create alternative narratives through project development.

Five activities that happened:

1. We shared personal experiences of being 'othered' to create compassion and understand non-separation. We revealed our hidden beliefs using Ken Wilber's quadrant to understand

how our beliefs interact with the societal beliefs and structures, and how we define our actions.

2. We used performance to explore how physical, personal or political boundaries have played out in our lives and reflected on these at a systemic level.
3. We did the 'Hero's Journey': A day and night on the mountain alone, and then retold our stories in an active listening circle the next morning.
4. We learnt about the history of the Middle East and discussed the complexity of politics, control, power and misinformation.
5. We explored and critiqued language and techniques used to integrate one culture into another. We practiced various project design tools to strengthen 'co-creative and participative led' projects that look into the emergence of a new culture.

Radically thinking as a Species [blogs](#) for further information and learnings.

[Andrew's blog](#)



Creating resilience

The first week of the programme was dedicated to understanding our patterns of burnout, to understand the internal and external factors that influence our capacity to be resilient and we worked on observing, accepting, letting go our limiting beliefs, calling the new inner skills that can help prevent burnout and create resilience. We explored various methodologies such as: contemplative methodologies, meditation, embodied practices, social presencing theatre, ecosophy and participatory conversation methods. These methodologies served us both to enquire about our own personal resilience, and to use when working with others who need support with their well-being.

In the second week of this programme we invited guest facilitators George Wielgus, Lex Titterington and Miranda Shaw through [Reboot the Roots](#). Their focus was to actively cultivate well-being drawing on a wealth of experience from cultural emergence leadership training and Joanna Macy's The Work that Reconnects. They also used clowning and Theatre of the Oppressed as tools to explore ways to transform oppressive situations. They interwove spiritual and creative sessions through mask work and emotional resilience practices.

[Blog links](#)

[Link to interview with Guest Facilitators on their experience at Eroles](#)

[Link to Reboot the Roots Report](#) (also in Appendix)

Five activities that happened:

1. We looked into our limiting patterns of behaviour, through an embodied work on duality and using the Stuck from Social Presencing Theater (Theory U) to move through them towards enabling patterns.
 2. Sitting spot: we had a contemplative practice every morning at sunrise.
 3. We created a space called 'Design by nature' where participants were invited to think innovatively about the space and tasks and take inspiration from nature for its optimum functioning and design. We intended to encourage people to think proactively about their impact on the site and upon each other, and extended to patterns such as self-care, creativity and rest.
 4. We used Theatre of the Oppressed techniques of Image Theatre and Rainbow of Desire to help us explore experientially the syndrome of burnout and the broader theme of oppression.
 5. We looked into concepts and feelings often associated with our experience as activists; trust, lost, anger, frustration, emergency. We used mask work to invite participants to explore these emotions from an embodied and non-personal experience, allowing a different and empathic way of expressing ourselves by being someone other than ourselves.
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A camp as if people matter

For the final programme, the participants stayed for the whole duration of three weeks so as to ensure some group continuity, as the programme was dedicated to creating a collective that would create a project together at a later stage. The programme description on the website was framed around working in a refugee camp, but as the participants came together in September, it became clear that with the different skills and interests present in the group, it was worth expanding the possibility of the project taking place elsewhere.

The three weeks were spent exploring migrant routes, actors along them and what they do, how NGOs work and the trouble with “aid & development” in this crisis. In parallel to this we were also working on group dynamics, idea generation and inner resourcing. Each week had a different guest with specific experience that felt relevant to the subject at hand; Jill Macknethnie from UNHCR, Julie Decarreux who works inner resourcing and sustaining well-being, Alfonso Flaqueras from refuGEN and Estéban Velasquez, a jesuit activist who has spent many years working with refugees in El Salvador, Honduras and Morocco.

[Jill's blog](#)





Key Learnings

There are many learnings that have emerged from this year's residency, here we give an overview of our key learnings from the core team.

During the residency we witnessed how relational patterns, such as division, alienation, isolation and "othering", occur in all groups and that without conscious awareness this can have a negative impact on members of the group. Using the ways it happened in our group, we learnt how to respond, and how to take this key learning into our work with others.

For the residency we actively sought a diverse group of participants and collaborators and we succeeded in gathering a group of people of different ages, backgrounds, country of origin, experiences and many other areas of diversity. This group had the benefit of enabling us to know ourselves better; coming to know our unconscious habits and assumptions reflected in the contrast and differences of others. This also had the effect of intensifying potential "othering". We found, for example, a pattern emerging of those whose first language was English dominating the conversations and influencing the sub-grouping amongst collaborators. It was a learning that we reflected upon and raised as something to be aware of for a group of people wanting to make positive change at a systemic level.

Feedback from participants showed that embodied learning offers a profound opportunity for lasting impact. A learning for the core team was that engaging activities, other than simply talking "about" the crisis and using solely our intellect to know and understand, enabled a deeper and more transformative experience for the participants.

Using the lens of complexity science, we were more able to see and make sense of the complex interrelating connections that political, financial, trade, media, aid & NGO systems are playing on the situation. Sharing our diverse knowledge and experience in this way sometimes gave new (and often more truthful) perspectives on 'Borders' which enabled discussions about our collective 'response - ability'. We followed the ripple effect of certain 'refugee / immigration factors'. For example, we spoke about the increase in subtle derogatory terms in mainstream European media shaping the narrowing narrative of public opinion (particularly noticeable during Brexit); we looked at the political racism displayed in the imbalance of government responses and lack of collaboration, which is systemically exemplified in the 'Dublin Accord' benefiting Northern EU countries more than Southern EU countries; and the statistics that show since NGO's have increased 'rescue at sea' missions, smugglers have been sending more people per boat, with increasing risk and therefore earning more money. These examples show the dangers when we act without being open to 'fully

seeing' the repercussions of our actions, which became a key learning while shaping our future work in this context.

One last learning related directly to the topic of Borders. As the residency progressed it became clear that learning in a community, on such an issue, strengthens our ability to comprehend some, but obviously far from all of the difficulties that can be experienced by refugees/migrants when arriving into a new country(ies). In a safe container participants experienced the emotional and psychological pressure of stepping out of their comfort zone; arriving into an unknown group, navigating new norms, getting used to a new place and a new cultural context, and for many speaking in a second language. The term and concept integration was dismissed for the more generative practice of participation. We would like to do more learning around “co-creation of culture” as a concept rather than “integration”.

-Eroles as a concept and evolving project

We made a number of changes to this year's residency as compared to before, including having a more structured theme and topic for each week, more defined facilitated sessions and a clearer difference in the role between core team members and participants. There was still an emphasis on collaboration, co-creation and contribution, but within a more pre-defined structure. This changed the dynamic of the process in many ways. Decisions could be made faster, as they were made by a smaller group of people. The more defined structure of sessions meant that there was more time to go deeper into topics. There were differentiated times for facilitators to meet and plan sessions, which created a larger division between facilitators and participants compared to last year. There was less variety of activities compared to last year's more open structure. We will continue to evolve and respond to the changing needs of participants and core team in our process and structure of the residencies, and continue to note our reflections on the impact of these changes on our learning community.

We had the opportunity to run a series of free, non-residential workshops in Newcastle following this year's residency. One reflection that this enabled, was to notice a financial and time commitment to learn and engage, affects the participants willingness and active participation in the workshops. Also the rural and residential context of Eroles allows the learnings to go deeper than in a more urban, non-residential environment, where there are more distractions, more fluidity in regards to attendance and less efforts have had to be made to physically get there. Hence, we have learnt to value our context and to adjust our expectations and workshop styles accordingly.

A last reflection, is from noticing how willing and engaged people are in wanting to make a positive difference in the world. It seems many, many people feel the will to make change and are seeking a community and context in which to learn more about how to take up their part. Community has a huge impact on the empowerment and ability of people to take their motivation and ideas into active change.

Key Learnings and descriptions of what happened from the participants' post-residency evaluation sheets

"I've learnt how to live in community and what it represents, re-learn how to look into myself again, and to reactivate my activism"

"Be the change you want to see in the world, exploring our own borders, understanding the political borders, sharing our skills in knowing and processing through artistic practice"

"Eroles cultivated deep peer-to-peer learning from the liminal space with the aim to foster micro and macro communality, collaboration and change".

"Learning tools for an anti-oppressive society through living in community... A platform an oasis in which to safely share our knowledge, concerns, dreams...feeling more centred in myself than I have in a while"

"Exploring the inner and outer obstacles for a just and beautiful society"

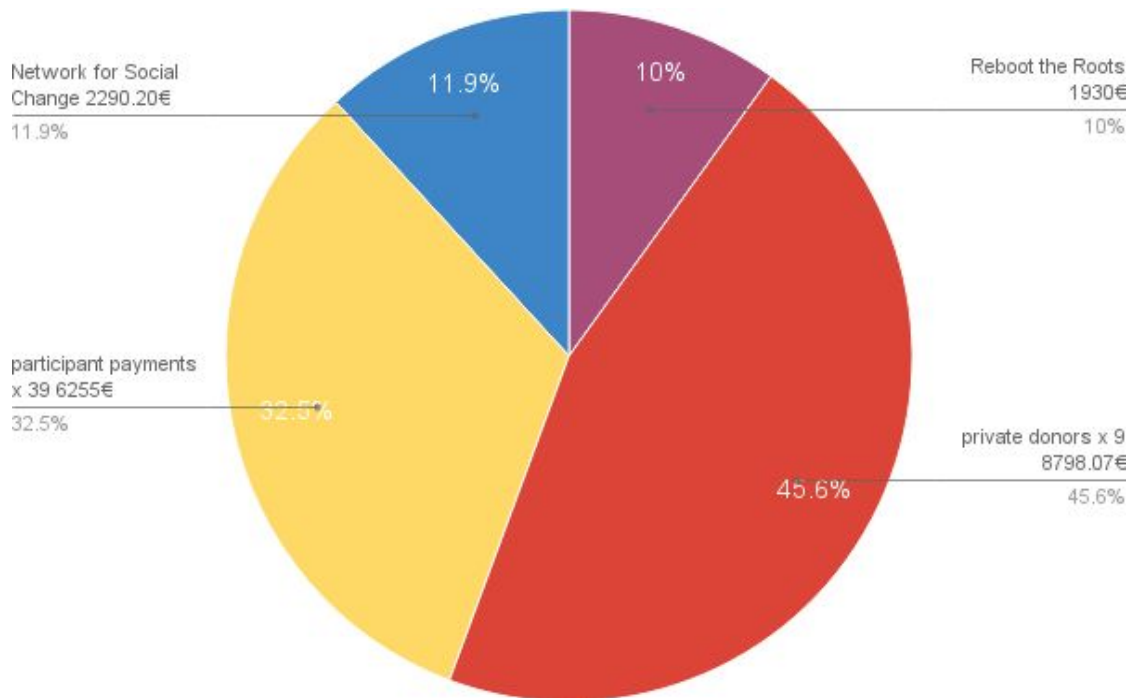
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Financial information

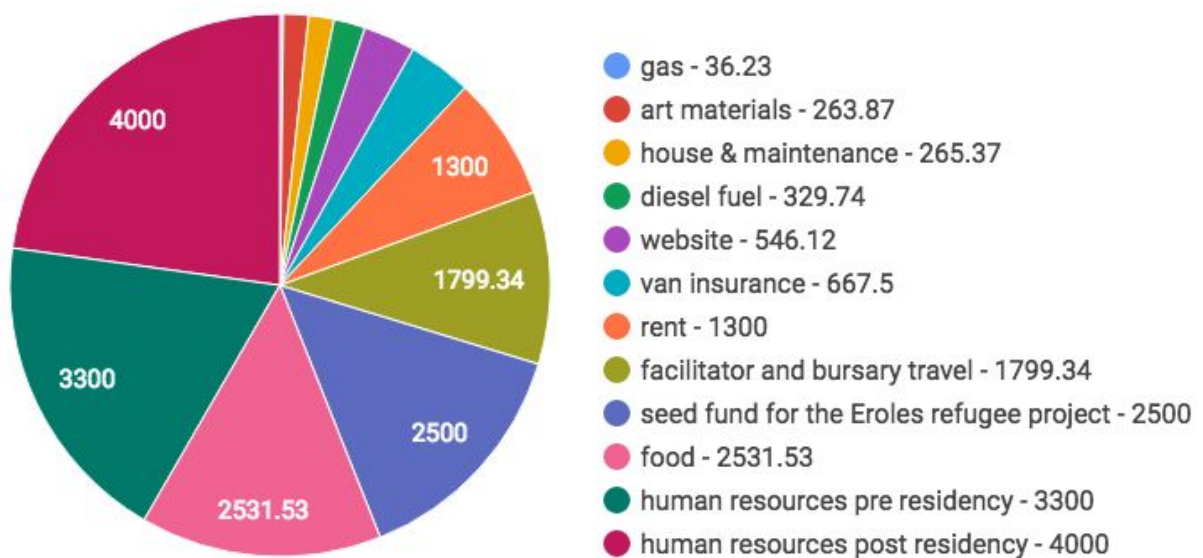
Sources of funding in euros (€)

2016 Total incoming: 19,273.27€

2016 Total outgoing: 17,539.70€



Expenditures in euros (€)



Bursaries

Out of the total of 30 participants, eight received full bursaries for a total of €2700, and 11 received partial bursaries for a total of €2775.

Name	Country	Programme	Weeks	Contribution €	Bursary €
Ainoa	Spain	A camp as if ppl	3	400.00	200.00
Antje	Germany	A camp as if ppl	3	400.00	200.00
Gilbert	The Gambia	A camp as if ppl	3	0.00	450.00
Jenny	UK	A camp as if ppl	3	600.00	0.00
Mara	Germany	A camp as if ppl	3	300.00	300.00
Sara	Egypt	A camp as if ppl	3	400.00	200.00
Thomas	Belgium	A camp as if ppl	2	400.00	0.00
Jelka	Germany	A camp as if ppl	3	350.00	300.00
Safi	Syria	A camp as if ppl	3	0.00	850.00
Habiba	Lebanon	A camp as if ppl	3	150.00	450.00
Jill	UK/Switzerland	A camp as if ppl	1	0.00	200.00
Alfonso	Spain	A camp as if ppl	1	70.00	130.00
Julie	France/UK	A camp as if ppl	1	0.00	200.00
Joanna	UK	creating resilienc	1	250.00	0.00
Marta	Spain/Philippines	creating resilienc	2	200.00	200.00
Marton	Hungary	creating resilienc	1	0.00	200.00
Andras	Hungary	creating resilienc	2	400.00	0.00
Juli	Hungary	creating resilienc	1	70.00	130.00
Rocio	Spain	creating resilienc	2	200.00	200.00
Adam	UK	Radically thinking	1	300.00	0.00
Andrew	UK	Radically thinking	2	400.00	0.00
Julie	UK	Radically thinking	1	250.00	0.00
Tommaso	Italy	Radically thinking	2	0.00	200.00
Alethea	UK	Radically thinking	1	200.00	0.00
Diana	Germany	Radically thinking	1	200.00	0.00
Ingrid	Norway/Sweden	Radically thinking	1	230.00	0.00
Emma	France	Radically thinking	2	300.00	400.00
Ellie	UK	Radically thinking	2	0.00	400.00
Jessie	UK	Radically thinking	1	135	65
Esteban	Gran Canaria/Ho	A camp as if ppl	1	0.00	200.00
Total				6,205.00	5,475.00
Percentage of total income from participants				53%	47%

Full bursaries	8	€2,700
Partial bursaries	11	€2,775

2017 and beyond

Regeneration Project Granada

ReGeneration is a project that re-generates people, land and culture for a sustainable future. We want to become a living example of alternative ways of dealing with climate change, migration, diversity and alternative economics.

The collective and an increasing number of partners are looking into designing, building and living in a pioneering eco village(s) that after a time becomes self sustaining. Our vision is to see a multicultural sustainable community designed by the people themselves (migrants, refugees, locals...). Which in the medium to long term will also work in conjunction with NGO's to act as a regenerative space for forced migrants and refugees who will live and participate in the project for shorter periods of time.

Eroles Project Residency 2017

An Eroles community consultation is being set up to collaboratively decide which theme for the 2017 residency seems to be the most alive and relevant.

On-line network

Funding for the set-up of the online network platform as well as a thorough upgrade of the website is currently being explored, with the aim of launching these simultaneously in March 2017.

Contact information

info@eroleproject.org

regeneration.granada@gmail.com

Facebook www.facebook.com/eroleproject

Twitter www.twitter.com/eroleproject

Website www.eroleproject.org

APPENDICES

Reflections and ideas from participants of the 2015 residency

“Being responsive to this time of uncertainty: I think developing and practicing the tools of creating resilient communities is very important - to be loving of each other beyond difference... What can we do to respond to statistics like 220,000 refugees in the UK by 2020”

Lindsay, January 2015

“We need more globally networked, sustainable, local initiatives, to counterbalance the destructive capitalist governments, who want to put more laws on our freedom of movement, speech, actions.”

Minou, January 2015

At the intersection of all of the root causes that we looked at in 2015 was **community**, how we treat ourselves, how we treat each other (those we consider similar and those we consider different), and how we treat the land that sustains all life.

“...social justice movements, humanitarian activism, everyone working on food, farm, housing, environmentalism... it all intersects. It comes together in the middle with community. Building communities stronger and working on anti-oppression are keys to succeeding. Decolonising ourselves is really hard work.”

Miranda, January 2015

Background Information

In this epigraph we briefly mention some of the points that justify our proposal for this year where we took into account our scope of influence and comparative advantages and look into some of systemic causes of the crisis.

1) Increasing numbers of force migrants and refugees.

The number of displaced people “hits records high”¹ with 65,3 million people that have abandoned their homes, due to conflict, war, climate change, lack of livelihood possibilities

The number of displaced people and the foreseeable increase in the future is demanding consistent and hard agency work on the asylum processes and to revert the actual tendency towards human rights and broadening them to include economic and climate change migrants as subject for asylum seeking.

2) Increasing xenophobic narratives across Europe. Political response is “[insufficient, xenophobic and irrational](#)” and is influencing how [refugees and migrants are treated](#). The xenophobic politics and media messages that consciously or unconsciously are using fear of economic depression, unemployment and terrorism are creating a hostile environment for migrants and refugees. Moreover this is having repercussions in other countries such as US, Kenya, and others that are reforming their political agendas towards refugees too.

3) Increasing danger and insecurity on the routes:

This situation is deepening the [trauma](#) that [refugees](#) are suffering and is causing [burnout](#) for a high number of overworked people.

4) Big Aid organizations arrive late and focus mainly on basic needs.

Meaning no other needs are met; the need to deal with injustice and violence, need for culture, community, self-realization, learning and knowledge, enlightenment and self sovereignty.

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Brightly Coloured Sea Monsters - a participant reflection

A letter to myself

Andrew Wilson, 2016

The Eroles Project

Dear Andrew,

You arrived to Eroles full of burden, with compassion and concern but a smile vacant from your eyes. From your arrival your self-imposed task was to ingest and unfold, but the gift has been *the unfold*.

Words are an unfortunate and incompetent tool to transcend the experiences of the last twelve days; nevertheless they come with their value. Like a net designed to catch fish these words might catch the big and boldly coloured but others, the smaller, the not yet fully formed, will and must wriggle through the holes of the net thus remaining anonymous. The temptation would be to catch these small wrigglers by limiting the size of the holes, thus defying the possibility for escape which in turn, would deny the small wrigglers the opportunity to fully form.

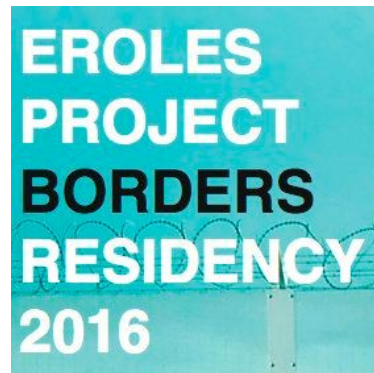
Perhaps in many respects what Eroles has offered, through shared meals, shared labour, improvised theatre, convivial conversation, meditation and self-inflicted isolation (among much else) is the opportunity to catch the many small wrigglers of yesteryear, now fully formed into brightly coloured sea monsters in their own right. Experiences buried or neatly packaged away in difficult to reach storage containers.

Through relentless questions of '*how do you feel*' and '*so what*' coupled with the generous opportunity to listen and be listened to you have rekindled a connection between your empathy and concern with your actual lived experience. You have relived experiences of rage, of aggression, of ridicule, of helplessness, of vulnerability, of violence, of sincerity, of trust (or the lack of) and you have explored your active participation as victim, perpetrator and passive bystander.

This reconnection, of the buried experiences of yesteryear, your brightly coloured sea monsters, with the feeling and action of today, this has been the gift. This has been *the unfold*.

Regards,

Andrew



Reboot The Roots & The Eroles Project

Eroles, Catalunya, 5th-21st August 2016

Creating Resilience Report

Report From George Wielgus

Arrival Presentation

The day the new facilitators arrived – Lex, Miranda and myself – at Eroles we were greeted by a slightly tense atmosphere as the participants had encountered some organisational problems after being tasked to present to us a review, evaluation or response to the first week. A disagreement had broken out between two of the participants, and one of them subsequently left the workspace. Maria and Ruth were asked to intervene and facilitate the disagreement.

The next day, the group presented a discussion to us around what had happened, the four of them sitting on the floor in a half circle opposite us and sharing their experiences. The disagreement seemed to have emerged over the conceptualisation of the theme of 'resilience', and on later analysis, I drew the following conclusions:

- 1) That despite the significant amount of movement and bodywork in the previous week, the group appeared to favour conceptually and verbally working through the process.
- 2) That significant learning had occurred for the participants in terms of their behavioural patterns when encountering conflict, especially around the notion of withdrawing from conflict when it occurs.
- 3) That the facilitation team modelled resilience and drew a satisfying conclusion from the team whereby they understood that process was as, if not more, significant than completion of an arbitrary task.

The group maintained cohesion despite encountering difficulties and the atmosphere was one of gentle reconciliation.

Designing the week

Our team – myself, Miranda and Lex – decided early on that it was important to model resilience and avoid burn-out. Typically in facilitating courses it is assumed that the work would be tiring and end with feeling energetically depleted rather than nourished, and we stated from the outset our objective was to finish the week feeling recharged and invigorated. From the beginning, we decided it was fundamental to model our aspirations as a team, and we started this from our very method of planning. Instead of relying on a cerebral, mental process, we used chance and association to make our ideals cogent, using group dynamics cards and the permaculture principles to design the week. We selected a series of cards from both, and used them to shape the theme and content of each day, aligning them along a linear board. We also selected a series of models to try and avoid linear thought, using circles, spirals and the 8-points of the compass to arrange our process. These images recurred throughout the week, and were transformative in our facilitation style.

A key moment in our planning was the transformation of the rather dry sounding 'work period' into a 'design by nature' opportunity, where participants were invited to think innovatively about the space and take inspiration from nature for its optimum functioning and design. This was intended to raise an awareness not only of the necessary tasks required (cleaning, cooking, maintaining the garden etc) but also to integrate permaculture principles of zero waste and edge effect into the activities taking place. 'Design by nature' was a term intended to encourage people to think proactively about their impact on the site and upon each other, and extended to patterns such as self-care, creativity and rest.

The following is a brief outline of the content and some personal reflections of the week.

Monday – Modelling & Yes And ...

To welcome people into the space, we made them wait outside, and one by one lead them in and offered them a space to lie down on the floor, close their eyes and relax. Once everyone was lying down, Lex guided them through a gentle relaxation exercise, again the idea being to create a healing, nurturing space, where stress was minimised and the concept of 'burnout' hopefully inverted. It was also part of honouring the space and making it sacred – a space of growth, learning and nourishment. This is connected to one of the cards we pulled randomly to frame our week – 'Aesthetics of Space'.

The first day we used to examine the creation of a group culture. Each participant designed a 'petal', containing their hopes, aspirations, needs and what they could bring to the group. These petals were then arranged into a circle around a central point, creating a flower. Personally, I was initially uninspired by the concept, but when I began to create my petal, I had an extraordinary experience where by practising 'no mind' I allowed key concepts and colours of my identity and abstract expressions to coalesce into a piece of art I was very proud of. The process seemed similar for many other participants, each finding personal and creative ways to express themselves, which when combined into a single construct (the flower) made a vivid image of our creatively coming together to create something bigger than ourselves. It was the first of several instances where the flow from individual to collective was done in a manner that was non-cerebral yet deeply powerful. It set up the week to a fantastic start.

The themes of modelling and 'yes, and', whereby every offering is accepted and added to, also created an initial culture of cooperation, not competition – another of the permaculture principles.

Tuesday – Balancing Content & Process

Due to the selection of the above theme, we decided Tuesday was an excellent day for some 'meat' – namely, the Theatre of the Oppressed techniques of Image Theatre and Rainbow of Desire. For myself, TotO is an excellent model of balanced content and process

– the process of TotO itself draws the content from the participants, instantly personalising it as well as allowing it become social and therefore universally understood.

Drawing on the inspiration of the first day's learning, we had also decided that nonverbal communication was to be key to our process. Persons working in multilingual environments such as refugee camps have to learn to grade their language and find universal modes of communication. This in mind, I ran the first session silently – as a clown.

Lex opened with some grounding and gentle movement again, and one by one I approached people with a red nose and big baggy pants, pressing my finger to my lips and getting them to gather silently. Without speaking, I then guided them through a series of movement exercises from image theatre, intended to demechanize their bodies and get them to communicate silently yet intimately – mirroring, puppet movement, Bolivian mimosas. After an hour, I was soaked with sweat, and dismissed the group for ten minutes.

When they returned, I began talking again, but endeavoured to minimise my speech. As a group, we selected a theme to discuss as a group, and despite my assumptions that it would be connected with refugees or displacement, the group selected 'burnout'.

As individuals, the group then created images with their own bodies of 'burnout', twisting themselves into shapes that for them personally connected with this concept. Each time we selected a concept like burnout we made sure to translate it into Spanish, Hungarian and British Sign Language, to highlight the difference between a word and the concept it refers to. This was a process repeated throughout the week with concepts.

The participants then added a sound and movement to their image.

The individuals then created two more images, each with sound and movement: one of 'the absolute opposite of burnout' – whatever they personally thought that was – and one of a transition moment between the two images.

The final process was to make a 'machine' as a group. Each person entered into the 'machine' and began to repeat their burnout each over and over. At a signal from myself, they moved into the transition image. At a third, they transitioned into their 'opposite' image.

Participants reported a powerful connection to the sequence, done entirely nonverbally and through movement, but for them embodying a healing process whereby they could circumvent a mental and verbal conception of 'burnout' or 'healing' and experience some kind of change physically and emotionally. Many were very glad the process was not done in reverse, and saw great value in the transition moment as well.

We broke for lunch and 'design by nature', and that evening returned to look at Rainbow of Desire. Initially it had been my expectation that 'burnout' would be the subject for this session, so with caution I sat with the group and encouraged them to share their reflections on the morning session and how they were feeling. After 30 minutes of round-table sharing, I felt confident that we could proceed and that the group was interested to continue to use these images to explore burnout.

Through volunteering, it was decided that one person's image would be used as the start. In the interest of confidentiality, the description here will be quite broad. The volunteer repeated their movement, sound and image, and then selected members of the audience to represent images of the emotions that she felt during the process. Each image was named, and informed by the volunteer 'You are me when I feel ... Like when I ...' She created two

such images – one person seemingly chained to the wall, the other slumped over on the floor with their head almost between their legs.

At the last moment, one more participant volunteered an image that proved the most challenging – which is not uncommon in Rainbow of Desire processes, as the image comes from outside the person and is more a projection than something they are generating themselves. However, as the volunteer recognised herself in the image it was accepted.

The volunteer – let's call her Chiara – then changed each image into its ideal. They then returned to their original image, and Chiara had the opportunity to go to each image in turn and try to convince it into the ideal. The first image, of the slumped person, she rubbed the back of, and said encouraging things, and after a moment the image shifted. The second (the wall), Chiara spoke to verbally, and again convinced it to change after some discussion and dialogue.

The third image she rolled physically on to its face, and despite much contact and verbal exchange could not convince it to shift any further. Another participant took Chiara's place, and got to the point of pulling open the images eyes despite it lying there on its face complaining that it couldn't move.

In the end, Chiara returned, and I put a pillow under the third images head to support her.

The final movement was for Chiara to return to her original burnout image, but now with the encouragement and support of the other images, find her way through her transition, to her 'opposite of burnout image'. The movement was very powerful, ending with Chiara stood like an amazon queen surrounded by her supportive emotions – even the floor one rose up and joined in – ending with the line: “You are the Empress of your world.”

Some reflections on the process: Chiara was very obviously moved by the experience. The 'slumped image' reported that the line at the end, which the group had adopted, was the signal which convinced her to move. The third image reported a very powerful experience, almost suffocating on the floor, and had to take some time to reassess their own commitment to the moment.

As a facilitator, a process like this is always nerve-wracking. You are inviting people into a liminal space, where there is danger if not handled appropriately. Some may consider the failure, or difficulty, in transforming the last image as a negative, but of course, there were changes to that image, progress was made, but we cannot assume a total solution will be found within a single session of Rainbow of Desire! As ever, what is most fundamental is the dialogue, the conversation around burnout, all being had in a manner which is holistic and much more profound than verbalising our conceptual ideas on the subject. The participants and the audience had a visceral experience, stepping up to a limit and either personally or vicariously experiencing change and transformation together. In analysis, it was understood that the third image was in fact, the most powerful – representing that moment of burnout of absolute paralysis, where your own actions, or those of others, are useless, and all you perhaps can do is rest and recover until you are ready to start again.

Wednesday – Discharge

Knowing full well that the Tuesday had been an intense experience, Wednesday was given over to nurturing, healing and nourishing. The sessions featured massage, gentle movement, and a guided walk through the village to the central square to assess our personal needs, and how we felt they were being met. The focus was very much on relaxation and recovery, and later many participants would report how that felt 'held' and that the flow had softened after an intense day before.

Thursday – Power Shift

Thursday morning we were joined by Gilbert from the Gambia. We ran a session on mask movement, including a series of exercises to introduce concepts of possession, trust, and limitation. Participants practiced colombian hypnosis, and again were engaged in a grounding ritual. In the second session of the morning, Lex Titterington introduced mask work, and the participants took turns donning masks in a ritualistic setting and engaging in a 'story', 'journey' or 'experience'. Again, each time we translated the various conceptual terms into the different available languages in order to deconstruct the associations we have to them. Participants were encouraged to play music, sing, ask questions and respect the space and masks.

For my personal experience, my experience had two distinct parts. In the first, I was struck by a sense of preparation, moving through various martial arts forms in a natural and unplanned manner. My breathing became incredibly intense and focused.

In the second part, I 'saw' the audience for the first time. I felt incredibly thirsty, and 'drank' from the water in front of me. I realised then that I was covered in blood from vanquished foes, and took pains to wash the blood from my arms and face, a warrior-monk who had killed many in a trance.

Afterwards, Gilbert shared some trepidation at the experience as maskwork is very strong and ritualistic in his culture. The facilitation team explained the high degree of respect, preparation and ritual that had gone into preparing the space with smudging, meditation and cleaning. Gilbert was satisfied to continue, and later expressed a great feeling of warmth and familiarity that he could travel from his home in the Gambia to Catalunya and encounter something such as this.

In the afternoon, participants were invited to create their own masks, or more specifically, give form to an entity that the mask could inhabit.

Friday – Mapping & Measurement

The next morning, we presented our masks to the rest of the group in a similar, yet more ritualistic and formalised, setting.

My own mask was that of a dualistic trickster spirit. The night before, I had donned it under the full moon and traversed the garden to surprise our participants after dinner. In the daylight, the life of the spirit was still full of mischief. At first I crawled along the wall, as if

injured, dragging a lame leg behind me. I moved towards the shrine with a limp, pausing by it to draw strength from its powers. It restored the spirit to strength, or at least that's what it pretended, and then went to examine the audience. As it watched the audience, it lifted its first mask, to reveal another mask underneath – a black face painted with a red leer. The spirit held a finger to its lips commanding secrecy, and then departed.

In the discussions post-workshop, participants volunteered reports of powerful experiences with the mask-spirits, some so much show that they inclined not to share about it.

The afternoon was for reflection, intention, and future actions. We lay three pieces of paper around the shrine in a circle, and people moved from one to the other, recording thoughts, images and ideas on 'past' and 'future', as well as writing on a continuum of the 'present', the Monday to Friday experience of the workshops. Afterwards, each person presented how they had come to be here, what they connected with over the week, and their hopes for the future. We did it standing up, and it ended with us all skipping in a circle with each other as we moved from one section to the other in a dynamic and energising end to the week, rather than sitting on the floor presenting.

We finished, much by chance, stood in a circle holding hands around the future, sharing a final statement with our formal group.

Evaluation Review

In my opinion – the week achieved its' goals and more. We left feeling energised and activated, each of us having encountered challenges and stretch zones through the week, but all agreeing that we had felt supported and held throughout, and were indeed feeling fired up rather than burnt out. Participants and facilitators had achieved a high degree of intimacy and exchange, and the level of satisfaction and inspiration was high. People wanted more, always a good sign, and in tearful final exchanges several participants expressed strong desires to do more of this kind of work in the future. It seems that one of the greatest tools for creating resilience is each other.

One of the most striking aspects of the course for me was the way it was designed in a relaxing but highly innovative manner, combining aspects of groups dynamics, theatre of the oppressed, mask work, activism and permaculture. I look forward to developing these themes and models in the future.

Future Plans

Numerous future plans, which are to be briefly noted here:

- to rendezvous with the Eroles team in Greece to followup with the ideas creating during the following section of the course 'A Camp As If People Mattered'
 - to organise and collectively visit Gilbert's village in the Gambia to provide workshops on
-

arts and permaculture

- to organise workshops in Budapest again/
- to meet in the UK in October to discuss our progress
- to organise a 'permablast' model to be deployed at farms and permaculture sites in the UK and beyond, combining planting trees, permaculture and theatre-arts.