

## 2015 Educateurs sans Frontières Assembly – NOTES

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**Topic: Sustainability Institute – Building Positive Futures**

**Presenter: Eve Annecke**

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I would like to welcome a marvelous member of our group, Eve Annecke. I met her three years ago. Felt that I had somehow come home, but learned something else besides. I have had a deep encounter with her. She has worked on this project for 16 years.

Eve:

Fourth Assembly

It is in a way like coming here. Thank you to EsF for inviting me. Also AMI. For me it is an accountability. To account to a wider community for a gift that was given to me 15 years old. I was in apartheid education in my country.

Strilli Oppenheimer. The pioneer to a Montessori movement.

I think that is by way of introduction all that I need to say,

What I want to do is to tell my story.

Ben Auckry (?) born in Nigeria and came to London now.

“The most authentic thing about us is our capacity to create, to overcome, to endure, to transform, to love and to be greater than our suffering.

Building

I love the word radical, Latin means roots. When we change things at their roots.

Ecological literacy, a sense of wonder, and more... what does it mean to be human?

The Saturn and all its beautiful rings. The kasiny project (?)

Along this amazing journey. I was sponsored in a primary course with Lillian Brian there is a sense of wonder, and above all, this haunting, haunting question of "What does it mean to be human? What does it mean to be a human being?"

We are going to be 7 billions. It seems more than ever that we ask this question.

Can you see where earth is? Had to take it and magnify it in order to see our planet. Very helpful. Like the pictures in the 60s where we are all part of multiple galaxies.

The next break for me was to imagine and be in the world as if in the arms of a loving universe when one of the astronauts, made it onto the moon and looked back, and one of my consciousness teachers and told the story. Were you not afraid coming back after the Apollo 13 before? He said, "After having the feeling of a loving universe, it did not matter if I came back or not."

For practice to think of living in the world as if it was loving. Not the way my country was.

SA – a young democracy with many challenges.

- Of the 1.2 million children that started school in 2002, approximately half dropped out well before their final school year in 2014;
- SA's official unemployment rate is 28%
- Over half our population is under 24 years old
- 48% of South Africans live on Approx. 1.25
- Rural western Cape has the highest fetal alcohol syndrome averaging the world due to the "TOT" system of a portion of wages paid in alcohol

sustainability institute – building positive futures.

NGO founded in 1999

Focusing on learning for sustainable futures, in partnership with Stellenbosch University (?)

Transformative learning: ethos of imagination, radical and pragmatic, with local children

Ecology in our country.

Cape Town, Fynbos (?) Biome

Cape town is at the end of the continent.

First mixed-income ecological village in SA

Well we started with children. What does it mean to think about sustainable futures? What soils do we have? What are we eating? We renovated a big school.

There are just under 250 farm worker children in school.

Two years later: before and after picture.

As nature holds us it becomes our greatest teacher

Guesthouse: how do set up for local woman, with a lack of capacity and doing it for ourselves for our community.

Entering the sustainability Institute.

We did it mean to be part of a messy developing country, in their space in the galaxy.

Our students come to our Eco-village for all their studies. They don't go to main campus so they can experience daily in their bodies what it is to live sustainable. We start with circle and do that chill or yoga.

You need to clean up your own school. Masters students returning from harvest.

It might be the first time that they have planted their own food. This is transformative. It is not rocket science.

The Hall: unfired clay brick cooled by wind chimneys. They employed two of her murderers. That project make the clay from outside.

The primary school is just as we speak where it will be come a community school. Taking it back from the government.

Sports Day: it is hard to tell an everyday life story. In no way what we do be transplanted some place else.

They make their own salad every morning. An international network, with the government that these children eat organic food twice a day.

If you are not eating or eating rubbish you simply cannot learn.

I like very much, ahs taken over the day show. How awful Ebola was. Had money give to the overweight hungry American children.

Not helpful to feel sorry for these projects. NGOs often don't know what to do.

15 years ago, we started with the Montessori preschool now 65 farm worker children in a beautiful environment and constantly in the gardens. We want them to play more. We are very formal, but we do it right. I would like them to play more.

We have a teacher sponsored by AMI and the IS.

We have taken a longer view in human terms.

I sometimes wonder, it is less about, the cognitive enrichment is paramount. What does it mean to a child just to be. Have a sense of place, where they know the trees. A contemplative softness. I think many of s have lost the connection to our own soft spot. If we can't find it how can we help find the child's?

We have women that work with healing. We have the highest rate of ????? But I am sure, also men, as we find that place in ourselves where we can heal, where we can un-entrap ourselves with the hamster wheel in our minds. Help them to circumnavigate those way. They need to transcend. We often send our own pain to the next generation.

I wonder if this work of healing isn't something that we would offer for what little successes that are taking place.

What does it mean to be human? This inextricable link with nature and all life. The outside is more our classroom than inside.

Investing in Youth

Demonstration youth learning centers of excellence – safe place for sustainable futures

Something about boys. Need to be strong and protective. We took the boys to a local prison. Of those boys 5 were from prison fathers'

The prison ward, the prisoners were even more incredible. What it feels like to have the doors closed and the gang cultures that grow.

It was not like it was on TV. So helping each other grow themselves up. Some have jobs now. Working in a factory.

Lost the connection with what fantastic work makes you feel inside. Now they have a swagger of good work. Something that has changed again.

Self-discipline, flow, confidence, structure. Then it helps them to feel connected and that they are doing something cool.

We are obsessed with cooking. The program has place to raise children at the institute. Children come from parent dead from Aids, or places that just don't have a chance.

Just stuff you would see in a normal village. They work now at the four star hotel. Every 6 weeks they go into nature. Go onto a mountain on their own. They can do this by themselves at night with maybe animals around me. I can do this.

We partnered with an organic farm. I often feel how privileged. I am to be able to eat our own food. We do live off of what we eat.

The oxen for came to us as adolescents. They were rambunctious, "where are these oxen from?" from the eastern cape, been to university. We are from eastern cape, but they don't need to go to university we can work with them for ourselves.

The trainer was brought down, the ox whisperer. They stopped and they smelled and they ran down a football field because they sensed he was there.

It is so easy to miss where the magical starts happening. How to we get that connection with our indigenous heritage and the knowing that are not all part of the national and official.

Beauty is a way to go there. We don't need words.

This is our master students, going out in the morning after their morning stretch. The student's work is meaningful. Matters to put energy in, rather than suck it out. It is how connected we are. This idea of prayer as a connection. The small groups, being in the gardens, changes the game. The tiny things are "How did you do this?"

A couple of pointers. The morning circle creating a sense of place and beauty.

The wonder of something getting stuck in the ground and it grew.

We are so in tune to the industrialized. I arrived what I like. I think therefore I am. Thank goodness people stood up. But the incredible group of Montessori. People that were able to see something else.

We made our own clay on site. We have to build houses. I never thought about building a house. We worked with architect and struggle to build a village. The privileged. Stop denying that we are privilege. Now, what will I do with it?

North facing, 60% less electricity, 45% less water, no sewage leaves the site, reduced/zero solid waste, walking distance to public transport (rail) minimal cement (less CO2), 25% of normal monthly CO2 release.

We had to create a different story with all of our ages. We made a lot of jobs. People who learn to make buildings, they are learning it.

People with mixed income live there. All the houses are similar sizes. First time at least 10 families have lived in a place they can call their own.

All my house parts except the door, is second hand.

I am aiming for one planet living, can look in apartheid era. Not by telling people that we don't believe in it or don't care about climate change. Many of us just follow the

Why not do what you are doing and upping it a little.

Solar water heater. Solar roof tiles. The children love that it is what makes their lights.

Wind chimneys to cool the hall. The southeastern wind flow. There is an extractor fan from the night. Gets into the rock, then emits the cool air.

There is a biogas digester. Cook off of the biogas. It does smell.

We recycle 100% of our water and reuse 40%. Now a complete garden now that the legumes that are planted there.

iShack

1200 improved shacks for informal settlement families providing solar energy for 3 lights, mobile phone charger and television, run as a business, not 'hand-outs'

There are little hub operators. If you don't pay, you get cut off.

They smashed the iShack. The community does not want us, but the clients want us.

Demonstration low income sustainable housing

Neighborhood to regions to international

Working with Stellenbosch (?) municipality on the Stellenbosch development framework;

Convening infrastructure innovation committee of retor/mayor forum; 9 a

9 African universities in transdisciplinary phd network

African-rooted research

Representing SA on UNEP's international resource panel

Sustainable communities – what does it mean to be human?

- Beauty, learning, creativity, community 'to give
- Children, women, men and all life
- Energy, water, waste, building, arts, nature
- Entrepreneurship, not hand-outs
- An approach rooted in a fair and just world for all, not only humans, celebrating many diversities
- Indigenous wisdom, ancestral guidance
- Messy integratedness of interests – spiritual intangibility, technologies, power, equity
- Context, practice, experience, intellectual rigor – we can't be sloppy, and just say we are going with the flow. Science with society not for society

Need a stomach for disequilibrium.

The last rhinos that will ever see have already been born. On our watch we are losing species that have not yet been discovered.

Obstacles in consciousness that stand in the way of just transitions

Characteristics of a preventing mind – set:  
Short – term, utilitarian thinking

More on slide

That way the tree we planted when they were all little, now they are big outside.

IS

An international living and learning center for experience and studies in ecology, community and spirit  
Montessori based infants and

More on the slide

Post Graduate Diploma in Sustainable Development/MPhil

Modules

- Accredited training in south African early learning centers/crèches
- Level 4 certificate
- Level 5 certificate
- Level 5 national diploma in ECD
- AMI trained curriculum writers/teachers
- 0-3 AMI intro course in 2014, mixed income, half sponsored
- Full time AMI 0-3 course at end 2016 – aiming for over half sponsored and linked to crèches on farms in the winelands. Julia Hilson taught assistants course. At least ½ sponsored and ½ pay.

Want infant system.

I hope that gives the understanding of the grounding we have. South Africa has to accredit at the same time.

We see quite clearly that what happens to the non-human happens to the human.

What happens to the outer world?

Happens to the inner world.

If the outer world is diminished in its grandeur

Then the emotional, imaginative,

Intellectual, and spiritual life of the human

Is diminished or extinguished.  
Without the soaring birds, the great forests,  
The sounds and coloration....

Thomas Berry

Our log is a labyrinth. It is a messy one to invite the inner journal. To do it in the form of a tree which links us all.

With life figure out ways of paying it back.  
Some grant funding.  
Over last 5 years we have been able to generate 82% own money.  
You need to own it.

Download a movie called "Fed Up."  
South Africa is the third most obese country in the world.  
USA number 1  
UK number 2

There is malnutrition. Micro-nutrients are missing. We are not eating real food. Look into the children's eyes and think about what is the best thing we can do. Make that part of the school's mission.

Cities: cities are the most exciting place on the planet. For the first time ever more people live in cities than not. Cities in Africa, America? Places for sustainability is exciting here. Get into the cities and figure out how to do things differently and sustainable. Those of us who live in developing countries. We need to leapfrog to how things are being answered and not go through the set ways of problems.

We like being organized in communities. We need to find simple technologies that impact how we live. We need to be asking the questions, so that when these massive developers move in, we are asking the questions. We need to think about how to do things.

Comment about Argentina.

There are not enough Montessori schools that do Montessori practice well. We need more jewel schools. You cannot have training so that teachers have the ability to really see how to do Montessori well. We keep blabbering on about needing more trainers.

*People went outside to get in touch with a bit of nature.*

Some reflections:  
Cathy Swan:  
The concept of sustainability. It is a big thing.

Adele Diamond.

I did not look or touch. I was drawn by the leaves and I loved to doodle. I noticed that the leaves were much more beautiful than my doodles.

I drew a picture of plumeria. I notice that when I am at home in my studio that is where I think and meditate the best.

Fern: My tree called to me. I felt the energy first before I saw the beauty of it.

Thai: she said she observed the fishpond. She saw different sizes of fish living together. And not just fish but plants also in the fishpond. The fish are usually living in the pond. The fish are use to people watching them.

Sedla (Turkish) – grew up on grandparent's farm. I could not pick it up or bring it here. I could not join it. It was in the air. The freedom of life in the air.

Thai: she loves the green very much. All the green and the plants are teachers, architects and builders in the world. When she sees the flowers it looks like the Montessori teacher in the world, both inner and outer.

Thai: she observed an orchid, with the understanding that it come from the very deep forest. Now it is in the trees in the hotel. It could adapt and still live well with each other. See how then can be sharing and giving.

I observe one living thing that is one. I picked it up. When I observed the pebble is myself, it is shaped by nature and the big rock. Everything in nature is shaped by nature itself.

I found a beautiful flower on the ground and a little ant crawled out of the flower and how tiny and how brave we have to be to do what we have to do.

I have to day I looked at the palm leaf. I thought at the idea that it could be an umbrellas how quickly we go to creativity and imagination. I r3emember my son, and in his university to learn from nature and he put it into his reality.

Lupita I am very attracted to flowers. It is the mathematics of nature. The 5 parts, and how they geometry of nature. How they fit around. The beauty of mathematics and geometry in nature right in front of you.

I went outside to see nature. I tried to see what was calling me to go see and watch. I thought about this morning to have coffee under the banyan tree. I went to the lobby to stand under the banyan tree. First was mystery the second firmness the third one was stand firm. Then beauty, then secret. Was the banyan tree talking to me. Nature may need to talk to you. Beside that I could feel the wind blow, and I looked up and saw the movement of the leaf and the gentleness of the leaf.

Eve: it is really a remarkable summary if you look at the words. My own shot at summary  
From a tiny experience in nature we can know things in different way. We have different ways of knowing. Art, seeing things affinity to a plant. The ways our indigenious forefathers knew this too.

Now we have had people who were not comfortable before that now shared in front of other. We can find our own voice.

The metaphor of the fishpond. We were able to find our grandparents. We can't bring the grandparent here but we were with our grandparents.

In deep time we can reflect and be the ancestors just by being.

The absorption of green. The space of architect, teacher and builders.

Montessori teachers are able to bloom in their own spaces. There is no different from being inner and outer.

The orchid from the deep forest can live well away. What does living well really mean to being humans. The pebble that is my ancient self my solid self that is part of many,

There was something about linking the son to the fertility to the palm leaf and the strength to be and to change.

The tininess and the bravery living in each and every day life.

I am very drawn by the geometry and mathematical of nature.

Each wanted to bring their voice. What is my calling? I stood next to the tree this morning. I stood next and I felt its mystery. The immediate contraposition of the poetry of the wind and the tenderness of the wind the secret that nature is bring to us in the is unique power of being.

When we look at that and the story on the other side of the world you were able to summarize this morning s story. You did not need me to blah blah blah

You did not need materials. You were able to go outside and just notice the complete antithesis. We became a whole in the smallest bit of time by begin individually together in nature.

So thank you.