

Axladitsa

Axladitsa-Avatakia is a home place, an olive farm and a place of collective inquiry, learning and retreat....a place for Living Wholeness

A Quarterly Newsletter

Issue No. 1 - Winter 2008

Scaling Up Since August 2006, we, Maria Skordialou and Sarah Whiteley have held the guardianship of Axladitsa-Avatakia. Specifically our work focuses on two - a 24 acre piece of land in Greece...where in response to engaging at the edge of our not knowing, so that we can source the than ever..."we have entered a next level of our humanity and (2) practice of living with and from learning to be resourceful, so we complexity individually and may use what we have wisely, as collectively - scaling up our nature does. See how our work is perspective of life."

How can you scale-up with us?
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Your community too - Participate, Invest and Grow with us Over 150 people have come to Axladitsa in the first two years. Many have come back time after time - nurturing connections and relationships. We invite you to join the 2009 learning at Axladitsa, engage in an action research process of business planning and help create the next level of infrastructure.

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Stories of Guardianship

Axladitsa's guardianship circle has grown from 19 people in May 2007, to over 40 in 2008. Invited by Sarah and Maria, people have intentionally committed to being in generative, long-term relationship with Axladitsa - protecting the integrity whilst sustaining the growth. Two stories - one by Panayiotis Gaitanas from Platania and one by Carla Kimball from Boston, share how Axladitsa has made a difference to their lives.

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Scaling Up

Our Complex World The complexity of our lives is more evident than ever. Systems we created and are a part of, are cracking and even falling apart. Here in Greece, our young people's recent outbursts is a sign of this. Keeping complexity at bay through viewing life as a machine that can be controlled is not working. We are at a critical choice: cling to what we know and the fear of losing it and ourselves; or embrace the unknown to meet what we might become. Either way, courage is necessary to meet one another in new ways. We are hungry for safe places in our communities, organizations, and families where together we can collectively inquire, participate and gently let go of what no longer works; creating new meaning collectively.

Our Work We see life as a living system. We see complexity as an inherent part of life. Complexity is how life evolves. Our work is to participate in hosting the next level of our human evolution by learning competencies that embrace the potential and possibility that reside in complexity. We do this by inviting people to use their innate human competence of being in conversation - specifically, conversations that they have never had before, yet deeply matter for co-



Conversation during the Berkana Art of Learning Centering Gathering, 2007

creating a new future. We use methods that offer just enough structure for us to enter collectively into a place of not knowing so we can inquire into what is possible and discover the wise way forward. We rely on building sincere and authentic relationships where, from a place of trust, we can do just about anything. We work all over the world and in many different contexts - large scale and grass roots.

Axladitsa-Avatakia In the past two years, we have strengthened our nomadic pattern of working by coming into relationship with a beautiful place, Axladitsa-Avatakia - a safe space in preparation for the increased need for the gentle letting go and the meeting of the new. Axladitsa is a home place of living wholeness. It is an olive farm, a place of

immersion learning through inquiry - individually and collectively - of how we can live our next level now in alignment with life, and a space for retreat. The land is a living systems field, which you tangibly feel as you enter the gate. You are invited to feel your aliveness through hearing the song of the birds, the insects humming, the rustling of the wind in the trees, smelling the herbs and plants, seeing the many shades of green on the land and the Aegean blue of the sea.

Scaling Up From our direct experience, we have learned that living this more complex, messy, diverse life means 'scaling up' our lives. Many would say that we are inviting people to learn how to 'down size'. We invite people to enter into a world of scaled up living by being in relationship with Axladitsa. For us - scaling up means entering complexity. Living 'scaled up' means learning to be in the chaos so that the order that is inherent in chaos becomes visible. Our experience is showing that to work on the systemic level - the place where we can fundamentally transform the way we view and live life - requires us to enter this practice of living with and from complexity individually and collectively. We invite you to scale-up with us in 2009, especially in responding to the call of many people wanting to learn and be accommodated on the land. (see page 3).

Work in Location & in the World

The inspiration for our work is human evolution and nature. Specifically our work focuses on two levels: (1) hosting safe space for engaging at the edge of our not knowing, so that we can source the next level of our humanity and (2) learning to be resourceful, so we may use what we have wisely, as nature does. Our work is expressed in the following ways.

Hosting Conversations - We host conversations as a form of Participatory Leadership. The act of leadership is in convening people to have conversations that takes them into the space of not knowing and transforms their context. We have

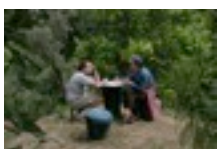


continued to be called to be of service in different parts of the World.

Examples where the art of hosting was offered include, working with young people studying entrepreneurship at the Kaos Pilots in Denmark; bringing 1300 leaders together to consider the tough issues of affordability and leadership in Jewish Day Schools in Boston; strengthening a community of practice of Israeli and Palestinian hosts so they may convene conversations where they can meet in their humanity; hosting a planning process for Children and Young People for the county of Nottingham with 300 professionals in the UK; and Art of Hosting trainings in Germany and the UK.

What are the conversations we need to have to shift our systems?

Learning - Learning is core to how we are engaging with Axladitsa's growth. We have been understanding that learning collectively is a crucial act in discovering what will work now.



Specifically, what we have seen emerge is a form of learning that cultivates new collective capacities that strengthen the

possibility of shifting the system as a whole. Systemic learning that calls us to be curious together, to bring our gifts to contribute, to sit in the not knowing until collective clarity arises. A learning that awakens our wisdom to discover and act from our next level of humanity. In 2008, we successfully prototyped Collective Inquiries through the Art of Protection and a Women's Learning Retreat (co-hosted with The Berkana Institute).

We are linking the power and nature of this place, the art of meaningful conversation

and the practice of collective inquiry. We are seeing a new learning pattern that works at a systemic level connecting what we meet about, how we do this and where. We know that this is a crucial fusion - and in 2009, so we are taking the bold step of creating more form to this with the Axladitsa Immersion.

What is the learning that will take me to my next level in 2009? (For invitations, registration forms, preparation and travel information, see <http://axladitsa.org/calendar.htm>)

Gatherings - More than 150 people have benefitted from the power of gathering at Axladitsa. People consciously chose to gather on this land for the bold purpose of moving their community of practice to its next level.



People having intentional meetings here has awoken the place to a new purpose and service. The land being a safe, peaceful

and static-free zone, has offered a context in which people can face, individually and collectively, what is needed and most crucial, explore what works now and let go of what doesn't serve.

In 2007, Axladitsa's first year, *The Berkana Exchange* (which Axladitsa is a part of) chose to host their annual trans-local gathering of *The Art of Learning Centering* - where 12 Learning Centers from across the world, came to discover the next level of work and service. The Exchange gifted the first levels of infrastructure needed to host such a gathering - building the outdoor kitchen and the group 'sky space'.

In 2008, the Pioneers of Change Multigenerational Gathering convened thirty people from nineteen nations, where the question, 'What is the pioneering our world needs now?' was engaged in over a five day period.

How can your community benefit from meeting in this safe, generative and transformational space?

Sabbatical, Internships, Apprenticing and Retreat - In 2008

we hosted a two-month sabbatical in the spring (See page 4), family week retreat for three families in the summer and an

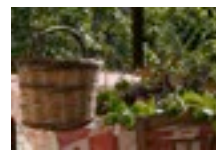


internship for three months during autumn. We have entered into two apprenticeship / mentoring

relationships this winter to span one year.

What is calling you to slow down in order to speed up in wise action?

Conscious Kitchen



The Conscious Kitchen, inspired by Vanessa Reid, one of Axladitsa's guardians has become core to Living Wholeness. We

have become conscious of what we eat, where it is grown, how it is cooked, how we consume it and how we turn waste into good use.

Kyria Athina has offered her local culinary arts, including wood oven baked bread, through hosting the kitchen during gatherings this autumn.

Axladitsa's 350 olive trees have withstood the dry conditions of 2007 and 2008 and produced 478 kilos of organic cold pressed olive oil. The organic kitchen garden has been created by almost every hand that has visited and in particular been stewarded by Panayiotis Gaitanas, (see story on page 4).

2009 will see us writing Axladitsa's first book about eating sustainably, including many of our recipes and beginning a local vegetable produce endeavor, in partnership with Panayiotis - growing and selling locally to residents and restaurants in the area.

How can you become more conscious in your kitchen?

Property Development as Land Engagement

- In 2008 we have been exploring a new form of property



development that is based on cultivating reciprocal, long-term relationship with place - for learning, retreat and rest purposes.

We have begun to see a pattern that holds the promise of reframing the trend of second home ownership, to intentional and collective 'time-share' guardianship of place. We will continue to expand this idea in 2009, so stay tuned as we will have more to offer on this in our Spring 2009 edition.

What can I 'give' and what can I 'get' from exploring such a relationship?

Action Research - As we enter 2009,

we are excited to be bringing our hosting work to a new level through being involved in a global project, the Power of Place Collaborative in partnership with Fetzer Institute and the Berkana Institute. This connects what we have been learning at Axladitsa about the power of place and the power of hosting conversations that can transform systems and our humanity.

How can the power of place impact our conversations and creations for the better?



'Light and Transformation' - Anne Doshier's Tree Intention for the World, 2008

Your Community Too - Participate, Invest & Grow with us...

Over 150 people have come to Axladitsa in the first two years. Many have come back time after time - nurturing connections and relationships. We invite you to join the 2009 learning at Axladitsa and to help create the next level of infrastructure.

2009 Calendar

Land Work Weeks: 2-13 March
Edge of Collective Sourcing:
16-19 March

Axladitsa Immersion: 11-28 May

- **Presence Retreat: 11-14 May**
- **Art of Protection: 18-21 May**
- **Art of Hosting Meaning in Place: 24-28 May**

Family Weeks: 11-23 July; 2-8 August

Olive Harvest: 9-14 November
<http://axladitsa.org/calendar.htm>

To register: info@axladitsa.org

Creating the Next Level of Infrastructure

Our intention is to host more people on the land from 2009, as

it is clear that people coming here have experienced a deeper level of connection and learning when staying on the land at Axladitsa. To both live close to the earth and to have a little more comfort is what is being asked for. We invite you to be part of this - by gifting and experiencing!

Two 4 meter Yurts - We intend to expand the 'yurt village' and purchase two more 4 meter yurts. Currently we have 3 yurts. Purchasing two more will allow us to host more people more comfortably. **Costs for two yurts fully furnished: €10,700**

Create 5 wooden platforms for yurts - We intend to build platforms for each yurt - for greater warmth, comfort and to maximize the yurts' life-span. **Costs for five platforms: €3,600**

Solar Electricity System - Converting our generator-produced electricity to solar will allow guests on extended visits critical access to be connected to

the world - either by email or mobile/cell. **Cost: €9,500**

Build an Eco-bathroom - Your contribution would allow us to build a small eco-bathroom in the yurt village - with a mini kitchen for making light snacks / drinks and strengthen the self-organising pattern. **Approx. Cost: €8,500**

Build 5-10 traditional small stone house (kaliva's) - We will soon be inviting conversations to co-create 5-10 kaliva's at Axladitsa - the next level of infrastructure / 'time-share' guardianship and the next prototype of a new form property development as land engagement. **Approx. cost per 30m square kaliva: €45,000**

Business Planning as Action Research - The journey of hosting the creation at Axladitsa is our process of business planning. We will be inviting you to engage in specific elements in due course.

Tending the Land

Tree Intention Gift - 15 Intentions were hosted in the olive trees during 2008, enabling the olive groves to be tended in return. If you wish to gift an intention that will grow for yourself, your loved ones, clients, colleagues or the world - one of the 350 olive trees can help. A gift voucher will be sent to you, with the photo of the tree that is hosting your intention for the year.

Cost per Tree Intention: Minimum, €50

Planting a Vineyard - Planting 50 vines to create a vineyard, during the Land Work Weeks and create a border to protect the fruit would allow us to grow more sustainable food sources at Axladitsa. Your contributions will help produce grapes for eating and creating home-made wine.

Cost: €1700

Participate, Invest, Grow... & Create With Us.

<http://www.axladitsa.org/gifting.htm>



Stories of Guardianship

Living Wholeness...through Presence, Generosity, Community, Transformation, Co-creation, Parea

Carla Kimball

Carla is a [Speaking Presence Coach](#) and founder of RiverWays Enterprises in Cambridge,



Massachusetts, USA. Carla is actively engaged as a Axladitsa guardian, visiting the land twice: firstly participating in the Strategic Presencing with the Tarot in 2007 where she was inspired to return on sabbatical to Axladitsa for two months in the Spring 2008.

During her Sabbatical, Carla lived in a yurt in the olive groves and profoundly deepened her understanding of presence. Carla now offers talks, workshops and keynotes on the *Sustainable Joy: The art of slowing down and cultivating presence* - also being one of the hosts for the Presence Retreat at Axladitsa in May, 2009.

"For me, Axladitsa is a prototype of how to live gently and intentionally with each other, all living

beings and the earth. It is a place of stark natural beauty and deep history in a remote region of Greece. It also represents a way of being that we carry as we return to our lives in the frenetic, urgent and cluttered world.

Axladitsa is a place in which to practice 'radical sustainability' - where the daily organising principle is rooted in the "river below the river" - the natural flow of relationships between ourselves, each other and the planet. A place where both Kronos, linear time and Kairos, expansive time intersect. A place where Parea (celebration of good company) takes precedence over "to do" lists.

In short, Axladitsa, both on the land and in the ongoing conversations with Maria and Sarah and guardians, has given me the opportunity to discover the 'incredible lightness of being' that comes from the direct experience of slowing down, paying exquisite attention, and celebrating the reality that 'less is truly more'. And, this experience has been so profound that I can no longer live unconsciously in my day-to-day life."

Panayiotis Gaitanas

Panayiotis was born and raised in Platania, 6km from Axladitsa. He is an olive farmer and building



manager who learned the traditions of tending land from his grandfather and father. Panayiotis knows the land of the area, down to individual trees and is a knowledge-holder of seasons, weather and local history. He is a wonderful teacher of local traditional farming, especially olive tree growing and harvesting.

"Before, Axladitsa was just a place which although beautiful, did not have any particular grace or purpose. Now, things have changed. By Sarah and Maria coming, they have brought their souls, creating a new spirit for the place. They are turning the least favorite aspects into advantages - like not having electricity, which could be seen as a disadvantage, but when I come and see how beautiful it is at night, I too wish that I did not have electricity. Yet lots of

people are coming from different countries and cultures. They come here and live together in peace without conflict, competition, small idiosyncrasies or arrogance. I have never seen people being together like this before, especially with the number of 20 or 30 people.

Even with so little infrastructure, everything is in place and people can live together happily and have their needs met. I have never seen any garbage or negative impact on the environment or between people.

Whatever takes place here has not come into conflict with locals nor has tried to dominate what is already here. Instead, people co-exist and create greater harmony with the local ways.

For me, I have come into contact with many different people from different cultures and professions, which have opened my horizons. It is as if I have traveled, yet stayed at home. So come and join us here if you wish to experience this"

What's your story from Axladitsa? Post on [E-Nexus](#)

Co-initiators & Core Guardians

Maria Skordialou
Sarah Whiteley

Guardians

Angela Hayes
Anita Boker
Anabel Farnell Watson
Anne Doshier
Avner Haramati
Barbara Peebles
Bob Zielger
Carla Kimball
Carsten Ohm
Charlotte Mannsteadt
Clive Cole
Danny & Erella
Debbie Frieze
Donna Alvarado
Filiz Telek
Gillian Keane
Holly Masturzo
Jeannel King
Jennifer Jones
Judith Heezen
Katrine Dietrich
Lenore Mewton
Lieven Callewaert
Lisa Berg
Liz Martins
Monica Nissen
Nitin Paranjape
Nora Kasanicka
Ravi Tangri
Ria Baeck
Rowan Simonsen
Teresa Posakony
Tom Hurley
Tova Averbuch
Toke Poludan Moller
Ulrik Golodnoff
Vanessa Reid
Yitzhak Mendelsohn
Richard Moreham
Sharon Moreham
Ingrid Schultz

Axladitsa also has...Friends...Anita Paalvast, Caitlin Frost, Chris Corrigan, Cynthia Lyons, Gilles Asselin, Jackie Cahi, Margaret Wheatley, Peter Martins, Tenneson Woolf, Jeraldene Lovell Cole, Christina Baldwin & Ann Linnea