

Water Ways / Beyond Boundaries

Aegina, Greece

Spring 2026



Prelude

Gigi, Win and few others, Beyond Boundaries people such as Tara, Lia, Will, Rob D., Leslie, Marlow, Roger, Margo, Anna I., Anna W. and more have been to Oikia Karapanou on Aegina many times over the past decades. Thanks to Rob Dreaming, some of us were called to share council trainings and some of us offered BB Gatherings focused on community building in the most recent past. Always the theme and realities of water have arisen - on what is a challenging situation for an island being more and more developed, using so much bottled water, reliant on a pipe from Athens - such a shared water story needing attention worldwide.

Given my personal focus on water for most of my life, I listened each visit, asking if there was anything I /BB might contribute or offer. Christina spoke about the water retention work she had seen on a visit to Tamera, a community I have been close to since its beginning. She became even more interested after seeing the film "*Water is Love*" in 2025. This past year the idea emerged between us to lure some of those water peoples to Aegina and co-create a sharing and exchange with some of the local people. Knowing the European Council Gathering was coming in April, with the theme of water, was the confirming message to reach out and initiate something that could be relevant for them as well. I spoke with a few Tamerans who had been involved with water works in a variety of ways. Two, Marcus and Isabu, who had since left Tamera, were still very much engaged with water works - people I trusted and respected - and they were a yes, available on the dates we needed. The rest is history. ☺

Beyond Boundaries is an alliance responding to possibilities, invitations and opportunities to build and strengthen local and global resilient communities of care and connection.

Water Week Events

Marcus Dittrich arrived on World Water Day, and together, we went directly to the ancient olive tree grove to begin our “meetings.” Isabel Rosa arrived soon thereafter, and we began a week of events with the showing of “*Water is Love*” at the town cinema. The owner, Titina Kanella had offered it for no cost and Christina made posters to put around town. It was a Greek holiday, and we had no idea if there would be 3 or 30 people--?

What a gift that around 60 came, locals and international visitors, fully engaged, most who stayed for the follow up conversation. Thanks to Isabu, Christina and local support, we even had Greek subtitles in the film. This makes a big difference when reaching out respectfully in a different culture. Some people then showed up on following evenings we offered at Oikia Karapanou, for a film series including *Paya*, *Reviving Rivers* with Rajendra Singh and *Reflection: A Walk with Water*. (see links attached at report’s end). Many ripples clearly went out, and we felt some good seeds were planted.



Learning with and supporting the local community

One of the most meaningful exchanges came with a walk with about 25 people along one of the largest riverbeds organized by Iro Benessaiah and Elika Vlachaki. Also Thanks to Christina, Yannis Psalidakos joined us to share his stories of place, All three are involved in the water story of Aegina as members of local associations, the *Active Citizens Association of Aegina* (Iro, Elika), the *Society for the Environment and Cultural Heritage - ELLET*(Iro, Elika), the *Aegina Oral History Group* (Iro, Yiannis, Elika) and all collaborate with *Aeginaia* and specifically Eleni Stambogli in the *waterscapes* project (<https://aeginaia.gr/topia-nerou>).

These people plus the “Friends of Aegina Association” organized a day of presentations (01/02/2026) on the issue of water in Aegina. (Please see attached summary *Waterscapes – Thoughts on a Threatened Balance*)

Yiannis does his own research about the souvaies and in collaboration with all the above has adapted an app so any can map and collect information about the souvaies of Aegina. This information is currently hosted on the website of Aeginaia. <https://aeginaia.gr/katalogos>) Yiannis shared some of the ancient mythological stories where we stopped along the trail, bringing the intergenerational nature of water awareness and care alive. Specifically walking the old trails that had been cleared, looking at terraces and check dams, gave us a sense of what could be possible again...not to necessarily replace the pipe but certainly to end much of the wasted water rushing to the sea. Marcus was able to both appreciate and explore future possibilities. It was clear there was a passion to improve upon what was there as well as look into new options that might contribute to more water retention, a more respectful and self-reliant relationship with water.

Interacting with Local Schools

Isabu had prepared a special animation from the film "Water is Love" for schools which was a joy for us all to see. The children were clearly captivated by the images and Christina slowed everything down by translating in person to Greek - emphasizing the teaching about rainfall - Slow *Spread* and Sink! After sharing with over 40 children at different locations - they participated in a demonstration similar to the one in the film. This hands-on approach with children ages 8 to 12 was clearly the way to go and seed real experience. Hearing what the children saw and learned was a highlight and quite a preparation for what intense rains we all were in during the following days. I have to imagine everyone was looking at the land and runoff of precious waters, the flooding in many places on the island --in new ways.



Sharing with the European Council Network

Fifteen people from ECN were working at Oikia during our water week preparing for a gathering of 80. As they were building compost toilets and showers to support a large yurt where we all would meet, the water subject was at center. They were able to join in on a demonstration and also attend many of the films. Although water scarcity is not such an issue in many of their European homelands, the global story was relevant for sure. Drinking out of bottled water on this island, very dependent on an underwater pipe from Athens, received everyone's attention. Seeing different stories from different lands in the films - Portugal, Kenya, India, and USA was a council in and of itself - deepening our experience of interdependence.

End of week gathering focused on next steps

After different local people found their way to Oikia for the films, weaving in and out during our time - it was curious to see who came for a closing session. They seemed just the right people, filled with ideas and ways to follow up.

As discussed, our intention was to keep the focus and momentum and support for those who have been focused on the water situation for some time already.

- # Respond to current government plan about the main riverbed, Skoteini
- # Make a good mailing list for our time while it is all still fresh
- # Research and report to all about the desalination plant on Agistri.
- # Research grey water systems on the island and what more may be possible.
- # Research local resources on water retention (**Iro and Elika**)
- # Organize a little dam project on the riverbed **with youth (Maria and Jan?)**
- # Share the shorter animation film and demonstration with more local schools using the curriculum and whatever support may be needed (**Christina, Iro and Elika**)
- # Share the longer film “Water is Love” and other films in local cinema – once a month?
- # Reconnect with journalist Eleni in Athens and maybe do a zoom? See where she is on water issue and what she may need or be interested in?
- # Co – create a web site as simple gathering place for resources/events/and related info/people/projects possible names “Watering – Hole /WaterWays in Greek or? (**Bertille Gentil with Katherine Wintnermeyer, Ricardo Mendoza, Gigi and others**)
- # Participate in and support local projects (Souvalas) and events already planned (**Elika**)
- # Explore local hotel s– Rastoni and Lalibay and/or another place becoming a case study for sustainable water management.
- # Support the collection of both old and new stories and add possibly to the new proposed web site as well? Invite contributions/donations to a web site? (**Elika**)
- # Connect with youth-- maybe make a little film together and co -create a service project for visiting youth. (**Gigi and Christina**)
- # Follow up with this group if a camera, money/local and global sponsors or something else is needed.
- # Make simple agreements as part of any collaborations such as direct respectful communication, not flooding us all with social media etc.

WHO WILL BE DOING WHAT IS STILL TBR ...TO BE REVEALED



Lowlights

- Not having more translation set up throughout and more subtitles in the films.
- Wishing that a few more from the local community had come to the follow up activities.
- Fielding a Greek American woman who arrived clearly angry and upset, shouting liars after the film, still unsure at who or what?

Highlights

- Finding so many local people, particularly Iro and Elikia, so engaged in this kind of work.
- Working with the teachers and the school children planting seeds that will be watered. After all, seemed complete for now at least, Isabu bumped into one of the teachers Eleni Simou at the talent show ...There she shared news that the Ministry of Education, the day before opened a new platform on which to highlight educational programs to be offered in all the Greek schools. Isabu and Eleni are now working together to translate all. This will be a perfect place for such information, the film animation and curriculum to be featured.
- To be with the weather and have a big storm arrive and so clearly demonstrate the need for water retention the very next days. Not to mention that 5 days later water was still heard and found in the usually dry riverbeds To see springs revived in one storm gave hope and inspiration of what this island could become again.

Meetings “in between”



A time focused on water through Oikia Karapanou, proved to be confirming that our visit was both inspirational and practical. Many conversations continued the week following especially as we were inundated with heavy rains and some flooding of where people were housed. Marcus was able to make specific suggestions on rain catchment, and some small next steps can make a difference on this land. The residents here seem more engaged now with some of the local community. As we know in our own lands, outsiders coming can sometimes be distracting and sometimes catalyze new relations and offer encouragement through a shared care with similar challenges and sense of responsibility. We hope our visit was the latter, ie. good for those we met, good for us and good for the water and land.

Confirmations and Learnings

Subtitles are important, along with mutual trust and respect; make preparations in advance for bi-lingual sharing throughout

Offering what we can and following up as allies and friends

Visiting local places and projects /coming always as an exchange in solidarity

Working with local time frames and customs while sharing a bit of our ways

Yes, always to working with children and as well all generations

Next Steps for our Team

Marcus

is available for a follow up zoom if ever wanted. He also will be sending some resource information.

Isabu

will be sending curriculum translated into Greek; is available if wanted in the future for a week tour perhaps to schools with other locals; will follow up with Eleni Simou and the possibility for the film distributed throughout the Greek school system.

Gigi with Win (BB)

will follow up with Christina and explore next steps at Oikjia Karapanou and how others thru ECN and BB might be involved: will send more resources/film links for web; will share some network /web experience; will make and share story/reports and bear witness to what unfolds local and global.

We leave curious

Will it be possible for people to come together once a month? to share more films? Work projects? Develop a Web site, simple agreements and stronger collaborations? Inspire and access financial contributions?

Every local action with such holistic awareness and attention to all of life is a healthy cell in this earth body...and what better place to come together beyond boundaries of our cultures or countries- to plant seeds then in the cradle of Western civilization where demokratia (democracy) began, emphasizing citizen participation. Gigi

Christina

This water week's different offerings, especially the screening in the town cinema and the activities with school children, raised a lot of interest, curiosity and enthusiasm. A new momentum has clearly been given to the ongoing effort towards a more sustainable water management on our island, new connections were created among us, which felt like more parts of one body finding each other and generating new possibilities. The feeling of being cared for and supported from outside of this island is a great boost.

Marcus

What a gift to be invited into someone else's home and get to hear the songs and stories of people who have deep bonds with Aegina. Seeing the ecological and socio-economic stress on this beautiful Greek island with water in the center of the struggle, I was relieved to be there in the spirit and practice of beyond boundaries. I walked between grief and praise, witnessing the exploitive tourism and property sale while feeling uplifted by the commitment of local activists and good principles of action I carry in my pocket. As rainfall over landscape, good stories too, need to slow, spread and sink.

Isabu

It was a very inspired experience and a really sense of working together on different levels with a sense of meaning and with visible results when the heart and passion are in the frequency of Activism, where the We is bigger, and creativity leads to real results.



Our International Guides

Marcus Dittrich *Water Retention Builder & Teacher, Community Organizer*

Born in 1984 in Eastern Germany, Marcus lived and worked for 15 years at the ecological community **Tamera** (Portugal), focusing on water retention landscape design and community governance. He has built rainwater retention systems in multiple countries and climates. He now lives on an organic education farm in Devon, UK, with his partner, their daughter and a wider farm team.

Isabel Rosa *Filmmaker, Facilitator, Activist*

Portuguese filmmaker and educator, Isabel lived for 11 years at **Tamera**, working in horticulture, activism and water retention. She is co-creator of the documentary *Water is Love: Ripples of Regeneration* and Education Coordinator of the animation - *How Water Makes Climate*. She offers school workshops on mini water retention landscapes and facilitates **The Way of Council**.

Gigi Coyle *Guardian, Guide, Council Carrier, Community Activist*

An active steward of sanctuary for 40 years in Ojai, California and Payahuunadu, the Eastern Sierra of California. She has organized, designed and participated in the building of 5 earth structures, different water catchments on the land and coordinated six permaculture programs for communities. Relevant as well, she was privileged to learn with Chinese and English geomancers. With nature, cetaceans and water as her primary teachers since youth, she is devoted to our health and that of our lands and waters, so intimately interconnected. As a co-founder of Walking- Water, (<https://walking-water.org>) Beyond Boundaries (livebeyondboundaries.net) and Ways of Council (<https://waysofcouncil.net>) she guides pilgrimage, gatherings, and communities focused on restoring all our relations.

Win Phelps *Partner and Editor*

has participated in full support of Beyond Boundaries planning, debriefing and editing behind the scenes for this journey as well as for Walking Water and many more BB gatherings. He has been a co - steward of 3 Creeks for 25 years, a council carrier and rites of passage guide after a long professional history, directing TV and film.



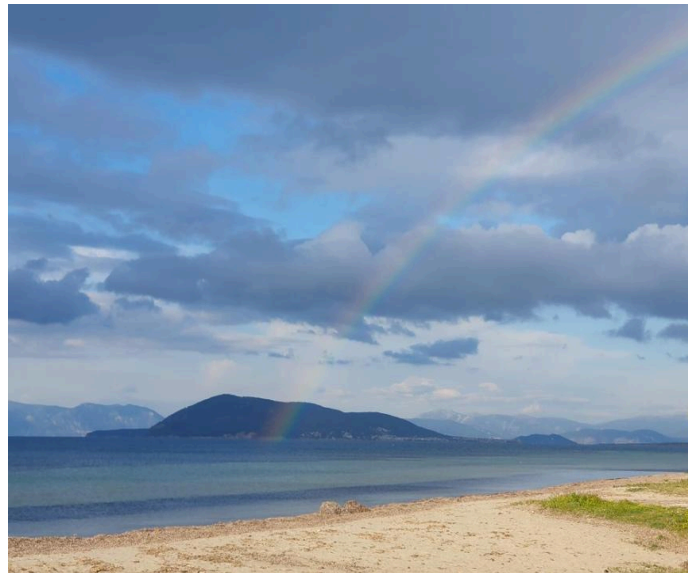
Local Water Peoples/Hosts

Christina Chorafas is the Founder and Director of Oikia Karapanou, a seminar center for 30 years on Aegina, also the School of All Relations, an international youth program. As well, she is a Mindfulness Meditation Teacher and longtime Qi Gong practitioner.

Iro Benessaia born in Greece, studied architecture in France (Paris and Montpellier), and worked on many projects in the desert of Algeria, Burkina Faso and Mali. She traveled on the sea and land, learning from different cultures, people and ways of living, as well as studied the bioclimatic and especially the ecologic architecture with different traditional cooling and heating systems. Returning to Greece, she worked in collaboration with an architectural and urban planning agency and independently, giving seminars to engineers and architects. Involved in the creation of many different TV series on such subjects over the next years, today she is far from retired, serving as part of a network of associations around Greece for the conservation and free exchange of traditional seeds which contribute to food sovereignty.

Elika Vlachaki is a visual artist involved in local projects about the paths and the water resources of the island. Member of the Aegina Active Citizens Association and Aegina Hiking, the Hellenic Society for the Environment and Cultural Heritage- ELLET, and the Aegina Oral History Group. She is engaged through the Active Citizens Association of Aegina and the Society for the Environment and Cultural Heritage – ELLET, in the mapping and maintenance of the footpaths of Aegina. This focus evolved into a local project that intends to bring awareness about the importance of the souvalas as water source and cultural heritage that has to be protected and preserved.

Eleni Stambogli representing Aeginaia (www.aeginaia.gr), a non-for-profit organization based on Aigina, joined us in preparation talks but was unable to be at the events. They have been publishing an annual periodical on the history, natural environment and culture of the island. This year they are implementing a program entitled AIGINA WATERSCAPES and among other things they have been focused on restoration of the Souvalas, the ancient waterholes that feed into the aquifer. Eleni is a historian, has been a member of the Aeginaia team since 2007. She was new to the island then but coming from a publishing background she joined to help with the technical side of the periodical's production. Since then, she has come to love Aigina and is involved in a number of initiatives to create a more sustainable future for Aigina.



With Gratitude

for the land, waters, and incredible history of the Greek peoples over thousands of years that leave us humble and in awe.

** To Christina for her generosity of spirit, inviting, hosting and organizing the water week and us all; to Anna Ingers Muller for her partnership with logistics and so much more, as well as Maria and Jan, who personally hosted us throughout not to mention their much-needed technical support.*

** To Titina Kanella who offered her cinema, Yiannis Psallidakos who shared his knowledge in mythology, Michael Agriogiannos for offering work on the Greek subtitles, Nejib Benessaiah for his work on the poster and to all others who made this time possible, along with those saying, yes and showing up to carry on.*

This time was sponsored by twelve financial supporters of Beyond Boundaries with funds offered to cover travel costs and food for us all. We welcome gifts, donations of any kind from all who join, in order that this work is accessible to all, continuing as an essential part of a shared future on this water planet.

RESOURCES

Shared in Aegina

[Water is Love \(2024\)](#)

[Reflection - A Walk with Water Full Film.mp4](#)

[Paya 026](#)

[Reviving Rivers with Dr Rajendra Singh - The Waterman of India](#)

[How Water Makes Climate](#), animation 12m about water cycle.

[Curriculum about Water Cycles and Water Retention methods](#) including building a mini water retention landscape.

Short films with BB filmmaker, mentor Teena Pugliese “you” also might appreciate with youth engaged

[We All Belong](#) (2024 youth film)

[Water- We Are Living Arts](#) (2025 youth film)

[Mother Earth- We Are Living Arts](#) (2025 youth film)

[BYO ToGo's- Reduce, Reuse, Refuse](#) (2025 youth film)

[Puente Hills Materials Recovery Facility Field Trip](#) (2025 youth film)

More to come in the future, maybe for the local cinema ☺

**Referenced above; Waterscapes – Thoughts on a Threatened Balance/day event
February 2026**



In the event hall of the 1st Primary School of Aegina, a seminar was held on Sunday 01/02/2026 on the topic 'Waterscapes – Thoughts on a Threatened Balance,' which was dedicated to one of the island's most critical and timeless issues: water. The event was co-organized by the 'Cultural Association Aeginaia', the 'Friends of Aegina' Association, the 'Aegina Active Citizens Association', and the Local Organization of ELLET (the Society for the Environment and Cultural Heritage). The seminar focused on long-term and sustainable proposals, attempting to address the water problem not in a fragmented way, but as an issue of comprehensive planning, environmental balance, and resilience against the impacts of climate change.

The program of the seminar

1) Water Supply – Sewerage – Irrigation

- The challenges faced by Aegina Panagiotis, Agradidis (Engineer - Friends of Aegina Association)
- Water and Tourism, Stavros Kalamakis (Hoteliers Association)
- Water and Agricultural Production, Nikos Alyfantis (Producers Association)
- The Streams of Aegina, Dimitris Theodosopoulos (Surveyor - Topographic Engineer NTUA, Member of the Board of Citizens' Association for Streams - "Roe")
- Small biological and environmental issues Stavros Arachovitis (Agronomist ATh / Member of TPS Study Group)

2) Good practices

- Reuse of historical water supply infrastructures: the case of the Hadrianic Aqueduct of Athens Giorgos Sachinis (Director of Strategy and Innovation, EYDAP)
- Stone terraces in temporary streams: A traditional water management practice as green infrastructure Lili Mordechai (Deputy Director, MedINA)

- Short presentation: Existing biological RASTONI - LALIBAY

3) **The water we drink**

- From management to daily life: water quality in the citizen's scrutiny Athina Mavridou (Emeritus Professor of Environmental Microbiology, Univ. of West Attica)
- Changing priorities: From continuous demand increase to saving and protection Despoina Spanoudi (Chemical Engineer, Initiative for ensuring public management of water)
- 'Meeting at the Springs' Iro Tzarbopoulou - Fokianou (GREENPEACE)

The seminar took place within the framework of the Waterscapes action of Aeginaia.