



Global Ecovillage Network Living and Learning Centres



PEOPLE ARE A PRECIOUS RESOURCE BY PERMISSION OF MARTI MUELLER

Today, in every corner of the world, there is a positive flowering of community-based initiatives aimed at restoring degraded ecosystems, repairing the fabric of our communities and developing more sustainable and satisfying ways of living. At the heart of these initiatives is the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN), an organisation comprising more than 13,000 eco-settlements on every continent on the planet.

Living and Learning Centres are central to GEN's strategy. Community-based demonstration and teaching centres offer people the opportunity to come and learn about sustainable living through practical experiences that can be replicated throughout the world. They are local planetary models that can be powerful catalysts for change. See it, do it, take it home, share it with others, and recreate something new.

It's about training trainers through inspiring on-the-ground programmes because

- what works in one part of the world often works in another
- it's not about reinventing the wheel, but creating effective new ways of working together
- the challenges ahead of us require real co-operation, fast action, and deep insights.

A SANE WORLD

High on our list of priorities are land conservation and Earth restoration, poverty alleviation through food security and meaningful livelihood. We are committed to renewable energy use, protecting indigenous cultures and species diversity, offering valuable living and learning contexts for youth, and providing the resources for good family planning for a child-friendly planet. All of these are part of local solutions to restore the Earth's balance.

ECO COMMUNITIES

Eco-settlements in rural and urban areas are one of the most effective ways to promote real planetary change because they provide wonderful laboratories for experimenting with new models in sustainable community and in finding and disseminating solutions to our many environmental and social problems. From the outset, people are committed to sustainable plus living, putting more into the environment than they take out of it. And Living and Learning Centres are ideally suited to making an exponential difference in everything from Earth restoration to poverty alleviation.

AUROVILLE COMMUNITY LIFE BY PERMISSION OF MARTI MUELLER



THE ROAD IS LONG AND TIME IS PRECIOUS

For a viable and fulfilling future for all, Living and Learning Centres:

- create local models of sustainable community development that demonstrate practical solutions for self-sufficiency
- provide integral lifestyles and offer hands-on experiential training
- show people how to protect and restore nature
- honour indigenous people and help empower them to maintain their lands and traditional livelihoods
- strengthen sustainable rural life and create viable new urban models
- show how renewable energy and ecologically-effective waste systems work
- create partnerships and give youth a new mandate
- focus on food security and meaningful livelihood for all
- reflect the world's great cultural, spiritual, and artistic diversity
- encourage a child-friendly world and a sense of belonging
- support local solutions to planetary problems because we live on One Earth



SARVODAYA TRAINING PROGRAMME BY PERMISSION OF LUCILLA BORIO

THE GEN NETWORK

The Global Ecovillage Network comprises a rich and broad variety of **Living and Learning Centres** throughout the world.

ASIA AND OCEANIA

Sarvodaya in Sri Lanka is a network of more than 11,000 villages working on becoming self-sustaining. It focuses on participatory self-help community development based on a vision of a society without poverty or affluence. Its mainstays are food security, micro-banking, livelihood training, small enterprise promotion, cross cultural-meditation, and pre-school development. The Tanamalwila Living and Learning Centre, located near two national parks in southeast Sri Lanka, focuses on permaculture, biological diversity, human rights, and peace initiatives. The Centre offers courses to villagers throughout Sri Lanka and to people elsewhere in Asia and around the world.

Auroville in South India is a multicultural ecocity that has been endorsed by UNESCO as a universal city of the future. It has a wide variety of programmes and receives visiting researchers, university students, and international volunteers. Programmes exist in low cost building technology and sustainable living, food security and organic farming, training in architectural applications and town planning. There is also emphasis on environmental education, creating seed banks and medicinal plant gardens, and doing research on traditional botanical knowledge, experiential education

DANISH EDUCATION MEETING BY PERMISSION OF MARTI MUELLER





DAMANHUR WORKSHOP BY PERMISSION OF MARTI MUELLER

methods, philosophy, medicine, and healing. Auroville's Forestry group works on land restoration and serves as a training centre for environmental restoration outreach programmes.

Bija Vidyapeeth Centre in North India is a training institute aimed at conserving rights for small-scale farmers, seed-saving, and creating locally-based organic low-impact development models. The Centre and wider Navdanya movement are integrally linked to an extensive network of Indian indigenous villages. The Centre focuses on ethical values that every species has a future, that all farms should be free of toxins, and that every person should be free from hunger. Bija Vidyapeeth is devoted to protecting bio-diversity, resisting bio-piracy, and defending people's food rights in the face of adverse globalisation. This Centre offers a unique opportunity to both Indian villagers and foreign visitors to explore and practice the art of sustainability in a peaceful setting in Doon Valley.

Crystal Waters in Australia offers courses in permaculture design, environmental restoration, and community work. The UN Habitat Award-winning ecovillage features housing models in rammed earth, pole structures, mud brick, domes and straw bale. Demonstration sites exist for water harvesting, waste water use, rainwater collection, swales, dams and constructed wetlands. Research on biolytic treatment, compost toilets, stand-alone and grid-connected solar power systems, heat pumps and cell grazing is also available. Programmes exist in land restoration, reforestation, orchard culture, wildlife corridor and rainforest applications. Crystal Waters has an excellent range of ecosystems, and abundant and diverse wildlife, which live in harmony and close proximity with humans. The Eco Centre is an ideal place for a genuine immersion experience and is linked to credit-earning university programmes.

AFRICA

EcoYoff in Senegal is an urban community development programme oriented towards aiding people to protect their natural resources and village wisdoms, ensure their long term survival, and alleviate poverty. It is the headquarters of the Senegal ecovillage network which in turn has on-site demonstration projects throughout Senegal. These include training in preserving mangrove ecosystems, village social action, green technology and waste water recycling stations. EcoYoff provides courses on food security, solar cooking, water conservation, conflict resolution, micro-enterprise, employ-

ment, and eco-tourism. Programmes also exist in integrated health, nutrition, and early child development. Through participating Coluffa village co-operatives and the SOS Environment NGO, farmers are trained in food security, eco-philosophy, permaculture, community resource management and organic farming. Participants – mostly women – are able to receive organic certifications. The network has been endorsed by the Senegal Ministry of the Environment and the UNESCO Chair of the Environment at the University of Dakar.

Ivory Park Ecocity in South Africa is a demonstration project located on the edge of a new and very poor township in Midrand near Johannesburg. It fuses African indigenous technologies with western technology. Models include ecologically-friendly homes, a zero energy community centre built by local women, solar energy, water conservation and harvesting, and medicinal herbs. The project promotes jobs in paper-making and traditional crafts, and encourages the use of smokeless stoves and solar cookers. Ecocity teams are developing eco-tourism, youth and women's empowerment, and environmental activities. Projects include sanitation, product recycling, food security, finance and eco-banking, eco-construction, eco-businesses, and co-operatives. Non-polluting transport, eco-urban planning, pollution, waste, and natural resource management are also areas of concern. Ivory Park is a courageous experiment in sustainability and poverty eradication for people living and working in cities and who need ecologically-friendly community models.

Tlhologo in South Africa is a small rural-based living and learning community that offers certification courses in permaculture, sustainable building technology and ecovillage design incorporating local African traditions. In order to respond to the growing challenge of prosperity and poverty living side by side, programmes are being developed to train trainers in science, solar technology, biology, sanitation, herbals, ecology and household food security.

EUROPE

Findhorn in Scotland offers holistic education programmes. These include an annual ecovillage training programme, permaculture workshops, courses in personal development, spirituality, arts and crafts. Findhorn is home to Britain's oldest and largest organic community-supported agricultural scheme. It has its own currency and bank, uses renewable energy systems (solar, wind and biomass), recycles waste, including sewage treated in a reed-bed living machine system.

MIDRAND DEMONSTRATION SITE BY PERMISSION OF MARTI MUELLER



It has many community-based enterprises and is creating a village of eco-sensitive houses. Findhorn is home to the award-winning reforestation project, Trees for Life, and promotes an ethic of voluntary simplicity.

ZEGG (Centre for Experimental Society Design) in **Germany** actively promotes an ethic of peace and sustainable living. Zegg offers courses in ecological building and renovation, mud-construction, organic gardening, permaculture design, spiritual ecology, the arts, social communication, conflict resolution, social networking, strategies for peace, and environmentally sustainable enterprises. The Zegg annual summer camps offer courses on everything from child rearing to countering global consumerism and resolving planetary crises.

Damanhur in **Italy** is a community with its own currency, a diverse social structure, many successful businesses, organic farms, photovoltaic installations, and an experiential school for children. Damanhur offers courses in the healing arts, communication, personal and spiritual transformation, community building, and the plastic arts, especially mosaics, ceramics, painting, tiffany glass work, and weaving. Damanhur also runs work exchange programmes, especially on its farms.

The Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT) in **Wales** is a comprehensive eco-tech demonstration and education centre run by dedicated environmentalists with hands-on holistic experience and academic expertise. A wide range of courses cover solar water heating and installations, timber frame self-build dwellings, and wind turbine construction. CAT is experimenting with alternative building methods, waste recycling, green oak building, and eco-design and eco-construction suitable for practising architects and professional builders who want to learn how to be more environmentally-friendly. Courses also include green woodworking, blacksmithing, working with living willow, and providing participants with traditional local knowledge. CAT is a premier outreach demonstration project.

AMERICAS

The Farm in **Tennessee** is oriented towards low-cost high satisfaction community living and self-reliance. It offers excellent examples of solar building design, micro-enterprise development, large scale composting, food production, and regenerative hardwood forest management. The Ecovillage Training Centre at the Farm offers total immersion courses

EXCHANGE STUDENTS BY PERMISSION OF MAX LINDEGGER



WINDTURBINE AT CAT BY PERMISSION OF CENTRE FOR ALTERNATIVE TECHNOLOGY

ranging from basic and advanced permaculture and village design to solar electricity, water treatment, and natural building techniques. It provides a walk-through visit to a straw bale dwelling, a dome, organic gardens, rainwater harvesting facilities, greenhouses, root cellars, a wetlands filtration system, and a solar car prototype. The Farm manages 400 acres of designated wilderness preserve, and has a nursery for indigenous tree species, a forest mushroom laying yard, and many species of temperate bamboo. The community has outreach programmes in Central and South America.

La Caravana is a **mobile ecovillage** working in Central and South America that uses theatre arts, workshops, conferences and bio-regional events to teach people how to take better care of the Earth. La Caravana has inspired the creation of ecovillage networks and projects in Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Jamaica, Cuba, Puerto Rico and Brazil and helped to create the Ecuadorian Women's Leadership Network for Peace. International volunteers teach permaculture, ecovillage design, consensus decision-making, facilitation and conflict resolution, appropriate technology, natural building techniques and community development for positive planetary change.

The **IPEC** (Institute for Permaculture and Ecovillages in the Cerrado) in **Brazil** develops sustainable systems that represent viable solutions to the social and ecological problems of Brazil. It collaborates closely with its partner PAL (Permacultura Latina America). The IPEC is developing the Ecoversidade Living and Learning Centre (Mollison Centre for Sustainable Studies) to demonstrate permaculture solutions to living in the

vast Cerrado region of interior Brazil. It is based on educational outreach and practical demonstration projects and has strong links to the landless movement (Sem Terra), as well as to traditional, intentional and indigenous communities. IPEC is the central hub for the rapidly developing national permaculture network. Areas of interest include viable appropriate technology community models in applied permaculture and village development, food production, natural architecture, nature conservation, reforestation and urban kitchen gardens. Courses provide organic produce certification and permaculture design certificates. Village women's co-operatives, eco-tourism, aqua-culture, organic agriculture, and appropriate housing design are also encouraged. The IPEC provides environmental education textbooks for schools, and appropriate village building technologies. The network has strong links to indigenous communities.

UNITY AND DIVERSITY

GEN Living and Learning Centres constitute just one of many models in the field of sustainability today. What is distinctive about them is their power as community-based demonstration and teaching centres to provide working models for harmonious and sustainable living. These models can be replicated because they are easily adaptable to different cultural and social contexts. The core vision is to train trainers in outreach programmes based on global planetary awareness and to provide meaningful livelihoods at home. Living and Learning Centres work in close co-operation with like-minded people to build community. They foster a strong commitment to restoring the Earth, ensuring young people a viable future, and creating a new planetary harmony based on greater awareness of how to live lightly on the Earth.

AFFILIATED PROGRAMMES

Educational institutions and NGO partners have recognised Living and Learning Centres as excellent site models for hands-on development work. Some of them run accredited programmes and research in Living and Learning centres based in eco-settlements.

The Manitou Foundation in Colorado fosters a community network for different cultural and spiritual traditions and runs the Earth Restoration Corps (ERC), an international training of trainers programmes in Earth restoration, environmental technologies, micro credits, and environmental businesses. A core activity is promoting meaningful livelihood training programmes for youth. The ERC is dedicated to helping establish and maintain viable training programmes in ecovillages throughout the world and to the protection of indigenous peoples and traditional wisdom. ERC teams have partnership programmes with communities in India, Brazil, and the Philippines.

Living Routes in Massachusetts is an ecovillage education organisation that offers university-level sustainable development programmes based in ecovillages throughout the world. Courses exist in Auroville (India), Findhorn (Scotland), EcoYoff (Senegal) Crystal Waters (Australia), Sirius (US), and others. Ecovillages provide ideal campuses for students to learn about sustainability while actually living it. Students receive college credit through a number of university accredited programmes.



For more information on how you can create an Ecovillage, a Living and Learning Centre, participate in an ongoing project, or fund programmes, please contact:

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A FEW OF THE GEN AFFILIATED UNIVERSITIES INCLUDE:

- University of Washington, USA, School of Architecture: Auroville, India co-project for a pavilion for the Americas
- Ithaca College, USA: University/Ecovillage Field Courses
- Pacific Lutheran University, USA: Findhorn Community Semester, Crystal Waters January term
- University of New Hampshire, USA: Geo Communities Semester North American Communities Semester
- Kalamazoo College, Michigan, USA: Diploma in Sustainable Development in Yoff, Senegal
- University of Massachusetts-Amherst, USA, American Summer Institute
- Chuo University, Japan
- University of Stellenbosch, South Africa
- Kyushu Lutheran University, Japan
- University of Turin, Italy
- University of Dakar, Senegal
- University of Madras, India
- University of Brasilia, Brazil
- University of Colorado, USA
- Environmental University of Curitiba, Brazil

and others...

AWARDS BY ECOVILLAGE ASSOCIATES INCLUDE:

UN World Habitat Award, Rolex Honorary Environmental Mention, The Gandhi Prize, The Ashoka Award for Enterprise, The United Nations Best Practices Act Award, Social Entrepreneur Award, Australian Centenary Medal

USEFUL LINKS:

Living and Learning Centres:

<http://gen.ecovillage.org/activities/> (Living and Learning)

Ecovillages worldwide:

<http://gen.ecovillage.org/iservices/>

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