



IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADD USEFUL REFERENCES, TO SHARE EXERCISES OR TO INCLUDE ANY OTHER URBAN COMMUNITY-LED INITIATIVE, PLEASE GET IN TOUCH WITH THE GEN EDUCATION TEAM AT: EDUCATION@ECOVILLAGE.ORG. THIS IS THE FIRST VERSION OF OUR MANUAL/GUIDE AND WE WILL SOON BE ABLE TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND IT.

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<https://ecovillage.org/education>

GEN EDUCATION MANUALS



REGENERATIVE URBAN COMMUNITIES

GEN
Regenerative
Urban Communities
Manual



GLOBAL
ECOVILLAGE
NETWORK



GEN
EDUCATION
& RESEARCH



Ecovillages have spent decades researching collaborative and interlinked ways of social, ecological, cultural, and economic regeneration. GEN Education actively collaborates with Ecovillages and Ecovillage Trainers across the world to turn that research into core trainings and unique immersive learning experiences for individuals, organisations, and communities.

To best harvest and share the abundance of

experience, knowledge, and wisdom about regenerative lifestyles from within the GEN network, a series of manuals were created, starting with Ecovillage Incubation, Urban Ecovillages and EmerGENcies. These manuals were developed to support people who are seeking information and tools in these areas and to showcase and share the experience of the network and best practices of how to create community in different contexts.

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Jim Bosjolie
Ecovillage at Ithaca

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Jim Grant
Ecovillage at Ithaca

GEN REGENERATIVE URBAN COMMUNITIES MANUAL

This manual is a guide for groups and individuals interested in building regenerative urban communities. It brings together examples and case studies to inspire and illustrate this very diverse field as well as suggesting references and tools.

GEN wants to support people who are willing to build regenerative communities and start community-led initiatives in cities.

HOW TO LINK THE MANUALS?

The Urban Communities Manual is less about incubation (creating new residential ecovillages and intentional communities) and more about creating regenerative communities in urban areas (neighbourhoods, projects and organizations). If you are interested in creating a more structured/residential community, please go to the Incubation Manual.

WHY CREATE A MANUAL FOR BUILDING COMMUNITIES IN URBAN AREAS?

Today, the majority of the world's population lives in urban areas. According to the 2018 Revision of the World Urbanization Prospects, published by the Population Division of UN DESA (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs)¹, 55% of the world's population are living in urban areas and this proportion is expected to increase to 68% by 2050. The urban population of the world has grown from 751 million in 1950 to 4.2 billion in 2018 and projections show that by 2050 another 2.5 billion people are expected to be living in urban areas.

There is a growing movement to build communities in cities, which responds to different needs: the isolation and solitude often experienced in large urban centers, the high cost of living that leads people to share, or the will to live in a less environmentally harmful and more communitarian way.

When we talk about creating community in urban areas, we are not referring specifically to residential communities, but to creating 'the spirit of community', a community field of trust and mutual support, collaborative and meaningful relationships in neighbourhoods, community houses, projects, and organizations.

The regenerative aspect comes from the concept of regenerative development² that means to create

health in ecosystems. It implies a systemic approach as the emphasis is on the connections between the various elements involved. The more integrated the system, the more it will facilitate its regeneration.

The various forms of relationship present in an ecovillage enable people to get to know each other better and to understand the complexity of living systems, as well as to learn about the essence of community life, of cooperation and interdependence. By observing nature and living systems, these communities can create virtuous cycles that not only contribute to environmental regeneration but also to community empowerment and to strengthening local economies, establishing the foundations of a regenerative culture.

Urban regenerative communities are a relatively recent field of focus for GEN, as regeneration is an emergent concept and most of the ecovillages and communities involved have their roots in rural areas. At the same time, GEN is home to longstanding urban ecovillages and sustainable community projects, such as *L. A. Ecovillage*, a 26 year old urban community in Los Angeles, US; *As One Community*, an urban network community in Suzuka, Japan; and *Christiania*, an intentional community of about 900 residents in Copenhagen, Denmark, founded in 1971, and considered an autonomous district.

¹ <https://www.un.org/development/desa/en/news/population/2018-revision-of-world-urbanization-prospects.html>

² "Regenerative development acknowledges humans, as well as their developments, social structures and cultural concerns, as an inherent and indivisible part of ecosystems. It sees human development as a means to create optimum health in ecosystems. Understanding the unique and diverse human and non-human elements of each place is a crucial part of regenerative development" (COLE et al, 2006; REED, 2007 apud JENKIN;ZARI, 2009 p. 5).

WHAT IS AN ECOVILLAGE?

An ecovillage is an intentional or traditional, urban or rural community that is consciously designed through locally owned participatory processes in all four areas of regeneration: social, culture, ecology, and economy.

GEN has learnt that while there is no one way of being an ecovillage, there are three core practices shared by all:

- Being rooted in local participatory processes;
- Integrating social, cultural, economic, and ecological dimensions in a whole systems approach to regeneration;
- Actively restoring and regenerating social and natural environments.

Usually ecovillages are demonstration sites of a way of life that has less negative impact and more

connection with nature. Community life is central in this model and education has an important role in spreading the ecovillage principles and lifestyle to a wider public through a variety of workshops, courses, and immersive experiences that these communities offer.

When it comes to an urban context, we can adapt and expand these principles to neighbourhoods, towns, and urban community-led projects. To make it easier to understand, and also because diversity is a key element in the ecovillage context, we will bring some examples from within the GEN Network and partners, to illustrate different urban community types / possibilities, highlighting the differences and similarities between them.

THE GEN REGENERATIVE URBAN COMMUNITIES MANUAL INCLUDES:

1. URBAN **ECOVILLAGES**

2. **CO-HOUSING** COMMUNITIES

3. COLIVING **COMMUNITIES**

4. **TRANSITION** NEIGHBOURHOODS

5. REGENERATIVE **URBAN**
COMMUNITY-LED INITIATIVES

6. COLLABORATIVE TOOLS TO **BUILD**
COMMUNITY IN URBAN AREAS

photo credit:
As One Network Suzuka
Community



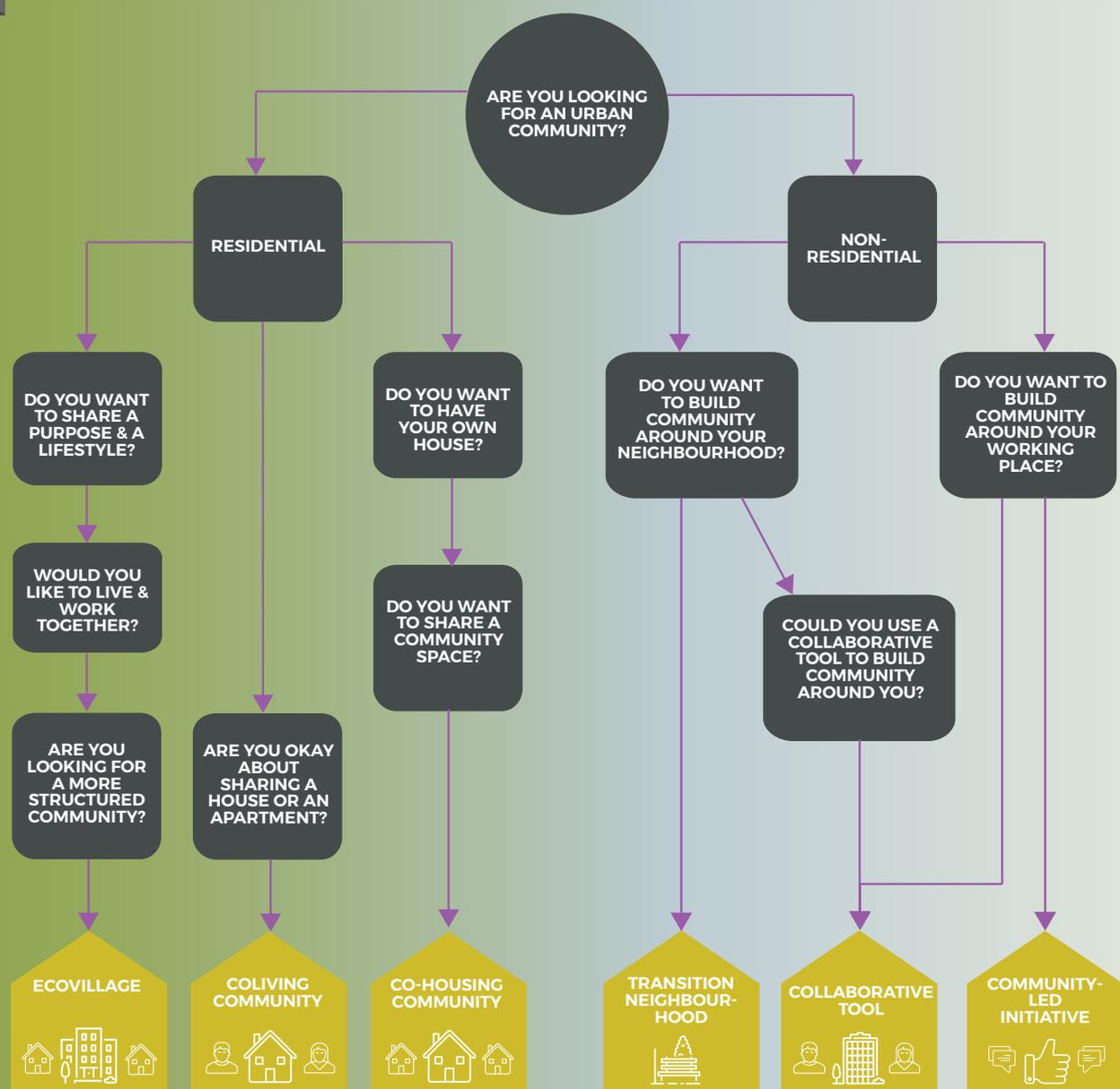
HOW TO CREATE REGENERATIVE COMMUNITIES IN URBAN AREAS?

What does it mean to create a regenerative community in the city? Do you want to create a residential community or a vibrant neighbourhood? Would you like to share a house and a lifestyle or projects and a working place? Are you more into creating a community itself or a collaborative network in your neighbourhood?

What are you really looking for: engagement, partnership, mutual support, community ties, a common purpose, a meaningful project?

Weaving together years of experience within GEN and other partner networks and organisations, we found out that there are many different reasons and gateways that lead people to join or to create regenerative urban communities. Also, there are different types of communities for different purposes. It will all depend on what you are looking for.

So, first of all, find your perfect Gateway into community!



MORE COLLECTIVE

LESS COLLECTIVE

FIND YOUR GATEWAY INTO COMMUNITY

We put together some key questions to consider in order to support you in further exploring this very diverse field:

- Why do you want to build community?
- What does an urban community mean to you?
- Do you want to live together with others, or just close to each other?
- Do you want to share a home, a lifestyle, a neighbourhood, a working place? What is it that you want to build community around?
- Do you have a cause? (social, political, environmental, economic?)
- Do you already have the group? Who are the people involved?
- Why are you in the city - what do you want to keep, what do you want to change?
- Do you already have a property (house, office) and want to create community around it? How big is it?
- Are you up for sharing a space with others or it is important for you to have your own space?
- Do you want to create a new initiative or join an already existing one?

HOW TO CREATE COMMUNITY DEPENDS ON WHAT YOU WANT TO CREATE!

First of all, be clear about your dream/purpose.

What exactly do you want to create?

Secondly, start mapping needs and resources. Brainstorm with the community: Who are we? Where are we? How can we live OR work together? / How can we regenerate our neighbourhood OR organisation?

photo credit:
Teoria das cores
Foto Escola





WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A COMMUNITY IN AN URBAN SETTING?

Ecovillage living is an intense process due to the deep sharing of all aspects of life. Some people prefer to have their own house and/or job in a community field so their preferred option could be a co-housing community, for example.

Photo credit: As One Network Suzuka Community

- **Specific challenges and opportunities**

Most of the people may already be used to living in the city. You have access to cultural life and more job opportunities - and usually more accessibility.

However, besides the challenges of building community itself, which are detailed in the Incubation Manual, there are some specific challenges in the urban context, such as people's availability.

"In urban centers, a big challenge is that people's agenda is always full with jobs, studies, family and social gatherings. Creating community takes time and effort, to make it happen, it must be a priority, at least for core members"

(Thiago Saldanha, co-founder of acasa).

- **Infrastructure issues:** more regulations, existing buildings,

more expensive, smaller spaces.

- Finding a house that fits your community can be tricky. You will probably rent or buy a place that is already built in a model/logic for a nuclear family with a big suite for the couple, other rooms for the kids, and, if you're in Brazil, a small room with no window for a housemaid. The differences in terms of sizes and quality of the rooms can mirror differences in terms of finances in the group."
(Thiago Saldanha, co-founder of acasa).
- **How can you start working with your community in such a dense and populated place?** You need to find the appropriate scale! Start small ("Small is beautiful!"). Some starting points can be: a house-share, office-share, in your building or street. RE-localize! Local-global (networking).
- **Geographical proximity is not necessary!** See the example of As One Community.



UNDERSTANDING THE CITY AS A SYSTEM AND HOW TO TAKE ACTION IN A SYSTEM

Some important aspects to keep in mind (from Marilyn Hamilton /Integral Cities):

- Stakeholder mapping
- Mapping allies
- Strategies of building alliances and hosting dialogue
- How to build a movement? – story and alliances
- Understanding scale
- Thinking about functions
- Look for the purpose not only of the group, but of the city – understand the essence of the place, its historical and geographical storyline and characteristics.
- Look at life conditions, context, capacity building

How to put the village back into the city? How to create community in urban areas?

Here you will find out about some of the most common urban community types / possibilities that can inspire your path. And remember, it is always possible to create something new.



CASE STUDIES: REGENERATIVE COMMUNITIES IN URBAN AREAS

Table: Most common urban community types

** Please note, this is a reference from what is most common. There are many possible variations.

 URBAN ECOVILLAGES	 CO-LIVING COMMUNITIES	 CO-HOUSING COMMUNITIES	 TRANSITION NEIGHBOURHOODS	 REGENERATIVE COMMUNITY-LED INITIATIVES
Multifunctional Residential Communities	Residential	Residential	Non-Residential	Non-Residential
Share Community Life, Facilities, Resources, & Common Areas	Share House or Apartment	Share Facilities, Resources, & Common Areas	Build Community & Regeneration within the Neighbourhood	Create Community & Sustainability in Cities
Common Purpose & Lifestyle, Community Activities, Community Projects	Shared Intentions & Resources	Community Activities (Shared Meals, Meetings, Events)	Community Projects	Work Together
Collective & Private Houses	Houses Rented or Owned by One Person	Private Houses in a Collective Space	---	Mostly Networking Organisations / Co-Working Spaces
Mostly Collective Work & Income Sharing	Individual Jobs & Income Generation	Individual Jobs & Income Generation	---	Various Forms of Income Generation



Photo credit:
Transition Granja Viana



1. URBAN ECOVILLAGES

Ecovillages are places where people usually live and work together, in addition to sharing a lifestyle and a common purpose - called the community 'glue' in the ecovillage movement. This is what brings people together.

Urban Ecovillages are multifunctional residential communities that follow the ecovillage principles and are located in urban or suburban areas. These communities can be localized in a specific place or scattered throughout the city.

Some good examples of urban ecovillages that can also show the diversity within GEN's network are *L. A. Ecovillage* and *As One Community*. While the Los Angeles Eco-Village is a two block neighbourhood in the Koreatown area of Los Angeles (USA), *As One Community* is a network community spread all over Suzuka, Japan.

Usually there is also more diversity in urban ecovillages in terms of work possibilities than in rural ecovillages. Some people work for or inside the community and others have jobs outside. Also, some ecovillages develop a kind of community business that most of the members work for, while others have not done this, as in the case studies below.

In terms of housing, there is also a lot of diversity. Some people share collective houses in the Ecovillage while others own their own houses.



- **As One Network Suzuka Community**
(Suzuka, Japan) / GENOA

As One Network Suzuka Community is an innovative urban network eco-community and a social experiment that started in the center of Suzuka City in 2001. The community's main vision is to manifest 'the world as one' - in which there are no conflicts and no one is left behind.

When the community faced social challenges in 2004, some members started a continuous research project on the essential nature of human beings and society called ScienZ. ScienZ, meaning Scientific Investigation of Essential Nature from Zero, became an education method and a way of thinking. The ScienZ Institute was established in 2004 and the ScienZ School in 2006, to support each person to grow psychologically, to be independent, and to be free.

As One is a scattered community, where each person or family lives their favourite lifestyle within a short distance of each other. There are 63 core members and 44 supportive members that see each other as a big family.

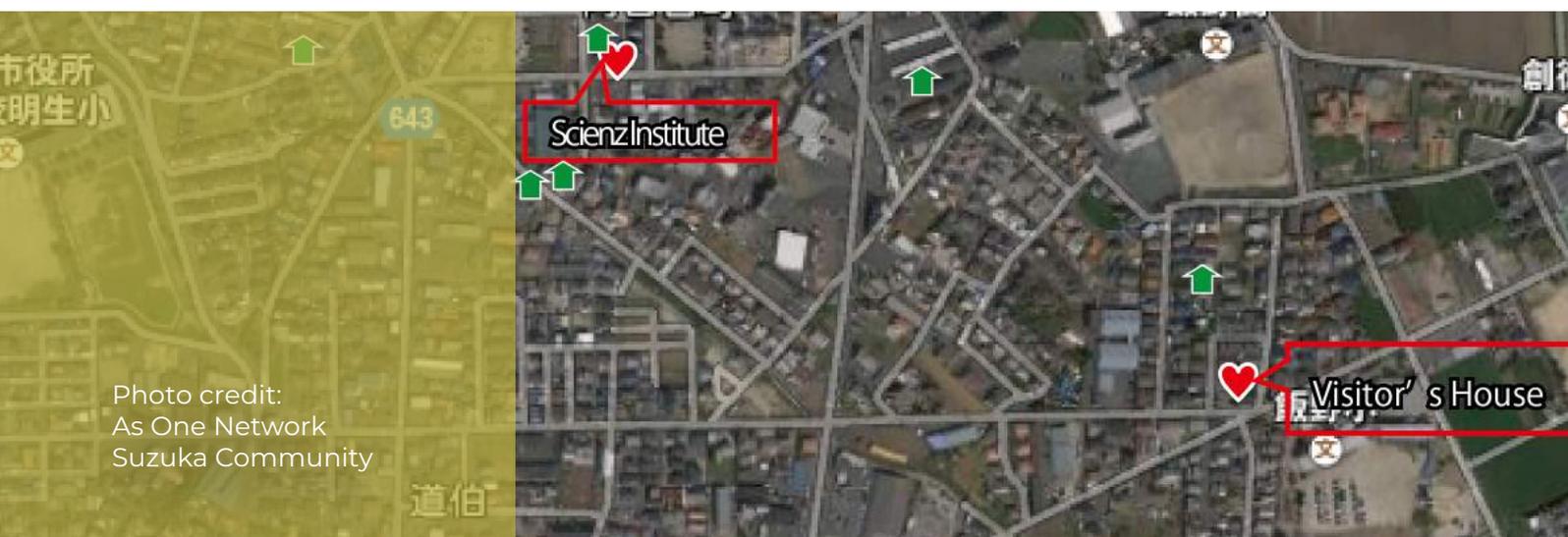
There are also various community businesses and social activities. The community space, JOY, created in 2013, is like a free shop, a place for community members to get their

daily necessities for free, including rice, vegetables, lunch boxes, alcohol, coffee, and even a haircut. Ofukurosan Bento (Mommy's Lunch Box) is a lunch box company that cooks and sales hand-made lunch boxes, using rice and vegetables from Suzuka Farm Co. Ltd - the community farming company established by the younger generations.

Their aim is to create "a company whose workers and customers can become happy." There are no rules or staff regulations and the salaries are based on individual needs. Nowadays, more than 1000 boxes a day are delivered to people in Suzuka and neighbouring cities, thereby increasing consumption of local products. Numbers of staff increased to over 60 and a book about the initiative was published: The company delivering "Happiness".

One of the community social activities is the 'Farming Park Project' where community members regenerate abandoned land for local people to enjoy farming and harvesting. There is also a group connected to the Transition Town movement, called Transition Suzuka, an elderly group, and a reforestation project at Satoyama woodland, among others.

As One Network Suzuka Community
<http://as-one.main.jp/suzuka/English/>
<http://as-one.main.jp/ace/>





- **The Los Angeles Eco-Village**
(California, USA) / GENNA

The Los Angeles Eco-Village has approximately 35 core members who have moved to the neighbourhood to intentionally live more ecologically and more cooperatively. Their aim was to raise their quality of life while lowering their environmental impact.

The community is a demonstration site that shares its processes and techniques with others through talks, workshops, conferences, tours, public advocacy, and other media. They want to contribute to expanding public awareness about a more sustainable way of urban life through being very active in the neighbourhood as well as engaging in international networking.

The ecovillage runs a buying club of local organic food, the Food Lobby Co-op, that provides an opportunity for neighbours to purchase organic produce and bulk goods. They use Permaculture principles to grow community gardens in the area, and also stimulate the use of bicycles as a means of transport, among others.

About 500 neighbours live in the 2 block area (approximately 11 acres). A diversity of households includes singles, couples, single parents, nuclear families, roommates, and extended families, from all ages. Currently, about 75 people participate in some ecovillage activities.

Los Angeles Eco-Village:
<http://laecovillage.org/>

Short film about L.A. Eco-Village:
<https://vimeo.com/12859157>



- **Ganas Community**
(Staten Island, NY, USA) / GENNA

Ganas is an urban intentional community started on Staten Island in 1979. It has grown from 6 to about 75 people. The majority are between 20 and 75 years old and a few children also live there. People of many races, nationalities, religions, professions, educational backgrounds, personalities, and worldviews all live together. They have their own social and political structure and the decision-making process is not fixed.

Recycling is the community's shared business. Most of their work happens in 3 retail stores called 'Everything Goes'. One store refurbishes and

sells furniture. The second sells used clothing. The third is a combination of book store, internet cafe, and art gallery. The businesses are housed near the residences. They are well organized, efficiently run, attractive, and profitable.

Approximately 15 - 20 people are involved in the businesses. Another 15 people work with the food, gardening, housekeeping, administration, and maintaining or upgrading the property and vehicles. About 25 people work outside the community and pay for their expenses.

Ganas Community:
<http://www.ganas.org/>



Photo credit:
<http://www.ganas.org/>



2. CO-HOUSING COMMUNITIES

Co-housing, originally from Denmark, is a form of community-oriented housing which balances the privacy of individual homes with neighbourhood ties. The community usually shares facilities and resources (tools, spaces), but not necessarily a life project or a common purpose.

The co-housing approach counters the isolation of single-family houses on separate lots by combining the autonomy of private dwellings with the advantages of community living. Households have independent incomes and private lives, but neighbours collaboratively plan and manage community activities and shared spaces.

Shared spaces typically include a common house, with a large kitchen and dining area, laundry, and recreational spaces as well as parking lots, gardens, and other open areas.

Community activities include regular shared meals, community meetings, and work days. Neighbours also gather for parties, movies, and events. Co-housing usually makes it easy to organize child and elder care, as well as carpools and collective purchasing clubs.

The legal structure depends on the country and local rules, but typically, it is a condominium association or a housing cooperative.



- **Munksøgård**
(Roskilde, Denmark) /
GEN Europe

Munksøgård is an ecovillage located on the edge of the city of Roskilde in Denmark, close to Copenhagen. It was established in 2000 and was designed to provide for a diversity in housing sizes, ownership types and to be supportive of different age groups.

The key idea was to create a development that integrates environmentally friendly technologies and practices while establishing a strong community among residents supported by houses for joint activities, common areas etc. The residents have planned the development and are in charge of the management of the settlement.

Munksøgård includes 100 row houses of different sizes and accommodates about 225 children, youths and adults in a socially lively community. The community is subdivided into five dwelling groups, each including 20 row houses.

Each dwelling group has their own common house for joint activities (common dinners, meetings, parties etc). The dwelling groups have different types of ownership: privately owned as individual family houses; co-operative association (the residents own the houses collectively as an association but at the same time the residents also privately own a share of the house they occupy); and three are owned by the local building association.

These houses are for rent, with one being only for young people, one only for seniors, and the third one being open for all age groups.

The community collectively owns an old farm located in the heart of the settlement. The farm buildings support many common activities: cafe, vegetable shop, gift shop, office space for rent, guest room for rent, shelter for bicycles, bicycle repair workshop, storage space for rent, and keeping of animals.

Munksøgård -
http://www.munksoegaard.dk/index_en.html





Earthsong Eco-Neighbourhood (Auckland, New Zealand) / GENOA

Earthsong Eco-Neighbourhood is a 32-home co-housing neighbourhood in the Auckland suburb of Ranui, New Zealand. It is the first co-housing community in New Zealand and was established on the principles of permaculture to model socially and environmentally sustainable community. Earthsong combines sustainable approaches to housing and lifestyle with well-established community decision-making processes.

Each household has a private, self-contained residence, and shares extensive common facilities, such as a large common house, which includes kitchen, dining room, lounge, guest room, laundry, activity rooms and children's and teenagers' rooms. There are vegetable gardens, a woodworking workshop, and much informal cooperation with things like childcare and carpooling.

The shared spaces are owned collectively, and residents work in teams to provide common meals two nights a week.

Currently 67 people live at Earthsong and residents include people of all ages, several ethnic groups, various backgrounds and a range of economic circumstances. Residents drove the 13-year development process which built within the community a range of skills relating to project management and development.

The consensus decision-making process is at the heart of the community. Clear communication agreements helped ensure effective group interactions which were necessary for development and continuing to help bring residents together. Strong informal networks have resulted in shared work projects.

Earthsong members are active in the surrounding community. Public tours and other events are offered throughout the year to demonstrate and showcase the practical application of cohousing and sustainable design principles.

Earthsong Eco-Neighbourhood:
<https://www.earthsong.org.nz>

<https://www.world-habitat.org/world-habitat-awards/winners-and-finalists/earthsong-eco-neighbourhood>



Photo credit:
Earthsong



- **Ecovillage at Ithaca**
(NY, USA) / GENNA

EcoVillage at Ithaca is a community of people living mainstream lives in a sustainable way, by caring for the land and connecting with nature, consuming less, cooperating more, growing food, and eating locally.

Located in Ithaca in New York State, EcoVillage at Ithaca has developed into a large and fully functioning community over the last 28 years (since 1991). The residents are about 160 adults and 60 children, living as families, singles, and couples.

It is composed of 3 co-housing communities: FROG, SONG, and TREE, totalling 100 homes. The village is also home to an organic CSA vegetable farm, an organic CSA

/ U-Pick berry farm, office spaces for entrepreneurs, a neighbourhood root cellar, community gardens, meadows, ponds and woodlands. Over 80% of the 175 acre site is planned to remain as green space, including 50 acres in a conservation easement. The community also runs a non-profit organization Learn@EcoVillage that leads the education work, including immersion experiences, tours and visits.

About 45% of the residents work from home, on-site on farms, or in offices built within the common houses. Some of them are retired and others are taking care of the children.

Ecovillage at Ithaca:
<https://ecovillageithaca.org/>



Photo credit:
Jim Bosjolie
Ecovillage at Ithaca

There are many choices involved in community living. Sometimes it is easier for a family to join a co-housing community or it can be easier for the ones that are starting to explore the community field. Another possibility, more common among individuals and couples living in cities, is the Coliving model, as you can see below.



3. COLIVING COMMUNITIES

Coliving is a form of an intentional community that provides shared housing for people with shared intentions. It is a modern, urban lifestyle that values sharing and collaboration. Residents unite around a common interest to collaboratively manage a space, share resources and have a more sustainable lifestyle. Some of them develop projects together and also share a work space. Coliving is ideal for people who want a home environment that actively supports them in living with purpose.

Coliving communities enable sustainable lifestyles through sharing and the efficient use of resources and space. It has gained prominence in recent years as a combination of factors including the cost of independent accommodation in cities, a lack of housing opportunities, as well as a growing interest in a more meaningful and less impactful lifestyle.

Usually, someone owns or rents a house or an apartment that is shared by the group. Each person or couple has their own room and they share the common spaces (living room, kitchen, etc). Also, each person

is responsible for generating his/her own income.

It is also relevant to mention that there can be different levels of interaction depending on the group's purpose and members' personalities.

"I lived alone for 7 years. It had the advantage of freedom and privacy but I lacked coexistence. Now I'm already in my third coliving experience. The biggest advantage is the interaction, the exchanges, and the mutual support. There is a lot of learning! I feel more alive and made new friends. In a coliving community it is possible to live in a bigger and better place without having to pay more, as we share the costs. But it is necessary to be open to others, to our differences. It is important to have group agreements and a clear communication. We need to learn to negotiate, to give up, to accommodate all needs" (Ana Paula Duarte - Casa C3smica, RJ).

At the time of writing, there is still no proper legal structure for this kind of communal living.

It is also relevant to mention about the appropriation of these terms by the market. While some condominiums with eco-houses are advertised as ecovillages, rooms available for bed and breakfast are also publicized as coliving opportunities. It is always good to double check and be aware of the community aspect if you are willing to join a community-led initiative.



- **ACASA**
(Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) /
CASA Latina

acasa is a coliving community located in Rio de Janeiro, at Santa Teresa neighbourhood. The group got together in 2016 aiming to experiment with community life in the city through the practical experience of coexistence and dialogue. They are also exploring the concept of family and new possibilities of being a family in this context.

The core community consists of 12 residents: 5 women, 6 men and a 6 year old child. There is also an extended community of about 50 people of friends, former residents, and neighbours who attend and support the initiative. Each resident has his/her own room, where they have the autonomy and freedom to do with it what they like. Currently the group rents a property of a former hostel business, so the structure served the project very well. There are 12 suites with private bathrooms, a semi-industrial kitchen, a room that accommodates

events for 60 people, a yoga room, and a big garden for larger events.

The house is collectively organised through four working groups: food, infrastructure, finances, and heart. Decisions are taken by consent, inspired by principles of sociocracy. Conflicts are addressed on the basis of empathic listening and nonviolent communication principles.

The group usually meets twice a week. One meeting is to address more pragmatic issues and the other is to take care of individuals and relationships. This is when they take time and space, for example, to mediate conflicts or to offer support and listen to anyone who needs to share about their personal life. acasa is also a place where residents and the extended community can manifest their talents. There are regular workshops and meetings on various topics such as group facilitation, non-violent communication, music concerts, etc.

acasa:
<https://www.facebook.com/acasacomunidade/>





4. TRANSITION NEIGHBOURHOODS

It is also possible to build community around your neighbourhood, making it a vibrant regenerative space in the city. That is what we can learn from the experience of the Transition Network (Transition Towns).

Transition neighbourhoods quickly spread all over the world inspired by the Transition Towns movement which started in the UK in 2006, empowering communities to come together to reimagine and regenerate the place they live in.

There are many reasons why people decide to join or create a transition group, such as to build community within their neighbourhoods, to feel connected to other people, to learn new skills, to engage with new projects, to create a new story for their place, or simply because they feel that 'it is the right thing to do'.

Here you can hear about the history of the Transition Towns movement in a two-minute video:

<https://youtu.be/ObmpRoqOpSo>

You can also read about the Transition Town Totnes (UK) here: <http://www.dragondreaming.org/wp-content/uploads/Fact-Sheet-Number-18-Transition-Town-Totnes.pdf>

More about the Transition Network: <https://transitionnetwork.org/>

Photo credit:
Munksøgård
ecovillage
Ciselle Wilkinson -
WordPress.com



- **TGV -
Transition Granja Viana**
(São Paulo, Brazil) /CASA Latina

Transition Granja Viana, started in 2009, is one of the most vibrant Transition groups in Brazil. The core group has about 15 people and their local network counts 40, with around 300 people participating in their weekly activities, such as the EcoFeira Granja Viana (an eco-fair). It started when they realized that there was almost no one else producing food in the region and so they decided to support local organic producers by launching the campaign G.O.L: "We like organic local food" (in Portuguese). G.O.L evolved to the eco-fair that now happens every Sunday in the neighbourhood. In addition to organic fruits and vegetables, homemade bread, biscuits, jellies, pies, cakes, juices, kombucha, honey, ecological cleaning products, handicrafts, jewelry and other products are available. EcoFeira Granja Viana is also a space for shows, body and artistic activities, learning, sharing information, and connecting to the neighbours.

Another initiative that came out of solving a community challenge is Caronetas, a carpooling group. Granja Viana is located around 30/35 km from

São Paulo city and has a very poor public transport system. The group realized that giving and receiving a ride not only lowers the carbon footprint but helps to reduce traffic and strengthens the community. Nowadays, the carpooling group that works using WhatsApp as platform has about 140 members.

They have also created an exchange trade market - Mercado de Trocas - with the local currency, Tavares, for the exchange of products and services that opens up once a month.

TGV:

<https://transitiongranjaviana.com/>

"I used to say in my Transition Talks that this connection between the Ecovillage Movement and the Transition Movement is the perfect marriage! It all started with the Ecovillage Design Education programme (EDE). Then, we did the Transition Training and here we are. First you need to be transformed to be able to engage. It is about inner and outer transition. The EDE raised awareness, instrumentalized. With the transition group, we took action. I'm not alone anymore. Finally I feel myself useful. I have a function in the world, a reason to exist. And I feel very happy about it!"

Isabela Menezes (co-founder TGV, Transition Hub Latin America articulator)



Photo credit:
Transition Granja Viana



5. REGENERATIVE COMMUNITY-LED URBAN INITIATIVES

- **T.E.R.R.A**
(Laranjeiras, Rio de Janeiro) /
CASA Latina

T.E.R.R.A is more than a co-working space and a social business. It is a networking organization and a living laboratory of collaborative experiments. The group aims to investigate new ways of entrepreneurship that create value (besides the monetary) for all those involved in their ecosystem. They are also willing to explore how to build a community of entrepreneurship and transition practices in the city, deepening relationships and learning together about horizontal management, which is not an easy task.

The work is supported by 4 pillars: Nonviolent communication, Holacracy³, Fluxonomia 4D⁴ and the principles of Networking organizations. A core group of 8 people, the co-founders, are the keepers of the purpose and are also responsible for legal issues. There is no preselection of the activities.

³ <https://www.holacracy.org/>

⁴ Fluxonomia 4D is a transition toolkit that combines 4 types of exponential economics: Creative, Shared, Collaborative, and Multivalued aiming to create collaborative networks capable of activating non-monetary flows through the combination of the four economies (<http://laladeheinzelin.com.br/>).

Everyone can join, but those who stay are those who get involved. The project began without a formal space and now has a large house in Laranjeiras, Rio de Janeiro. As mentioned by one of the co-founders: “the physical space matters. The house made a difference because it promotes encounters. Then, new things happen. It creates a field of abundance and potentialities” (Melissa Bivar).

Currently the house is home to 36 initiatives. Among them are a restaurant, a collaborative store that sells second hand clothes, therapists, a publisher, a complementary school, an architecture firm, a waste management company, and other social enterprises. There are also frequent events, workshops, and study groups. They even developed a social currency called IBI.

T.E.R.R.A -
<https://terrachamando.org/>



Photo credit: T.E.R.R.A.



- **Ground-up Initiative,**
(Singapore) / GENOA

Ground-Up Initiative (GUI) is an urban community sustainability campus in Singapore. It is a non-profit community, guided by the spirit of innovation, resilience, and grounded leadership to demonstrate urban sustainability. They are building Kampung Kampus, a low-carbon footprint community campus in the town of Yishun, that aims to be a role model in sustainable living and a School of Life.

There are different units and teams that make up the GUI ecosystem and they hold several education programmes, corporate social responsibility programmes, organic farming programmes and craft workshops, among others. In 2009, GUI started the first project named SURF - Sustainable Urban Roof-top Farm. After having made impressive progress, they were awarded additional lands by the Bottle Tree Park management.

In 2011, they started H3ROES , an environmental leadership programme to nurture resilient and mindful leaders, with a deep sense of responsibility to society and awareness of the environment.

In 2012, GUI launched JOE - Just One Earth, to teach children in more than 50 kindergartens about the value of our planet and a healthy environment, while teaching practical skills of recycling, reusing, and how to grow small plants in reused bottles.

In 2013, they organised EXCITE!, aiming to reduce youth unemployment by redefining education and exploring social entrepreneurship. It was the first programme in Asia supported by Challenge: Future from the European Union and DBS Singapore. From here on, much more has been done by the group.

Ground-up Initiative:
<https://groundupinitiative.org/our-story/>



Photo credit:
Ground-up initiative



6. COLLABORATIVE TOOLS TO BUILD COMMUNITY IN URBAN AREAS

- **Tem Açúcar - APP**
(Brazil) / CASA Latina

Tem Açúcar is a platform of shared economy / gift economy. It started as a sharing platform (loans of things) to encourage collaboration and to create a sense of community between neighbours and also raise awareness around consumption habits, reduce waste and save money. You don't have to pay anything - it is about unconditional help. As a Brazilian quote says: "kindness generates kindness!"

Following this, other forms of collaboration emerged and Tem Açúcar became a collaborative network. Nowadays you can get a ride, find company to exercise, find someone to walk the dog together, ask for information, share food, etc. It is a community-based experience, a hyper-local network that also contributes to reducing solitude which is so common in urban centers. "Abundance in a collaborative economy does not come from the amount of money you have but from the relationships you create" (Camila Carvalho).

The initiative started in Rio de Janeiro in 2013 after Camila Carvalho, the founder, attended an EDE and is now present in ten thousand neighbourhoods / four thousand cities in Brazil (180000 people registered). It also inspired other international initiatives. In 2014, the project was launched as a website and in 2016, it became an App. It is recognized as a reference in collaborative economics in Brazil and as the biggest platform for neighbours to share things in Latin America.

In 2017, a study was done to calculate the savings from the use of the platform. The results show that users saved around 7.8 million Brazilian Reals during that year. The next step is to improve the platform to enable the creation of a collective buying group, a group of mothers in the neighbourhood, among others. It is becoming the social network of the neighbourhood!

Regenerating the world starting with your neighbourhood - Camila Carvalho - TEDxDonauinselSalon:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jlw6KMPGCI1>

TEM
AÇÚCAR

Compartilhe coisas com seus vizinhos

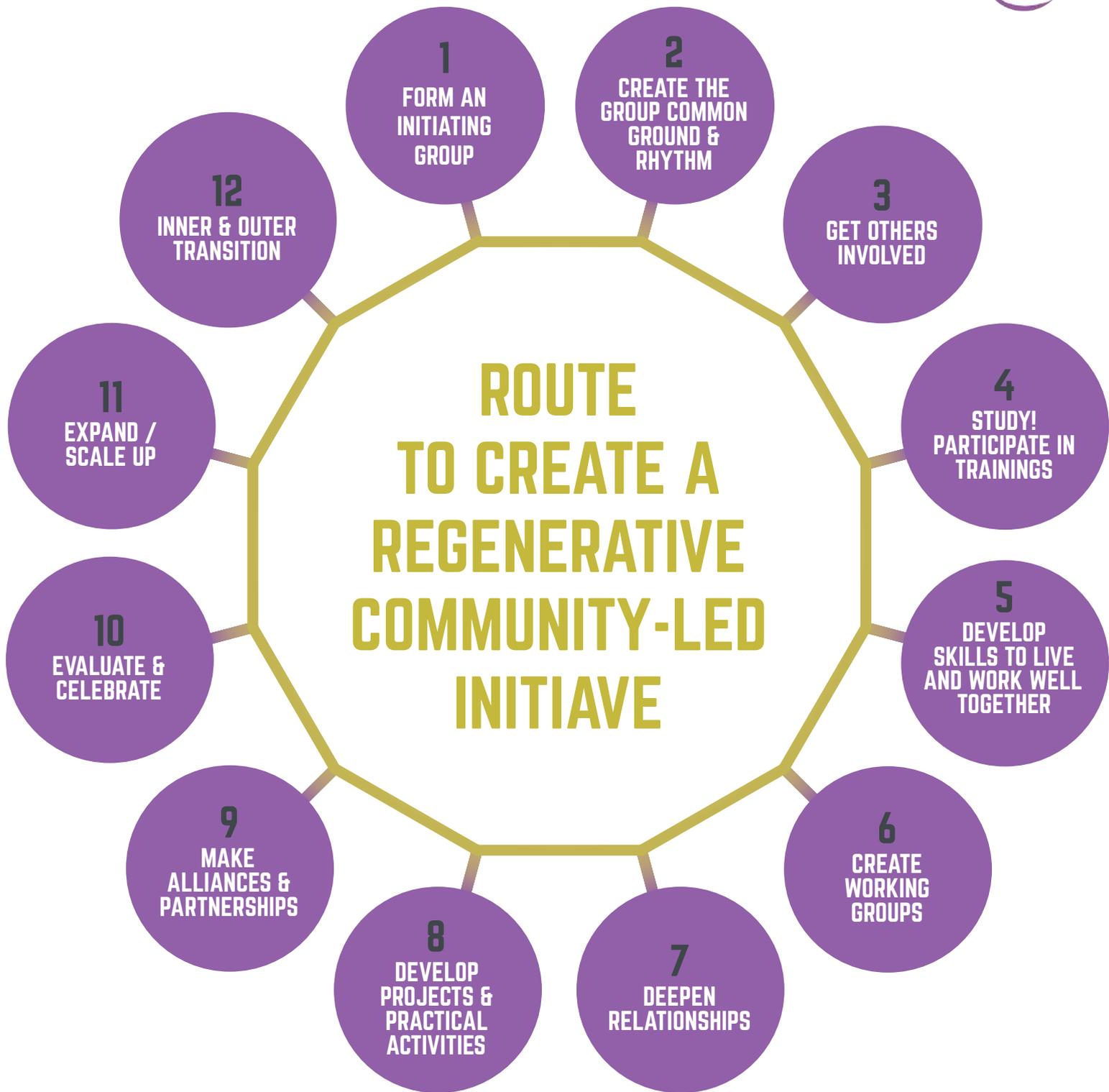
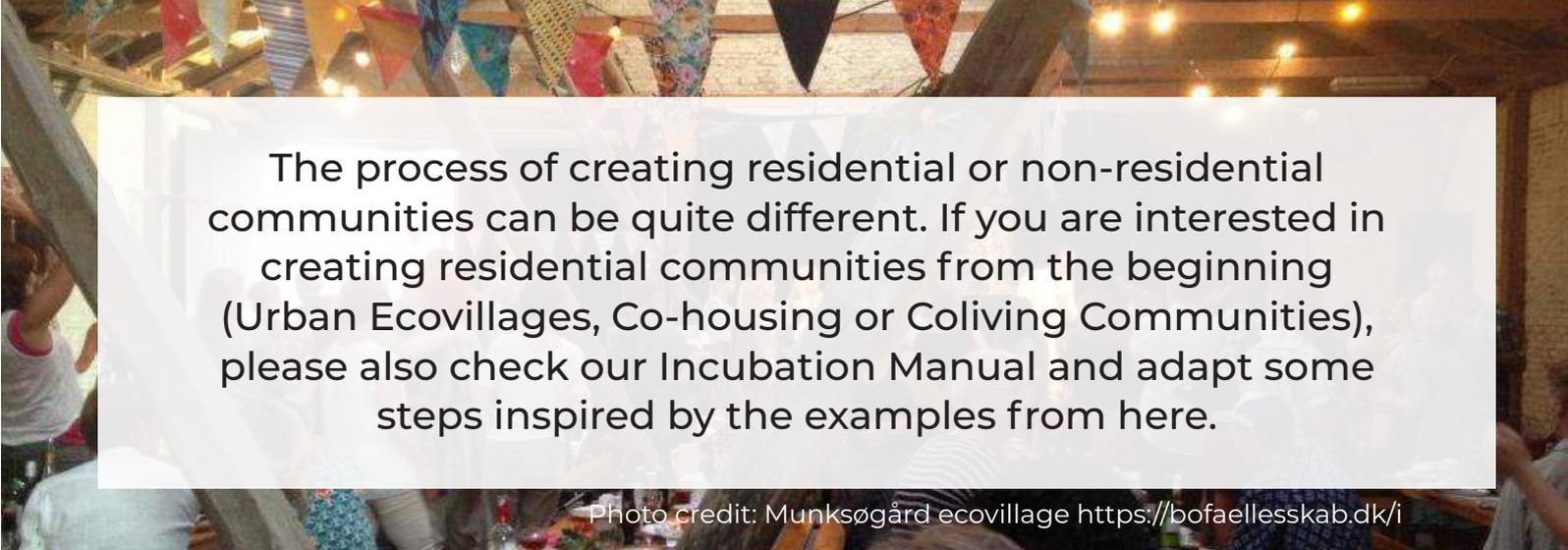


Photo credit:
Munksøgård ecovillage
Bofællesskab.dk





The process of creating residential or non-residential communities can be quite different. If you are interested in creating residential communities from the beginning (Urban Ecovillages, Co-housing or Coliving Communities), please also check our Incubation Manual and adapt some steps inspired by the examples from here.

Photo credit: Munksøgård ecovillage <https://bofaelleskab.dk/>

TO START A TRANSITION NEIGHBOURHOOD OR A REGENERATIVE COMMUNITY-LED URBAN INITIATIVE

1. Form an initiating group

It all begins when people get together to share their dreams and ideas. We can often feel lonely and helpless in the face of the size of our dreams or the changes we need to make in order to live in a more pleasurable, healthy, and sustainable way. Remember, together we are stronger!

1.1. Share your ideas with friends, family, partners and neighbours. Invite people to create and/or contribute to an urban community-led initiative.

1.2. Organize meetings to bring people together.

Besides a space for people to get to know each other and for more informal conversations, we suggest that, at some point, you create a

safe space for deep sharing. This can be done in many different ways. Here are some methodologies that can be useful:

Sharing circle with a talking stick - hold a sharing circle to create space for each person to bring him/her vision/dream/ideas and/or needs.

The sharing circle is a traditional practice in Native American communities adopted by many intentional communities. It is designed to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to share their opinions and ideas.

The talking stick is a special tool that gives each participant the opportunity to 'speak from the heart'.

In a sharing circle, only the person holding the talking stick is allowed to speak. When someone speaks, the others are invited to listen deeply and to hold the space.



The idea of the Sharing Circle is that everyone is heard and has a chance to share⁵.

- Dreaming circle - make a dreaming circle to hear and integrate the dreams from all participants.

How to make a dreaming circle?
(from Dragon Dreaming⁶)

<http://www.dragondreaming.org/wp-content/uploads/Fact-Sheet-Number-10-Dreaming-Circle.pdf>

1.3. Find out what this specific group wants to co-create together - What is the group's purpose?

1.4. Re-design your initial idea/dream to include all the other perspectives.

Now it is a group initiative everyone can commit to because it involves the common dream of this group of people.

Suggested Trainings:

Group Facilitation; Participatory Governance and Decision Making Processes (Sociocracy, Consensus);

Communication Skills (Non-violent communication, collaborative communication); Conflict Management; Dragon Dreaming; Transition Training (depending on what is available in your region and on the group's needs).

2. Create the group common ground & rhythm

Now that you have already found a group with the community spark and the will to invest energy and time in creating a project/initiative together, it is time to work on the basic group agreements and, if the group is ready, the vision statement, mission and goals. It will all support the group in the manifestation of the dream / implementation of the project.

It is also time to decide about the common rhythm - when is the group going to meet (every week? twice a month?) and where? Prepare the initial group schedule.

⁵ Indigenous Education:

<https://www3.sd71.bc.ca/School/abed/resources/teacher/Pages/Talking-Stick-and-Talking-Circle-Lessons.aspx>

⁶ Dragon Dreaming is a systemic design process, a philosophy and a methodological framework, for the realisation of collaborative and sustainable projects. <http://www.dragondreaming.org>



Photo credit:
As One Network
Suzuka Community



3. Get others involved

3.1. Map your neighbourhood / region (multiple stakeholders).

When starting a project it is very good to know who you could count on as partner organizations and supporters. Who is doing similar work in the area? Who should we invite to participate? Who has abilities that we might need in the group? Remember that the more diversity in the group the better. And with more connections, the project will grow stronger.

Usually there is much more going on in urban areas and more possible links. So we suggest you map your system in the very beginning. This is a big difference between building rural and urban communities: there can be much more mapping and alliance building in the urban context.

Mapping Tools: GEN Design Cards, Systemic Constellation exercises, live mapping exercises.

3.2. Organize public events (to share ideas and invite others to join)

3.2.1. Use participatory methodologies to create engagement. This is a crucial aspect in any community project. People

need to feel that they are part of the process, that their ideas are valuable. And, we need everyone to make it happen!

Suggested methodologies: Open Space Technology⁷ / World Café⁸

In GEN, we recommend that you actively work with the 4 dimensions of regeneration: social, ecological, economic and cultural so it is good if you can include all these aspects in your events.

4. Study! participate in trainings

Usually, new abilities are necessary in order to move on. So we suggest you and your group participate in trainings or even organise specific trainings that can bring useful knowledge and tools for working together. It can also be a space to share knowledge within the group or to study together to deepen a specific theme.

It will empower the group and can also bring more people to the initiative.

this is something that can be done during the whole process and will depend on the group's needs.

⁸ Open Space Technology: <https://www.openspaceworld.com/>

⁷ The World Café: <http://www.theworldcafe.com/>



Photo credit:
Los Angeles
Eco-Village:





5. Develop skills to live and work well TOGETHER

From the very beginning you will notice that some facilitation skills are necessary in order to organize the meetings, hold the space for the group, and make the conversations flow in the most appropriate way. If you are not used to this role, we recommend you to enroll in a group facilitation training, to read about it and/or to talk to other facilitators to share useful tools.

It is also important to learn about participatory governance and decision-making processes. It will empower the group and give you good tools to move forward. There are different possibilities for different purposes. Choose the most appropriate for your group. We suggest you read about Sociocracy, Holacracy, Consensus and Deep Democracy.

In order to live in harmony with a diverse group, you will probably need to improve your communication skills and to study

about conflict management. There are also specific tools that can support you in that, such as the Non-violent communication approach and the restorative circles.

6. Create working groups

The working groups will depend on the group goals and abilities.

6.1. Map the group interests and abilities

It is much easier to work together if you know who you can count on and what specifically each person loves doing and would like to contribute.

6.2. List the activities needed in order to implement the project/dream.

6.3. Decide who will be taking each task and who are the working teams.

The number of groups and the number of people involved in each group will depend on how many people are involved in the project, their wishes and abilities.



Photo credit:
As One Network
Suzuka Community



7. Deepen relationships

This is a key aspect in building community!

When we feel connected to other people and care about them we also become more flexible about our differences.

A good option is to invest in being together in different contexts and situations, to get to know the other's life history, his/her personal challenges and potential. And most of all, be open to listen, to share and to co-create together.

8. Develop projects & practical activities

This is the time to move from theory to practice, manifesting the dream. Through projects and practical activities you will gain visibility and it will probably attract more people to join the group.

How to develop a community project? What kind of project? Example: DD Methodology http://www.dragondreaming.org/wp-content/uploads/DragonDreaming_eBook_english_V02.09.pdf

Here, again, it is important to develop projects and activities in all dimensions: social, ecological, economic and cultural.

9. Make Alliances & Partnerships

Strengthen the group and the project.

Gain more visibility. Connections are vital in urban initiatives!

9.1. Connect to other groups, projects, organizations and networks that are doing similar work. Share experiences.

9.2 Build bridges of collaboration (Invite them to join/co-develop a project together).

10. Evaluate & Celebrate

Reflect, evaluate, improve, re-design, promote, re-energize, celebrate (feedback loops).

Both Sociocracy and Dragon Dreaming have nice approaches on how to evaluate and celebrate. We recommend you to have a look in their materials.



Photo credit:
Transition Granja Viana



11. Expand / Scale up

Going beyond the initial dream. Further develop existing projects. New dreams / new projects / new partnerships.

12. Inner & Outer Transition

There are so many things to learn, to reflect on and reevaluate, to change or adapt in order to be able to live in harmony with 'the community of life' and to co-create regenerative communities that we make this last point here: the transition is both internal and external, it is systemic!

During the years, the Transition Network developed a specific training on inner transition, for example, that we recommend.

More information:

<https://transitionnetwork.org/do-transition/training/trainings/inner-transition-workshop/>

It is also interesting to have a look at John Fisher's model of personal change - The Personal Transition Curve (FISHER, 2012)⁹ and see if you can find any similarity with your own transition process. It is a great analysis of how individuals deal with personal change.

To access Fisher's personal transition curve and have more information:

<http://www.businessballs.com/personalchangeprocess.htm>



The Regeneration Group¹⁰, a group of pioneers on regenerative development, used to say that regenerative practitioners must engage simultaneously in a three-dimensional work. The first one is

¹⁰ <https://regenerationgroup.com/>

related to self development; the second is to grow as a community, as a team; and the third, to improve the health of the system as we can visualize in the figure below, inspired by Regeneration Group work.



“Regenerative development is grounded in a belief that we cannot make the outer transformations we envision for the world without making inner transformations in how we think and who we are able to be.”

(from Regenerative Development & Design)

We hope that this manual can be useful in your transition process and in supporting the co-creation of regenerative communities worldwide!



Photo credit:
As One Network
Suzuka Community



PROPOSED EXERCISES:



Photo credit:
T.E.R.R.A.

Storytelling

Offer opportunities for people to map and tell their stories

Mapping tools

Understand your context.
Live mapping exercises,
GEN Design Cards.

Inventory of assets

Use asset-based community development

Timeline in addition to map

Help people understand and hold longer term vision.

Creative exercises

Use collective intelligence

Constellation exercises

4 Voices: 1.citizens / individuals; 2.civic managers; 3. business or innovators; 4.civil society (3rd sector).

Let each one tell his/her story.
Always ask who else should be there (from Marilyn Hamilton - Integral Cities).
OR Government, Academia, Business and Civil Society



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Local Resilience Assessment
Roots of Equity and Resilience
Download from:
<http://rootedinresilience.org/programs/communities-for-resilience/toolkit/>



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