

THE GLOBAL ECOVILLAGE NETWORK
DESIGN CARDS

INSTRUCTIONS



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NETWORK

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The Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) was founded in 1995 to connect communities that regenerate their social and natural environments. Today, GEN reaches out to around 6100 communities on all continents - intentional or traditional, rural or urban ecovillages with vibrant social structures, vastly diverse, yet united in their actions towards low-impact, high-quality lifestyles. We have learned 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 holistic design approach to sustainability and regeneration
- Actively restoring and regenerating life systems

These Ecovillage Design Cards are a flexible and creative way to explore that holistic and participatory approach through the Ecovillage Map of Regeneration. The 32 cards illustrate and distill years of experimentation and learning within our global network, as well as current research on resilience, sustainability and participatory design. They are also the fruit of GEN's longstanding collaboration with Gaia

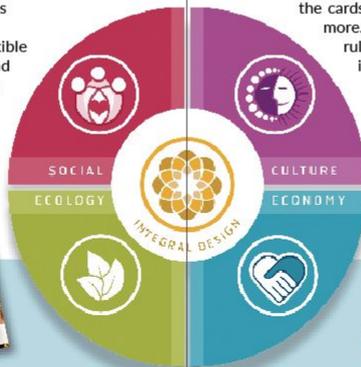


Education, a world leader in education for sustainability, and of our shared commitment to develop and promote holistic, community-led approaches to resilience and thriving on planet Earth.

The cards are divided into five groups - four areas of regeneration (culture, economy, ecology and social) arranged around a central path of integration (integral design). In each area, you find a number of cards, each one representing one of 32 Ecovillage Principles. Together, they make up a tool for play, reflection, dialogue, learning, research and design - for individuals, groups, projects, organisations and communities. This booklet contains inspiration and instructions for some ways of using the cards, and our warmest invitation to innovate and create more. There are many ways to use the cards and no set rules or limitations, so allow your imagination to flow, innovate, and have fun creating the more beautiful world we all know is possible.

To find out more about the Global Ecovillage Network, see www.ecovillage.org

For feedback or questions about the cards as well as upcoming translations, contact gen-cards@ecovillage.org



SOME NOTES ON PICKING CARDS

Many activities involve participants picking one or several cards from the deck. This can be done in different ways. The cards can be face up or face down, they can be spread out on the floor or a table, randomly or grouped according to area, they can be hung on walls or spread throughout a room, or simply pulled at random from the deck.

Sometimes, it might be more interesting for participants to intuitively choose a card without knowing which one it is. If that is the case, encourage participants to be drawn to a card. It might also be more effective to present the cards face down so that their content is unknown. At other times, it could be more suitable to study and select a card based on analysis and conscious choice. It is really up to you as a facilitator or participant to play and decide what works best for you!

EXPLORING THE CARDS

PRESENT-A-CARD

This is one way for a group to familiarise itself with the cards, to see and hear all participants speak, and to start reflecting and sharing about the significance of the ecovillage principles. Each participant picks one or several card(s) and introduces it to the group. The introduction can be speaking the principle out loud and/or showing the card to the group, as well as a longer reflection or sharing. The reflection can be free-form or responding to specific questions or directions given by the facilitator or decided by the group. Some examples can be:

- How is this card relevant in your life/project/community/region and/or planet right now?
- What does the image on the card evoke in you?
- Share an experience from your life related to the principle on the card
- Describe three solutions or ways of addressing the principle on the card
- How does this principle benefit the nonhuman world? How about the human?

- What would be the consequences of applying this principle in your life/project/community/region/planet Earth?
- Name one thing that you or your project does well in relation to this principle, and one thing where you could improve

CARD ART

Pick a card, individually or in a group. Express it through a story, poem, skit, song, dance, painting, sculpture or other form of creative art.

GUESS THE PRINCIPLE

Pick a card but do not show it to anyone else. Describe, enact or illustrate the image and principle without using the actual words. Have people guess which aspect of holistic sustainability the card is about. This can be done in pairs or groups. .

WORKING WITH ASSETS AND NEEDS

MAPPING

This activity uses the cards to give a quick visual image of assets and needs in an individual's life, in a community, or any other scale or collective the participants and facilitator choose to work with. The activity elicits information from the collective field which can be used as the beginning of a SWOT analysis, a collaborative design exercise, setting up peer-to-peer learning and more. It can be done once, or regularly as a way to keep track of how a project or community develops.

Mapping needs two different kinds of objects that participants use to indicate whether a card represents an asset or a need. Examples can be black and white stones, green and red leaves, a stone and a seed, post-its of different colours, or something similar. Each participant needs a set number of each kind, usually three of each.

It also needs to be clear which assets and needs are being mapped - is it an exercise to better understand a concrete project, the state of the world, the skills and knowledge gaps in a group, or something else? Another way to talk about assets and needs is as things we do well and things that could improve or are missing, or simply strengths and weaknesses.

Start by laying out the map of regeneration on the floor or a table by placing the cards face up, grouped in areas with integral design in the middle. Make it very clear which assets and needs are being mapped. Participants then walk around in silence and place their objects for indicating 'asset' or 'need' respectively on the cards/principles that to them illustrate the strengths and weaknesses of the project, group or other that the activity is about. When everyone is done, gather around the mandala to observe and reflect on the result.

One way of reflecting on the cards and what they show in the mapping, is to make and fill in this small table of assets and needs together. In each field, simply indicate how many markers for assets and needs respectively there is in each area.

Dimension	Assets (number)	Needs (number)	Total (number)
SOCIAL			
CULTURAL			
ECONOMY			
ECOLOGY			
INTEGRAL DESIGN			

To see assets and needs in a table like this often brings unexpected insights, and clearly shows where there is more energy or interest in a group - no matter if it is expressed as an asset or as a need!

Here are some suggestions for what to ask or discuss with the group during mapping:

- What do you notice when you look at the cards now?
- Where do you see the most strengths/weaknesses? These cards can be seen as points of interest or 'leverage points' in the system. Building on them, or bringing more attention to them, is important for the system to evolve.

- Where do you see large numbers of strengths and weaknesses on the same card? These represent topics which the organisation or community are currently very conscious about. Usually, many conversations will be taking place about this topic already.
- Are there any cards that have no markers at all? These 'blind spots' are of particular interest - they signify areas that are not yet conscious to the community or organisation.
- What would be a way to use these assets to address the weaknesses?
- How would you change the design of your project using this information?

BUILDING ASSETS

- Choose a need and use cards from the same or other dimensions to brainstorm holistic solutions
- Identify assets and discuss how to build on them to increase the vitality, success and sustainability of a project and its contributions to the world
- Identify assets and needs, then use the assets to address or find solutions to the needs

PEERING UP

Use Mapping or any other method to identify participants' skills/ strengths and knowledge gaps/weaknesses. Pair up for peer-to- peer learning or co-coaching.

HOLISTIC THINKING

UNEXPECTED OPPORTUNITIES

Choose three cards, at random or by choice, and reflect on how each card presents challenges and opportunities to your life/project/community/ region/planet etc.

WILD DESIGN

1. Pick three cards at random and figure out how they are connected or affect each other.
2. Choose three cards and think of ways to combine them in a whole systems design.
3. Let each participant choose one card, reflect on it, and then find two or more other people with cards to talk the questions above

EXPANDING SOLUTIONS

Participants choose one card that is particularly relevant to them, then use cards from other areas of regeneration as prompts or challenges to design or think about how to address it in a more holistic way.

REFLECTION AND RESEARCH

REGENERATIVE GUIDANCE

Pick a card intuitively and read it as a message of particular relevance - what message and meaning does it carry in this particular time and situation? Share with a peer or the group.

QUICK REFLECTIONS

Pick a card, reflect, and share with a peer or group about its significance - for the individual, community, project or planet, focussing on challenges, solutions or anything else of relevance.

PRINCIPLED RESEARCH

The cards can be used as research areas for participants to explore. The method and depth of exploration will vary with the time available. It could be an afternoon, or perhaps the basis of a whole year of mapping and understanding a particular project or region.

To start, participants chose a card, individually, in pairs or in groups, and investigate their community, project, bioregion or other relevant unit in relation to the principle on the card. What is happening related to the principle? What is not happening? Why? What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats? Who are the key actors, champions, stakeholders or gatekeepers? Are there any clear links to other cards/principles? Let the purpose of the research dictate how it is presented or documented.

AREA DEEP-DIVE

For this activity, participants split into groups to explore the different areas. One way of forming groups is by walking around with the full Map of Regeneration laid out on the floor and stopping in front of an area that is particularly interesting, attractive or perhaps even disturbing to the individual participant. The people who chose the same area form a group.

Each group then reflects, discusses or analyses their chosen area in relation to the or project under investigation. Topics for discussion can be what is going well, what might need focus or energy, where there are opportunities for growth - or any other questions listed in other activities or relevant to the participants and the area.

One way to harvest insights if participants are working on a common project, is for participants to write their main points on post-it notes. The post-its can then be placed on a large paper grouped according to area. This way, everyone can easily read and reflect on the insights of their peers. The paper can also become a good starting point for further explorations and design exercises. Repeating the Area Deep-Dive can also be a way to track the development of a community or project.

