

24 June 1998



GLOBAL ECO-VILLAGE NETWORK

Dear community member

I write to introduce the Global Eco-village Network (GEN), and enclose some information on our aims and activities. We are essentially a networking organisation aiming to share information relevant to eco-villages and sustainable communities. We are not a profit making venture, nor aligned to any political party or religious group. Our backing comes largely from a charitable trust in Denmark.

Here in the Oceania/Asia secretariat of GEN we have since our inception been spending much time liaising with communities and projects in Asia, identifying where we can help each other. The information we have built up over the last few years has been shared around the world via GEN's global network and web site (which now receives an average of 500,000 hits a month).

We have been successful in bringing the issues of sustainable settlements to the attention of the 'mainstream' worldwide, and are now a partner to the United Nations in their Best Practices Database and Local Leadership Programme (BLP). This programme aims to identify 'best practice' in issues related to human settlements, such as wastewater treatment, town planning, and community empowerment. The UN is creating a extensive database of such initiatives and sponsor an annual award to encourage submissions. GEN is now on the steering committee which consists of 15 institutions and networks well known for their role in promoting sustainable human settlements.

We are now looking to increase our database of resources, eco-communities and eco-villages in Australia and New Zealand. It is with this aim in mind that I am writing to you. We have enclosed a questionnaire that we would very much appreciate if you would complete and return to us in the stamped self addressed envelope we include. While we would like to share this information with others as necessary we will not do so unless we have your permission - you will note that on the enclosed questionnaire there is a place where you can indicate your decision on this issue. If you do not want the information to be generally shared we will not pass out contact or other information to enquirers, but will continue to treat you as a full member of GEN.

As a network we offer several benefits to members:

- Lobbying power (and the more members we have the stronger our voice). The governments and councils of this world need to hear what we are all doing, what our needs are in terms of legislation restrictions, what our combined support could do for the solar power industry, and so much more.

WEB address: <http://www.gaia.org>

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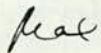
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100% recycled paper

- We know that the solutions to many of today's problems can be found in the Multiple Occupancy settlements, the communities and villages around the world. We are sharing information on successful communities, eco-logical businesses, products, contacts, etc.
- Discounted space on our web site for eco-communities who fill out our self-audit, or we can link to existing community web sites.
- Income generating opportunities - in the way of shared information on successful businesses, and also some communities may be interested in getting involved in hosting international students doing community study subjects. This is a programme we are developing at present, having already hosted one group from a university in the USA.
- A regular quarterly newsletter updates members on our activities and can be used as a networking tool by members - we offer free advertising (in moderation!) to eco-villages and eco-communities.
- Members are eligible for discounts on some GEN courses and on GEN merchandise.

However, to my mind the most important reason for joining GEN is because you, too, want to contribute to a better future for all of us, to help create a sustainable and environmentally sound future. I hope you will join with us in our attempts to change the direction of government and big business thinking, and spread the word on the many successful examples of ecological living around the world.

I hope to hear from you soon.

Yours sincerely



MAX O LINDEGGER
Regional Co-ordinator
GEN Oceania/Asia

encs

Name of contact person(s) Peter Hamilton

Address: (Please include name of community/village) Pan Community Council
1150 Patterson St., Byron Bay 2481

Tel:

Fax:

Email:

Web page:.....

Nearest larger town/city:.....

Number of residents: Adults

Children under 16 years old.....

Visitors welcome?

WWOOF host?.....

Property/village/community size: ha acres

Date started:.....

Community/Village history

(Could you give us an outline of 'the early days', how you started, the key ingredients which made the community what it is today - positive and/or negative....)

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Community energy sources and use:

(Are you on mains power, using solar, how do you deal with refrigeration? We particularly like to hear of innovations, successes, ways you 'make do'....)

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Community glue, spirituality, rituals and celebrations

(Please describe what your community see as the things you have in common, the times you gather together, how you meet....)

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Food, water and shelter

(How much of the food you consume do you grow, do you have control over your water, do you grow organically, produce surplus, what are the preferred building techniques....)

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Outreach

(Do you run workshops, courses, have you published books or distribute a newsletter...)

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Work/economy

(Tell us, please, about businesses the community and community members operate. How do people make a living? Do you use LETS or similar schemes? Did anyone get 'kick start' funding from government, or finance their operation in an innovative way? Do you have any tips for sources of funding/government services available that we can pass on to other communities?....)

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Can we publish the above information?

☐ Yes! Go right ahead! ☐ No. Please keep the above information private.

Would you like us to post you the Community Sustainability Assessment Checklist?

☐ Yes, please. ☐ No.

Signed:

Date:

The GEN Annual Report 1997



While visiting Southern Africa last autumn I had the opportunity to look back over two years of activity in the Global Eco-village Network (GEN). Even if the preparatory work started some years earlier, it was following the conference "Eco-villages and Sustainable Communities, models for the 21st century" at the Findhorn Foundation, Scotland in October 1995 that the Global Eco-village Network (GEN) was established with an International secretariat in Denmark, and three regional secretariats in the USA, Australia, and Germany, each with the clear mandate of building up regional and national networks and cooperation across the regions. Linking these people and projects is one of the primary functions of GEN, the next stage being the formation of partnerships and cooperation at local, national and international levels that can more effectively implement sustainable community development.

The eco-village concept answers a seeking in society. In 1991 Robert and Diane Gilman wrote in their landmark report on eco-villages: "There is hardly anything more appealing, yet apparently more elusive, for humankind at the end of the 20th century than the prospect of living in harmony with nature and with each other." Here, 7 years after Gaia Trust commissioned the report, we are in a better position to point people to projects where these ideals are being lived out in practice, serving as examples for others to build upon. Improving these models of sustainable community while at the same time broadening the network will remain a primary goal of GEN in coming years.

Due to the varying nature of each region the emphasis in each has differed. In Oceania and Asia the focus is on identifying projects and contact points; in the Americas, network nodes dotting the continent are in close communication and set to inaugurate the Eco-village Network of the Americas (ENA); in Europe there has been an emphasis on creating national networks that will be active in the regional network. Partnerships are being built at all levels of the network in pursuit of the goals of Agenda 21. Examples of secretariat activities and some of these partnerships appear throughout this report.

Courses at eco-village training centres, workshops on the road, and participation in international conferences have all made GEN better known. Eco-village design workshops

have proved useful, inspiring groups of diverse professionals to an increased awareness of the need for holistic design techniques and giving practitioners tools that are applicable to individual projects.

The level of interest in the GEN web site (www.gaia.org) has continued to rise. The number of "hits" to the eco-village web site has risen exponentially from under 800 per day in October 1995 to a present level of approx. 12,000 hits per day, making it "the premier site for eco-villages", to quote one of our contributors.

Email has become an increasingly common vehicle for communications to and among the secretariats, there are times when the staff have been hard pushed to respond to the volumes of new material appearing on the screens. Close to 20,000 messages were sent out from the secretariats' computers in 1997. Not to mention that with

mailing list technology many of these messages are reaching anything from 3 to 250 or more people.

Besides activities of informing and linking people interested in eco-villages, the GEN has a number of projects and working groups that act to provide better services for the network. These range from eco-village self-audits, student programmes for visiting community, video productions and fundraising. In the coming period an increased emphasis will be placed on educational curricula and programmes.

"...the eco-village concept has found such fertile ground, this can be attributed to the many people around the globe who have been pioneering ideas...often in isolation..."



(clockwise) Los Angeles Eco-Village, USA, grassroots urban community renewal (established 1983). Rammed earth building, Győrűfő Foundation, Hungary (est 1992). Dome house at Crystal Waters Permaculture Village, Australia (est 1982). Rapt listeners at local bank opening, Sarvodaya people's movement, Sri Lanka (est 1958).



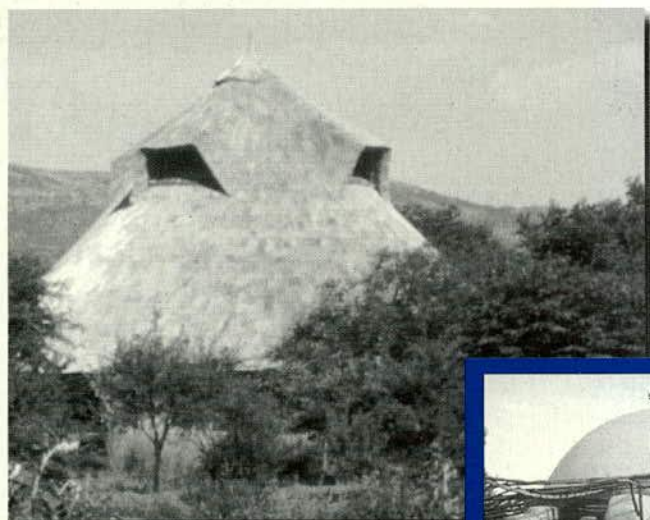
In building up the network it has been a privilege for each of the secretariats to have the opportunity to visit and link with community efforts around the globe. The enthusiasm that one meets is an inspiration and it is a pleasure to note how the circle of communities widens. Also worth remembering is that despite two very active years, the GEN is still a young organisation with the future before it and, as Albert Bates says, "the wind of absolute inevitability at our back."

Hamish Stewart, secretary GEN International

Tlholego and a glimpse of South Africa

The potential for designing sustainable communities when providing new settlements for large numbers of people, and contact to two eco-village initiatives were the primary reasons for choosing South Africa as the location for the board meeting of the Global Eco-village Network in October 1997.

Present day efforts to resettle and house the millions of "informal settlement" squatters and to provide jobs, livelihood, services and land tenure are possibly the single



Affordable housing at Tlholego



largest challenge facing the new South Africa. Policies of mobile labour, huge single sex hostels and being forced to leave women, children and dependent elders in the rural homeland villages, broke up family structure. The ultra mobile work force, rapid urbanisation, lack of land tenure, and living on hand-outs from the employer, gradually seem to have removed incentives for family food production. Gardening and self-reliance in food supply are skills that appear to have suffered under the apartheid regime.

Without housing, jobs, and a visible redistribution of the country's wealth from the richest 5 million, disaffection can easily set in. New settlements are being built at a tremendous rate. Low cost housing solutions have flooded in from all parts of the world, as foreign companies vie for position in this potentially lucrative market of 45 million people. And housing is being built as fast as circumstances will allow. Many of the developments are grid shaped layouts of half-acre lots stretching a kilometre or more in each direction, devoid of trees and vegetation and a dreary sight. The houses often scant minimums of corrugated iron that swing in temperature, surrounded by bare earth and a chain link fence. And yet it's home...

Efforts are underway in many parts of the country to promote other styles of development. To recreate village community, self-reliance, and maybe above all, a sense of pride and belonging in one's surroundings. The Tlholego (Tlhol-eko) development project is one such example.

It is situated to the west of Johannesburg at the end of the once mineral rich Megaliesberg escarpment in land that saw, and still holds the stone walled settlements of the wealthy Sotho kingdom that spread north-west in 1600.

There were more trees then, for cattle grazing has been heavy. And the land is arid. The farm of 700 acres is now a land trust and learning community for finding a balanced level of village lifestyle. It's home for a group of 25 people who are building up a centre for training in design of sustainable community.

Teaching themselves and others to build houses using modern techniques of unburnt brick and appropriate technologies of rainwater collection, compost toilets, grey-water irrigation and solar collectors. Gardens and tree-nurseries are an important facet of the community, and a model homestead demonstrates how the half-acre blocks can be both self-sufficient and productive. There's beauty too in occasional decoration on the houses, the design of spaces with shade and water, and a wide variety of plants.

The architectural style, with rounded shapes, colours of red lateritic soil and sun bleached thatch, contains the vernacular of ancient Africa and strikes an economic balance between the opulence of the fortified villas and the naked poverty of the shacks. This middle course with it's emphasis on affordability, reduced resource use and home productivity, offers hope in this time of challenge.

Not surprising in a formerly oppressed population, the cultural roots are still strong. Song and dance express the joy and solidarity of a country in the process of rebirth. School-children sing out and dance in a unison that would be the envy of any Danish school. And yet their school lacks so many facilities. The buildings stand stark in a bare field, far from other houses at the end of a long dirt track. The farm school for 300, draws children from surrounding farms and is probably typical of its type. A redesign of the school has been done and plans are in place for adopting some of the lessons learned in neighbouring Zimbabwe where school-children husband animals and develop gardening skills. Once again, part of the process of creating food security and self-reliance in a country that has almost lost the tradition.

It was encouraging to see the Danish agency, Cooperation for Environment and Development (DANCED), involved in funding government environmental policy and resource management, and many smaller grassroots projects. Also encouraging to hear of the interest and possible relevance to a country stepping out of feudalism, of Grundtvig, the 19th century Danish renaissance giant. Both poet and priest, he revolutionised adult and child education which in turn fostered cooperative movements, and a strong agricultural economy. The legacy is still visible in Danish social and environmental policies that are good models in the world today.

A short visit gives a limited picture, but from the 500 or so people we did workshops or presentations for and rubbed shoulders with, there was a sense of potential in the country, that said "We can do it". With contact points in the north and south of the country GEN will be following up opportunities for design, training and cooperation.

- Hamish Stewart

Tlholego, P.O. Box 1668, Rustenburg 0300, South Africa
Tel: +27 142 27090 email: vildev@iafrica.com

Russia GEN meeting, June 1997

Fifteen representatives from the GEN secretariats and selected eco-village projects gathered in June 1997 in St. Petersburg, Russia. The geographical spread of the GEN nodes and secretariats makes it a rare occasion when the staff and sponsors can get together and work out their plans for the coming year.

Among subjects on the agenda were:

- ▶ Meeting the challenge of a rapidly growing demand for information and services.
- ▶ The attitude of an initially "northern" network to North/South dialogue, including assisting in the establishment of networks in the Africa, Asia and South America regions. The regions will start by identifying 10 sites in the countries of the South.

This meeting was in addition a time for the secretariats to share news and ideas from their regions, and for clarifying GEN policies and agreeing on the information base.

Different working groups were created within GEN to work on subjects like: visioning, exchange with universities, rewriting the UN proposal, reworking the eco-village self-audit and coordinating fundraising.

GEN visits Russian eco-villages

The GEN group visited two embryonic Russian eco-villages, north and south of St. Petersburg, and took part in a larger conference where GEN representatives and some of the best known Russian projects shared experiences with an audience of 200 people.

The two projects that were visited have been part of the GEN network since its inception. The Nevo Ecoville project, at the north end of Lake Ladoga, 6 hours north of St. Petersburg, is making good progress, having built 4 houses in the last 18 months. The project is situated in Karelia, just south of the Finnish border, in exquisite lake country with great tourist potential. Rysovo village, which lies 7 hours south of St. Petersburg, is still in the early stages of development but has a large group of supporters in St. Petersburg who move onto the land in the summer.

In general, there is an optimism that the concept of ecological communities could spread widely in Russia if promoted in the right way. Thousands of villages are still self-sufficient in providing their basic needs. The question is what development path they will choose to follow? The Russian communities will be staying in touch with one another and in cooperation with the GEN Europe secretariat and the Sacred Earth Network will explore plans for forming a Russian Eco-village Network in the future. *Contact GEN Europe for more information.*

The Sacred Earth Network

*The Sacred Earth Network's mission is to inspire and empower activism in defence of the biosphere. Much of their activity is in the former Soviet Union providing communication equipment and support to environmental groups. The Sacred Earth Network, 267 East Street, Petersham, MA 01366, USA
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email: sacredearth@igc.org <http://www.igc.apc.org/sen/>*

Permaculture as a seed for building eco-villages

Permaculture is the conscious design and maintenance of agriculturally productive ecosystems which have the diversity, stability and resilience of natural eco-systems. It is the harmonious integration of landscape and people supplying their food, energy, shelter and other material and non-material needs in a sustainable way. Without sustainable agriculture there is no possibility of a sustainable social order. Permaculture Design Courses (PDC's) can be an important first step in the creation of an eco-village.

A Permaculture support programme was started by Gaia Villages in 1994 and assistance has been given to 31 PDC's in 19 countries in the period 1994-1997. A total of US\$ 24,000 has been available each year for the programme and courses have been held in Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary, Turkey, Israel, Russia, Belarus, Sri Lanka, Uganda, Senegal, Mexico, Guatemala, Columbia, Peru, Ecuador, Argentina, Brazil and Cuba. Courses are arranged for Cambodia, Cameroon, Kenya and Ghana as part of the ongoing programme. Gaia Villages has co-funded courses with DANIDA (Danish International Development Agency), SIDA (Swedish International Development Agency), AusAID, the Rotary Club, Institute of Soviet American Relations (ISAR), Permaculture Global Assistance Network (PGAN) and the Mexican government. Following the teaching of two courses, it is assumed that the beginnings of a local capability and network are in place. In other words, the courses are aimed at training local trainers to spread the concept of permaculture within their own countries and bioregions and following from this, the concept of eco-villages and sustainable living. *Contact GEN International for more information.*



Dike-pond system developed by the Shipibo on the Yarinacocha Lake, Peru.

Visions, definitions and the self-audit

The search for criteria of what constitutes an eco-village, and finding tools for evaluating the process of creating a full-featured community has become a central topic of debate within the Global Eco-village Network (GEN). The self-audit, which has been through several stages, is still being developed. Further work in 1998, particularly in making it more operational, will be coordinated by Linda Joseph.

Simultaneously with the development of the self-audit, working groups have produced affirmations and vision statements that seek to articulate the path to, and the ideal of a full-featured eco-village. Eco-village visions, definitions and audits are an ongoing process. As a contribution to this process Hildur Jackson has prepared a status of what has been done so far. *The paper can be seen as an invitation to discussion, and can be ordered from the GEN International secretariat.*

Global Ecovillage Network-Americas



The history of GEN in the Americas begins not with the Findhorn meeting in October 1995, but more than a year earlier, when Albert Bates began making fundraising calls, developing a newsletter and website, and writing grant proposals to create an ecovillage network in North America. In the summer and fall of 1994, Albert and his son, Will, travelled across North America, stopping at ecological settlements in a variety of locations, photographing and videotaping model communities, and soliciting early members to found a network. The first newsletter of ENNA — for "Ecovillage Network of North America" appeared in the Spring of 1995.

Following the successful Findhorn conference, ENNA became the Ecovillage Network of the Americas (ENA) and held its first organisational meetings. The quarterly journal and website became the Design Exchange. The GEN-Americas secretariat which is the link to ENA participated in the PrepCom meetings for Habitat II at the United Nations in New York and promoted the idea of ENA on college campuses, to various civic groups, and at meetings of the Communal Studies Association, the National Association of Student Co-ops, the Bioregional Congress of the Americas, the Society for Utopian Studies and the Fellowship for Intentional Communities. Relevant articles were published in journals such as Communities Magazine, the Permaculture Activist, and the Permaculture International Journal.

In 1996, the GEN-Americas office hosted GEN's board meeting at The Farm in Tennessee and participated with the other regions in hosting a major exhibit at Habitat II in Istanbul. Albert Bates extended his trip to Turkey by going on to the Middle East, visiting green kibbutz and eco-settlements in Israel, Egypt, and the Palestinian Territory. GEN-Americas participated in the GEN meeting at Crystal Waters, Australia and the Sixth International Permaculture Conference in Perth. In all, the secretariat staff travelled more than 100,000 miles for GEN in 1996, and the television footage taken on the road has since been turned into a number of useful productions, used not only by GEN but also provided to commercial broadcasters such as CNN. The three-minute GEN videotape produced for Habitat II is now available in eight languages.

There are many ENA regional projects that commend themselves for immediate funding and GEN-Americas has worked to locate sponsors for the free hospital at

Gesundheit!; the Bimini Hot Springs at LA EcoVillage; the Gaia Asociación community farm; and the Sirius Conference Center to name a few. We have also made grant proposals to support the green kibbutz programme in Israel and projects in Russia on behalf of GEN. In 1997 we assisted in winning small grants for La Perla del Golfo in México and Sarvodaya in Sri Lanka. We nominated Luna Nueva, a women's development cooperative in México, for a share of the \$150,000 Right Livelihood Award and worked with the Huehucoyotl ecoaldea on a \$75,000 grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. We are also concentrating on foundation support for building ENA as an organisation.

Through the fall and winter of 1996, ENA node offices were springing up in California, Colorado, Massachusetts, Ontario, and Central and South America. At three meetings in 1997, the GEN-Americas secretariat brought together an ENA core committee to draft mission and vision statements, to agree on an organisational structure, and to devise the means to sustain ENA as a corporation. ENA is now centred around a great council, the Consejo de las Americas, made up of representatives of national networks like the Ecovillage Network of Canada, Rede Global de Ecovilas Brasil, Gaia Asociación Argentina, and



ENA steering committee in Mexico, anticlockwise from left: Bea Briggs, USA; Kailash, USA; Linda Joseph, USA; Nathaniel White, USA; Giovanni Ciarlo, Mexico; Jeff Clearwater, USA; Michael Lee, USA; Joan Thomas, USA; Laura Casteneda, Mexico; Francisco Sanchez, Mexico; Gustavo Ramirez, Argentina; Alberto Ruz Buenfil, Venezuela; Silvia Bolado, Argentina; Corinna Bloom, USA; Liora Adler, Venezuela.

the Red de Ecoaldeas de México. The ENA committee met most recently in México in January 1998. Albert and others in the GEN-Americas office travelled more than 200,000 miles in 1997, visiting and documenting many more communities in North America and representing GEN and ENA at meetings and events in México, Belize, Russia, Iceland, Korea, Scotland, Brazil, England and South Africa.

- Albert Bates
secretary GEN Americas

Huehucoyotl A.C., Mexico

Huehucoyotl Eco-village A.C. was founded in 1982 by a group of people of various nationalities, many of whom had been working in a travelling theatre company "The Illuminated Elephants Travelling Gypsy Company". The project now numbers 20 permanent residents and many more who stay for longer durations, who provide education and training workshops, retreats and events to people who wish to explore sustainable lifestyles, healing methods and spiritual practice. The village has a special relationship with the nearby community of traditional Nahuatl Indians who live in extreme poverty and is a focussing centre for local arts and crafts, the use of appropriate technology, consensus decision making and permaculture. Visitors are usually welcome and are expected to take part in the daily work routine of Huehucoyotl for between 2-4 hours a day. Contact: Huehucoyotl A.C., Apartado 111, Tepoztlán, Morelos 62520, Mexico
email: huehue@laneta.apc.org <http://members.aol.com/Huecoyotl/Huehucoyotl.html>

GEN Europe (GEN-E)



The eco-village movement is new, but is spreading very quickly in Europe. When the GEN-Europe office was started in spring 1996, there were only eco-village networks in Denmark, Germany and Israel. Now at the end of 1997 there are new networks in a further 6 countries: Finland had its first meeting in June 1997, under the auspices of the Permaculture Association of Finland; France in August 1997; Ireland just lately, in October 1997; Italy was founded as a network at a meeting in Allesano in December 1996 and experienced very quick growth; the Eco-Village Network, United Kingdom (EVNUK), has been meeting and net-working since mid-1996 and is generating a great amount of interest; whereas Russia, which has had an information office in St. Petersburg since 1995 is still struggling due to economic reasons - although there are 25 to 30 eco-villages on the ground and a cooperation with the Sacred Earth Network in Moscow is nearly complete.

GEN-E has contact persons living in eco-villages or starting information nodes in 14 other European countries: Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Hungary, Iceland, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Turkey.

The eco-village movement invites us all to say YES to a way of living which addresses the critical issues of living sustainably and enables us to live together with respect for nature. As eco-village models become established and the movement matures the result will be the ecological rejuvenation of our cities, towns, suburbs and villages. The urban co-housing in Denmark, Norway and Sweden and the cost-effective ecological settlements in Austria, the Netherlands, Germany, Greece and Switzerland are the tiniest beginnings to this mightiest of challenges.

The strength of interest in this concept and the number of projects on the drawing board is phenomenal. Due to the large number of enquiries GEN Europe receives, we are making a directory of the several hundred European eco-villages. This directory will be in English, containing



(clockwise) Rental social housing constructed from earth bricks and timber, in Hjortshøj a Danish eco-village. Half-timbered, thatched adobe house, at Győrújfő eco-village in Hungary. Ecological housing from reclaimed whisky barrels at the Findhorn Foundation Community, Scotland.

descriptions and photos of eco-villages in Europe and will be available by Easter 1998.

An Eco-village Training Centre has been started, based at Lebensgarten, Germany, the home of the GEN-E secretariat. Beginning in 1998, a series of courses directed at participants from all over Europe will be offered under the general heading: *How to start an eco-village?* The programme consists of 6 courses, each of which focuses on a different aspect of eco-village structure. Courses offered include: eco-village design, fundraising, living in community, eco-village economics, and earth cellar building. They may be attended separately. *Individuals and organisations are welcome to attend, contact GEN-Europe for a full course description and registration information.*

GEN-Europe has applied for registration under the charitable organisation act in Belgium and is awaiting acceptance. In the meantime it is functioning as a members association under the umbrella of the Danish registered Global Eco-village Network. For the first two years we have been able to win Christina de Wilde, one of the founding members of the eco-village Terre d'Enneille near Brussels, to be our first President of the Council of GEN-Europe. Declan Kennedy will act as Secretary and Agnieszka Komoch as Treasurer. We aim at electing a further two members to the Council at the first General Assembly of the members of GEN-Europe, planned for 26-28 June 1998 in the eco-village Torri Superiore near Ventemiglia, Italy.

- Declan Kennedy
secretary GEN-Europe

Award to Danish eco-villages

In December 1997, prizes were awarded to 11 eco-village projects by the Danish Association of Sustainable Communities (LØS). The winner, Munkesøgård, received over US\$ 50.000 to assist with the development of an eco-village on the outskirts of Roskilde, near Copenhagen. This hundred house project was successful, not because it is innovative, but because it shows that eco-village lifestyles can be achieved in a modern suburban environment.

The funding for these awards, totalling over US\$ 130.000 was given by Gaia Trust a.m.b.a. and the Green Fund, in cooperation with the 5 government Ministries of Housing, Social, Interior, Culture and Environment/Energy. The quality of applications was so high that a book will be published in 1998 showing over 50 of the project proposals.

For information contact LØS. email: los@pip.dknet.dk Tel: +45 75 66 41 11 Fax: +45 75 66 41 21 <http://www.gaia.org/los>

Sólheimar

Sólheimar is a village in southern Iceland, located about 80 km from the country's capital, Reykjavík. Sesselja H. Sigmundsdóttir (1902-1974) founded Sólheimar on July 5th, 1930. It is the first community of its kind in the world, where so called able and disabled people live and work together. Sólheimar is also the first community in Scandinavia where organic cultivation was practiced. Today, it is a village with grounds of approximately 250 hectares, with 100 inhabitants, 40 of whom are disabled. Sólheimar prides itself on its varied cultural, social and sport activities. The project includes a child care centre, swimming-pool, jacuzzi, sauna, convenience store, gallery and gymnasium. A theatre group, founded in 1932, is also active along with a choir, sports club and Scout troop. We welcome visitors to our guesthouse which is open all year round. Please contact Solheimar, Grimsnes, Iceland Tel: +354 486 4430 Fax: +354 486 4427 email: solheima@smart.is <http://www.smart.is/solheimar/>

GEN Oceania and Asia (GENOA)



Our area which includes Asia, Oceania and South Africa is very large. It includes many lesser industrialised countries and all climatic zones. Cultures, religions and languages vary considerably and it is with an awareness of the need for sensitivity to these differences that the network has been established.

From the beginning we made it one of our priorities to visit people and projects, as we are aware that nothing can substitute face to face contact. An Australian communities meeting in Victoria was attended about 18 months ago, and during 1997 visits were made to the Philippines, Malaysia, India, Thailand, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Turkey, South Africa and Korea as well as places in Australia.

The enquiries we receive are often requests for general information, but an increasing portion of our mail expects specific information and requires at times considerable research. We have so far produced 6 issues of our newsletter which includes articles about eco-village projects and contacts in the Oceania region, current information about our secretariat activities, an events calendar, and news from the other regions... About 1600 copies are mailed (and emailed) around the Oceania region 4 times a year. The expanded GENOA web pages also help with the dissemination of information, back issues of newsletters and secretariat travel reports are just two of features which are appreciated by the many visitors to our web site.

Together with the other GEN secretariats a number of courses dealing specifically with eco-village design have been offered in USA, South Africa and Australia. In every case the courses have been fully booked and have been found to be useful to the many participants. Crystal Waters, the home base for GENOA, has over the last 8 years proven to be well suited as a centre for education related to sustainable living. It offers adequate teaching and accommodation facilities, has many examples of appropriate technology and Permaculture techniques for students to experience, and the beautiful surroundings offer an environment supportive of learning. Students from Pacific Lutheran University (USA) were at Crystal Waters on a study programme in January 1998. A semester course of 13 weeks is expected to take place in late 1998.

Besides participating in the major conferences at Findhorn, Scotland and Habitat II in Istanbul GENOA also attended the Eco-village Symposium in Seoul, Korea. Closer to home, in Australia, we were represented at the Agenda 21 "Pathways to Sustainability Conference" in Newcastle, the Catalyst Conference in Canberra, and the International Permaculture Conference in Perth. Conferences are a useful way to spread our message and to make contact with government representatives and academia as well as the grassroots movement.

Two of our regular GEN board meetings have been hosted within our region. The meeting at Crystal Waters in October '96 was arranged to coincide with the International Permaculture Conference in Perth, where GEN had a good presence. Our meeting in South Africa in October '97 carried over into two eco-village design workshops as well as a number of public lectures.

With the growing trend towards more ecological settlements we will need to expand and refine our educational and information programmes without losing our vision. The villages in the lesser industrialised countries deserve our support so that they may not only retain their culture, their songs, dances and stories but can make well informed choices about the technologies they want to use so that they may not need to leave their villages for an uncertain future at the fringes of the growing number of megacities.

Eco-village projects in countries with highly controlled town planning guidelines will need to be very convincing, well presented and documented if they are to be accepted by public authorities. There are positive indications that countries which suffer from rapid population drift to ever growing cities, will support eco-villages.

It can be expected that the demand for information and education will increase. Meeting the expectations will be a challenge.

The office of GEN Oceania and Asia is staffed by Val Oliver (4 days/week) as secretary, Robert Tap (1 day/week) for web pages and computer support and myself as regional coordinator.

- Max Lindegger

secretary GEN Oceania and Asia

Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement

The Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement (SSM) began as an educational experience in the mid-1950's, when a group of high school teachers in Colombo decided to translate their convictions into action. So successful have they been at mobilising people across cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds that they now reach 8,500 villages, have dove-tailing programmes of health, social care, rural technology, enterprise development, banking and education, and an extremely well practiced modus operandi for integrated village development. The movement combines provision of services, stimulation of self-reliance, and a strong connection to the religious and cultural strength of the people. Contact: Lamka Jathika Sarvodaya Shramadana Sangamaya (Inc.), "Damask Mandira", 90 Rawatawatta Road, Moratuwa, Sri Lanka Fax: +94 1 647084 <http://www.sarvodaya.org>

30th Birthday - Auroville, India

Auroville, the City of Dawn, was inaugurated in 1968 in south India, as a planned universal city of the future for fifty thousand people, at present about 1000 live there. Auroville began on a few thousand acres of barren coastal land and has over the years restored the eco-habitat towards a sustainable future. This unique experiment has been endorsed by the United Nations and other governmental and non-governmental organisations throughout the world. Visitors Centre, Auroville 605 101, India Tel: +91 413 62239 Fax: +91 413 62274 email: guests@auroville.org.in <http://www.auroville-india.org/>



Website News...

1997 saw increased use of the Global

Eco-village Network website (www.gaia.org). Statistics show that on average 3000+ pages are currently being served per day, this is up from approx. 200 hits per day when the site was launched in October 1996. The raw hit count on the gaia server is over 12,000 per day (1/3 million per month) and puts GEN in the 'heavy' traffic site category.

The site contains up to date eco-village news from around the world. Articles and networking information from secretariat newsletters, reactions, reports, and current status of GEN member eco-villages from Colorado to India. In addition there are hundreds of pages of eco-village related information, news, resources, links, calendar listings, member web pages and much more. The GEN server is in Westport, Ireland with Stephan Wik (stephan@gaia.org) handling tech support/development.

Due to high level of use and an increasingly out of date structure, we will be having the site redesigned to reflect the needs of our visitors while at the same time striving to identify and serve the needs of the GEN secretariat offices and the communities/individuals/organisations which they represent. We are aware that it is essential that electronic information contained in the site is presented in such a way that it is easily accessible by the secretariats and site visitors who often need information which can be downloaded and distributed in a non-electronic format. Visitors to the site should expect to see the new site structure and content "live" by the Summer of 1998. *We welcome suggestions as to how you would like to see the site developed. Contact content developer Heidi Wrighton (heidi@gaia.org) with comments.*

- ▶ You are invited to join - evannounce_1 - the emailing list for (GEN), which aims to make information on GEN more widely available. Send an email to requests@gaia.org with "subscribe evannounce_1" in the body of the message.
- ▶ Ecobalance is a discussion group dedicated to the creation and maintenance of self-sufficient, sustainable communities. To subscribe to the list: send an email to: requests@gaia.org with the words: "subscribe ecobalance" in the body of the message.

● Best Practices Database and Local Leadership Programme (BLP)

During a visit to Nairobi to the UN Commission on Human Settlements (UNCHS) agreement was made on GEN joining the steering committee behind the Best Practices Database and Local Leadership Programme (BLP). The BLP was launched as one of the key follow-up activities to the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and is designed to facilitate the implementation of the Habitat Agenda which resulted from that conference. The steering group presently consists of 15 institutions and networks well-known for their role in promoting sustainable human settlements.

GEN will take part in promoting the dissemination, sharing and exchange of lessons learned from the many

The GEN Website to be improved and restructured in Spring 1998...

best practices, and facilitate the transfer of the knowledge, experience and expertise associated with best practices in improving the living environment through cooperation on a north-north, north-south and south-south basis. *Please contact: Leadership Programme UNCHS(Habitat) P.O. Box 30030 Nairobi, Kenya <http://www.undp.org/un/habitat/practice/index.html>*

● Center for Respect of Life and the Environment (CRLE), Washington DC

CRLE has the aim of awakening people's ecological sensibilities and transforming lifestyles, institutional practices and social policies to support the community of life. The aims of CRLE are closely related to those of GEN in that they seek to identify approaches to economic and social development that recognise the links between ecology, spirituality and sustainability. Major programmes are the greening of academia, creating a global earth ethic through the Earth Charter and associated working groups and conferences, and promoting sustainable livelihoods and communities. Representatives of GEN and Gaia Trust took part in and co-sponsored an international conference in Assisi, Italy, in July 1997 focusing on the transformation of religion, economics, law, politics and education at the approach to the millennium. Further cooperation will be co-sponsorship with 4 other international community networking organisations of the Second International Sustainable Communities Forum, to be held in April of 1999 in New York, in conjunction with the 7th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. *For further information contact: CRLE, 2100 L Street NW, Washington DC 20037, USA <http://www.center1.com/crle.html>*

Community Studies programmes

GEN has started a cooperation with two groups in the USA whose aims are to create and sponsor programmes for university and college students to learn first hand about eco-villages, community and sustainability issues.

Pacific Lutheran University -

A programme developed by the Pacific Lutheran University, in cooperation with the Findhorn Foundation, has demonstrated that such initiatives are not only essential, but can attract and effectively educate participants, while providing new resources to communities. Students visited Crystal Waters, Australia, for a trial 3 week programme in January 1998, to be followed by a semester programme in September 1998. Students earn college credits studying psychology, human ecology, ecology and other subjects, and gain some insight into the challenges of attempting to live in a sustainable manner. *Contact Prof. Lawry Gold, 5835 Old Highway 410, Olympia, WA 98512, USA Tel: +1 360 866 6721 email: goldlb@plu.edu*

The Gaia Education Outreach Institute -

in cooperation with the University of New Hampshire, offers twice yearly International Communities Semesters that bring students to exemplary intentional communities in India (Auroville and Mitraniketan) and France (Plum Village). *For more info contact: Gaia Education Outreach Institute, Derbyshire Farm, Temple, NH 03084, USA Tel: +1 603 654-6705 email: geo@igc.org <http://www.ic.org/geo>*

Status of the "Earth is our Habitat" proposal

The Earth is our Habitat proposal for 50-70 demonstration eco-villages around the world, was created in connection with the UN Habitat II conference in 1996. The suggestion for a UN supported committee to further this proposal has been followed up on by GEN representatives at the following conferences in 1997: Earth Council Rio +5, UN Commission on Sustainable Development in New York and UN Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) 16th session in Nairobi. The feedback that came from this was that the idea of a UN committee is inappropriate and that we should look for project funding for the proposal.

Various channels have been explored, among them the Global Environment Fund (GEF), which was set up in the wake of the Rio summit in 1992 to support environmental efforts in the developing (and new Eastern European) countries. The biodiversity and climate change areas are those most applicable to eco-villages, though the International Waters focal area offers some possibilities for small island developing states (SIDS).

While we are not going to get \$100 million from the GEF for our 50-70 demonstration projects there looks like real potential for a few medium scale projects. We invite projects in developing countries that are interested in GEF funding to contact their nearest GEN secretariat.

The search for funding that would support outreach, demonstration and experimentation in eco-village projects in the North is an ongoing process, and will most likely find its solution on a national or regional basis. Funding from grantmakers and regional funds appear most promising for projects in the Americas and Europe, while national and international development agency support is available for parts of Asia and Africa. The same traditions do not exist in other parts of Asia and Oceania and self-funding must be found through subscriptions, education programmes, eco-tourism, trading and other activities.

Funding in 1997

GEN would like to thank the following for their support:

- ▶ Kellogg Foundation, US\$ 50.000 to the Ecovillage Training Center (EVTC) at The Farm. This generous donation enabled EVTC to run education and training courses and give scholarships to 77 students.
- ▶ Lebensgarten in Steyerberg, Germany received over US\$ 165.000 in government funding to assist them with their activities in connection with Expo 2000.
- ▶ In 1997, Gaia Villages supported GEN related activities with US\$ 600.000
- ▶ Gyûrûfû Alapítvány, one of the first eco-villages in Hungary, received nearly US\$ 160.000 for building common facilities and infrastructure on it's 250 hectare site in the south of the country. The funding was a partnership between Gyûrûfû, Gaia Trust a.m.b.a. and the European Union PHARE programme.

A lot has been achieved with very little. We accept donations gratefully.

*F*or millennia people have lived in communities close to nature. Many of these communities, or "eco-villages", exist to this day and we seek to support their struggle for survival.

In those parts of the world where an indigenous base has been destroyed, eco-villages are now being created intentionally so that people can live again in communities that are spiritually connected to the earth in a way that ensures the well being of all life forms into the indefinite future. - GEN Vision group 1997

GEN Secretariats addresses:

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GEN International secretariat

Skyumvej 101, 7752 Snedsted, Denmark Tel: +45 97 93 66 55
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We have the following resources available:

- GEN newsletters - Each region produces quarterly newsletters. Available from the relevant secretariat or on the internet.

GEN-America's newsletter "Design Exchange":
<http://dx.gaia.org/index.html>

GEN Oceania and Asia's newsletter:

<http://www.gaia.org/thegen/genoceania/newsletter/index.html>

GEN Europe's newsletter:

<http://www.gaia.org/thegen/geneurope/newsletter/index.html>

- Eco-village slideshow - 50 slides, from the USA to India, Australia to Scotland - with commentary. Shows a great variety of ways eco-villagers have found to rise to the challenge of living sustainably. US\$75 available from GEN International secretariat - email orders: simon@gaia.org

- What is an eco-village? A discussion paper on eco-village visions, definitions and audits, by Hildur Jackson, January 1998. (For a complete list of GEN reports and papers, contact the International secretariat in Denmark)

- Eco-village Self-Audit - try the GEN self-audit, a tool for measuring how sustainable your village is. Contact the secretariat in your region for a printed copy or:
<http://www.gaia.org/thegen/evaudit/index.html>

- Global Eco-village Network Resources - GEN offers a complete list of resources to assist those concerned with living for the 21st century. Contact the GEN International secretariat or see:
<http://www.gaia.org/links/index.html>

4 September 1997



GLOBAL ECO-VILLAGE NETWORK

Dear Reader

Please find enclosed issue 6 of our quarterly newsletter. We hope you enjoy it.

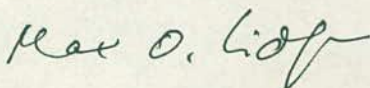
We created the newsletter to help spread information on eco-villages and related subject matter around our region. It has been getting some good comments from readers, for which we thank you! It is always good to get constructive feedback (and we are not averse to being complimented either!). Please feel free to write in with information and comments, and remember, we are always happy to include pleas for help/information etc in our "Wanted" column (preferably for a small donation - value to be determined by you).

While the other secretariats of GEN are focusing largely on getting information out on the internet, our region is one where large areas have little access to the electronic resources we take for granted in Australia. So our newsletter will continue to go out in print format to most of our subscribers. However, if you are connected to email, please consider receiving the newsletter this way, as it will save trees, print and postage costs.

A very big 'thank you' from us to those readers who have already subscribed to our newsletter - your donations have helped us keep the newsletter going, not to mention given us a morale boost! The newsletter has now been going for 18 months, and we feel it is time to review our mailing list. We initially sent out free newsletters to our entire list, but this is not a feasible financial option in the long term. We are also very anxious not to create junk mail and waste precious resources. We would therefore ask you to let us know whether you wish to continue receiving the newsletter. Please either send us the subscription form enclosed with your donation, or advise us in writing as to why you/your organisation should receive a complementary copy. If you don't wish to subscribe but have access to the internet, you will be able to keep up to date with our activities on our web page <http://www.gaia.org/thegen/gen-oceania/index.html>.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



MAX LINDEGGER
Regional Co-ordinator

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100% recycled paper.

✓ Bill Kidd.

- o The current Newsletter, Vol 1. Issue 6, contains a report on the m. Mobbs semi-autonomous house in urban Sydney.
- o Would you please link this to Ron Bais Home Page.

Thanks
Peter.

Order form



Please send me video(s) at \$14.95 each plus *\$3.10 p&p in Australia. I enclose my cheque for AU\$..... herewith.

*Note: Overseas purchasers - please enquire as to postage costs prior to placing order. Tel: +61 7 5494 4741, Fax: +61 7 5494 4578, email: lindegger@gen-oceania.org

Please make cheques payable in Australian dollars to the Global Eco-village Network. Send to: Global Eco-village Network (Oceania), 59 Crystal Waters, MS 16, Maleny Qld 4552, Australia.

Name:

Address:

Telephone/Fax/email:

Crystal Waters Eco-village Video

Crystal Waters Permaculture Village is a budding eco-village in SE Queensland, Australia. It is one of the 'seed' villages of the Global Eco-village Network.

There is a strong and growing demand for this kind of development. This 14 minute video shows that it is viable to build ecological settlements in terms of financial return and environmental desirability.

Includes coverage of:

- ◆ Eco-village concepts
- ◆ Design elements of Crystal Waters
- ◆ Environmentally friendly houses
- ◆ Permaculture gardens
- ◆ General footage of the 259 ha property

Plus a 12 page booklet providing more in-depth design information

Note: This is not intended as a 'how to' video, but as an example. We hope it inspires - please show it to a friend!

For more information on the Global Eco-village Network, contact: Max Lindegger, Regional Co-ordinator, Global Eco-village Network (Oceania), 59 Crystal Waters, MS 16, Maleny Qld 4552, Australia. Tel: +61 7 5494 4741, Fax: +61 7 5494 4578, email: lindegger@gen-oceania.org.