



GEN International Newsletter March 2015

Editorial: Celebrating 20 Years of the Global Ecovillage Network

Dear Friends of the Global Ecovillage Network!

We stand at a critical moment in Earth's history, a time when humanity must choose its future. To move forward we must recognise that, in the midst of a magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms, we are one human family and one Earth community with a common destiny. Established in Findhorn in 1995, the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) today connects more than 10,000 villages, urban neighbourhoods and intentional communities in more than 100 countries worldwide. Spanning all continents, GEN showcases high quality, low impact ways of living that have led to some of the lowest per capita footprints in the industrialised world, and a healthy integration of heritage and innovation in more traditional settings.

GEN has consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council. With its 20 years of experience, GEN has a wealth of inspiration to offer, emphasising local solutions to global challenges and demonstrating that the creation of a different world is possible!

As human beings living in community, not only is there no need for us to further destroy our beautiful planet, we are actually able to regenerate the very fabric of life around and within us. We can heal ecosystems: the waters, the soils, the atmosphere, forests, oceans, and coastlines. We can create sanctuaries for biodiversity to flourish again. We can heal social isolation and historic wounds, communicate across all sectors and divides and celebrate the wealth and diversity of our cultural heritage. We can create cyclic economies that serve environmental and societal wellbeing instead of the



Going beyond the 'green islands' or 'life boats' concept of its first decade, today the GEN is shifting into becoming a transformative knowledge network that works in close alliance with like-minded organisations and other sectors in order to optimise sustainable development strategies for whole societies.

In conjunction with Gaia Education, GEN has developed a set of trainings to facilitate the transition to resilience – learning journeys for change makers and design processes for communities to chart their own pathways into the future.

We thank all those who serve and contribute, nourish and use the Global Ecovillage Network in the service of a future worth living.

Thank you, Leticia Rigatti and ComunTierra for the videos of many of the GEN regions. You find them as hyperlinks in the headlines of the regions.

Kosha Anja Joubert, President GEN International
Leila Dregger, Jenefer Marquis, editors

maximisation of profit. When we pool the best of our intelligence and wisdom to these ends, we can shift from business as usual to an entirely new paradigm. We can live a new story.

With the regional networks GEN-Africa, GENOA (Asia and Oceania), the South and North American networks CASA and GEN-NA, GEN-Europe, GEN provides us with a direct link of friendship and understanding between people and projects from the North and South, East and West – a heart connection that enables us to feel that we are working towards solutions for one planet.

Read the editorial [here](#)

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GEN International



GEN+20 Summit in Findhorn: Celebrating 20 Years of the Global Ecovillage Network and 10 Years of Gaia Education

Sunday, 5th to Friday, 10th July 2015

Organised by GEN in partnership with Gaia Education, the Findhorn Foundation and New Findhorn Association, the GEN+20 Summit is an invitation to celebrate 20 years of walking our talk. At this conference, members from all regions – GEN-Africa, GENOA (Asia and Oceania), the South and North American networks CASA and ENA, GEN-Europe and NextGEN (the youth or next generation of GEN) – will present their work. GEN provides us with a direct link of friendship and understanding between people and projects from the North and South, East and West – a heart connection that enables us to feel that we are working together towards solutions for one planet.

Make a booking for the GEN+20 Summit today on the Findhorn Foundation website:

<http://www.findhorn.org/programmes/559/>

More about the Pro-conference workshops and the summit:

<http://ecovillage.org/de/event/gen20-summit-living-new-story>



More upcoming Events

Some of the many meeting points of the movement [here](#).



Book about GEN to be Published in July 2015: "Ecovillages Worldwide - Local Solutions on Global Problems"

The GEN 20+Summit in Findhorn is the occasion that Kosha Joubert, Leila Dregger and Clio Pauly took to write a book about ecovillages worldwide – with the help of many longterm ecovillage members who contributed thoughts, experiences, adventures, failures, learnings and success stories. The book will be published in German and English at the same time and be launched at the summit. Thanks to all those who helped so generously. Leila Dregger recalls the process of writing.

[Read More](#)



Call for Action: Support GEN to do what is close to your heart

Dedicated people from all over the world sharing their passion, time, skills and funds so generously made GEN what it is today: a vibrant, global network connecting ecovillages and activists around the globe. This year GEN is celebrating 20 years of dreaming, co-creating and living the New Story. This is your celebration! GEN now invites you to support making the dreams for the next 20 years a reality. Become a volunteer or make a financial or in-kind donation and join the Friends of GEN family. Follow the call by clicking [here](#).



The History of the Global Ecovillage Network: 1991-2015

Ross and Hildur Jackson from Denmark were the driving forces in creating the GEN network twenty years ago. For the first time they share the full story from their perspective. All their experience and information is a great gift especially to the young people who now take over the responsibility for the network. [Read more](#).



GEN and Gaia Education – a Story of Love and Collaboration

A crucial part of the GEN history was the wish to create a global education for resilience and sustainability based on the experience of ecovillage. Kosha Joubert, President of GEN International, shares the story of Gaia Education. [Read more.](#)



The Story of NextGEN: Youth Perspectives Impacting the Ecovillage Movement

For the past several years, a group of empowered young people have been creating an inspiring movement within the existing ecovillage network. NextGEN is a youth-focused and youth-directed part of the Global Ecovillage Network, building youth-oriented projects in every region of GEN. Its members represent a wide diversity of youth from around the world. Ethan Hirsch-Tauber shares some of the different voices. [Read more.](#)



20 Years of GEN: ZEGG Says Thank You!

The ZEGG community in Germany has been a genuine and integral part of the GEN network in Europe. Ina Meyer-Stoll was GEN Europe Executive Secretary from 2003-08, Achim Ecker was GEN Europe council member and president at the same period of time, and Thomas Heuser, the Managing Director of ZEGG is a current GEN-Europe council member. Artemis Zimt (member of Next GEN) interviews the three of them. [Read more.](#)

[GEN Europe](#)



Slovenia: The Time when Ecovillages were Places Faraway in the Woods is Over
The following article about ECOLISE and GEN, written by longtime ecovillage activist Nara Petrovič from Slovenia, was published in the Delo Newspaper, one of the biggest mainstream media of the country. It can be likened to GEN as it is today: a modern and open movement for global change. [Read more.](#)



GEN Estonia celebrates 7 years of eco-life
7 years ago, on the 8th of February in 2008, a group of sustainably minded people founded an organisation called the Network of Estonian Eco-communities, working towards creating a just and ecological Estonia. Today, our biggest achievement is a sustainable and vital ecovillage movement with yearly gatherings and regular communication activities, 2 strong eco-communities, and a Gaia Elementary School. Kadri Allikmäe from Network of Estonian Eco-communities reports. [Read more.](#)



Ecological Soil Reactivation and Forest Fire Protection: How to Produce your own Biochar for Terra Preta
In deforested regions with depleted soils farmers are particularly challenged to create and store enough humus to be able to start the reforestation process that will, eventually, protect the land from bush fires, droughts, and desertification. Achim Ecker, living in ZEGG, has experimented with creating Terra Preta for some years. Now he has found a brilliant method to produce biochar and Terra Preta to assist in the challenging South European climate. [Read more.](#)



Ecovillage Boekel, Netherlands: About the cooperation of ecovillages and governments

After he saw Ad Vleems' presentation about Ecovillage Boekel, a member of the Dutch government said: "Ecovillages are like Formula 1 cars": A Formula 1 car is not mainstream, and let's face it, not everybody wants to live in an ecovillage. But just like in a Formula 1 car, its innovations find their way to the mainstream. And this makes ecovillages important to our governments. [Read more.](#)



"ORIGIN" Connects Damanhur, Tamera and Findhorn

The University project ORIGIN or: Orchestration of Renewable Integrated Generation In Neighborhoods is developing a sophisticated intelligent ICT (Information and Communication Technology) system for the management of energy in a community. The goal is to achieve a more efficient use of the installed renewable energy generation and storage to reduce the amount of "imported energy", from the public grid. Beatriz Silva reports. [Read more.](#)

[GEN Africa](#)



Cameroon: Bafut Ecovillage Sparks Entrepreneurship Revolution

About 20 km north of Bemenda, Cameroon, is the village of Bafut, where the traditional "fondom" (kingdom) community living structure remains intact. The goals for the future are ambitious, and inspiring. With the help of matching Permaculture principles with volunteer placements, Better World Cameroon (BWC) is building an African green revolution based on youth, agriculture and environmental conservation. [Read more.](#)



The Gambia: Responsible Tourism in Sandele Eco-Retreat

Sandele Eco-Retreat in Kartong is an example of responsible tourism. The lodges are built with compressed, stabilized earth blocks which use a minimum of cement and are frequently stabilized with lime. Electricity, hot water and water pumping are provided using solar and wind power. The Lodges and the Guest Rooms have compost toilets and a constructed wetlands system that minimizes the use of, and purifies, the water flowing from the toilets, showers, hand basins and rainwater. Every step that its founders Geri Mitchell and Maurice Phillips from England did was agreed with the local Village Development Committee. In 2014 they organized an EDE course with 32 participants, 24 of them from the village Kartong. [Read more.](#)

GENOA - GEN Oceania and Asia



Andharmanic Ecovillage, Bangladesh: A Model for Sustainability in Climate Sensitive Regions

Andharmanic village is situated in Khulna district of Bangladesh, near the Bay of Bengal and beside the biggest mangrove forest 'Sundorbon'. This village community experienced the very powerful cyclones 'Sidr' in 2007, and 'Aila' in 2009, which affected the community tremendously. Houses fell down, big trees uprooted, crops were destroyed, domestic animals died, soil and water were polluted by saline water, and many villagers were injured. Today, having incorporated a variety ecovillage techniques, many families have significantly increased their standard of living. Boniface Gomes reports. [Read more.](#)



Japan: New Collaborations Have Emerged

Spring has come. Under the soft and warm sunlight, Mom's Lunch-Box Shop, of As-One Community, becomes very busy with orders for local people's spring events in Suzuka city, Japan. But there is also another reason to be busy this year. Hiroko Katayama / As-One Community Suzuka, representative of GEN-Japan, reports.

[Read more.](#)



Siddarth Ecovillage, India: Young Tribal Girls Become Barefoot Organic Agricultural Scientists

Jyotshna, Gurbari and Meena, three Munda tribal girls never thought that in their adolescence they would be appreciated in their own village for bringing transformation into conventional agricultural patterns, and become young agricultural scientists.

Thread reports. [Read more.](#)

CASA - Ecovillages of Latin America



The 9th Call of the Mountain - Setting a Pace for our Social Movement

In January, at the South of Colombia, at the very heart of the country's conflict zone, ecovillagers, indigenous, afrodescendants, peasants and citizens were all together dancing, communicating, sharing and envisioning under the fiery sun crowning the mountains of Guambia, territory of the Misak indigenous people. They were there to celebrate the ninth gathering of the Call of the Mountain - Llamado de la Montaña 2015 - the most relevant annual gathering of CASA Colombia. Jennifer Trujillo Obando reports.

[Read more.](#)



Argentina: 13-day Wavespells at VelaTropa

In front of the largest football stadium in Argentina lies an intentionally sustainable community. This is the ecovillage VelaTropa, located in the city of Buenos Aires, on the other side of the River Plate football club's home. Along with Boca Juniors, River Plate is considered to be the best Argentinian club and, due to their rivalry, they create a classic, world famous game. Reported by Henny Freitas, EarthCode Project. [Read more.](#)

GENNA - Ecovillages North America



Sociocracy in North American Ecovillages and Intentional Communities

Sociocracy — which means “governance by peers or colleagues” (sometimes called “Dynamic Governance”) in the US — is an increasingly popular governance and decision-making method based on the principles of transparency, equivalency, and effectiveness. In Diana Leafe Christian’s experience, when an ecovillage or another kind of intentional community uses Sociocracy, their governance process tends to become far more effective and enjoyable than it was when they used consensus as their decision-making method. She is preparing a book about decision-making in communities. [Read more.](#)



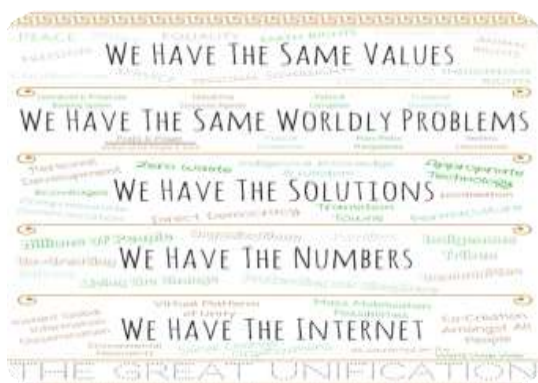
California: Pilgrimage "Walking Water" Celebrating and Honouring Water

A pilgrimage in California called Walking Water will spotlight humanity's relationship to water and invite people to co-create solutions that are pivotal to the wellbeing of all life on Earth. GEN is a cooperation partner of the pilgrimage. Geoff Dalglish from Findhorn reports. [Read more.](#)



GEN Science: Change and Innovation in GEN. Results of the EU research project TRANSIT

Ecovillages are fascinating experiments, Iris Kunze first came across them in 1996. Ever since then, she has been keeping in touch with the ecovillage movement motivated by researching and teaching on sustainable ways of living, at university. Prompted by GEN's 20th anniversary, she and her colleague concluded a research study on 20 networks as initiatives for social innovation with the EU-Project TRANSIT (TRANSformative Social Innovation Theory). Here she summarizes their preliminary findings on GEN. [Read more.](#)



Inspiration for the End: "Free Your Choice" - the Great Unification

Yan Golding, a yoga instructor, permaculture teacher, dancer, and community builder, co-founded a pioneering eco-community called Khula Dhamma in South Africa, organised and co-facilitated the first Ecovillage Design Education (EDE) in Brazil, and is now living in Southern Portugal where he intends to co-create another ecovillage. He is also part of the steering group that is spearheading a bio-regional Transition Initiative of the Western Algarve. He unfolds his plan through this poem. [Read more.](#)



The Global Ecovillage Network is a registered charity: SC043796 and has consultative status in the UN – ECOSOC.

Visit our renovated site at: gen.ecovillage.org

