

# SAN PANCHO ECOVILLAGE



## WHAT IS AN ECOVILLAGE?

Ecovillages are communities of people who strive to lead a sustainable lifestyle in harmony with each other, other living beings and the Earth. Their purpose is to combine a supportive social-cultural environment with a low-impact lifestyle.

Underlying the concept of the ecovillage is the desire to take responsibility for one's own life; to create a future which is regenerative for the individual and for nature. Ecovillages are now being created intentionally, with the goal of creating a human-scale, full-featured settlement, in which human activities can be harmlessly integrated into the natural world in a way that is supportive of healthy human development, and can be successfully continued into the indefinite future.



As a new societal structure, the ecovillage goes beyond today's dichotomy of urban versus rural settlements: it represents a widely applicable model for the planning and reorganization of human settlements. They are living models of sustainability, and examples of how action can be taken immediately. They represent an effective, accessible way to improve our social, ecological and spiritual environments. They show us how we can move toward sustainability in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The ecovillage is not intended to be a reversion to a primitive and austere level of existence, as is often assumed. Rather, the vision is more of a conscious synthesis of all the ethically redeemable and life-enhancing amenities of the modern life with the organic social cohesion and ecological viability of traditional village life. They incorporate widely yet discriminatively employed appropriate technologies, a cornucopia of enlivening arts and sciences, full access to educational and re-creational resources, comfort and convenience in moderate proportion, and abundance and prosperity in those qualities most contributory to an extended, productive, healthful human life.

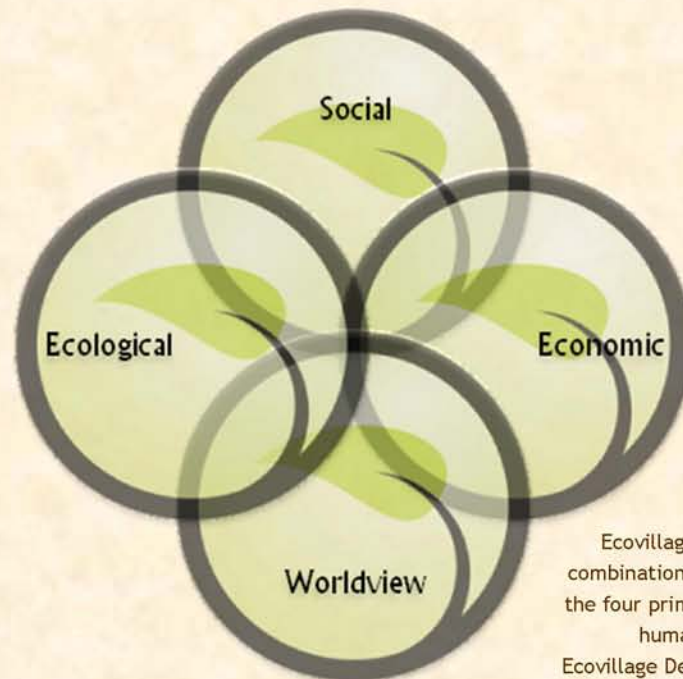


*"What makes a community? What binds it together? For some it is faith. For others it is the defense of an idea, such as democracy or the fight against poverty. Some communities are homogeneous, others multicultural. Some are small as schools and villages; others as large as continents. What binds us into an international community? In the broadest sense there is a shared vision of a better world for all people. Together, we are stronger."*

- Kofi Annan- Former UN Secretary General

## HOLISTIC AND INTEGRATIVE APPROACH

One of the great strengths of the ecovillage movement is its foundation in the understanding that sustainability is not only an environmental issue. True sustainability arises from the balanced interdependence of the physical, social and personal worlds. Ecovillage life is every bit as much about how we cooperate, make decisions, resolve conflicts, measure and distribute wealth and build community, and about how we find our individual purpose and worldview, as it is about permaculture, appropriate technology and organic farming. In fact, they cannot ultimately be separated from each other.



### Social dimension

Today, we need to consciously reinvent cooperative and harmonious ways of living together. Therefore, seeding, growing, and rebuilding meaningful communities and networks of communities are vital steps towards a more livable, sustainable future. As prototypical “living and learning centers,” in which people from a variety of cultures, spiritual pathways and economic backgrounds explore the synergistic communion of embracing diversity together, the ecovillages inspire a new global culture of peace and prosperity.

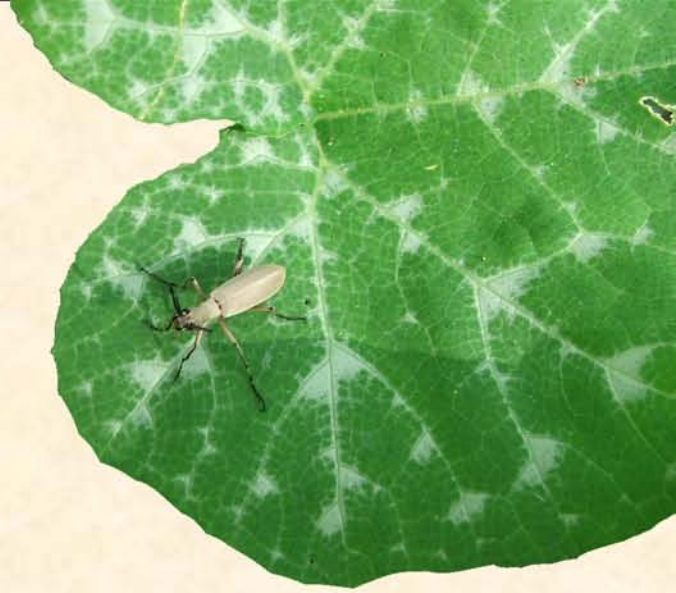
*“The next Buddha will not take the form of an individual. The next Buddha may take the form of a community; a community practicing understanding and loving kindness, a community practicing mindful living. This may be the most important thing we can do for the survival of the earth.”*

- Thich Nhat Hanh



*“In response to the grim realities of climate change, resource depletion, collapsing ecosystems, economic vulnerability, and other converging crises of the twenty-first century, a consensus is emerging among scientists, governments, and civil society about the need for a rapid but manageable transition to an economic system where progress is measured by improvements in well-being rather than by expansion of the scale and scope of market economic activity.”*

- John Talberth, Director of the Sustainability Indicators Program at Redefining Progress



### Economic dimension

Continued human progress -both material and spiritual- now depends on an economic transformation that is more profound than any seen in the last century. A world of limits will require a shift from the unfettered conventional economics that prevailed then to the emerging field of sustainable economics, which embraces many of the principles of market economics, including the ability to allocate scarce resources, while at the same time explicitly recognizing that the human economy is but part of the larger global ecosystem that contains it.

While noting that structural changes are required at the global level, we note that there is also a need for the emergence of vibrant, locally-based alternative economies, so that the shoots of the new burst forth. This is where ecovillages have a key role to play in researching, demonstrating and teaching new, alternative approaches to economic life.



*“I believe we can accomplish great and profitable things within a new conceptual framework—one that values our legacy, honors diversity, and feeds ecosystems and societies . . . It is time for designs that are creative, abundant, prosperous, and intelligent from the start.”*

- William McDonough



## Ecological dimension

Ecological concerns are fundamental to the design and development of ecovillages and sustainable communities. The prefix 'eco' originally meant 'home' - not in the limited sense of 'house,' but rather referring to the surrounding and supporting local environment. An ecological village, or *eco-village*, then, is integrated into the

landscape in a way that benefits both humans *and* their encompassing environs. Designers will take great care to ensure that life-supporting natural functions are not only preserved but *enhanced* whenever possible. The strategy here is one of working *with* Nature rather than against Nature. The ultimate goal of sustainable settlement design is the creation of self-reliant, self-maintaining, self-regenerating 'living systems' that can assume a life of their own.

*"We are human in good part because of the particular way we affiliate with other organisms. They are the matrix in which the human mind originated and is permanently rooted, and they offer the challenge and freedom innately sought. To the extent that each person can feel like a naturalist, the old excitement of the untrammelled world will be regained. I offer this as a formula of reenchantment to invigorate poetry and myth: mysterious and little known organisms live within walking distance of where you sit. Splendor awaits in minute proportions.*

- Edward O. Wilson



*"The main obstacles to living with nature are cultural, not technical or economic"*

- Art Ludwig

## Worldview dimension

The ecovillage is seen as a place consciously created to allow for the spiritual dimensions of life to unfold in all their wonder and splendor: art, music, ritual, ceremony, pageantry, mind-body awareness, and various practices designed to develop expansion of consciousness and attunement. Ecovillages foster, tolerate, and encourage diverse, ecumenical spiritual perspectives. Ideals of mutual-respect, trust, cooperation, harmony, beauty, interconnectedness and wholeness are foundational and intrinsic to ecovillage living.



*“What is also necessary is to realize that we are not some contradiction of Nature, a destroyer of it, but that we have a place in Nature, and can reclaim that place.”*

- David Holmgren

## WORLD CONTEXT

Communities can make powerful contributions in helping to facilitate the transition to a sustainable society. As noted by the Worldwatch Institute in its 2008 State of the World Report (considered by some as the most comprehensive, up-to-date, and accessible summaries on the global environment), the ecovillage movement is perhaps one of the best illustrations of the opportunities that exist in designing communities to be sustainable through the mobilization of resident energy and resources.

The Global Ecovillage Network, an organization that links together a highly diverse worldwide movement of ecovillages and related projects, is now bringing the ecovillage message into mainstream international governmental and civil society forums. It is a leading participant—along with the CIFAL Network—in a UNITAR training program, to build capacity of local authorities worldwide to implement the Millennium Development Goals. It has ECOSOC consultative status as an NGO at the United Nations and is represented at events such as the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the World and European Social Forums, the World Urban Forum. UN-Habitat has also included ecovillages in its database of best practices since 1998. Ecovillages are certainly gaining prominence and legitimacy.



The 385 registered ecovillages (though the actual number is greater if broader village networks are included) have made great strides. A resident of Findhorn Ecovillage has just half the ecological footprint of an average individual in the United Kingdom. And in Germany's Sieben Linden Ecovillage, per capita CO<sup>2</sup> emissions are just 28 percent the national average. Ecovillages serve more as models for other communities than as solutions themselves, they are testing grounds for the experimentation and integration of intentional community living with alternative technologies and innovative design techniques.

Furthermore, ecovillages have become living and learning centers. They are local planetary models that can be powerful catalysts for change. Although ecovillages make unconventional classrooms, they are considered to be ideal when it comes to learning about sustainability while experiencing



# EMERGING ECOVILLAGE

The seed has been planted, the intention growing in our hearts. We have been waiting with patience and confidence, and we know that now is the right time. We are taking responsibility for proactively bringing forth the kind of world we choose to live in. This desire has brought us together to San Pancho, a quaint and beautiful town in the Mexican pacific coast where we hope to co-create an ecovillage. In a way, the community has already manifested itself in the way we relate to each other, in the many projects we collaborate in, in the vision we share...this fertile and amazing land has invited us ground and grow.



The envisioned location for the ecovillage is amidst the lush jungles of a coastal tropical environment. Right between the human and natural interface is where we plan to create the settlement: beaches, towns and tourist development on one side, mountain, wilderness and rural areas on the other. The ecovillage has an enormous potential to serve as a bridge that will contribute to the sustainable development of both.



The southern coast of the state of Nayarit, just north of Puerto Vallarta, is developing quickly and is aiming to become an international tourist destination showcasing many amazing beaches and friendly small towns. We can take advantage of this flow of people to expand our activities (outreach) and interaction with people.

### Conservation and Ecology

Central to our understanding of the tropical forest where we wish to live is the knowledge gained by observation and research. The ecovillage can serve as a base station and the gateway to an invaluable ecosystem, and the information generated can immensely contribute to its conservation.

### Land Development

With Permaculture, Landscape Planning and Ecological Design as our guiding principles and practices, we hope to integrate our presence in the ecosystem in a harmonious, sensitive and creative way. This is our first step into the land.

### Human Development

We are inspired by the desire to learn and keep on learning through all of life and beyond. We want to constantly rediscover the miracle of self-aware consciousness. We wish to provide a space and service that will host a variety of workshops, retreats and lectures in a wide range of topics relating to our greater human potential.

### Food and Material Production

We will define our own food, agriculture and animal systems. This starts with an organic garden and orchard that will eventually grow into a productive agroecological system with surplus products that we can share and fairly trade with the surrounding community.

### Natural Building & Green Architecture

We will build healthy, beautiful, comfortable and spiritually uplifting homes while minimizing our environmental impact. We hope to transmit the inspiration and empowerment experienced by emphasizing simple, easy-to-learn techniques based on locally available, renewable resources.



With this privileged location and the dedication and commitment of the core group, we hope to develop a variety of locally appropriate and globally responsible projects that will strengthen our community and contribution to this world.



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## CREDITS

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<http://ecopancho.wordpress.com/>