



FINDHORN CONTRIBUTES TO LOCAL ECONOMY

A recent study has revealed that the contribution of the Findhorn Foundation to the economy of the north of Scotland represents 400 jobs and £5 million (€8 million) annually. In the words of Douglas Yale,



chief executive of the body that commissioned the study (Moray, Badenoch and Strathspey Enterprise), "The report clearly demonstrates that the Findhorn Foundation is an important player in the Moray economy. As well as bringing a great many people to the area for conferences and courses, the activities of the Foundation help to maintain a diverse range of skills in the area's population and make major

contributions to the main learning centres. This report will help us develop strategies and make decisions about Moray's economic development in the future." The report underlined the value to the local economy of the community's diversification into economic activities other than education, including building, entertainment, tourism, retailing and health. For more information contact: Geoffrey Colwill, Geoffrey@findhorn.org

GEN-Senegal Wins Funding

The ecovillage network in Senegal has received a grant from the United Nations' Global Environmental Facility to support developmental activities in 12 of its constituent ecovillages. The funding of US\$50,000 per village will sponsor a variety of three-year projects including waste recycling, composting, renewable energy, nature conservation and permaculture-based farming. The funding awards follow on from successful presentations by GEN-Senegal staff as members of the GEN delegation at the World Summit on Sustainable Development last year in Johannesburg. The ecovillage model has been accepted as a component of the rural development strategy of the Senegalese government. For more details contact: mzeitlin@refer.sn

PEACETOUR 2003

This summer, the Tamera ecovillage in Portugal organised a travelling festival made up of Israeli, Palestinian and other international artists and activists. A group of 20 musicians, actors and peace students under the guidance of Sabine Lichtenfels (co-founder of Tamera) created a performance together exploring the possibility of peace between the conflicting groups in the Middle East. The students of the Peaceschool Mirja from Germany and Austria, who are now studying inner and outer peace in Tamera, also performed a play on the Palestine/Israel theme that showed the historical and human roots of the conflict as well as presenting approaches to a solution. The aim of the organisers was to make clear that peace is more than a word, it is a vision we can realize when we are ready to change our thinking and living patterns. For more details contact: ben.mendelsson@tamera.org

JAPAN TO GIVE UP GOLF AND GO ECOVILLAGE?

Recently GENOA and EcoLogical Solutions hosted a group from the Nippon Ecovillage Network at Crystal Waters, where various ideas were explored. One of these was to turn golf courses in Japan into ecovillages. Many golf courses in Japan are lying un-golfed. The fees are often too high, and public interest has been dying off. There is a possibility that some of these economically draining and water guzzling swathes of turf could be transformed into ecovillages – an exciting idea, but is it one with a future?

Next month Max Lindegger will give a workshop at Crystal Waters for officials from 20 Japanese town councils. This group is making a whirlwind

tour of Maleny and Crystal Waters, and is interested in Co-operatives, LETS systems, Ecovillages and Permaculture. It is very encouraging that the Japanese government is looking for sustainable solutions, both social and environmental.

The organiser of the trip, Mutsumi Matsumoto (a keen permaculturalist) reports, "This morning, I made a speech at Oita Government employees seminar, and introduced them to Permaculture, LETS, Maleny, etc. People were so interested in Permaculture they asked me to do it again the day after tomorrow. I have no doubt that now is the time for people in Japan to think and take action for a more sustainable future."

GEN-Europe At The EU Social Forum

Following their successful participation in the first European Social Forum in Firenze and at the World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002, GEN-Europe will be sending a team to participate in the second Forum in Paris from 12-15 November. The Forum is a great melting-pot of activists, educators and concerned citizens engaged in visioning the type of society we want to create for a just and sustainable future. As a venue for learning about new initiatives and ideas, getting inspired and creating alliances, it offers unparalleled opportunities. The Forum's theme and rallying call is 'Another World is Possible'. GEN-Europe will be hosting a teach-in seminar entitled 'Another World is Possible: We are already creating it!' If you are interested in joining the GEN-Europe team at the Forum please get in touch.

For more information contact: info@gen-europe.org

CHRISTIANIA Under Threat



Christiania, the anarchist community in the heart of Copenhagen, is under threat from the government which seeks to 'normalise' the area. The community was created in 1971 when a group of people occupied an area of central Copenhagen that had previously been a military base. Today, it is home to 900 people. The Danish government has launched a competition for the design of a new, up-market residential area to develop the site along conventional lines. The community is requesting support from friends internationally, in the form of non-violent protests against Danish interests. For more information contact: ditlev@christiania.org

NEWS IN BRIEF

EUROPEAN ASSEMBLY 2004

Following the very successful 2003 Annual General Assembly at the Centre for Alternative Technology in Wales, next year's event will be at the ZEGG community near Berlin. Dates to be confirmed. Further information: info@gen-europe.org

CURRUMBIN GREEN LIGHT

The Ecovillage at Currumbin has been given the "green light" by the Gold Coast City Council, Queensland, Australia. This innovative project is set to inspire sustainable living practices and development, by attempting to create the world's best ecologically sustainable village. For more info: www.theecovillage.com.au

INDIAN EV NETWORK BORN

GENOA has provided funds to the Indian Ecovillage Network to enable it to start spreading information about the ecovillage concept in India. This role had previously been taken on by GEN South Asia, based at Sarvodaya in Sri Lanka. For information about their activities, contact Siddhartha, Email: sidd@vsnl.com

ECOLINK CONFERENCES

The European Union is funding four conferences across Europe this summer under the Eco-link project. The project aims to promote networking among European eco-centres and to explore the possibility of establishing a European Federation of Eco-centres. Further information: <http://ecodev.jrc.it/ecocentres>

KOREAN INITIATIVE

Many rural villages in South Korea have been depopulated over recent years as a result of rapid development, but there is growing interest in moving back to the land and reclaiming village life and cultural heritage. Ecological design company E-jang is retrofitting one of these villages in Hamyang Province in the south of the peninsula. For details visit: www.e-jang.net

FINNISH NETWORK ESTABLISHED

The Finnish Society for Ecological Communities was launched in August 2003 as the national ecovillage association. This brings to 13 the number of national ecovillage associations affiliated to GEN-Europe (the others are in Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Senegal, Spain, Sweden, Turkey & the UK).

Currently, the association comprises five member organisations: The Keuruu ecovillage, a meeting venue and course centre, which runs permaculture and other courses; Katajanmaki (Juniper Hill) community which focuses on reconnection with Finnish cultural roots; the Buddhist Rokpa organisation that has its home nest on the island of Vano in the Turku archipelago; Marjarinteen metsäpuutarha (Forest Garden of Berry Slope), a family run farm with rich visions for land-based community; and the ecovillage association of Pirkanmaa, a group of meditators and eco-activists who plan to create several ecovillages in the future. For more details contact: Heikki Attila, hhattila@saunalahti.fi

Twin-Ecovillage Film Premiered

A film, directed by GEN-Europe council member Jean-Michel Pochat on the twinning of ecovillages in Africa and Europe, was premiered at GEN-Europe's annual general assembly in Wales, July 2003. The film traces the journey of Jean-Michel and his 29-year-old son, Fabrice, through Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso and Mauritania. The film explores the strong interest evident in these countries in the ecovillage model and demonstrates the potential benefits to be had by both partners through this kind of exchange. The film is available in French and English. For more information or to borrow a copy of the video, contact: info@gen-europe.org

CHINA WALLS TAKES HURDLE

Plans for a new ecovillage development in the beautiful Snowy Mountains in New South Wales, Australia, recently received 'in principle' support from the local government authority, Tumbarumba Shire Council. It is hoped the proposed development will become home to a population of about 300 residents. China Walls is located on an elevated plateau above the fog belt, very close to Australia's highest mountain, Mt Kosiosko. Ecological Solutions designers and GENOA Secretariat officers, Lloyd Williams and Max Lindegger, are currently working on the re-zoning process and development application. So far, no website has been established.

Australian Government Interested In Ecovillages

At last! After years of work and international exposure, some individuals in Federal and State Governments are beginning to see the benefits that ecovillages have to offer. An indication of a new positive trend from Australian governments is that Max Lindegger (from EcoLogical Solutions at Crystal Waters, and also the GENOA

Programme Director) was recently asked to make a presentation to the Western Australian Government's land development department – LandCorp. The response from the LandCorp staff was generally good, with some individuals able to see that ecovillages just might have some solutions to some serious development and social issues.

ITALIAN ECOVILLAGE GROWS FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

Damanhur, pioneering ecovillage in the development of alternative economic development (the community has its own bank, currency and thriving entrepreneurial culture) just got bigger. In May the community bought a former Olivetti factory located nearby, a metaphor perhaps for the evolution from a corporate to an ecovillage-based civilisation.

The acquisition of the building takes Damanhur into a new phase of growth, with the expansion of the school and many Damanhurian companies on the new site. The increased activity in Vidracco, where the factory is located, will bring new life and services to the village and create many opportunities for generating local employment. Many commercial and art cooperatives will be located in the building, complementing a new housing development which



will see the construction of new community houses and apartments. A new piazza will be created to provide the village with a public space for meetings, festivals and celebrations. In December of this year, the senior classes of the school will be moving into the new building so that the older children can interact with

the world of work on a daily basis, studying in the art workshops and broadening their learning experience. The fund-raising to complete the purchase of the building continues with donations arriving daily from all around the world. For more information, or if you would like to visit, contact Lepre Viola, lepre@damanhur.it