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# Establishing an Internship Programme in your Ecovillage: Handbook for Beginners

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## SUMMARY

Internships are mutually beneficial to curious, often younger interns as well as to the ecovillage communities that host them. There are many considerations to be made before receiving an intern, many of which are outlined in this handbook. A number of established international internship systems support ecovillages in opening up for internships. As a complement to the established international systems, some of the ecovillages have chosen to establish unique internship systems of their own. Each ecovillage needs to decide which type of internship programme they want to develop, using existing systems or developing its own.

## PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook is intended to assist ecovillages in establishing internships that have the intention to reach out to the wider society with the sustainable living practices as well as to strengthen the ecovillages themselves.

## DEFINITION OF INTERNSHIP

An internship, in this handbook, refers to non-formal on-the-job training in ecovillages. Internships in many European languages are termed with the Germanic/Slavic "praktik" or Romance "stage". This concept differs from organized formal and informal training courses or spontaneous touristic visits to ecovillages. An internship should be between 1 week and 2 years, normally having a duration of 1-12 months. An ecovillage internship assumes that the intern is a live-in guest, integrated socially and occupationally into the ecovillage community.

## RECENT HISTORY OF ECOVILLAGE INTERNSHIPS

For many middle-aged Europeans the notion of ecovillage internship makes them reminiscent of the *kibbutz*, which grew in the 1970's, to travel to Israel and work at a *kibbutz* or social-experimenting, anti-materialistic agricultural cooperative working towards self-sufficiency. The vast majority of the *kibbutzim* has since lost its idealistic flavour, and European waves of youthful truth-seekers have subsided. Instead Europe itself has established its own brand of *kibbutzim* in the ecovillage movement. Though perhaps influenced by the *Kibbutz* movement, European ecovillages have diverse roots in other concepts; Christian monasteries, Eastern-style ashrams, leftist political communes and socially alternative collectives as well as alternative treatment communities such as the Anthroposophic Camphill movement.

These various philosophic approaches mix with a general European interest in ecological living and new eco-technologies as well as a post-modernistic desire for a simpler lifestyle. The former rush to *kibbutzim* is thus replaced by individuals seeking their way to ecovillages, often wanting to experience and learn without committing by joining in a more permanent way. Thus most ecovillages in Europe are regularly visited, too often unannounced, by the curious in search of practical or existential answers about sustainable living. The largest ecovillages have handled this in more organized ways. Damanhur, one of Europe's largest ecovillages, established a professional welcome centre, effectively channeling the

constant flow of visitors to its array of market-priced guided tours and its own hostel facilities, creating a major source of community income. Smaller ecovillages with less resource have organized less formal events like open house days, e.g. ZEGG Ecovillage's Open Sunday and Café Sieben Linden held on the first Sunday each month.

Some ecovillages have however created or joined formalized systems to handle interested persons wanting to taste ecovillage life. The interest in eco-living is definitely expanding, and so is the need to cope with the growing number of those wanting to visit ecovillages.

## WHY ORGANIZE INTERNSHIPS IN YOUR ECOVILLAGE?

It is assumed that your ecovillage already has a certain flow of people interested of staying during the day or wanting to stay longer. These are often young travellers, many times unaccustomed to booking a visit in advance. This tend to become a problem for ecovillages, which are forced to choose between offering hospitality at the cost of own plans and priorities, or being frank but unaccommodating to the spontaneous flow of curious visitors. An internship programme prepares the ecovillage for handling visits; it creates a more regulated flow of persons at periods of time suitable to the ecovillage, and more importantly it creates an organized manner for the ecovillage to interact with the broader society. A good internship programme can improve the image of the ecovillage in the surrounding community and can offer benefits of additional labor and perhaps employment creation in the ecovillage.

## CREATING AN INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME

There are a number of aspects to consider before establishing an internship system in your ecovillage. You need to know which kind of internship system you want to use, how many interns you want to host, for how long the internship will last and what kind of interns you want to attract. Many of these details are crucial to address, in order to know how to proceed with the creation of you internship programme. The community needs to consider how these guests will fit in, what rules will apply to them and finally what practical measures need to be taken to be able to receive long-term guests in the community.

*Important aspects to consider when creating an internship are:*

- ▲ *What kind of interns are your ecovillage looking for?*
- ▲ *How many interns can your ecovillage host?*
- ▲ *For how long will the internship period be?*
- ▲ *How will the interns be integrated in the community?*
- ▲ *What practical measures need to be taken in order to host the interns properly?*

## REACHING POTENTIAL INTERNS

Today the internet is the main source of information used to find interns, or rather for interns to find your ecovillage. Thus it is crucial that your own web site gives an up-to-date picture of life in your ecovillage and what knowledge your community maintains, which could be of interest to the curious outsider. Other

forms of information about your community, such as brochures, are nice - if you can get them in the right hands. This is of course difficult if you do not have an active national ecovillage association that attends urban fairs, summer festivals and school and university career days with your printed matter.

There are international networks that facilitate people finding ecovillages. These are the main source other than Internet search engines for individuals to find ecovillages to join or visit. The largest collection is at [www.ic.org](http://www.ic.org) run by the American Fellowship of Intentional Communities, thanks to its no-cost listing service. The list is a mixture of co-housing, urban collectives as well as ecovillages. The Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) has more ecovillage-specific listings but does not list all ecovillages, due to membership requirements. The Eurotopia guidebooks list a larger number of ecovillages than does GEN, especially in the German-speaking areas of Europe. The Ecovillages for Sustainable Rural Development project has created a web site called Ecovillage Road ([www.ecovillageroad.eu](http://www.ecovillageroad.eu)), consisting of a map of ecovillages in the Baltic Sea Region as well as a forum for the transition of knowledge. Finally, a number of European countries have national ecovillage associations that list ecovillages. Many of these national organizations are GEN members and their addresses can be found on the GEN web site. In addition it can be of great assistance when looking for interns to look in fora generally connected to the green movement, other political associations and the transition movement.

## FORMULATING RULES, RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS IN YOUR PROGRAMME

Most ecovillages have written or unwritten rules for the community to function. If the rules are not written down, bringing in outsiders into community life can create conflicts, if the behavioural expectations of the host community cannot be explained to the intern. It is also advisable that you have a written contract between each intern and you as a host. This will make the rights and obligations for both parties clearer and in addition aid in formulating suitable rules for the interns.

Even those communities with written rules need to contemplate which of these rules should apply to guests, or if even stricter rules may apply to guests. At the same time interns will not stay long or even come in the first place if their rights are not sufficiently taken into account by the community. Any expectation on individuals differing from what can be considered normal in the interns home country needs to be explicitly stated before the intern and the community agree on the internship.

## MEDICAL, INSURANCE, RESIDENCY PERMITS AND OTHER LEGAL ASPECTS OF INTERNSHIPS

Within the EU there are systems for national health insurance for common access to public health care. Insurance cards can be requested from national authorities to simplify use of state health care facilities near the host ecovillage. Non-EU interns need to have an insurance, which can be purchased as travel insurance in the intern's home country. It should never be assumed that accidents during the internship can be covered by the ecovillage's own insurance. Utilizing an international internship system is often very attractive for the insurance aspects, since these programmes can acquire policies much cheaper per intern than what the individual intern or ecovillage could arrange.

Within the EU any EU citizen may move freely, but if the intern is to stay more than 3 months, the EU member state will require a residency permit to be issued from the national migration authority. If the host ecovillage can certify that the person is an intern and that cost of living is arranged, this residency permit is not difficult to obtain. Non-EU residents however need visas and residency permits if the stay is to be longer than 3 months. Interns from outside the EU need to take into account that visa procedures can take time, as there may be suspicion that the person may be attempting to enter the EU for other purposes, e.g. paid employment. Internship is classed as “other studies”, which makes the procedure comparable to the visa procedure for foreign exchange students. In some established internship programmes it is possible to partake in an internship in your home country, however most of the programmes are designed for international exchange.

Interns staying a longer time may experience difficulties from not having national identity cards or national identity cards and numbers. Setting up bank accounts can also be difficult. Thanks to the Internet, credit cards and mobile telephony it is quite easy for the intern to overcome distance and stay connected to their home country during the internship. In this way interns can carry out banking in, chat and mail, be interviewed, and make phone calls to their home country. While this simplifies the intern’s life, it does demand internet services in or near the ecovillage.

## PLANNING FOR AND RECEIVING AN INTERN

Before welcoming an intern, the ecovillage needs to agree how the intern will be received, which work conditions and training the intern will be given, which living facilities the intern will have and what social obligations the community has towards the intern. There should also be a considerable amount of pre-arrival communication with the intern about logistics, items necessary to bring and other key information that the intern needs to prepare for the arrival. To be completely sure that the interns are aware of the preconditions for the internship and the preparations needed a written agreement between you and the intern could be set up.

## PROCESSES DURING AN INTERNSHIP

### INTRODUCING THE INTERN TO ECOVILLAGE LIFE

There is a large mass of information that needs to be transferred to the newly arrived intern. This makes arrival meeting or on-arrival training inevitable. The interns needs to find their way around the ecovillage, as well as be able to locate equipment, facilities, and persons necessary for them to function. Before starting any tasks that could be considered dangerous, safety instructions should be given. It is recommended that a system of safety training includes a certificate of completion with the signatures of the supervisor and intern. A social mentor can be assigned, parallel to the work of the supervisor, to ensure that non-work aspects are looked after.

## ACCOMMODATING THE INTERN

Interns in ecovillages, unlike in other work situations, need to be housed in the immediate proximity of the workplace. As an intern you need a bed, access to toilet, shower and laundry facilities. Furthermore the intern needs access to drinking water and cooking facilities, if the intern is not included into community or resident family meals. The intern requires sufficient place for basic social needs: reading a book, surfing on the Internet or skypeing with friends. The particular ecovillage situation of course decides what is possible and if there exist other opportunities for sleeping, eating, personal hygiene and social needs. Having more than one intern slightly increases basic infrastructure requirements but often radically decreases host community needs to actively care for social aspects of the intern. Interns appreciate their own rooms but this is seldom expected. Sharing a room or having a bed in a dormitory is normal for intern accommodation.

## ORGANIZING THE WORK PROGRAMME

Every intern needs a clear work programme, a named work supervisor, expressed or formulated goals for learning and expectations of the performance of the intern during the internship. It is ideal to agree on these matters prior to the arrival of the intern, so that mutual understanding and sufficient resources exist upon arrival.

Most interns in ecovillages would be expected to work to the same degree as other employees or members of the community. This is important for integration and acceptance for all parties. Interns however may have certain needs for training, or language studies that cause them to have less time to practical work. Often too little work is considered negative and not positive by the intern, so the balance between work and leisure time tasks should be provided for. Most interns do not come to be idle, but to be useful and learn-by-doing. The more integrated they are with other workers the more they will get out of the experience. A minimum of 6 hours a day, 5 days per week is recommended as a normal full-time routine; more than 40 hours a week can be excessive. However it should be clarified what are personal tasks, what are leisure time tasks and what is part of the normal work detail. This delineation is more difficult in an ecovillage. Such tasks as washing your own clothes, helping in the common kitchen or repairing a bicycle could be considered work time or leisure time, depending on the particular ecovillage situation.

## SOCIAL LIFE FOR INTERNS

The ecovillage internship, unlike many other types of internships, is an unusually intense experience. Interns are on location 100% of the time and cannot easily get away if the ecovillage is in a rural setting, as is usually the case. Unlike an internship in an urban situation, the intern lives within the ecovillage community and needs to adapt to community rules both during work and off work. In many cases in Europe, the intern will not share the mother language of the ecovillage, and communication will be in a lingua franca foreign to both intern and ecovillage. Learning and speaking a foreign language takes extra energy; this can create mental fatigue for both host and guest. Being aware of this is in order to avoid conflicts and misunderstandings.

An even more important aspect of the interns social life is their living space. Having a pleasant and cosy living space, that enables the interns to feel comfortable and secure, is quintessential to having a good internship. The importance of cosiness cannot be stressed enough!

## DOCUMENTING LEARNING IN AN INTERNSHIP

Most interns are keen to learn about eco-lifestyle for their own personal development. The internship host needs to make an effort to help the intern in documenting their learning experiences during the internship, so as to facilitate the recognition of their new skills, and thus the propagation of eco-technologies and practices to their home countries. The best format for documentation is a well-developed description of the various skills the intern has worked with as well as an objected, plausible evaluation of the intern's performance. A minimum would be a letter of recommendation of 5 sentences mentioning the place of the internship, full name and perhaps date of birth/place of residence of the intern, the dates of the internship, the tasks carried out and a final opinion of the performance of the intern highlighting the intern's strong points. The letter should be signed by the ecovillage's representative or work supervisor. A more advanced document would include more details of the tasks involved, the amount of time spent on them, the name of the supervisor for each task/skill and an opinion of the level of skill attained. The EU Youth in Action programme has a system called Youth Pass which, like the "Euro Pass" Curriculum Vitae, documents the skills and learning of the intern in a recognizable European standard format.

## REINTEGRATION CONSIDERATIONS FOR DEPARTING INTERNS

As mentioned previously, the internship experience is often a strong personal experience and afterwards many interns return home with new ideas and skills, but with the same challenges of finding one's place in the home country. It is of course not easy for an ecovillage to assist in the return of an intern to a foreign country. But speaking about how the experience in the ecovillage can be used on return can help the intern in thinking through options and committing themselves to positive action before returning home. The ecovillage, through the Global Ecovillage Network, may be able to identify a supportive environment upon return so that the intern could connect with others with similar experiences and ideas in their home country.

## EVALUATING THE INTERNSHIPS AND INTERNSHIP PROGRAMMES

Both individual internships and an ecovillage's internship programme can more easily improve if they are open to self-critical evaluations. It is recommended that the ecovillage itself has a dialogue with departing interns about how well the internship met expectations and where it could be improved. If possible, others than those directly involved in the internship should be invited to give their opinion about how well the internship functioned. The learning of these discussions should be written down and utilized when planning future internships.

## EXISTING INTERNATIONAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAMMES FOR ECOVILLAGES

A number of internationally established systems of exchange and internships exist that are already used by ecovillages. As these systems are already established, having fixed rules and cemented procedures, they facilitate new ecovillages starting up internships. Most of these have survived as they solve some important dilemma of organizing internships. Below we mention those more used by ecovillages.

### EUROPEAN VOLUNTARY SERVICE

The main internship system in Europe today is the EU Youth in Action sub-programme called European Voluntary Service (EVS). EVS has taken over the lead position from other programmes due to the fact that it is well-financed, well-organized and has an impressive geographical coverage. Basically most of the world can participate in the EVS programme, though it is easier for youth and ecovillages within the EU. If you are interested in creating an internship programme between an EU country and a non-EU country the project has to be applied for by the EU country, in addition there can be complications regarding visa and residence permits for non-EU citizens.

Youth between 18 and 30 years wishing to spend up to 12 months on an internship can apply to be an EVS volunteer at any of many sending organizations in their country. Ecovillages can apply to become a sending organisation, this is however not a necessity, due to the overweight of applying interns (being sent from sending organisations) compared to available spots (hosting organisations). Thus the main need is to increase host organizations to receive youth.

As a sending, hosting or coordinating organisation you can apply for a EVS project. When applying to your National Agency there are five application deadlines per year:

<i>Projects starting between</i>	<i>Application deadline</i>
1 May and 30 September	1 February
1 July and 30 November	1 April
1 September and 31 January	1 June
1 December and 30 April	1 September
1 February and 31 July	1 November

For someone that has not managed projects before the application processes can be time-consuming, which is important to remember. For more information regarding deadlines and applications processes, see the Youth in Action Programme Guide.

Host organizations are granted sufficient funds to cover 90% of travel costs of interns and food and accommodations of interns. The funding is divided between lump sums per intern, travel costs et cetera.

For an exhaustive table of the different funding for each country see the Youth in Action Programme Guide.

EVS offers insurance and on-arrival training for all interns, where all interns in that particular country attend a common training course. For organisations or persons interested in learning more about EVS such trainings are available in all countries in Europe. EVS may change its name and form after 2014, as a result of the new programme period. For more information see [http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/european-voluntary-service\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/european-voluntary-service_en.htm).

<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Disadvantages</i>
Sufficient project funding	Potential complications for non-EU citizens
World-wide participation is possible	Extensive bureaucracy in comparison with other internship programmes
Formalized, guaranteed insurance for all volunteers	//
Several application deadlines	//

## WWOOF

The international WWOOF association was originally called "working weekends on organic farms" but later renamed itself to "world-wide opportunities on organic farms", as most volunteers were keen to stay much more than a weekend, and sometimes even up to several years. WWOOF is an international network of national WWOOF organisations, which are offering volunteer contacts to organic gardening projects and private organic, mostly rural, farms, all over the world. The host farm usually pays an annual fee to WWOOF in order to be listed and thus are contacted by potential Woofers. On the WWOOF web site it is stated that hosts: (1) "grow organically, are in conversion, or use ecologically sound methods on their land", (2) "provide hands-on experience of organic growing and other learning opportunities where possible." and (3) "provide clean dry accommodation and adequate food for their volunteers."

Food and accommodations are provided and paid for by the host in exchange for labor while Woofers pay travel to the site. WWOOF is not explicitly an internship organization, but is widely used by ecovillages to attract volunteers. A important difference between WWOOF and e.g. EVS is that there are no application processes when creating internships via WWOOF. The potential intern instead scans through a list of WWOOF hosts and then takes direct contact with the host, without any formalized procedure. This leads to the fact that the internship periods vary widely and are decided by the host and the interns themselves.

WWOOF offers no insurance but does recommend a private, non-profit company called O V Europa offering tailored insurances for Woofers. For more information see [www.woof.org](http://www.woof.org).

<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Disadvantages</i>
Non-existent bureaucracy in comparison with other internship programmes	No guaranteed, all-encompassing insurance
World-wide participation is possible	No project funding
Intuitive and easy-going project creation procedures	Annual fee to national WWOOF organisation
No fixed internship period – allowing more suitable internship design	//
Year-round possibilities to initiate projects	//

## SERVICE CIVIL INTERNATIONAL

Service Civil International (SCI) has branches and partner organizations in some 50 countries and organizes international volunteers to local community projects. SCI has been used by ecovillages to organize international work camps of around 10 volunteers, usually 2-3 weeks in duration. Like WWOOF, SCI is not an internship organisation, but a peace movement demonstrating that people from different cultures can peacefully work, eat and live together and join forces in a common idealistic project. Unlike EVS, SCI does not have an upper age limit, but are open to all above 18 years, with a slight variation depending on the location.

In addition to the short work camps, SCI has long-term volunteer placements (LTV) which are 3-12 months. The LTV facility of SCI, which has no base funding, has been seriously challenged by the EVS programme due to the latter's funding. LTVs do however still exist and offer a less bureaucratic form of long-term internships. Ecovillages unwilling to get involved in the complexity of the EVS programme may be more attracted by SCI, especially since the project creation procedures are handled by both SCI's national organisation and the hosting ecovillage.

All hosts of SCI activities pay food and accommodations for volunteers while volunteers pay travel to the site, in addition to the participation fee usually demanded by SCI. Unlike WWOOF, SCI can offer insurance for all volunteers. For more information see [www.sciint.org](http://www.sciint.org).

<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Disadvantages</i>
Formalized, guaranteed insurance for all volunteers	No project funding
World-wide participation is possible	Usually only short work camps

Less extensive bureaucracy in comparison with other internship programmes	//
Year-round possibilities to initiate projects	//

## OTHER LESS UTILIZED PROGRAMMES

Apart from the above-mentioned, there are a number of other programmes that could support internships at ecovillages. Some of these are listed below.

### FÖJ

*Das Freiwillige Ökologische Jahr (FÖJ)* in Germany is a programme for young people 16-26 years that allows these youths to spend a year in an environmental project. The intern gets pocket money, rail card and 26 days of holiday. The host gets funding similar to EVS.

### GAP YEAR

North American students from USA and Canada have developed a tradition of making gap years abroad, to get away from the call room and instead do something exotic and more practical. Therefore many ecovillages get enquiries about receiving students from Gap Year programmes, which are able to pay for taking in students as interns. The programme is normally fully funded by the fees from the students' families.

### ERASMUS

EU university exchange programme Erasmus has possibilities to fund internships for students going to another country. The intern is able to get some assistance for travel costs.

### LEONARDO

EU vocational exchange programme Leonardo has a good internship facility for vocational development of professionals. The Leonardo intern gets a stipend that can allow them to help pay for food and accommodation.

### GRUNDTVIG LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS

Adult education exchange programme Grundtvig has a strand for Learning Partnerships (LP) which allows for mutual exchanges between educated professionals. This facility has been used by ecovillages to exchange skills and experiences between adult educators in ecovillages. Grants provide 1000 EUR per exchanged professional within an LP project.

## ECOVILLAGES WITH OWN PROGRAMMES

As handling the flow of interested visitors is common to most ecovillages, the oldest and largest ecovillages have had time to develop their own coping strategies, prior to the internship mobility schemes of the EU had come into being. Many of these can function as inspiration for ecovillages wanting to set up their own internship scheme.

### FINDHORN

One of the most well-developed and well-functioning internship systems in an ecovillage is that of Findhorn Ecovillage in Scotland. They have an impressive battery of intern programmes starting with the few-day Short Term Visit programme which costs 18 GBP/day, giving you two meals but no breakfast or accommodation. The rest of their programmes are based on the concept of all-inclusive packages of food, accommodation and staff-led processes. For example the week-long "Experience Week", the follow-up week "Exploring Community Life" or "Spiritual Practice" week are the next steps in the internship process, costing 425-655 GBP/week. These internships are followed by several longer ones, where the "Living Essentials Apprentice" (LEAP) is the final one.

Those wanting to test Findhorn slightly less costly can do a working week or "Service Weeks" at just 95-295 GBP/week without any staff-led processes, but there is a prerequisite of attending Experience Week first. All of Findhorn's internships contain a high degree of personal and spiritual development but includes practical and sometimes technical work as well. For more information see [www.findhorn.org](http://www.findhorn.org).

### ZEGG

The German ecovillage ZEGG offers one-week Summer Guest programmes all summer long, allowing guests to work 5 hours a day for 5 day/week for just 56 EUR/week for board and lodging. For more information see [www.zegg.de](http://www.zegg.de).

### TAMERA HEALING BIOTOPE 1

The rapidly developing Portuguese community Tamera has both introduction weeks and a week-long Summer University to test life in Tamera. The month-long Basic Semester can be continued with a Second Semester for those interested in staying at Tamera and understand their peaceful models for the future. For more information see [www.tamera.org](http://www.tamera.org).

### SIEBEN LINDEN

German ecovillage Sieben Linden, besides using FÖJ, EVS and Grundtvig has one-week Experience Weeks or a Summer Camps with accommodation in your own tent. A special Youth Week (16-28 yrs. old) at 80 EUR with accommodations in own tents is another possible way to visit. Sieben Linden uses the FÖJ system for its own internship programme allowing a group of 10-12 young people to come, live and work one year in the community. For more information see [www.siebenlinden.de](http://www.siebenlinden.de).

## SUMMARY

Every ecovillage needs to make its own judgment regarding which type of system is most appealing or appropriate for its particular situation. If there is ample food production in the ecovillage receiving interns may not be as important as social and public relations aspects. But for most ecovillages both money and labor is in short supply and interns can help with both, even though neither of the two aspects should be exaggerated. In addition, an internship is also a way of spreading knowledge about your ecovillage and can be a rewarding way of attracting new members.

Accommodation, infrastructure and more importantly personnel to supervise and guide the interns are required, which means that the ecovillage needs to be at the right level of development to be able to receive interns. The best way of ensuring that your internship is successful is to choose the right format and dimension of it. We formulated a 8 point start-up checklist that is attached to this document, that is summary of the content in the document and should work as a step-by-step guide during the creation of your internship.

If you have any comments on the content of this handbook, or think there is something missing, please send an email to [eriklindmanmata@suderbyn.se](mailto:eriklindmanmata@suderbyn.se)

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS:

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## IMPORTANT LINKS

Ecovillages with established internship programmes:

[www.tamera.org](http://www.tamera.org)

[www.siebenlinden.de](http://www.siebenlinden.de)

[www.zegg.de](http://www.zegg.de)

[www.findhorn.org](http://www.findhorn.org)

Existing internship platforms:

[www.ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/european-voluntary-service\\_en.htm](http://www.ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/european-voluntary-service_en.htm) (EVS)

[www.ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/grundtvig\\_en.htm](http://www.ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/grundtvig_en.htm) (Grundtvig)

[www.ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/ldv\\_en.htm](http://www.ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/ldv_en.htm) (Leonardo)

[www.erasmusprogramme.com/](http://www.erasmusprogramme.com/)

[www.sciint.org](http://www.sciint.org) (Service Civil International)

[www.wwoof.org/](http://www.wwoof.org/)

[www.foej.de/html/foj\\_en.html](http://www.foej.de/html/foj_en.html) (FÖJ)

Ecovillage associated organisations:

[www.gen-europe.org](http://www.gen-europe.org) (Global Ecovillage Network)

[www.ic.org](http://www.ic.org) (American Fellowship of Intentional Communities)

[www.gaia.org/gaia/](http://www.gaia.org/gaia/) (Gaia Trust)

[www.gaiaeducation.org](http://www.gaiaeducation.org)

Other relevant links:

[www.oveuropa.com/](http://www.oveuropa.com/) (WWOOF tailored insurance)

[www.balticecovillages.eu](http://www.balticecovillages.eu) (project web site for the Ecovillages project)

[www.ecovillageroad.eu](http://www.ecovillageroad.eu) (tool for visiting ecovillages and sharing knowledge)

## START-UP CHECKLIST

### 1. VISION & DREAMS

Think through what kind of internship project is most suitable for your ecovillage. What do you want from the project? How many interns can you host, and for how long? It is important that the number of interns is compatible with the capacity of your ecovillage's infrastructure. Do not forget to think about the social aspect of hosting interns.

### 2. FORMULATE YOUR VISION!

Formulate your vision and wishes, in a comprehensible and clear document, in order to avoid any future misunderstandings and uncertainties. If you choose to join an already formalized internship programmes the above-mentioned document can function as the basis for your project application.

### 3. WHICH FORMAT SUITS YOU BEST?

Decide which internship format is most suitable for your ecovillage and your project. For instance, would it be best to create your own programme or is it better to apply for an EVS project? What kind of administrative capacity does your ecovillage have? Look at the summarizing tables in the section Existing International Internship Programmes for Ecovillages for guidance!

### 4. APPLICATION OR ANNOUNCEMENT

Depending on which internship format you choose, you either need to write an application or make an announcement. This is a work that is time-consuming, so you need to make sure that you have both personnel and time sufficient for the task. Remember that it is beneficial to use the document you formulated in step 2 when writing the application, so that the internship is coherent.

### 5. PREPARATION, RESPONSIBILITY & PLANNING

Before receiving the interns it is crucial that you prepare and plan all practical and logistical details. A prerequisite for a smooth implementation of the internship is a proper division of labour. Before receiving the interns you need to make sure that each task has a responsible person. It is crucial that this responsibility is divided among the community members. Of course, it is also important that some persons have an overall responsibility of the project. Is it clear for all community members what part of the internship project is their responsibility?

### 6. IMPLEMENTATION – HOSTING THE INTERNS

During the very implementation of the internship project it is important that you have good routines for communication. You need to have a functioning communication with the sending organisations, involved authorities, the interns and eventual national administrative offices. Do you have functioning routines for problem solving?

### 7. DOCUMENTATION & PREPARATION FOR RETURN HOME

Before the closure of the internship project you need to document the results, experiences and learnings attained during the internship. Make sure that the interns are conscious of what they have learned during their internship. It is also favourable that you prepare the interns for their return home, and plan for eventual implementation of their experiences.

### 8. EVALUATION

Evaluate the project together with the interns, the members of the ecovillage and other involved parties. What parts of the internship functioned properly and what could have been better? Was it the right choice of format for your internship programme? Was the work invested in the internship proportional to the results?