



GEN EUROPE
GLOBAL
ECOVILLAGE
NETWORK



2022 ANNUAL REPORT

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2022 IN BRIEF

2022 saw the joyful return of the in-person European Ecovillage Gathering, cementing its role as a place of deep connection and meaningful celebration for the entire global network as well as a wide-open doorway into ecovillage lifestyles for newcomers. We also did our best to support GEN Ukraine as they responded with speed and solidarity to the war through the Green Road project, welcoming those displaced and seeking safety. Our ongoing funded projects have continued to spread ecovillage tools and culture to new audiences, and our network-building activities are bearing fruit with the formation of new bioregional networks.

2022 **IN** **NUMBERS**

YOUTH IMPACT

360

young people

participated in youth exchanges, events and trainings through the youth-led Yes To Sustainability programme

over 100

participants

in Community Learning Incubator (CLIPS) trainings

SPREADING ECOVILLAGE SKILLS

150

participants

in capacity building trainings across the network

BUILDING NETWORK CAPACITY

**COMMUNITY
SOLIDARITY**

more than

€52K

raised for
GEN Ukraine

2 NEW

bioregional ecovillage
networks created

**CONNECTING
COMMUNITIES**

**GATHERING
AFFLUENCE**

293

participants
at the Gathering from
24 different countries

300
locations
on the Green Road

**NETWORK
HOSPITALITY**

OUR TEAM

GEN EUROPE 2022



Angel Matilla

IT, ESC MANAGEMENT, WESEEN



Armin Olunczek

FINANCES



Carolin Waldmann

MEMBERSHIP



Dario Ferraro

PROJECTS, MATERNITY COVER



**Dicte Frost & Riccardo
Clemente**

GATHERING



Fanny van Hal

PROJECTS



Fran Whitlock

COMMUNICATIONS



Manja Vrenko

COORDINATION, MEMBERSHIP

OUR TEAM

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OUR TEAM

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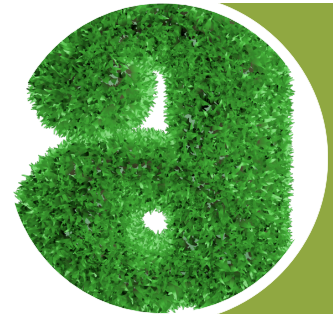


Alisa Sperling

LAUNCH & THRIVE

Alessia Rebeggiani

PROJECT SCOUT



Tom Feeney

EC2

Eva Hauber

EYE



Eva Goldfarb

ESC VOLUNTEER 2022

Alejandra Hart

ESC VOLUNTEER 2022



Ziska Reißig

ESC VOLUNTEER 2022

Ezma Block

ESC VOLUNTEER 2022



OUR TEAM

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GEN Ukraine & the Green Road

- 60 locations in Ukraine and around 300 abroad in the beginning of the Green Road
- Over 2000 displaced people hosted in Ukrainian ecovillages and eco-projects
- Funds raised: € 52,648.69



The early months of the year were marked by devastating circumstances: the outbreak of war in Ukraine. From that moment on, members of the network, staff and council maintained regular communication with GEN Ukraine, offering network solidarity and fundraising support as they dealt with the fallout of the war. National networks, ecovillages and individuals all joined together to offer donations and to coordinate hospitality, with national contact points set up across our networks to connect ecovillagers and other displaced people with places to stay. We highlight in particular the work of the Danish ecovillage network, LØS, whose swift and continued response has been a shining example of effective coordination and solidarity between networks.

The Green Road project emerged in the early days of the war as dozens of ecovillages both within and outside of Ukraine opened their doors in hospitality for refugees. This initiative continues to provide much-needed shelter and support to those seeking refuge, while also highlighting the vital role that ecovillages can play in promoting sustainability and community-building in the longer term: many of the new arrivals in the ecovillages are staying and integrating into the projects.

LEARN MORE

- [THE GREEN ROAD: A HOME AWAY FROM HOME. A DOCUMENTARY FILM TELLING THE STORIES OF THOSE WHO HAVE FOUND NEW HOMES IN ECOVILLAGES DURING THE WAR](#)
- [GEN UKRAINE HOMEPAGE](#)
- [GEN EU UKRAINE DONATION AND INFORMATION PAGE](#)
- [GREEN ROAD PROJECT FEATURED IN THE MEDIA](#)

The 2022 European Ecovillage Gathering was a further moment to cement collaboration with GEN Ukraine, and thanks to a generous donation from the Gaia Trust we were able to invite 15 volunteers from the network to the event. Besides immense energy in bringing the event to life, the volunteers offered a joyful experience of Ukrainian culture with traditional songs, dances, crafts and storytelling. We were moved by their accounts of the impact of war in the community, and inspired to action: the Busha Toloka project to build eco-friendly community winter housing was dreamed up between ecovillagers at the Gathering and is already coming to fruition.

As we reflect on the events of the past year, we are reminded of the power of a close network of communities: how the strong bonds of friendship and communication forged over years of collaboration create tremendous solidarity and capacity for action. We honour the incredible resilience and dedication of our Ukrainian friends, celebrate their achievements, and mourn their losses with them. Despite the challenges they have faced, they have remained steadfast in their commitment to maintaining their network and supporting those in need. We are honored to stand beside them as they continue this important work.



NETWORK SUPPORT & MEMBER CARE

2022 saw GEN Europe consolidate our network support and member care activities, primarily through European projects and our capacity building programme. The opportunities generated through these activities highlight some of the principal benefits of membership: access to training and project resources, alongside the opportunity to co-create new projects based on needs through participating with peers in our projects working group.

Network Support

Two main network projects were under way during the year: WESEEN and Launch & Thrive. These projects not only have the goal of engaging the project partners, but also of creating resources and infrastructure that can benefit our existing and new networks and our longer-term network strategy.



The WESEEN project was brought to a successful close in 2022. This project connected 40 participants and eight partner organisations engaged in ecovillages and other sustainability initiatives from the two target regions and offered training, mentoring and support in network-building. The most exciting output was the emergence of two bioregional networks: Western Europe (WE) (joining France, Belgium, Luxemburg and the Netherlands) and South East Europe (SEEN) (Croatia, Hungary, Serbia and Slovenia). Both networks are now represented with regional websites displaying searchable maps of local sustainability initiatives, and the networks will be creating new projects to bring ecovillage training, youth exchanges and volunteering opportunities to the regions. Besides these very practical results of the partnership, new personal connections were established, that will last beyond the project's lifetime - which is, of course, what strong networking is all about. Continuing the project theme of network support, 2022 saw the kick-off of Launch & Thrive: a project designed to create resources that will support both new and existing national ecovillage networks. Inspired by previous projects, especially the Danish national network's collaborations with networks in Ghana and Ukraine, it emerged in response to frequent requests for better support for national networks that are either starting up or emerging from a dormant period. The project pairs up more established networks with younger or less active ones, including an exchange programme between the two so that partners can gain on the ground experience and best practice. The outcomes will include a support manual for network-building, a learning platform, video resources sharing network stories and experiences, and web tools for networks and members - as well as the closer cooperation between the participating networks: Baltic, Danish, Iberian, Swiss, Italian and Ukrainian.

Capacity Building

The GEN EU capacity building programme was developed in collaboration with the projects working group to support our members to learn skills and access funds through European projects. In 2022 the projects developed through the programme enabled 150 participants to take part in trainings on project creation, ESC volunteer projects, and group facilitation. These trainings enable participants to create their own projects and develop transferable skills, thus expanding the network's impact and drawing in more skills and economic opportunities to communities. We offered an open online session for newcomers to our projects and the Erasmus+ scheme to support expanded participation in our programmes.

As part of our commitment to networking and knowledge-sharing, our project experts shared our activities at the Communities for Future Fundraising Capacity Building Session, sharing our experiences of Erasmus+ as a source of funding for community-led initiatives.

The hard work of the projects working group, made up of volunteers from the membership supported by our projects coordinator, is vital to our ongoing mission to build network capacity. We're very grateful to all those who participate in the group - and we warmly invite other interested members to get involved.



Member Support

A blended digital/live National Networks meeting took place early in the year in Hungary: the first point of reconnection for the network after two years without meeting due to the pandemic. It was a much needed moment to take stock of the past years, and a reminder of the importance of in person connection to care for our relationships, share our experiences, and maintain and grow our network.

We expanded our member IT Toolbox and IT services, while actively promoting open source and ethical alternatives to conventional corporate platforms and tools. IT manager Angel offered a webinar on tools for ethical organising online, and continued to provide services such as website setup, a joint database for the WE and SEEN networks, and a wiki functionality.

Wider networks

To support broader networking and interface with the wider world, we continued to offer our existing platforms as well as creating new opportunities. We launched a forum for exchange and conversation, which we hope will become a long-lasting repository of information related to ecovillages. The forum also hosts our Living Library, a new initiative designed to showcase member expertise and connect individuals to consulting and advice from ecovillagers. As part of the wider Global Ecovillage Network, we remain in close contact with the regional ecovillage networks across the world and allied networks such as ECOLISE, and create shared projects, communications and other activities that expand ecovillage and community culture worldwide. In 2022, projects included an IT collaboration on the Stepping Stones project tracker, Ecovillage Transition in Action, and the Ecovillage Resilience Project, exploring resilience, adaptation and transformation in a >+2.5 degree global warming scenario. More broadly, the EC² project, funded by the EU's Horizon 2020 project, connected us with research institutions and networks across Europe on the subject of energy citizenship, enabling us to bring ecovillage wisdom on both energy and community engagement into academic and institutional settings.



YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

We are fortunate to have a highly engaged and dedicated youth network, which continues to grow through NextGEN Europe (the European youth branch) and the Yes to Sustainability network (a youth-led network dedicated to creating nonformal learning opportunities for youth in ecovillages). 2022 was a year of intense activity for the youth area: The Yes to Sustainability Partnership project continued to strengthen the YTS network its work supporting young people in creating sustainability youth exchanges. It launched its first publication, a [brochure](#) for young people and youth workers exploring sustainability practices in youth exchanges. Their work alongside that of GEN EU was also highlighted as best practice in a [European Commission publication](#) on sustainability in learning mobilities.

Other projects supporting youth included the EYE Project that saw a group of young people from Senegal and Germany travelling to meet each other in ecovillages in their respective countries to address themes of youth empowerment, racial and social justice and colonial healing. And as always, we continued to welcome volunteers through the European Solidarity Corps, as did dozens of ecovillages around Europe, providing a much-needed way into community living for young people.

LEARN MORE:

- [NEXTGEN'S ANNUAL REPORT](#)
- [YES TO SUSTAINABILITY](#)
- [YTS BROCHURE](#)
- [ECOVILLAGE YOUTH EXCHANGE SENEGAL/GERMANY](#)





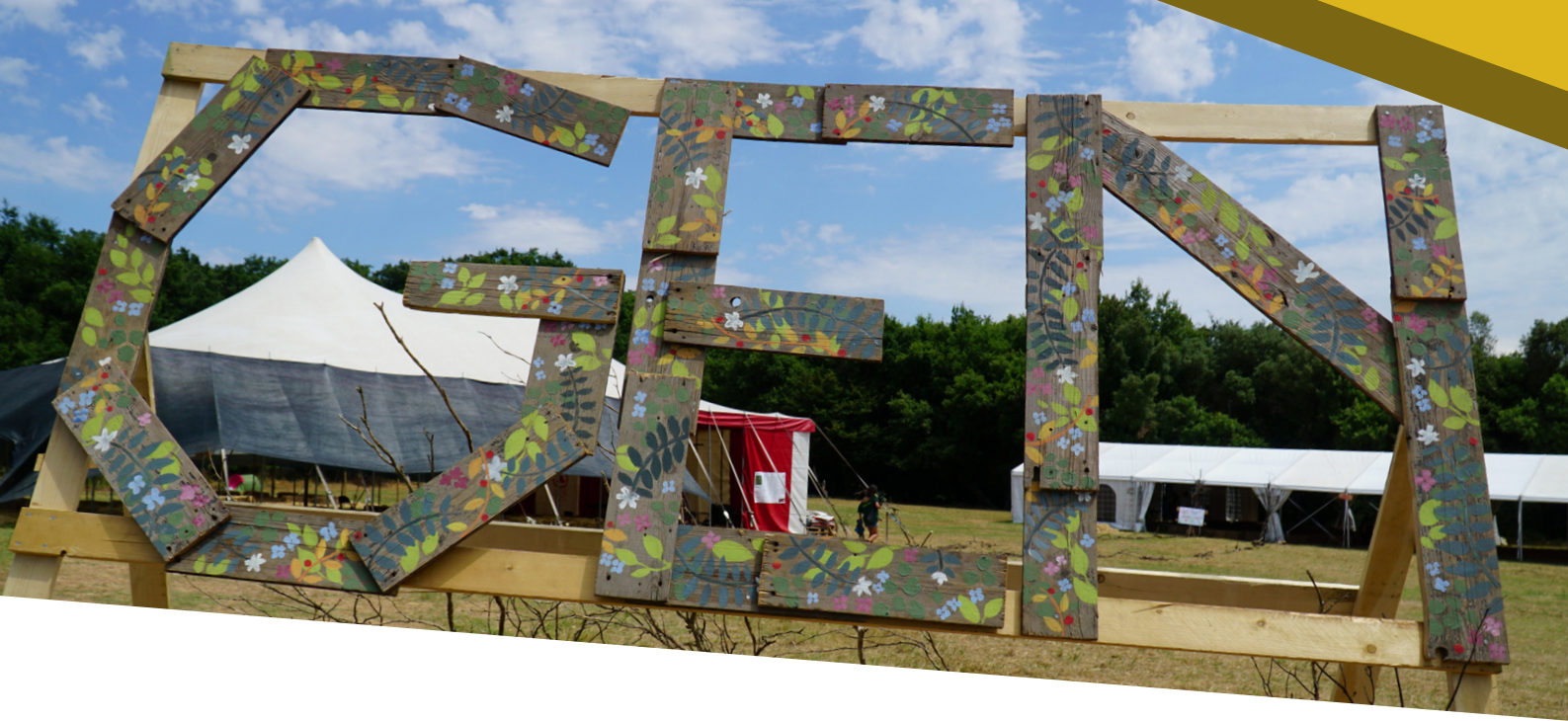
"I left with a lot of inspiration, fascination and force to tackle the collapse and the diverse possible futures that ecovillages can play a big part of."
"I'm completely inspired, charged and feeling a lot of love."

- 2022 Gathering Participants' Feedback

EUROPEAN ECOVILLAGE GATHERING 2022

At long last, we celebrated finally being able to come together at the European Ecovillage Gathering after almost three years apart. It was clear that curiosity about ecovillage lifestyles has grown: over half of attendees were first-timers, which made the positive feedback we received even more gratifying. Participants picked out as particular highlights the music and dancing, inspiring plenary sessions, the networking and connection opportunities and a [deeply moving keynote address from writer Dougald Hine](#).

The event was given a uniquely Ukrainian feel thanks to the dedicated team of volunteers from GEN Ukraine who were instrumental in preparing much of the infrastructure and organisation, as well as bringing songs, dances and stories from their homeland to the event. We also owe special thanks to the Ananda Gaorii community, who opened their doors and hearts to us at the last minute and enabled us to create an unforgettable gathering in a warm, intimate setting – just what was needed after so long apart.



STAFF, COUNCIL AND OPERATIONS

After two years separated by Covid, we were fortunate enough in 2022 to be able to meet twice in person as a team to work on strategy, team-building and planning. We were able to collaborate more closely on strategy and begin developing a timeline for the next five years. We look forward to sharing and consolidating our strategy, based around pillars of solidarity, education and outreach built on a solid base of network care, financial stability and administrative excellence. On the staff side, we welcomed Dario, a familiar face to many in the network thanks to his years of dedicated project work, as project coordinator to cover for Fanny's maternity leave. Angel continued maintaining and evolving our IT capacity while also managing the WESEEN project as well as coordinating the ESC volunteers in the Arterra office. For much of the year Manja juggled both membership and general coordination roles. Armin wrangled our finances, Dicte and Riccardo worked hard to create a magical Gathering in Ananda Gaorii, and Fran kept up the communication along with some coordination support work.

And of course our project managers Tom, Eva and Alisa were indispensable in keeping our projects running smoothly, bringing in vital resources and expertise to the network. At the end of the year we also welcomed Alessia to support with scoping for new projects.

As always, we welcomed an energetic, highly skilled and dedicated group of ESC volunteers who provided invaluable support to our work in the office, going above and beyond in their roles and showing great initiative. Thank you Ziska, Eva, Ale and Ezma!

Meanwhile on the council we said a fond farewell to Abdul and Riccardo and welcomed Jake Jay-Lewin and Teodora Radulescu as new council members, joining Ave, Steffan, Charlie and Stefanie as our dedicated group selected by the network to hold the vision for the network. We are grateful for their expertise, goodwill, and the extensive voluntary hours they put in to support the staff and network. We are also deeply appreciative of the members of the Projects and National Networks working groups, who regularly and voluntarily work together to create projects and networking opportunities for our community.



Areas of Improvement

While we are enjoying a period of strong teamwork and a path towards clarity on our strategy and longer-term goals, we are realistic about the challenges we face and areas that still require improvement.

We are financially stable thanks to our ongoing projects, but we remain highly dependent on project funding and continue to seek alternative funding streams for our core work. We are also implementing a project strategy that requires projects to be in clear alignment with our wider mission, to ensure that project work and core work is closely connected.

We made the decision to hold the 2022 Gathering after two years off due to Covid, as we sensed that the network needed this moment of reconnection. Due to a last minute venue change, expenses were higher than predicted, but we are deeply grateful to Ananda Gaorii for stepping in and hosting a wonderful event with great generosity and warm-heartedness.

However, this also meant that the financial outcomes for the Gathering were lower than in previous years and we are undertaking an ongoing process of evaluating the Gathering model, its financial viability, and possible alternative models that maintain its invaluable function of network connection and showcasing ecovillages to the wider world.

After a period of a process of bringing our organizational administration up to date, an exercise which continues into 2023. Our goal is to achieve administrative excellence as a solid basis for our financial, HR and other administrative activities.

From the network...

"GEN Europe is more than a network to me. It's my international family which I happily join each year for the reunion and know I'll be able to travel anywhere and have a home. And just like a real family I'm excited about each year's new family members!" - Annika Alex, GEN Germany and Yes to Sustainability



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**WE ARE THE EUROPEAN ECOVILLAGE
NETWORK: A NETWORK OF INTENTIONAL
COMMUNITIES, ECOVILLAGES AND
NATIONAL ECOVILLAGE NETWORKS
WORKING TOGETHER TO CREATE A
REGENERATIVE WORLD.**



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CALLE ABAJO, 1
31480, ARTIEDA,
NAVARRA

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**DESIGN BY
GIUSEPPE LORRAI**