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# Connecting Communities for Affordable, Sustainable, and Inclusive Rural Housing

Dario Ferraro - Program Manager



- Ecovillages are collectively designed communities, where individuals create a home with a shared vision
- The rural housing crisis requires affordable, sustainable and inclusive solutions
- Our members span over 25 countries and operate as living laboratories for innovative housing models

*Ecovillages demonstrate that sustainable, affordable living is not just a dream but a practical reality*



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- Community-led housing models combine affordability, sustainability and inclusivity
- Possible models: Foundations, Housing Cooperatives, Community Land Trusts, Co-housings
- Collective land stewardship and shared resources
- Communal living reduces costs and improves wellbeing, compared to conventional housing

[Findhorn Ecovillage \(Scotland, UK\)](#)

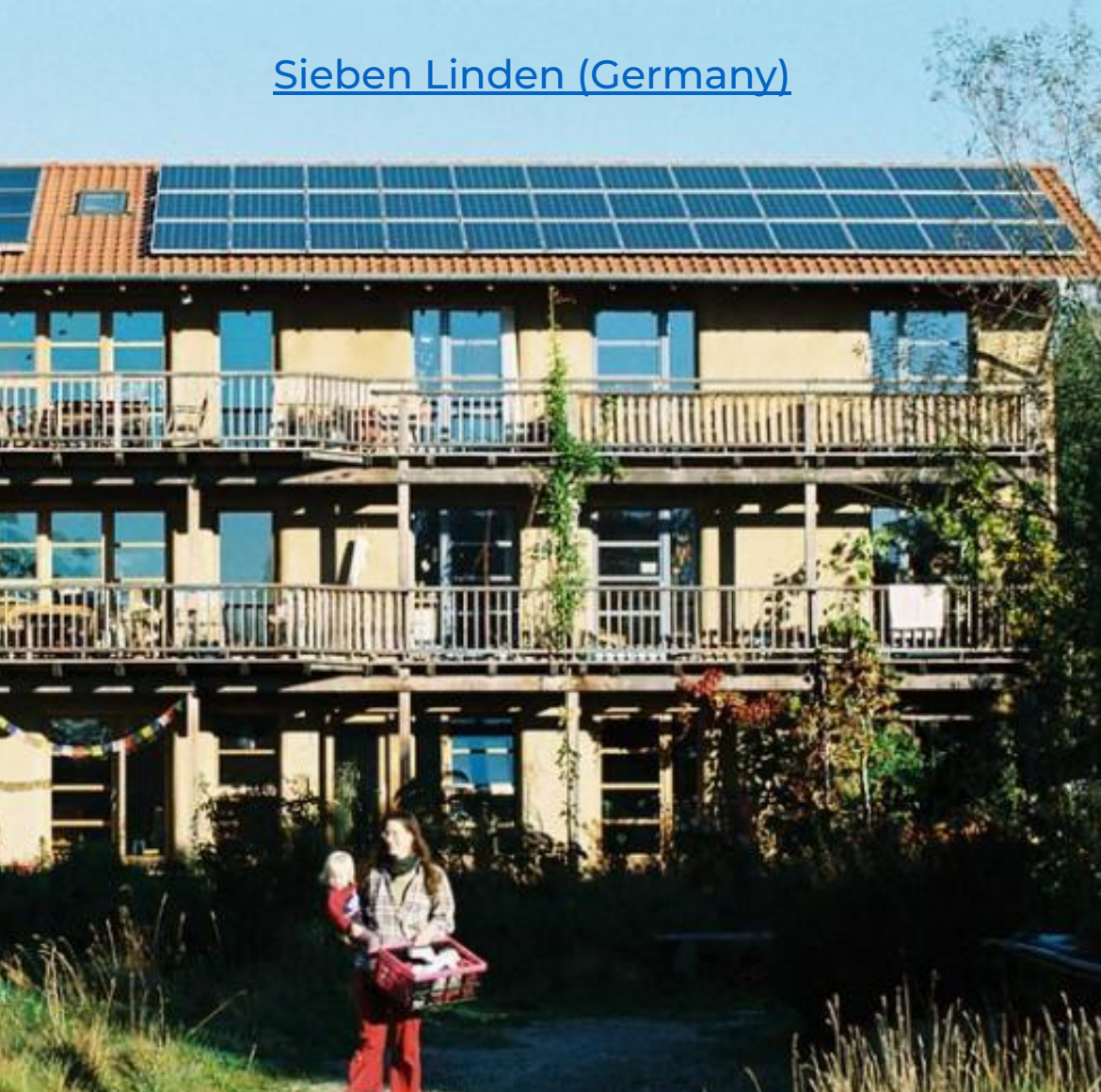


Solutions for Affordable, Quality and Social  
Housing



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- Enabling access for low-income groups, refugees, and elderly people
- Preventing rural depopulation through community-led housing
- Cooperative ownership model ensures long-term affordability

Social Inclusion & Housing for Marginalized Groups



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- Solidarity-based economy: income pooling, shared assets
- Collective ownership of the land avoids speculation and rising prices
- Residents of collective housing models have lower energy and maintenance costs
- Sharing meals and resources saves money, creates cohesion, and counters loneliness

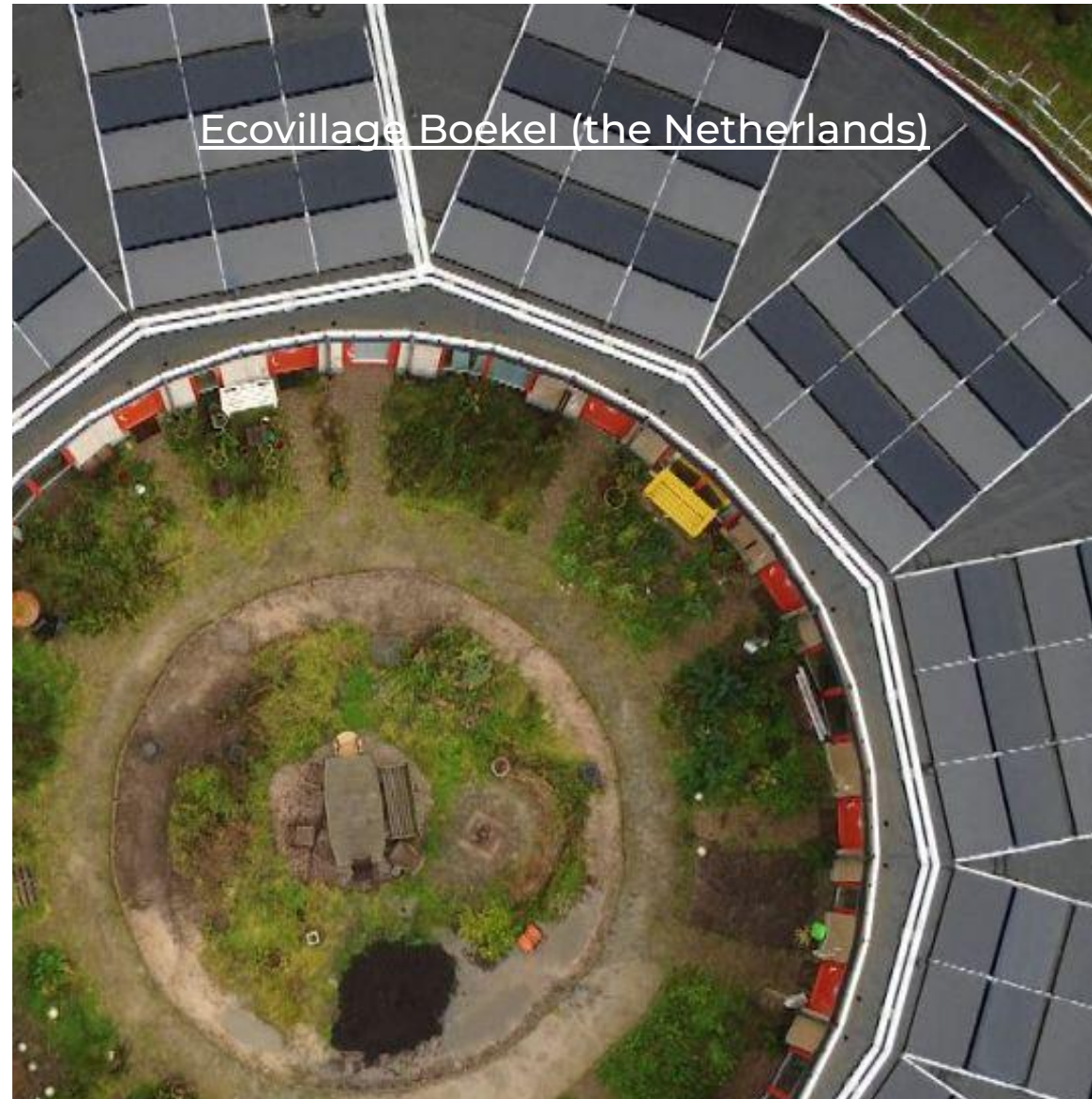
## Economic & Social Benefits of Communal Living



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- Demonstrated use of bio-based and recycled materials, low-carbon design, and energy autonomy.
- Innovative circular practices: water reuse, permaculture, greywater systems.
- Community-level approaches to reduce land sealing and preserve local ecosystems.

Ecovillage Boekel (the Netherlands)



Climate-Resilient and Sustainable Villages  
of the Future

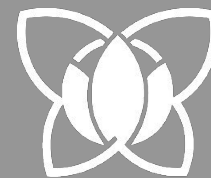


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- Showcase of successful examples of retrofitting and adaptive reuse.
- Contribution to mapping and documentation of abandoned or underused buildings.
- Storytelling and visual documentation of transformation processes.
- Strengthening community identity through historic restoration.





- Successful methodologies for participatory design, e.g. Sociocracy and the [CLIPS programme](#).
- Training and facilitation in stakeholder engagement and community co-design.
- Community-led Living Labs and testbeds for inclusive housing prototypes.

[Arterra Bizimodu \(Spain\)](#)



Participatory Processes and Governance  
Tools Supporting Community-Led Solutions



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- Policy experience in Germany, France, Spain and Denmark on co-housing and planning law.
- Social finance models to support the creation of new ecovillages.
- Analysis of zoning barriers, building codes and other legal challenges to sustainable community-led housing.
- Bridging grassroots and EU policy through advocacy and dissemination.

[Cooperative Oasis \(France\)](#)



Policy Innovation and Systemic Change



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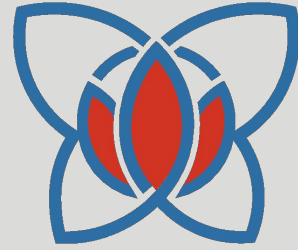
- Unique network of grassroots initiatives actively implementing innovative housing models.
- Track record in EU-funded projects (Horizon, Erasmus+, CERV, Interreg).
- Expertise in stakeholder engagement, dissemination, and systemic innovation.
- Access to hard-to-reach groups and rural territories often excluded from mainstream research.

Why Partner with GEN Europe?



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## Looking for partners for the Horizon Europe call HORIZON-CL6-2025-02-COMMUNITIES-02

Exploring and improving access to housing in rural areas and  
developing the houses and villages of the future

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

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