Current Trends in Science and Landscape Management

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Chapter 21

Ecovillage Movement in Turkey

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INTRODUCTION

It is an undeniable reality that the developing technology brings great convenience to our everyday lives; but with the acceleration of technology, the concept of consumption frenzy has emerged in people rattled in the capitalist order. Today, as production increases in the world and Turkey, consumption also increases. The abundance in production due to the decrease in the unit costs of the goods produced is reflected in the behavior of the consumer (Atalay et al., 2012). Non-organic packaging is used to reduce the cost of production, which leads to the formation of a pile of garbage that does not disappear for thousands of years in the environment. In addition, as product abundance and luxury lifestyle habits increase, people need more energy, which leads to a decrease in energy consumption from nonhealthy technologies - nuclear, coal, oil, HEPP and so on. This stress, which piles up on the earth, disrupts the ecology on a terrible scale and causes the opening of injuries that cannot be healed.

Climate change, which has accelerated global warming and becomes a more serious problem today, has come to the surface as another factor that questions our lifestyle. A few decades ago, widespread global and regional climate changes were thought to have progressed gradually over hundreds or thousands of years of time scale, and it was therefore assumed that climate shifts would not be perceived within a human lifetime. The tendency of climate to change suddenly throughout human history has been one of the most striking consequences of the workings of the climates of the past. There is good evidence that some of the most severe climate changes include regional changes of up to 5ºC in average annual temperatures over a few decades or even just a few years. According to the IPCC 2001 report, by 2100 the global mean surface temperature could rise from 1.4 to 5.8 ° C, which means that the global mean sea level would rise between 20 and 88 cm by 2100. Future climate change will have an impact on all elements that affect human society, such as coastal areas, storms and sellers, health and water resources, agriculture and biodiversity. Climate change creates an external pressure on a society, but its structure, especially the level of flexibility, determines whether society can survive (Maslin 2011).

Possible collapses in a world that exceeds its natural capacity will drive humanity into a tough struggle for survival in the years to come. Climate change, the depletion of energy resources and the crises caused by the destruction of nature are already a threat to the continuation of mankind. Today's societies are in a constantly increasing consumption frenzy due to the current economic models. We need to adopt a culture based on the principles of sustainability, equity and business unity, which consume less of the natural resources we can survive, but this transition is not an easy task to achieve. To be successful, a wide range of tactics must be implemented at every stage of the society (Kellog and Pettgrew 2007).

It is a fact that the technologies and energy sources that people use up to now pollute the environment. Environmental problems and potential solutions will prevent all other political and ideological conflicts in the 21st century. According to a 1996 report by the CIA, it is predicted that the greatest cause of possible wars in the 21st century will be water-sharing and natural resources. A technological renewal and a new lifestyle that is fed up with renewable energy sources and that place priority on sharing instead of competition will become very short-lived in these short periods of time. Ecovillages will be a small model of them (Nathan 2008).

Professor at Hanover University. Dr. Robert J. Rosenthal "Ecovillages are conscious communities that have come together for a new purpose and hope for the future. They have two important features in their construction. The first is that the most qualified life occurs in healthy small communities where people support each other. Secondly, the path of sustainable life for humanity is the revival of traditional society life. Ecovillages is the most important movement that gives the most hope in history" (Dawson 2006).

WHAT IS AN ECOVILLAGE?

Many different definitions of ecovillages have passed through the literature on the basis of different criteria. But perhaps one of the most comprehensive of these definitions was made by Gaia Trust. The Gaia Trust is a Danish-based philanthropic association, founded in 1987, founded under the leadership of Ross and Hildur Jackson to support a future sustainable and more spiritual mass transit (Gaia Trust, 2017).

In 1991, Gaia Trust commissioned Diane and Robert Gilman to make a global survey of the best examples of ecovillages what they could think of as a basis for our future strategy. Robert Gilman's academic training was in astrophysics and he has been a research associate at NASA's Institute for Space Studies. Another phase of his life began in the mid-1970s when he decided that "the stars could wait, but the planet couldn't." He turned his attention to the study of global sustainability, futures research and strategies for positive cultural change. In 1979, he and his wife, Diane, founded the Context Institute, one of the earliest NGOs to focus on sustainability. Due to their reputation, Gaia Trust commissioned them. In their report "Ecovillages and Sustainable Communities", they came up with a definition of an ecovillage as a human scale, full-featured settlement, in which human activities are 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. The definition is then detailed into separate terms, as the following, by Diane Gilman and Robert Gilman in the report "Ecovillages and Sustainable Communities" (Gilman, 1991).

- Human scale: "Human scale" implies that the community is limited to a size in which people are able to know and be known by others in the community and each person feels he or she has the opportunity to influence decisions in the community. Opinions on how many people human scale might include range from 100 to 500 individuals.
- Full-featured: This indicates that elements of daily life – residence, work, leisure, social life, and commerce - are present in balanced proportions. The ecovillages are not merely places to come home, eat, sleep, and leave. A variety of services including jobs and commerce are available within the site. This does not mean, however, that we expect ecovillages to be fully self-sufficient or isolated from the

surrounding community. Communities often have special services different from each other such as universities or hospitals. An exchange of services between the smaller units is expected.

- Human activities are harmlessly integrated into the natural world: This one emphasizes the ideal of equality between humans and other forms of life. This involves the cyclical use of resources such as solar energy, instead of the use of fossil fuels.
- Supportive of healthy human development: It refers to the mental, physical, emotional and spiritual health of the individual within the community as a whole.
- Continued into the indefinite future: It is that combines all of the above principles under the umbrella of sustainability. Sustainability is a broad term which can include all aspects of existence, but in short, it means that we cannot confine ourselves by making short term decisions which will inhibit future generations of residents and communities from having similar access to the quality of life enjoyed by current ecovillage residents.

ECOVILLAGE MOVEMENT

When it comes to the question of when the Ecovillage movement begins, the Icelandic community Sólheimar, first established in 1930, may come to mind; but if we leave the modern meanings evoked by the ecovillage word aside and look back even further, it can be concluded that the concept is new but based on very old as the practice and the idea. As noted by Bill Metcalf's work on the subject, this lifestyle, first seen in monasteries, is actually much more ancient, almost BC. It goes up to the 5th century. In other words, it extends into prehistoric times in a community, not only with the bonds of relatives but also with the common sense of value and duty (Dawson 2006).

It is difficult to determine the number of ecovillages so far, but there is a total of 491 ecovillages (Communities Directory, 2017) currently linked to the "Communities Directory" database (according to the July 2017 data) and a total of 1152 ecovillages registered in the GEN database. Of these, 186 are found in South America, 152 in Africa, 452 in Europe, 215 in North America, 147 in Asia and Australia (GEN, 2017a).

Jackson estimates that there are close to 5,000 estimates of the number of ecovillages that are not registered to databases. Albert Bates thinks this number is about 15,000 (Jackson 2004).

According to the general opinion, the idea that ecovillages created in the countryside should reset the relationship with the city is dominant. The reason for this is that one of the aims of ecovillage initiatives is to create a "self-sufficient" settlement. However, the rural ecovillage settlements, which are separated from the cities or their surroundings, have great problems. As a result of the problems and difficulties experienced in rural ecovillages, the issue that ecovillages can be formed without breaking away from the city has come to the agenda and it has been aimed to solve the problems of rural ecovillages by attaching the concept of "urban ecovillage" to the concept of the ecovillage. The design principles and decision mechanisms applied by the rural ecovillages and urban ecovillages are similar. The most significant difference between rural and urban ecovillage settlements, according to Cordivae, is the size of their area (Cordivae 2003).

Global Ecovillage Network

The Global Ecovillage Network (GEN - Global Ecovillage Network) is a social media channel in which ecovillages around the world are in keeping in touch.

According to the GEN, ecovillages are intentionally established or traditional communities that target the regeneration of the social and natural environment under the umbrella of the sustainability of the ecological, economic, social and cultural dimensions in an integrated process, using local participation. The presence of ecovillages, a gradual process of supporting social, cultural, ecological and economic structures, constitutes a commitment to the inversion of our destructive environmental impacts on our ending planet. For centuries, people lived in supportive social structures close to nature. Most of these communities - or most of them - are fighting for existence today. Ecovillages have now begun to deliberately be established and live in a way that provides for the prosperity of all life forms, within the communities connected to the purpose of the people, the ruins of the Earth. Ecovillages are the only solution to the biggest problem of our time - our planet has already reached its growth limits, and people's lives have become increasingly meaningless. It is imperative that we are adapting to a sustainable life as long as we are able to sustain the species (GEN, 2017b).

In 1991, Gaia Trust invited representatives of ecovillages to Denmark to set up strategies to develop an ecovillage concept. This was the first step in the formation of the GEN. The "Ecovillages and Sustainable Communities: Models for the 21st Century" conference held at the Findhorn Foundation in Scotland in 1995, took place with the participation of 400 people from all over the world and 300 people had to turn back due to lack of space. A year later in 1996, the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) was established at the United Nations Habitat Conference in Istanbul. GEN introduced itself as "a global confederation of people and communities dedicated to building sustainable lifestyles, bringing together more of what they have received, preparing cultural and educational exchange programs, guides and bulletins, sharing and exchanging ideas", and its main objective was to encourage the evolution of sustainable settlements all over the world (Zeybek 2014).

Following the establishment of the GEN, there are three separate entities, ENA - Ecovillage Network of the Americas, GENOA - GEN for Oceania and Asia and GEN - Europe, regional center has been established. In Africa and the Middle East, the task of promoting the development of the ecovillage model has been given to GEN-Europe. Ecovillages in Turkey have been registered to GEN-Europe. GEN has been divided into six divisions as GEN - Africa, GEN - Europe, GENNA - North America and CASA - Latin America6, GENOA - Oceania & Asia, NextGEN since 2015. Unlike regional classifications, NextGEN is the youth movement of GEN, and it is actively working in all regions of GEN. NextGEN was set up at the GEN Conference in Findhorn in 2005 and was activated in 2012 (Zeybek 2015).

THE SITUATION OF TURKEY

Turkey's first ecovillage initiative was undertaken by a mountaineering group from METU (Middle East Technical University, Ankara) in the early 1990s. This initiative was named Hocamköy. The purpose of this group is to combine traditional knowledge of Anatolian people with academic knowledge and create a sustainable rural life model together with local people. In order to fulfill this purpose, they tried to create a settlement model in harmony with nature, in which the needs of daily life can be met. That ecovillage initiative planned to be passed on to the Hasandede town of Kırıkkale was finalized before established. In the Hocamköy ecovillage initiative, the social, cultural and economic differences between urban and rural areas and the inability of

entrepreneurs to keep up with this diversity has been the main problem. Entrepreneurs have attributed another cause of their failures to the repressive and control-freak community and family structure.

Some associations and organizations have been established in Turkey to support this movement. These organizations can be listed as EKİLAT (Ecovillage Communication Network), Buğday Ecological Life Support Association, EKOYER (Eco-settlement Network), Marmariç Ecological Life Association, Permaculture Institute of Turkey.

• EKİLAT (Ecovillage Communication Network): This initiative, which was the first establishment comes to the life in Turkey, was established by ecovillage entrepreneurs who came together in meetings held in many parts of Turkey. Thanks to EKİLAT, many entrepreneurs have shared ideas but nowadays the activity of this group has decreased (Buğday Ekolojik Yaşamı Destekleme Derneği, 2017).

• Buğday Ecological Life Support Association: It has been active since 1990. On August 12, 2002, these works were transformed into an institutional structure, restored under an association. The goal of this association is defined as to create consciousness and sensitivity of ecological life in individuals and society and to support life-compatible lifestyles so that ecological balances do not deteriorate. This association is trying to achieve this goal by contributing to the sustainable agricultural production as in traditional villages, the dissemination of sustainable agriculture methods that do not threaten the environment and human health, and the redefinition of human needs in harmony with ecosystem cycles (Buğday Ekolojik Yaşamı Destekleme Derneği, 2017).

• EKOYER (Eco-settlement network): The ideological history of Ekoyer, established to support and develop ecological settlements in Turkey, dates back to the beginning of the relations with GEN-Europe. Turkey's relationship with GEN-Europe began in 2000 with the introduction of a representative from the Hocamköy venture into the management board. Between 2003 and 2012, two separate representatives from the Güneşköy Cooperative, respectively, took office on behalf of Turkey in the GEN-Europe Executive Board. Ekoyer's first meeting was held in METU in 2009 with the organization of Güneşköy Cooperative and the support of GEN-Europe; The activities were participated in ecological settlements, associations and associations (Shelter, Bugday Association, Dedetepe Farm, Ekoder, Fetav, Güneşkoy Cooperative, Keva, Marmaris) at that time. In this meeting, Ekoyer defined his intention as "supporting ecological settlements, contributing to the development of economies, establishing a network for sharing experiences, strengthening and celebrating the network through regular meetings, trainings, festivals and festivals". In his last meeting, Ekoyer made two important decisions regarding the rejuvenation and expansion of the community. Among these is the support of young people who want to live ecologically, to live and to support ecological life, to participate in Ekoyer meetings and to gain ecological life experience. Because, although the number of ecovillages in Turkey does not exceed the fingers of a hand, there is a growing number of people, families and communities who are struggling to create a self-sufficient and sustainable life without harming the environment. The number of young people who want to work voluntarily in farms where organic agriculture, permaculture, agricultural tourism are increasing day by day (GEN, 2017c).

• Marmariç Ecological Life Association: The association aims to turn Mersinli (Marmaric), which is an abandoned village bounded by the Bayındır district of İzmir,

into a sustainable human settlement in harmony with nature in terms of social, economic, cultural, residential, technological and production and observing local values. This association was founded by the Marmariç ecological entrepreneurs, which is among the ecovillages that are exemplified in Turkey (Marmariç Ekolojik Yaşam Derneği, 2017).

• Permaculture Institute of Turkey: This organization has been established in Turkey to work for the recognition and spread of permaculture practices (Türkiye Permakültür Enstitüsü, 2017). One of the main activities of the institute is to organize courses about permaculture.

Below are mentioned the projects carried out or continuing with the intentional communities or state support in Turkey. Instead of talking about all of the initiatives in Turkey, some of the most well-known and successful projects have been mentioned.

Ecovillage Initiatives Carried Out By Intentional Communities in Turkey

Turkey is a country lagging behind of the ecovillage movement around the world. In the last 10 to 15 years it is possible to come across initiatives that have been initiated by individuals or by various groups. Transition projects initiated with the support of some ministries are new. However, there is no ecovillage project completed with state support yet. In this part, because of its success, only Güneşköy will be mentioned as an initiative that carried out by an intentional community.

Güneşköy: Güneşköy is located near Hisarköy, which belongs to the Yahşihan district of Kırıkkale. In Balaban Valley, the project is 60 km away from Ankara. Güneşköy introduces itself as a clean, natural, solar-powered village planning and application model developed as a solution to the global warming in the rural area. The goals of Güneşköy in the official website are as follows (Güneşköy, 2017):

- To develop a clean, natural, healthy life and conditions,
- Developing a worldview and lifestyle that is in harmony with nature,
- To evaluate Anatolia's rich but undiscovered cultures,
- To protect and enrich Anatolia biodiversity,
- To create a natural settlement and infrastructure,
- Develop and implement exemplary Solar Projects,
- Natural and ecological, permanent agricultural production,
- To create a "social structure" in harmony with nature,
- To offer natural and non-emission transportation facilities,
- In rural areas, to increase production, create new business opportunities,
- To create a solid, participatory, and cultural society.

In 2000, founded by METU professors, Prof. Ali Gökmen, Prof. İnci Gökmen and a group of seven people, Güneşköy is a member of the GEN. Güneşköy, one of the main characteristics of ecovillage settlements, has focused on organic farming, permaculture and ecological sustainability studies (Zeybek, 2015).

The area to be constructed is planned to be 5% of the total area. The remaining areas are protected for agricultural activities and enforcement of energy efficient systems. This initiative, which has important connections with the GEN and even hosts some GEN meetings, is talking about communal lifestyle, community building and advanced architectural structures in its future plans (Zeybek, 2015).

As stated in the official website of Güneşköy, there are 84 decares of land and 9 members. Ecovillage also announced the establishment date of the cooperative as its

foundation date. The land of Güneşköy was taken from the treasury in 2002. In Mandala pattern, the building using hay bales was completed in 2007 (Figure 1). The purpose of the settlement is to "develop and share experiences with nature and sustainable living in rural areas" (Güneşköy, 2017).



Figure 1. First structure of Güneşköy (Güneşköy, 2017).

Güneşköy Cooperative was established on July 7, 2000 for this initiative. Güneşköy Cooperative is a non-profit-oriented cooperative founded to work for the public good. It aims to provide conditions for living in a healthy and natural environment, to set examples for collecting works, to harmonize life with nature and to disseminate it and to raise conscious, happy, healthy and productive individuals in this way. In order to set an example for these purposes, the aim is to make their partners live in a healthy environment, to acquire the knowledge and culture necessary for such an environment, to make appropriate sample productions and marketing, and to have intensive scientific and educational activities.

The solar greenhouse is a new greenhouse model developed for the cold climate of Central Anatolia and a first in Turkey. The greenhouse, which is being built in Güneşköy, was created by using up to ten solar systems together. In this structure, which is called Günsera, many subjects are examined and tried for the first time in Turkey (Figure 2).

The first high-speed train project in Turkey is planned between Ankara and Sivas. However, due to various reasons, it is not yet passed on. After the project is completed, Ankara will be reduced from Sivas to 2 hours and 50 minutes (TCDD, 2015). This high-speed train line that is on the agenda will be constructed with the viaducts over Balaban Valley, where Güneşköy is actually located. Unfortunately, a serious planning mistake will change the fate of Güneşköy. One of the viaducts will be built right on top of one

of the two structures built using straw bales with the mandala model in Güneşköy. Work trucks also started to use a road that opened from the center of Güneşköy for transportation to the worksite (Figure 3).



Figure 2. A panoramic picture of the landscape around Günsera.



Figure 3. Structure that will be demolished during the building of viaducts.

Nevertheless, Güneşköy is one of the most successful initiatives in Turkey with an intentional community.

State-Sponsored Ecovillage Initiatives in Turkey

It is necessary to specify some points before this division begins. In the eco-housing projects supported by ministries in Turkey, the basic return tourism potential expected by the ministries is to be increased. In this respect, it can be argued that the ministries have an erroneous approach to such projects. Only economical dimension is focused on amongst 4 dimensions (ecological, economic, social, and spiritual) that make up the ecovillages. Therefore, the transition projects they have supported are mostly ecotourism projects. These supports, which focus on stimulating the local economy in particular with the empowerment of women, are driven by the production of local food in an organic way and the export of local handicrafts. The work is pushed into the backdrop of the ecological channel in particular. Examples of these transformation projects are given below.

Doğanbey Village: In the Aegean Region, a 600-year old Doğanbey Village of Aydın is an old Greek village. A transition project is being implemented by the Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs for the village, which is becoming increasingly popular with stone houses and cobblestone streets remaining from the Greeks. In April 2016,

"Dilek Peninsula - Grand Menderes Delta National Park Nature Tourism Implementation Strategy and Action Plan and Doğanbey Village Eco Village Assessment Workshop" was carried out by the T. C. Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs, National Parks and Nature Conservation General Directorate.

Ecovillage Executive Chairman of the Workshop said that "We began a wide project on Dilek Peninsula, which included the old Doğanbey Village, and the Menderes Basin and the National Park. We are now in a preparatory work. Our people who live in this region have many economic activities that cannot be carried out because of the National Park. A workshop was organized in the agricultural sense in which these activities could be carried out within the National Parks, where there would also be rest areas in terms of economic sense and tourism. There is an executive board to run this workshop. After this work, our ministers will also have an executive committee to be established in my presidency with the instruction" (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Doğanbey Village.

As can be understood from Ecovillage Executive Chairman's explanation, a number of economic activities that cannot be done in Doğanbey Village, located within the borders of a national park, will be carried out within the scope of ecovillage transition project. It is open to debate how successful the transformation of ecovillage will be for some reasons, such as having some of the owners of the old Greek houses in Doğanbey Village are famous artists, having a large part of the year in Doğanbey, and having house prices in very big numbers.

It is open to debate how successful this transition project will be because some of the owners of the old Greek houses in Doğanbey Village are famous artists, they do not spend most of the year in there (lack of social dimension), and the house prices are very expensive.

Garp Eco-Volunteer Settlement: The Garp Eco-Volunteer Settlement is said to have been established in the village of Babakale in Çanakkale province in order to create an ecological settlement focused on fishing on the sea side. However, despite all the struggles within the scope of this research, no contact could be reached and enough information could not be obtained because the website was not active. Despite all the struggles within the scope of this research, no contact could be reached and enough information could not be obtained because the website was not active. Nonetheless, the initiative called Garp Eco-Voluntary Settlement still appears in the GEN (Global Eco-Villages Network) database. Likewise, the Dutlar Collective and Eko-Foça initiatives,

which are among the initiatives in Turkey during the researches, appear to be registered in the GEN database even though they are not active. For this reason, it has been determined that the theoretical information is not the same as the practical ones in the research process (Güleryüz, 2013).

Bayramiç, Yeniköy: Bayramiç Yeniköy group is an initiative to establish a self-sufficient village by designing and implementing the permaculture philosophy, sharing the knowledge of local seeds, natural farming practices, learning and producing. According to the web site of the Bayramic Yeniköy initiative, it is observed that a number of events were organized recently in 2014. No events or workshop entries have been entered since 2014. It is not possible to reach the explanations about who initiated this initiative, communal information, designs for space use (Bayramiç Yeniköy, 2017).

Dadalı: In the Western Black Sea, the village of Dadalı, two kilometers from the town of Akçakoca, Düzce, has become known to the media with its local menu, local food and handicrafts by villager women. It has attracted attention with its unspoilt nature, and high organic agricultural capacity in rural and ecotourism areas in recent years. The project is based on agriculture and livestock. The project of "Dadalı Village's Tourism Branding and Quality Management" prepared by the association of Akçakoca Hazelnut and Chestnut Growers, and became a model village throughout Turkey with support from Eastern Marmara Development Agency (Düzce İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü, 2017). It is perceived as a place for weekend rural tourism point, because of its closeness to a metropole like Istanbul, and the number of totally entertainment, economy-based events such as ATV safaris in the village has increased, despite there is no match with its nature and history. Therefore, in this initiative, it is seen that the activities far away from the ecovillage philosophy are supported even though it is referred to as ecovillage in the beginning.

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

In this research, which was prepared in order to examine the ecovillage initiatives carried out in Turkey until 2017, the ecovillage projects initiated through the intentional communities from zero and the transition projects carried out with the state support were handled separately.

Initiatives undertaken by the intentional communities seem to be proceeding more consciously. For example, while Güneşköy and other organizations that are mentioned on the work are members of the associations GEN, none of the transition projects with state support have made an attempt in this matter.

The main mistake in the projects with the intentional communities is that no community lives in the settlements. The project has been initiated in Güneşköy and very successful developments have been recorded but the sustainability of the project has weakened since there is not a commune that is constantly living in Güneşköy. From this point of view, the project of transforming an existing village into ecovillage may be more successful. However, these are usually carried out with state support.

Like many developing countries, Turkey is one of the countries that trust tourism to strengthen its economy with its natural and cultural values. The main advantage of ecovillage projects that Turkey hopes, is tourism. But just because this goal is pursued, trying to integrate non-novice entertainment elements into the nobility as it is in the Dadali ecovillage is a very wrong policy. Because tourism consumes space. Ecovillages are not projects for tourism-consumption.The tourism expectation, which is the base of

the eco-village initiatives that are trying to survive a space with the lowest possible ecological footprint, is the main reason why these projects are not successful enough in Turkey.

Focusing only on tourism, the social, spiritual and ecological dimensions are completely pushed backward. Ecovillages can only be evaluated in terms of educational tourism, not rural tourism, which focuses on consumption. It will be a correct approach to give various training on sustainability in these ecovillages by experts.

To solve this problem, state employees involved in the project need to be sent to trainings such as Ecovillage Design Education, Design for Sustainability, and Renewable Energies for Sustainable Development in cooperation with Gaia Trust and GEN in the world's leading ecovillages. Otherwise, the ecovillage initiatives in Turkey are judged only within the context of rural tourism and are bound to remain relatively unspoiled areas where people can gather vegetables from the field and eat food prepared by peasant women. If this trend is changed, Turkey can have successful ecovillages worldwide and become an important training center.

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