



Volume 1, January 2000

News from the Global Ecovillage Network

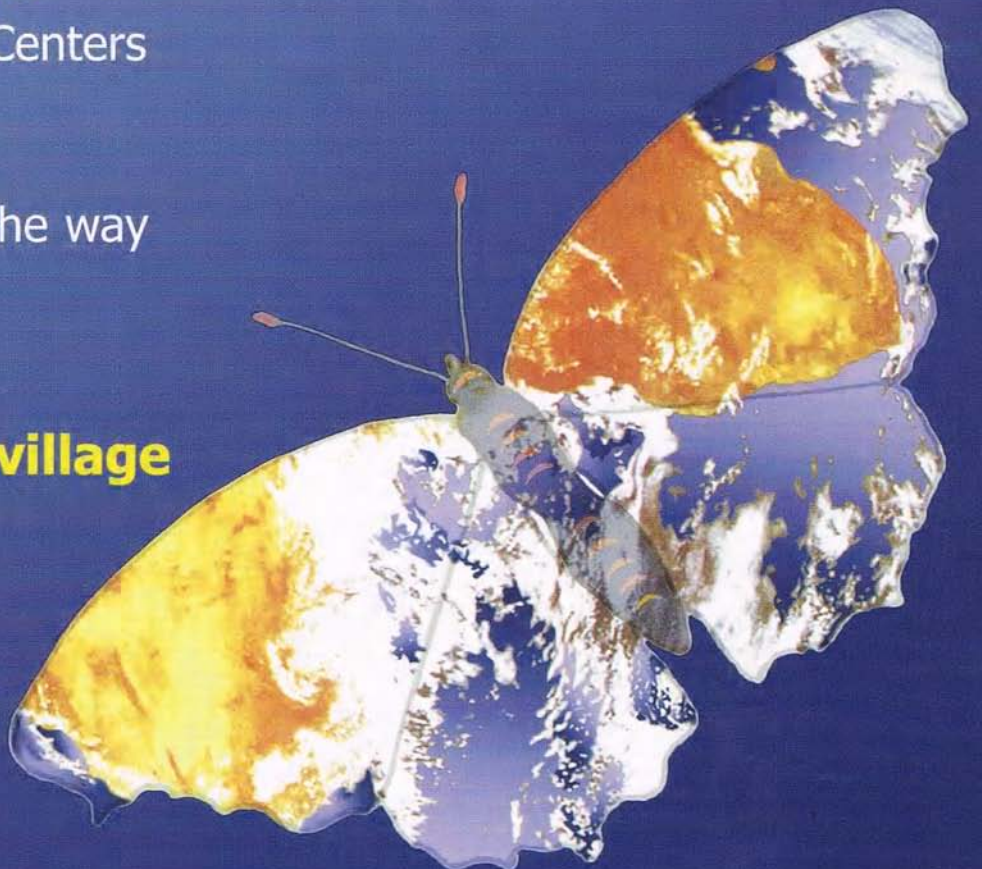
# Ecovillage Millennium

**From Global to Local**  
Towards green economics

**Ecovillage Education**  
Living and Learning Centers

**Expo 2000**  
Lebensgarten leads the way

**Stories from Ecovillage  
Pioneers Around  
the World**



# Best Practices Awards

*Nicholas You and Declan Kennedy*

The original call for Best Practices was launched during preparations for the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) as a means of identifying what works in improving living conditions on a sustainable basis.

Over 700 Best Practices from 90 countries were submitted to Habitat, 350 of which were received in time to be included on the Best Practices database. An independent international committee of technical professionals identified 105 submissions as Best Practices and 12 of these were selected by a jury to receive the Tokyo and Dubai Awards for Excellence in Improving the Living Environment at a special ceremony during Habitat II.

Among the lessons learned from this process were the following:

- There is a tremendous demand for Best Practices information, experience and expertise
- The Best Practices database is primarily a networking tool, and there is a need to deepen our understanding of what makes a Best Practice work.
- The lessons learned from Best Practices should be transferred and widely disseminated using modern information and communications technology wherever possible.

In response to these lessons, UNCHS (Habitat) established the Best Practices and Local Leadership Programme (BLP) to continue the process of identifying, documenting and disseminating the lessons learned from Best Practices, and to monitor the implementation of the Habitat Agenda.

In October 1998, the second round of Best Practices Awards for Excellence was presented. The purpose of these awards is to recognise and create awareness of outstanding and sustainable achievements in improving the quality of life in urban and rural settlements.

The sponsor of the Best Practices Awards is the Dubai Municipality, which sponsored 10 Awards for Excellence in Improving the Living Environment.

Each Award consisted of:

- US\$ 30,000 prize; including all costs associated with attending the 1998 Awards ceremony for up to two persons directly involved in the Best Practice.
- Commemorative Certificate
- A trophy.

**Eligibility:** The Awards were open to all organisations and individuals from Government, local authorities, non-governmental and community-based organisations, the private sector and other representatives of civil society.

**Award Categories:** Best Practice Submissions were accepted under any of the following categories: shelter and urban infrastructure; sustainable human settlement development; mainstreaming gender and combating social exclusion; experimental and innovative practices; improved consumption/production cycles; urban poverty reduction and job creation; safe water supply and sanitation; improved urban environment and health; natural and human-made disasters; responsiveness to the ideas and needs of youth; waste collection, recycling and reuse; accessible public transport and communication; crime prevention and social justice; efficient, accountable and transparent governance; use of information in decision-making; architecture and urban design; addressing the needs of older persons.

114 applications out of more than 600 were considered eligible by the jury - these projects were deemed to be Best Practices, out of which 10 awards were then granted. In this second but last round, four ecovillages were named: Auroville, India; Lebensgarten, Steyerberg, Germany, the Findhorn Foundation, Scotland and Crystal Water Permaculture Village - the latter making it into the last round and receiving a highly recommended Award. Any ecovillage or other social, environmental or settlement project can apply for the next Dubai Award for Best Practices 2000 as long as they get their application in by April 2000. Details of criteria and application procedures can be found on the web site: [www.bestpractices.org](http://www.bestpractices.org)