

# Let's Imagine...

## Living closer to our nature



Cooperative eco-housing for  
families, seniors & creatives...





Improvised choir at Smala's 20th anniversary in 2013

## From creative hives to social ecology

The international Ecopol label was first launched in Romandie (the French-speaking part of Switzerland). It is a network of Eco-centers, with 20 to 50 people each (including children) sharing four complementary dimensions:

- \* Intergenerational living
- \* Ecoconstruction with natural materials
- \* Sharing mutualized spaces, furnitures, objects, vehicles...
- \* Services available for inhabitants, provided by... inhabitants !

### Our common values

- \* Living together
- \* Creativity
- \* Cooperation
- \* Solidarity
- \* Sustainable well-being
- \* Respect of the environment



« Together, we go further... »





# WELCOME TO YOUR ECO-LIFE !

## Private and independant accomodation...

- \* From 30 to 200 m<sup>2</sup> over 1 or 2 floors
- \* Bright and modular spaces at affordable prices
- \* Comfort, simplicity, healthy materials
- \* Energy savings and recycling

## ... also including shared spaces :

- \* Multi-purpose spaces : cafeteria, party rooms, garage, workshops
- \* Outside: vegetable garden, bread oven, playground, collective square
- \* For everyday life: leisure and sport areas, grocery shops, exhibitions...
- \* Working environment: multi-purpose rooms, with daily or monthly rental

And of course all of your initiatives to help developing the place.

*« Some things you lose, some things you win, that's community living »  
François, la Smala. Lausanne, 1998*





# ECOPOL, A PLACE OF LIBERTY

## We can be coordinated....

- \* Anyone can create and imagine it's own activity, serving everybody's needs
- \* One mandatory monthly meeting (4h) helps in developing and coordinating our daily life
- \* Moments of moderation and discussion, with trained moderators, allowing the transformation of disagreements into possible suggestions for improvement
- \* Training workshops to learn how to co-manage community ecology and set management rules for common services in an evolving context

## ...while maintaining our private lives and own rhythm.

- \* To each their own private space, without any obligation to share their accommodations
- \* To each their own personal pace (only one mandatory monthly meeting)
- \* Services offered and never imposed
- \* Access to a network of partner suppliers

*« Live simply so that others may simply live »*

*Mahatma Gandhi*





## THE PLUS FOR « ALL » : SERVICES !

- \* Housekeeper for the management of shared spaces
- \* Support for energy saving and waste recycling
- \* Fruit, vegetables and bread regularly delivered
- \* People and commodities transportation
- \* Mutual help on fair and easy computer use
- \* And all your initiatives (care, art,...)

**Original feature :** an office helps you selling, buying, or trading furnitures and services at the best value, using web tools. It also takes care of logistical issues.

**For example :** farming products like organic meat and vegetables to sell, second hand clothes to sell, rooms to sublease for a few weeks, event tickets...

*« Helping each other is a law of nature »  
Jean de La Fontaine*



# THE PLUS FOR « FAMILIES » : MUTUAL ASSISTANCE

Ecopol is a way to reduce the expenses of households by mutualizing goods and services.

- \* Daycare / mutual babysitting
- \* Homework help
- \* Mutual assistance between parents
- \* Your initiatives (holidays, shared meals,...)
- \* Modular spaces suiting all families

Possibility of generating income on site, part-time in a cooperative of employment and activity.

Parents have priority over caretaking and concierge jobs, in order to provide services to seniors and families, as social micro-entrepreneurs working on site.

*« For a child to grow, they need the whole village »  
African proverb*





# THE PLUS FOR « SENIORS » : LIVING TOGETHER

## Find mutual assistance and security through co-living !

Ecopol is a chance for the seniors to live in an environment adapted to their needs in personal assistance. Our collaborators from Apress.ch bring their expert assessment and their skills through rewarding activities, useful to other inhabitants.

### A la carte services :

- \* In-home meals
- \* IT services
- \* Alternative therapies on site
- \* Room service (including laundry)
- \* Transportation and delivery
- \* Your needs, your ideas...

### Rewarding activities :

- \* Gardening, daycare, workshops...for all ages
- \* Possibility to create your own service in order to generate a supplementary income (bed & breakfast, crafting...) with benefits for the community and visitors.

*« To live is to change time into experience »*

*Caleb Gattegno*





# THE « ACCESSIBILITY » PLUS : ERGONOMY & COOPERATION

Throughout their lifetime, people may have to deal with accessibility difficulties or handicaps. This is why Ecopol includes :

- \* Functional and user-friendly accomodation, designed according to your needs
- \* Educational signs for you and your relatives
- \* Possibility to generate income by cooperating in micro-enterprises
- \* Healthcare services (same as for seniors, see previous page)

**Our European partners :**

[www.town-for-all.org](http://www.town-for-all.org)

... a network of experts  
in accessibility for all

led by ARVHA.org (Paris).



*« Self-fulfillment of everyone while respecting differences »*

*Françoise Volto*



## THE PLUS FOR « CREATIVES AND PEOPLE IN TRANSITION » : MODULARITY

Ecopol spaces are particularly modular in order to avoid « empty beds » (unused spaces). « Sociocultural caretakers » maintain a high service quality. Their mission consists in providing social life and accomodation services : tidying up, verifying, unloading, communicating, aticipating, connecting...

All of the transition fees (leaving, arriving, using just for one day...) are there to make sure that the spaces are properly maintained and allocated. Through them, a private studio can become a classroom or the other way around. A private accomodation can become a guestroom (B&B) during your holidays. Thanks to a beautiful common infrastructure (mini-spa, sport and game rooms, library), wellness services and a rewarding associative environment, each Ecopol is a place to rejuvenate and recharge your batteries.

**For creatives and artists**, with a strong social and educational sensibility, Ecopol spaces offer ideal living conditions. Through several workshops and multi-purpose spaces, they can create their own work (music, sculpting, painting, theatre...), interact with therapists and project assistants, organize training workshops, exhibitions and start research projects and micro-enterprises...

**For people in transition** (family or work related) and stepfamilies : they will find temporary or long-term accommodation of different sizes according to their needs. For example, an Ecopol place allows a father to obtain a studio flat during week days and have his children over on weekends in case of shared-custody, in a neighbor's accomodation (converted into a B&B for the occaasion). Ecopol places can also accommodate former expatriates returning to their home country in order for them to take some time to get back on their feet, but also interns or students... Such a cultural mix is made possible thanks to the sociocultural caretakers.

*«Henceforth the most needed solidarity is the one from all the people on Earth »*

*Albert Jacquard*



24 Heures - Mars 1994

## Pour Tir Groupé, la pureté réside dans le métissage

Bondolfi et une poignée d'autres artistes et étudiants lausannois responsables de Tir Groupé ont obtenu de transformer ces locaux en lieu de rencontres artistiques, musicales, conviviales et pédagogiques. Cela, en attendant que la gérance de la Ville les transforme en appartements.

De salle en salle, de chambrette en vestibule et d'étage en étage, la configuration des lieux se modifie au gré de l'errance du visiteur. Certains locaux sont des espaces, chics et nets, d'exposition de photos; des laboratoires, des bibliothèques. D'autres ressemblent à la chambre d'étudiant un brin (artistiquement) négligé, tiennent du loft new-yorkais ou encore des «coulouirs hantés» de la maison de Frankenstein à Luna Park.

**Liberation**

Vendredi 20 juin 1996

Sous la houlette de Théo Bondolfi, une soirée réunissant les œuvres de photographes des pays de l'Est, ponctuée d'une *Dia Nights* (4 heures de projection de diaporamas) et d'une *Nuit Off* (carte blanche à divers artistes). **A noter: une exposition, intitulée Collective Eye 96, présente jusqu'au 11/6 les images de 25 artistes européens.**

Musée de l'Élysée, 18 avenue de l'Élysée. De 18h à l'aube.

Finissage de l'exposition Vaud d'Art, rassemblant des travaux d'élèves; concert de jazz et célébration du premier anniversaire de l'association.

24 Heures - 27 Mai 1994

Revue Moneta, été 2008

Il s'agit en fait d'une proposition virale informelle, qui permet à chaque association ou entité pronant l'économie sociale et solidaire de proposer ses prestations à des partenaires qui défendent le même idéal. L'association Smala, cofondatrice d'APRES-VD, est notamment active dans la gérance communautaire, l'animation socioculturelle, l'écologie pratique et l'incubation d'éco-projets: autant d'actions liées à une forme d'économie solidaire.

24 Heures - 09 juillet 1999

La Banque Cantonale Vaudoise a finalement opté pour la jeunesse. La Smala prend en main la destinée de La Voile d'Or. Ouverture dès vendredi soir déjà!

n°122-123 | être. Handicap Information | 85  
un film de la Smala. Cette association suisse est allée constater la situation sur le terrain en France, en Italie et au Royaume-Uni. 2012

**Vaud-Régions**

La villa du maréchal Mobutu

Les occupants exigent que cet argent soit consacré à la construction d'écoles, de centres de santé, à la création de bornes Internet communautaires et à des entreprises de type social. «Nous avons l'intention de rester jusqu'à dimanche et nous invitons le public à découvrir le musée des dictatures. Les portes sont aussi ouvertes aux artistes qui désirent montrer leurs œuvres», lance le porte-parole de la Smala en guise d'invitation.

Propriété sous contrôle

Si les manifestants ont pu pénétrer sans problème dans le domaine des Miguettes, il y a

L'Impartial - Avril 1992

Favoriser le métissage des domaines d'expressions  
Stimuler l'organisation d'une plateforme culturelle...

«Tir réalise des créations artistiques et culturelles traitant de photographies et de mises en scène pour la presse. L'occasion de faire le point de vue sur la vie toujours plus diversifiée du Flor, de découvrir ses innombrables ressources qui offrent à ce jour les entrepôts devenus «lofts» et leur histoire.

Réunie hier à Lausanne en présence de la syndique Yvette Yagel, marraine parmi d'autres parrains du concours innovateur, l'association lausannoise Tir Groupé, créée il y a un an, s'accorde un mois pour mettre sur pied un comité de coordination chargé de donner une suite concrète à ces projets non retenus. Il lui reste encore d'ici là à classer selon leur champ d'application social, invention, culture, environnement.

**ECONOMIE**

Soutien à la création d'entreprises

Dans un immeuble de quatre étages, de jeunes professionnels travaillant dans les domaines de la danse, du rap et de l'image, offriront à d'autres jeunes la possibilité d'une «formation culturelle». Ouverture officielle des lieux samedi, dès 18 heures.

Journal de Genève - Novembre 1997

Tricycles inaugure à Lausanne son «école du terrain»

lucratif «Tricycles» y proposera des services dans le domaine de la danse, du rap et de l'image, et ce à travers diverses «unités de productions gérées de manière indépendante et ouvertes par des utilisateurs à des conditions définies par de jeunes professionnels outillés». Y sont également installés une galerie photographique, un espace d'exposition polyvalent et une salle de spectacle.

JACQUELINE FAVEZ

Ils ont réussi! Après plusieurs mois de démarches, les jeunes de l'Association la Smala ont décroché un contrat de confiance leur permettant d'occuper La Voile d'Or à Lausanne-Vidy. Le bâtiment construit pour l'Expo de 1904, à l'abandon depuis environ quatre ans, va donc revivre. Et plutôt deux fois qu'une!

En ce qui concerne le bien-être social, il s'agit par exemple de développer des relations économiques avec des filières de production offrant des conditions de travail et de rémunération équitables. Et de tendre vers un but non lucratif ou limité dans le profit, lequel est réinvesti dans la promotion du but social de l'activité», énumère Théo Bondolfi.  
En matière d'écologie, l'engagement implique notamment de connaître, d'appliquer et de transmettre les solutions et les pratiques les plus respectueuses de l'environnement. Par exemple le tri des déchets, la récupération, le recyclage, l'utilisation d'énergies renouvelables, la mobilité douce, les économies d'énergie, etc.

# A 20-YEAR PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE WITH CONCRETE RESULTS

Between 1993 and 2013, the Smala community and institute, led by Mariette Glauser and Théo Bondolfi, rented and renovated over 40 creative hives for co-living and co-working. We never succeeded in owning land. We always rented or were offered free spaces for pilot experiences. But we were resilient enough to update our governance in each new location.

Then, starting in 2008, we realised 4 socio-pedagogical innovation projects commissioned by Swiss federal grants, within a EU program, to formalize and spread our art of co-living. This was a recognition of our pioneering work for social ecology building. Then we launched Ecopol, and succeeded in financing 3 ecovillages in 2 years.

How did we do it ? Concrete actions taken for one Ecopol (value 3 million Euros)

- 26 first contact evening events with over 1'000 visitors in total
- 18 days of stands, fairs, conferences...
- this booklet produced and spread in more than 3'000 copies
- 11 press releases with all the communication work behind
- 2'000 email addresses gathered from interested people
- 750'000 Euros of funds invested by external supporters and future cohabitants
- 160 individual sessions with possible candidates for co-living or investing
- a support committee with 8 known sponsoring personalities (4 artists, 4 politicians-academist)
- a steering committee with 6 successful social entrepreneurs providing specific expertise
- 5 project studies on 5 lands with a large group of partners on own funds
- 12 trainees, 40 micro-entrepreneurs and 200 meals within 12 months

*« Experience is still the best kind of teaching »*

*Madeleine Ferron*





# WHERE AND HOW TO BUILD THIS DREAM ?

You might wish to use the Ecopol method and Label in your place. It's possible.

Smala initial team is only active in Switzerland and Brazil. We are developing a network of solid partners around the globe, social entrepreneurs able to help you incubate your own Ecopol. Yes indeed.

**But why should you adopt this Ecopol method, instead of trying on your own ?**

First, it's an improved incubation process, with a clear and largely customizable governance.

Second, considering today's humanity challenges, there is a strong need for a quick and successful change of lifestyle.

Third, because it will cost you much less than learning by doing without expert support.

Fourth, anyway your group will be co-leading and we will only be facilitating the incubation process.

## The bright future of cooperative real estate

Did you know that 3% to 5% of real estate properties worldwide is owned by non-profit cooperative organizations ?

They depend on investments from public authorities and private investors. Flats are attributed in priority to middle-class modest investors or persons with low-income (working poors, retreated, employees from public corporations).

Rents are set for once and stay unchanged for long periods, unlike standard profit-oriented renting offers. Cooperative housing removes real estate from speculation forever. In these places, cooperation is also expressed through sharing spaces and services, thus paying less for more living spaces. Imagine this combined with the Ecopol method !



# FOCUS ON THE HUMAN ADVENTURE

*Mariette Glauser, president of Smala, active retired woman.*

*With Ecopol, I can consider moving to a place where I would still be useful, where I would continue sharing enjoyable and simple things of life with children of all ages, while benefiting from the support and care I would need in case of health problems.*

*Pr. Jean-Bernard Racine, geographer (member of the Pro Infirmis Vaud comity).*

*When a person is handicapped, there are at least ten other concerned persons around her. Facilitating access to mobility for all is a win for the entire population.*

*Lucélia, mother.*

*It is an opportunity to work in administrating projects from home, for small Ecopol network enterprises. I can also offer my child an access to nature, like a vegetables garden and farming. We can also help each other with neighbors for the babysitting, meals, grocery shopping, nights out... It gives me confidence and courage everyday to take on my several roles as a mother, spouse, cooperater...*

*Fabien, student and micro-entrepreneur.*

*I was in the military, did sports, studied journalism. In 2009, I discovered ECOPOL and its cluster of micro-entreprises which employed me during my studies, according to my availability (10% during school, 80% during the holidays), for all kinds of technical, administrative ,and web-related jobs : it's the "meaningful career" program of Ecopol's partner, Aptes.ch association. I worked in multiple houses managed by Smala realizing projects in different fields : solidarity economy, educational books and movies... It is a more exciting student job than working in a supermarket, and it helped me broadening my social and professional perspectives.*





# ECO-CONSTRUCTION

The features of Ecopol houses are of high environmental quality (Minergie certification)

- \* Wood structures made with local species (pine, fir, larch, spruce)
- \* Bioclimatic orientation (south oriented bay windows and veranda)
- \* Isolation with lime and hemp, mud-brick or straw
- \* Dry toilets and rainwater collection
- \* Solar energy and wood fuel (pellet fuels)
- \* Natural interior finishes with your ideas

Possibility of planning group training workshops to learn about eco-construction while practicing it.

Cooperative and project owner: [www.batirgroupe.org](http://www.batirgroupe.org)

General contractor : [www.ecosupport.ch](http://www.ecosupport.ch)

*« Building means collaborating with the earth »*

*Marguerite Yourcenar*





*Adapted from the article of the sustainable degrowth review « Less ! » (Moins !) December 2012.*

## **Ecopol governance : an innovative proposition to solve the socio-economic crisis**

*The Ecopl initiative was progressively built from several social ecology experiences. The method was formalized with consistent quality-management rules, where everyone can find his place as long as he's ready to co-operate.*

*Interview with Théo Bondolfi, social innovation incubator for Smala, by Pryska Ducoeurjoly, french reporter specialized in ecological behaviors.*

**Ecopol offers concrete solutions for the current socio-economic crisis. Could you explain the important aspects of this service ?**

Ecopol is a mix of several good practices that we have been constructed according to key notions of social ecology : inter-generational dialogue, global diversity, eco-construction, free licensing for shared know-how, mutualisation of spaces, furnitures and services, and the possibility of generating incomes on site with the support of an incubator of micro-enterprisess.

**Where did the Ecopol vision come from ?**

It all began in the 1990s with the association named "Tir Groupé", then renamed "Smala", in Lausanne, Switzerland. We started a creative hive in an abandoned building, where we could live together and cooperate on cultural, social and economic projects. Four years after, we had to change location and started to develop various temporary urban communities. It was a mix of squat culture, ecovillage living and co-working incubation.

We also helped friends doing the same in Eastern Europe and Africa. But we had no funds to buy these places, and accepted to become nomads. By re-initiating over 30 times from scratch to build new governance dynamics for communities, we started to identify the keys of success for any sustainable eco-living communities. In 2013, we named this "package of good practices" Ecopol. It's a method which makes a coherent whole, contributing to guarantee quality of life for ecological pioneers. The label validates the good use of the method.

## According to you, environmentally friendly practices are easier in a community. Why is that ?

Because good eco-practices are highly time-consuming if applied individually. Who can effectively take care of generating correct incomes, have a fruitful social life, and meanwhile succeed in recycling carefully, buying organic food at local fairs, using computers in an eco-responsible way, engaging in local citizenship, using eco-friendly transportation, growing his own vegetables in a cooperative garden, etc. ? It's too hard when living alone..

This is why we suggest to share and mutualize resources and efforts. It is easier to take care of a garden when it is shared by several households. Furthermore, while co-living and co-working, we can better manage services such as car-sharing, babysitting, housework support, good cooking... We can create jobs for this kind of tasks and share the expenses between co-inhabitants.

We did all this since 1993 at a local level and decided to deploy this art of co-living at a larger scale.

Such concrete solidarity helps to live the “voluntary simplicity” of economic degrowth. It also brings “joy in the effort of living”. This last point implies the idea that the efforts asked by the shared ecology can make us happier. Unlike the *credit card lifestyle*, we plant seeds, we take care of the young leaves, and only after that, we collect fruits. Abundance comes then naturally.

## How can we preserve the familial structure in the collective daily life?

In Ecopol-labeled co-habitat, family is very important. Each household has its private space : bathroom, kitchen, living room, private rooms. However, when we talk about creating a DIY (do-it-yourself) workshop, a playing room for kids or any collective service or space, we are coming up with the concept of shared goods.

The idea is that each co-habitant contributes to feed a common pot for some 150 Eur-300 Eur per month, to run the community services. If their personal budget is tight, they can reduce the renting and size of their personal space proportionally, considering they have access to large collective spaces.

## What is the social governance in Ecopol?

Total liberty of rhythm : everyone lives his life and makes his own planning. There is no central authority, except for monitoring the rental payment. The only duty is to give some time : one session per month (4 hours) to define together what and how to share furnitures and services, and some 4-8 hours anytime during the month to garden the community. This is not a capitalist neither communist approach, but rather a new mode of living. We name it social ecology. This works well in small groups, between 20-30 adults. In each Ecopol-labeled group, we have delegates to plenary sessions gathering various Ecopol places locally, once every 6-12 months, to update the common uses of resources. We define in plenary sessions the regional suppliers, the promotion of our common visions, the new income opportunities for our micro-entrepreneurs, the new good practices we wish to adopt.

## Good communication within a group is not an easy challenge... How are you dealing with human relationships and conflicts?

Indeed, learning to manage disagreement, to communicate and to collaborate, implies adopting a benevolent vision, to question some believes and develop some new practices.

We learn together with relational tools such as non-violent communication, intercultural dialogue and forgiveness, active listening, participative governance and more formal dynamics such as the evaluation of satisfaction for each key service provided by and to the cohabitants. We never vote. We always try to reach consensus, or if needed we demand consentment. We also try to never discuss in plenary our problems. We bring solutions, to avoid tiring the participants. Our governance model is also largely inspired by the Wikipedia community and free software movements : we track and denounce fallacies and indirectly expressed feelings, mostly those bringing Fear, Uncertainty and Doubt (FUD); this helps a lot in anticipating the spreading of negative vibes, and in recognizing the most merittant participants.

Each activity has one person in charge, and just one. One project, one responsible. Developing a new community is a (big) project. Organizing a meal is a (small) project. Changing the rooftop is a project. The responsible volunteers, but doesn't do everything in his project. His mission is to bring the project to success. He can coordinate a group, delegate to colleagues, even lead projects remotely. This is how we learn to cooperate and live together.



For complex decision making processes, such as attributing a space to a new candidate, or reviewing our common budget, it is the same : one person in charge, a progressive consensus to build. Moreover, we change roles and responsibilities often, thus learning to recognize uncertainty and transitions as a sustainable lifestyle.

Furthermore, each household being autonomous, the community expresses itself through the sharing of some goods and services. The word "community" is often considered under its more radical meaning: everybody in his own household with shared kitchen, bathroom or bedroom. This not the central point in Ecopol.

This is also why all the candidates make a trial period of 6-18 month before being accepted as co-responsibles of the community. This trial aspect of Ecopol was largely inspired by the ecovillage movement (GEN).

For financial aspects, we are applying the principles of Social and Solidarity Economy. We have no chart nor principles, we apply verifiable contracts and agreements.

## What is concretely shared? And how?

We empower the culture of community-based **participative budget**. For western countries, we defined a sum of 150-300 Eur per month to be paid by each adult for shared goods and services. This budget covers first the renting of nice common spaces and their frequent cleaning, the garden with fruits and vegetables, buying basic products such as spices, coffee and tea, some telecom (internet connexion and telephony with several numbers in the same operator), different newspaper subscriptions, some well maintained vehicles...

As any good family budget managers, community members in Ecopol are co-monitoring the optimal use of their monthly payment. This is where community living and working starts : where goes the money ? It takes years before it's well spent, socially and ecologically. It requires many virtuous patterns to develop, and forces cohabitants to learn to cooperate with a lot of respect and attention. It also helps some people living in the community to provide services to their fellows, thus generating some initial income which helps in starting a micro-entrepreneurial activity at a larger scale.

## Who leads the community, and how ?

At the beginning, as coordinators of Ecopol's headquarter, we need a group of maximum 3 people leading a new Ecopol : the founders. They are the men in charge. They are responsible of the financial income (renting) and of the day to day management of the common resources. We jokingly call them the *benevolent kings (& queens)*.

Founders chose their co-habitants, and provide them a 6 to 18 months trial renting contracts. It can be a group from the beginning and it's a lot better if it's not just 1-3 leaders; but still, it's better that, while the group is incubating, only some benevolent leaders are formally in charge. Their mission is to avoid making choices alone, and to make sure consensus is reached for any significant decision with the new cohabitants arriving and starting to experience the Ecopol spirit. Founders have to demonstrate they are only facilitating the emergence of a group dynamic, by sharing their responsibilities with newcomers, slowly, progressively, deeply, sustainably. But if needed, the coordinators can use their right to put a veto on a decision, to expel a trouble maker, to make sometimes difficult choices.

It's a hard mission, requiring high socio-entrepreneurial skills. At the end of the trial period, they can welcome these cohabitants as co-responsible, accept them as peers. All the co-responsible peers have the same rights and obligations : make sure the community is viable, sustainable. We call them Ecopol fellows. After 4 to 5 years, if the kingdom hasn't become a participative democracy, with at least 50% adult conscient cohabitants being fellows, external Ecopol fellows can help reboot the community by reviewing each cohabitant's status individually.

## What means *label* here, and why is it useful ?

Like an ISO certification, it confirms that some qualities of the process are well managed. For a large scale deployment of the Ecopol know-how, the label is useful for promoters of new places. Today in 2015, the label has only 4 locations labeled. It's not much. But imagine if it grows, it can be important to create trust in such a new lifestyle for those who hesitate to step in. It's a tool to provide an external assessment of the good participative management of a community building.

## Who can participate and how?

Throughout time, we developed mechanisms of integration and support of new inhabitants, as everybody gets his chances to find his place among the different co-inhabitation and cooperation aspects, in order to develop his personal way. There are three options:

- 1) Investing and co-living
- 2) Investing funds to support
- 3) Co-living without bringing funds

## 1. Investing and inhabiting

Investing and inhabiting is the most suitable option according to our values and the cooperative spirit.

Accommodation is primarily given to people investing their own funds (for example, acquisition of shares, ethical forms of investment) Concretely, for the total value of each accommodation, the cooperative needs about 20% of equity.

You obtain shares according to these 20%, and get them back if you leave your accommodation.

We can sometimes reduce these funds to 15%, eventually 10%, if we can find public subsidies or guarantees.

## 2. Investing funds to support

The choice to invest in cooperative real estate is smart both for you and humanity. It supports the creation of Ecopol places, without speculating. Real estate guarantees financial stability for your investment.

The planned return on investment depends on countries. It represents between 2% and 5% per year. The financial accounts of the cooperative are managed by a trustee and audited yearly (external control).

The minimum investment is about 10'000.- Euros or equivalent. Most investors are recently retreated adults wishing to mix fair investment with a possible opportunity to spend the rest of their life in a dynamic living place with low-tech healthcare. Usual investments are 50'000 Euros up to 100'000 Euros. Ecopol headquarters, runned by Smala, not only help each Ecopol-labeled group in raising funds, but also in keeping the funding culture alive, to make sure investments are well managed and easily refundable if needed.



### 3. Inhabiting a Ecopol

When there are funds invested by people who do not want to live in a Ecopol but only to support the Ecopol spirit, we can offer accommodation to people without own funds. It emphasizes the cohabitation of people with different financial situations.

We start by signing a rental contract for a determined period of 6 to 12 months. This first period helps to know each other before a more lasting engagement. If the trial gives satisfaction to both parties, we sign a rental contract for an unlimited period.

It is possible for an inhabitant to get back to his accommodation after having temporarily left for a journey. It is his duty to reallocate his accommodation.

#### Last words

It is difficult to understand Ecopol without having lived it! That is why Smala suggests personalized experiences for a night, a weekend, a week, a month or even for holidays in bigger ecovillages.



*Pryska Ducoeurjoly (writing)*



*Théo Bondolfi (imagination)*



*Mariette Glauser (review)*

# GLOBAL ECOVILLAGE NETWORK (GEN)

Created in 1995, the same year as Smala, the Global Ecovillage Network intends to go beyond technical ecology, just like Ecopol. "Village", means here "togetherness". To become a member, the following criteria need to be fulfilled :

- \* At least 8 adults who have been living together for at least 2 years
- \* Intention to develop a balanced, ecological, social, and cultural way of life
- \* Common goals, and clear governance (statutes, decision-making processes)

Smala is member of GEN since 2015, and is at the moment the only representative of the French part of Switzerland. There are five others in the German part. Each ecoplace with the Ecopol label includes the above GEN criteria, as well as :

- \* Shared offices, workshops, planned mutual aid to generate on-site incomes
- \* Cooperative property or equivalent (no real-estate speculation)
- \* Everyday management facilitated by adaptable patterns based on practical experience, such as contract templates, agendas, house regulations ...

In the Ecopol book, chapter 2 is dedicated to the portrayal of different eco-places : intentional communities, ecodistricts, transition towns, ecocities, indigenous peoples... With this Ecopol label, Smala also contributes to the integration of the first local communities to this global network of thousands of inspiring ecovillages.

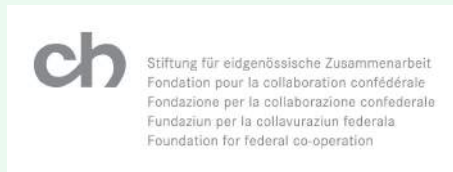


# SOCIAL INNOVATION FOR RESILIENT COMMUNITIES !

Throughout the world, many initiatives have passed the pilot stage, and function on a broad scale. The Ecopol project is a collection, as digestible as possible, of all community good practices.

In order to bind theory, practice and education, Smala's creative hives include coliving facilities and a research & training institute. The institute's team takes part in social innovation programs, with partners from all over Europe.

Over the 2014-2017 period, Smala animates the SIRClE project in Switzerland, which is dedicated to social entrepreneurs training. More information on [www.lasmala.org/institut](http://www.lasmala.org/institut)



Here's an overview of good practices key-concept for transition to social ecology poles, which inspire our vision and is shared within the Ecopol book and the SIRClE trainings :

Ecovillages, eco-cities, eco-districts, transition towns, revitalized brownfields, permaculture, anthroposophy, copyleft and open/libre culture, cultural creatives, digital citizenship, socioeracy, social entrepreneurship, non-violent communication, neuro-linguistic programming, phalanx, potlatch (gift culture), complexity management, social innovation incubation, indigenous peoples, intentional communities, social economy, soft skills, informal training, functional economy, sustainable building, net domestic happiness, bio-habitat, open governance, new paradigms, life skills, voluntary simplicity.

## Hey social entrepreneur : get on board as a partner

You've succeeded in leading innovative projects for the social good ? You wish to move forward ? You might be interested in building Ecopol-labeled places ? Let's try.

At Smala, piloting the deployment of the Ecopol label, we'll demonstrate to you that building Ecopol-labeled places can be a sustainable and fair source of income, if you are a social entrepreneur with strong skills and previous achievements.

At the time these lines were written in 2015, we are 40 part-time co-workers, mostly independent multi-disciplinary micro-entrepreneurs, with a solid experience in project management.

Our portfolio of projects contains 4 Ecopol places under constructions, 3 Europe innovation projects, and several international private-public partnerships to develop specific resources such as online tools to assess the viability of sustainable communities, academic certificates in eco-community deployment

Our method is not based on training and workshops. We believe in learning while doing onsite, and evidence-based meritocratic governance, like on Wikipedia. If you've already experienced micro-entrepreneurship, you can plan to come to our headquarters near Lausanne in Switzerland, and start right away to work with us, not for us.





# 3 STEPS TO DEVELOP YOUR OWN ECOPOLS

**Step 1 :** you cover some initial costs for some 1-10 days (around 100 Euros per day), and help as volunteer in the ongoing projects, depending on your skills.

*While seeing you cooperating “live”, we’ll negotiate with you a trial paid mandate. That’s how you’ll get on board. Content of your deliverables will depend on your resources (know how, soft skills, own funds, lands, social network ...). The mandate can be a telework activity, or a work on one of our Swiss or international projects, depending on your situation.*

**Step 2 :** as a self-employed worker, you deliver services as junior partner on building Ecopols, paid on our project funds, while learning how to become a senior partner.

It can be as economist, ecobuilder, sociocultural animator, applied research officer, project manager...

**Step 3 :** after 2-3 years minimum, start your own eco-places using the Ecopol Label, as senior partner, and develop your own local Ecopol network.





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# IMPRESSUM

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## FIRST CONTACT FOR ANY COOPERATION

*Smala incubates ecological communities since 1993.  
Since 2013, the Ecopol method and label helps you  
succeeding in your project of co-living and co-working.*

Smala institute & Community - [www.lasmala.org](http://www.lasmala.org)

Headquarters of Lausanne region - Switzerland

+ 41 76 376 97 76 - [info@lasmala.org](mailto:info@lasmala.org)

Théo Bondolfi, project manager

email us first, then phone, thanks :-)

## HOW CAN I SUPPORT THE ECOPOL LABEL ?

- A) By buying the book on [www.ecopol.net](http://www.ecopol.net) (250 pages)
- B) By investing in Ecopol shares (min. Rol 2,5% per year)
- C) By sharing our lifestyle for a few days (B&B service)

