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Routes



Study Abroad in Ecovillages  
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# SENEGAL: Sustainable Development in Ecovillages

*JANUARY TERM 2010*  
*December 28, 2009 – January 17, 2010*

## ACADEMIC HANDBOOK



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## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

As a part of its Ecovillage Education program, the three-week January Term course in microcredit offered by Living Routes and the Earth Rights Eco-Village (EREV) Institute, in partnership with the Global Ecovillage Network of Senegal (GENSEN), has developed and uses materials and activities that motivate villagers to design, and microcredit committees to approve, loans with developmental benefits. Pictorial aids for village microcredit teams support generative discussions of the types of developments the villagers seek for their villages and concrete suggestions of the types of loans that are beneficial to the needs of all village members.

The program begins at the urban ecovillage of Yoff, part of a 600 year-old fishing village within Dakar, where you orient to Senegalese culture, get to know your Senegalese university partners, and become proficient in microcredit concepts and practices and Appreciative Inquiry (AI) research methods. With new cultural and theoretical knowledge, depart for a rural development tour of Senegalese Ecovillages, ranging from the ancient and traditional to the modern and ecological, culminating back at Yoff to integrate the learning. In each Ecovillage, students enter into dialogue with villagers and participate in cultural activities and work together on development projects that will benefit the community. Villages rotate from year to year, to help spread the benefits of sustainable development. Students live with village families in culturally rich and ethnically diverse villages including Moor, Wolof and Peul communities known for their carpet weaving, ceremonial dance, protection of Acacia forests, and the arts.

## BACKGROUND: EREV INSTITUTE AND GENSEN

The EREV Institute ([www.erevi.org](http://www.erevi.org)), a subsidiary body of the Earth Rights Institute ([www.earthrights.net](http://www.earthrights.net)), offers academic and non-formal education and training programs in sustainable ecovillage development in West Africa. Academic courses include Spring and Fall semesters and a January Term in addition to Ecovillage Design Education (EDE), participatory research and program design and facilitation methods, French, English and Wolof language classes, microcredit. Academic courses and internships include equal numbers of international and Senegalese students. These courses take place in Senegal's capital, Dakar, and in several of the 45 ecovillages of the Senegal Ecovillage Network. Basic and non-formal education include literacy, ecovillage concept and design and appropriate technologies for ecovillage development. Equal numbers of American and Senegalese students participate in our university study abroad semesters, which we offer with Living Routes ([www.livingroutes.org](http://www.livingroutes.org)) and the University of Massachusetts Amherst, in addition to other universities.

The EREV Institute serves the ecovillages within the Senegal Ecovillage Network (GEN Senegal, or GENSEN, [www.gensenegal.org](http://www.gensenegal.org)), which is a part of the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN, [www.ecovillage.org](http://www.ecovillage.org)), a United Nations ECOSOC NGO. GENSEN's 45 member villages are rural and semi-urban settlements striving to become sustainable in alliance with the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>) and other global and local initiatives. These villages, located in almost all regions of Senegal, participate in the program as laboratories for sustainable development activities, and actively improve their villages. GENSEN's

membership also includes a number of NGOs and other public private groups who work primarily with the Network. Students will find the GENSEN office holds the Senegal Ecovillage Microfinance (SEM) fund, which is the result of a previous student project and the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) computer training program.

# Sustainable Development in West Africa :

## Theory and Practice

**Program:** Senegal: Sustainable Development in Ecovillages

**Course Number:** Anth 397A

**Department:** Anthropology

**UMass Faculty Sponsor:** Robert Faulkingham

**Living Routes Faculty:** Ousmane Pame and Mouhamadou Lamine Kane

**Term:** Fall

**Credits:** 4

*Sustainability “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”* (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987)

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Living Routes and EREV Institute three-week J-Term program engages students in defining and enhancing concepts of sustainable development in West Africa where ancient heritage and community values are still intact to a degree rarely found elsewhere. The Senegal branch of the Earth Rights Ecovillage Institute (EREV) co-sponsors this course, which begins with preparatory sessions in Dakar and then journeys to 15 or more écovillages. American and Senegalese students participate in development activities in the villages, while enjoying magnificent scenery. Students and staff return to Dakar to complete the course by reflecting on lessons learned documenting their village experience. French proficiency is NOT required for this course, as Senegalese work-study student partners will be fluent in English and will provide French-English and Wolof – English translations. Because of time limitations, each J-Term typically selects one or two aspects of ecovillage development for its focus.

Living Routes and EREV Institute 2010 J-Term course in sustainable development focuses on microcredit as an approach to sustainable development and on working with villagers in defining ways that their microcredit projects can contribute to their economic, social, cultural, and environmental development. We work with the microfinance institution (MFI) called Senegal Ecovillage Microcredit (SEM at [www.sem-fund.org](http://www.sem-fund.org)) that has grown rapidly over the past couple of years in partnership with the microcredit website program [www.kiva.org](http://www.kiva.org). SEM is a socially oriented MFI providing very small loans mainly to women and women’s groups, but also to men. Credit comes from a variety of private donors through SEM’s founders John Fay, MS graduate of the Cornell University Sustainable Business Program and former EREV L&L Center intern and Nan Guslander, microcredit representative of Young Presidents of the World (YPM) and from donors to Kiva. SEM currently manages more than 30 projects in over 20 villages

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Create overlapping communities of students, staff, home stay families, and village coworkers that come within the scope of the experiential “living and learning” framework.
- Create and reinforce paradigms for multicultural communication, global citizenship, and the construction of a sustainable future.
- Contribute to a cross-cultural living and learning experience in which the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.
- Hone group-building skills and work effectively as a team in tackling sustainability issues in Senegal.
- Master the most important skills, facts, and theories intrinsic to each of the learning experiences that make up the semester.

## LEARNING MODALITIES

The faculty of the Senegal: Sustainable Development in Ecovillages program use lectures, discussions, site visits, and hands on projects as key strategies to allow each student to develop mastery of course content.

## COURSE OUTLINE

The course begins at the EREV Living & Learning Center in Dakar, the capital City of Senegal. Here, American students participate in an orientation to Senegal’s culture, history and environment, get to know their Senegalese partners, participate in presentations in microcredit and sustainable development and become proficient in a village version of the organizational design process called Appreciative Inquiry (AI) in which they and their partners will learn to serve as assistant facilitators. Then in small teams, we will visit ecovillages for a week of AI work, interspersed with cultural events and nature tours. We will provide informational and secretarial support to each village microcredit committee in designing and writing up a project eligible to request a loan for income earning activities that contribute to long-term village development. Back in Dakar, students will share their learning experiences, complete assignments and engage with the deliberations of the microcredit loan selection committee, which will award a Living Routes sponsored loan to the project judged most likely to create long term benefits for its village. All other projects designed by the villagers also will be eligible to apply for SEM loans.

## DAILY SCHEDULE

See detailed calendar below

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Student teams will be expected to assist in note-taking during AI sessions and in providing secretarial help if needed to village microcredit committees in preparing the loan applications for projects they may design during the course. Each team also will prepare and present a group PowerPoint presenting their course experience in the two villages they visit. Each student also will submit a brief personal reflection paper. We recommend keeping a daily journal of reflections that may contribute this 5 – 10 p; single spaced electronic “paper.”

### Grading

Course participation 25%

Analysis of AI experience 25%

Group powerpoint presentation 25%

Individual reflection paper 25%

### Instructors

- **Marian Zeitlin**, Ph.D. Research director, former professor of social science research methods and international program design, Tufts University Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, Co-founder GEN Senegal and director, EREV Living & Learning Center
- **Ismael Diallo**, M.S. in Geography, Fondation Universitaire Luxembourgeoise (FUL), Belgium, completing Ph.D. University of Dakar and FUL program in hydrology and natural resource management, President of Global Ecovillage Network – Senegal, Director of GEN Senegal and of the SEM microcredit program.
- **Ousmane Aly Pame**, PhD in English, University of Dakar, Associate Professor of translation, British civilisation and literature at the University of Dakar, previous coordinator of several American Universities Study Abroad Programs at the West African Research Centre (Dakar, Senegal), Academic Director of the Living Routes
- **Oumar Diene**, M.A., in Geography, completing Ph.D with UNESCO Chair for Environmental Studies, University of Dakar in urban habitat and sanitation. Secretary General of the Senegal Ecovillage Network, and Assistant Director, Yoff Living and Learning Center.
- **Brooke McKean** MSc, *Development Management, London School of Economics, UK*  
In addition to teaching with the program, Ms. McKean has conducted anthropological research in Tanzania and Sierra Leone. She also has experience developing and overseeing consultancy projects in media, participatory evaluation programs, and other organizational development in Kenya and Senegal.

## Team Facilitators

- **Gaysiry Touré**, EREV Program Coordinator, Associate's Degree in English, Secretarial training, Webmaster degree
- **Francisco Carvalho**, EREV Program Coordinator, B.A. in English (American Literature and Civilization), Living Routes study abroad participant
- **Boubacar Sarr**, SEM microcredit loan manager, and L&L Center assistant, familiar with all microcredit villages.
- Other Local English speaking experts from Yoff and other participating Senegalese ecovillages

## Transcripts

**UMass Students** order transcripts through the Undergrad Transcript Office and can look up their grades through the SPIRE system.

**Non-UMass Students** send a letter with name, SS#, Date of birth, dates attended, complete address of where to send, and signature along with payment of \$6 to:

Transcripts  
Records Office  
100 Venture Way, Suite 201  
Hadley, MA 01035-9430.

Payment can be made by check (made out to "UMass CE"), money order, MC, VISA, Discover, giving expiration date, card number, and name of cardholder

**More information can be found at:**

<https://www.umasslearn.net/InfoGeneralTranscripts.htm.asp>

## TEACHING TOOLS

The following sections contain teaching materials that we use. They illustrate models of the types of materials that work for us in teaching this developmental microcredit course. They should be adapted to local conditions and situations. We also use the Discover section of a process called Appreciative Inquiry (AI), which is a success-based approach to discovering the types of microcredit programs already active in the villages. In other longer programs we also use AI as an village organizational design tool. Loan request forms are not included, as these are specific to each microcredit program.

1. The scoring sheet used by the microcredit committee judging the loan applications in the final section of the course,
2. The EDE pictorial diagram for explaining and discussing ecovillage concepts at the start of the village visits.
3. The numbered key to its pictures,
4. The second version of this diagram used for suggesting the types of developmental loans that are useful to the entire village, and leading into the loan request design process

## Sustainability Scoring System for Loan Application for Microcredit committee

Team \_\_\_\_\_ Evaluators \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Village \_\_\_\_\_ Name of group (or individual) \_\_\_\_\_

Activities \_\_\_\_\_

Nmb beneficiaries \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_ M Amount requested \_\_\_\_\_

(instructions : Use this form to rank loans with the microcredit committee judging the « best loan » created during the J-Term course. Under « score », write yes=1, no=0, or NA) (do not use this form in village)

N°	<i><b>Does project contribute to Yes=1, No=0, NA=non applicable</b></i>	<i>score</i>	<i>Comments or specifications</i>
1	Urgent needs of borrowers		
2	Urgent needs of all villagers		
3	Village culture, values		
4	Village sanitation		
5	Protection of environment		
6	Solidarity of loan group		
7	Village solidarity		
8	Management skills of group		
9	Village management skills		
10	Village education		
11	Revenues of loan group		
12	Whole village economy		
13	Manufacturing		
14	Export		
15	Intervillage trade		
16	Village equipment		
17	Village infrastructure		
18	More vegetables in village		
19	More eggs/meat in village		
20	Other scarce supplies		
21	Health facilities/medicines		
22	Schools/books and supplies		
23	Work efficiency - mills, pumps		
24	Job creation		
25	Ecotourism potential		
	<b>Is the project</b>		
26	Replicable		
27	Capable of upscaling		
	<b>Total positive points</b>		
<b>Negatives</b>			
	<b>Will the project</b>		
28	Cause suffering if not renewed		
29	Need unavailable training		
30	Have negative effects (ask whether children help with project)		
	<b>Total negative points</b>		