



For the study visit I visited the ecovillage Sólheimar. I met with the Managing Director of Sólheimar and he showed me around the village. The information written here is information collected from him and from their website solheimar.is

Sólheimar is a sustainable community with about 100 people who live and work together. Sólheimar is located in the countryside in South of Iceland. The village is characterized by vegetation, open common spaces and buildings that nicely co-exist with the landscape. Sólheimar was founded in 1930 by Sesselja Hreindís Sigmundsdóttir (1902-1974) with the goal to provide individuals of various backgrounds the opportunity to work, live and socialize freely. Sólheimar creates the space and opportunities for each person to grow and develop as an individual, thus becoming an important and active part in the community.

The foundation of the ideology of Sólheimar derives from the visions and lifework of the founder, Sesselja Hreindís Sigmundsdóttir who was deeply influenced by the anthroposophical theories of Rudolf Steiner, Christian values and the studies of Dr. Karl König who, like Sesselja, believed that people with special needs should share the same provisions as others whether it be at play or at work. Sesselja focused on diversity being the strength of Sólheimar. The ideology of Sólheimar believe that it is important to focus on the possibilities of people, not their limitations. People with special needs will always be the center of the community.

They collaborate with the local prison and the Labor of Ministry. The projects have gone extremely well with substantial increases in quality of life and community involvement with the help of prisoners who have made positive impacts of the Sólheimar community. Prisoners who live in Sólheimar do so for a short or longer periods of time and have the unique opportunity to rebuilt relationships with their family and let them live with them in the village during their stay.

Sesselja was a pioneer in organic farming, not only in Iceland but among all the Nordic countries and was among the first environmentalists in Iceland. Solheimar's activities are also defined by the goals of intentional community and the Global Eco-Village Network. Sólheimar has an aim to create a sustainable community with a focus on its people, encouraging the cultivation of man and nature. Emphasis is placed on sustainable construction, power self-sufficiency, organic farming and creating products from natural and/or recycled materials. A variety of companies operate in Sólheimar and they all take into account their economic, social and environmental impacts on society. Sólheimar was the first place in Iceland to win international recognition as a sustainable community.

For more information on their sustainability information please visit:

English: <http://www.solheimar.is/en/sesselja-house/solheimar-sustainability/>

Icelandic: <http://www.solheimar.is/sesseljuhus/umhverfismal/>

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