

Living in the Obenaus Community

A call from our time

When we know the days of consumerist, carbon energy life are counted.

When we are aware that small core families can't serve children or ageing people.

When we know that food matters and must be healthy.

We decided to experiment with low carbon living and see what it's really like to live in a wider community frame beyond the family core.

As you will read and see, it takes work. And can be extremely enlivening and joyful.

Living naturally

What is a way of life that expresses Human and Nature in balance?

Far from knowing all the answers in advance, we are experimenting and developing living in a self-selected voluntary community, in the countryside with fresh water and clean air, foster close connections and communications in the day-to-day, work with body and mind, outside and indoors, care for the quality of soil and food to name just a few essential elements.

The Obenaus Community began with people moving from Brussels to South Styria and inhabiting a run-down farm place with the intention to live healthily and with Nature as a guide.

We are now entering a new phase with the support of the commune of Ehrenhausen. We'll be able to develop the whole estate, rebuild the buildings and invite more residents to join us here.

A lifestyle in balance with the biosphere

In Obenaus we take care to only use materials we can give back to the local environment as they are. Composting is the rule. We have our own water well and a local biological sewage system. Heating is with local wood, and soon we'll produce our own solar energy for heating and electricity. All these installations are robust and can be overseen by ourselves. We're getting off the large grids and live with simple direct systems.

Technology supports the new lifestyle. We can connect with the whole world thanks to internet and live calls. We meet people online now for close and intimate conversations as much as for business meetings. As a consequence, there is no need to commute to an office or even to live in a city. We can live on the countryside and work with our colleagues wherever they are. We enjoy fresh air, clean water and live in connection with green nature.

A developmental space

All humans develop over a lifetime. Here in Obenaus, we deliberately observe and support our growth of human capacity so we expand ourselves between our capabilities and our potential.

There is the need to practice timeless skills, from turning the compost to chopping wood or tending to the fire in the kitchen stove, baking bread or using a scythe for cutting grass.

There is an ongoing need to reflect on what one is doing here, and what mankind does at large with nature, our resources and our lifestyle.

There is continuous practice of hosted reflections on how we live here as a community, what we learn and where we (need to) develop.

The practice to co-sense and co-decide on matters of the day-to-day life of the community.

The practice to be seen in your journey of life and receive or give mentoring across generations.

The various discovery practices of systemic work, developmental assessments and coaching, Art of Hosting, Yoga and many more.

Living in community

Humans need a variety of close human interactions and connections. We envisage a permanent residence group of over 12 people in Obenaus, allowing a variety of interactions across all generations. We share our kitchen and take at least one meal together every day. We share our tasks in the houses and gardens so that we enjoy our common spaces. All have their private rooms or small apartments so we can close the door behind us and be with just ourselves.

As we share a larger space, we also share the kitchen, washing machines, internet connection and so on. Thus we can keep the financial cost of living low and accommodate modest budgets and many professions among our community.

Working in and from Obenaus

Organic agriculture

Since 2015, Obenaus is a certified bio farm. We keep a flock of sheep, have planted +20 fruit trees and harvest the apples from a couple of old trees around the main ground. We make hay for the sheep from our various meadows. The farmer's garden is designed according to bio-dynamic and permaculture principles and offers a variety of vegetables. In the coming years we plan to increase the female sheep flock to 40 and market sheep cheese.

Local employment

Many employment possibilities exist around Ehrenhausen. The second largest city in Austria, Graz, is well connected by a direct train route and offers all possible jobs and professional local possibilities.

Sole traders, consultants, teachers and coaches

Digital nomads can find their home in Obenaus. We have a small co-working office space for computer work and online calls and meetings. For travel, Ehrenhausen is well connected by train to Graz or Vienna airports, while the night trains of the ÖBB rail service offer low carbon travel options across Europe with an increasing network of connections. The motorway A9 connects the area to all over Europe by car or bus.

We have indoor and protected outside workshop facilities, so you can invite your participants, partners and clients to Obenaus and organise your seminars and workshops right here.

With our experience of setting up employment or businesses as expatriates we can support your first steps in the area and the administrations for getting started.

Tierra Verde Shop and Distribution business

We have the Austrian and a larger German-language distribution licence of [Tierra Verde](#). With our local shop for the regional community, a web shop for the German speaking markets and serving an increasing number of outlets in Austria, we offer an income possibility right from Obenaus as a place of work. If you have a shop trader or sales capacity, you can expand the business and create your own job through your work.

Serving the Community services

When Obenaus receives guests or hosts workshops, the service for this exceeds the normal community work contribution, and we offer a remuneration or recompensation for preparing guest rooms, meals, arranging breaks for seminar guests etc.

Healthy food

We eat vegetables from our own garden and meat from our own sheep, supplemented with shopping and supplies from our neighbors. We produce our own herbal teas, jam, fruit juices, bread and more.

A place for gatherings, workshops and trainings

Every summer we organise an Art of Hosting training and a systemic work intensive workshop and training during the Open House in Obenaus weeks. People come from all

over the world and share the Obenaus lifestyle for a couple of days or weeks. Visitors and guests meet us here the whole year round.

Investing into building a natural future

As from 2020 onwards, Obenaus has entered a building and development phase. Supported by the village, the Obenaus ground has been classified as recreational area in the middle of greenland. We can now transform former stables and barns into living, working and meeting spaces. Over the next 10 years we will invest up to 3 Mio € into eco-friendly buildings and infrastructure.

People can invest in the project with loans or shares. Investors in Obenaus receive a guarantee backed up by the value of the land and the revenues of the community, preferential access to Obenaus products, stays and seminars, and a long-term dividend. Investors in shares are invited and entitled to take part in the overall investment plans and decisions for the development of Obenaus.

The [Obenaus development plan](#) gives more details.

Joining the community

The Obenaus community is a voluntary space. You can join us and leave again as it fits your life and plans. As the commitments for you here become more lasting the longer you want to stay, we see three various stages of engagement. As a community member, be it for a limited or unlimited period, you have a full co-decision right and voice in shaping the day-to-day life of Obenaus.

Visits

You can join Obenaus as a visitor for a stay of 3 weeks or longer. Visits are arranged on an individual basis, so we can both agree on our priorities for each other, the dates and all other conditions.

Resident for a limited period

At the end of or after your visit we can then agree to accept you for a limited period of 6 to 12 months duration. You become a community member with all rights pertaining to residents, though limited to the time horizon of your stay. That time serves as a trial period as we'll both find out if living in Obenaus is really what fits your life and the community equally, or if the agreed time limit felt just right.

Community Member

Following the limited resident period you can apply to become a community member. If the other community members accept you, you'll join the community without any limitation, with full rights in the community decisions and a right to stay as long as it fits you.

We ask Community Members to invest a share of at least 50.000 € backing up the space they live in. With that investment, they're also taking part in the overall investment decisions around Obenaus.