

Sustainable Vaisnava Communities (SVC)

MANDATE

(October 2014 – Tirupati)

(Formerly promoted through GVIC - Global Village Initiative Committee)

“The whole idea is that we are ISKCON, a community to be independent from outside help... Our mission is to protect our devotees from unnecessary heavy work to save time for advancing in Krsna consciousness. This is our mission.” Letter to Yasomatinandana, November 1976.

The Sustainable Vaisnava Communities (SVC) initiative committee has been established to assist the ISKCON GBC, established ministries and temples to promote the concepts and best practices of sustainability and self-sufficiency within ISKCON rural and urban communities as well as individual devotees around the world.

Our relationship with the land and cows and their ability to nurture us in numerous ways has become so far removed from our lives that it sometimes appears that we have lost the way to revive it. Our goal is to become Krsna Conscious, but often our activities in Kali Yuga seem to lead away from that relationship. Krsna has given us the means by which we can sustain and perfect ourselves while saving time to worship Him. The goal of SVC is to provide information, tools and resources as to how we can gradually adapt our systems and lifestyles to achieve this goal.

Best Practices

A best practice is a method or technique that provides results superior to those achieved by other means, and is often used as a benchmark. Apart from ISKCON's excellent preaching endeavors we have many examples of best practices that demonstrate the importance of “simple living and high thinking”. The following are pertinent examples from rural, and urban sectors as well as from individuals.

Rural Projects

ISKCON Farm Hungary – Sustainable Agriculture, self-sufficient community, excellent preaching through self-reliance. Making of soaps and detergents, etc.

Bhaktivedanta Manor Goshalla - Gita Nagari Farm – Ahimsa Milk

Bhaktivedanta Academy Gurukula, Mayapur - Education on self-reliance. Developing realized relationships with Krsna through service and surrender. 85% self sufficient in food production. Producing world-class preachers.

ISKCON Mayapur – Battery operated rickshaws and minibuses. Handloom cloth.

Panca Gavya products in many ISKCON farms. Small scale cottage industries producing natural incense and various other products.

ISKCON Hebri farm – Ox power developed for irrigation (Persian wheel), food processing, Panca Gavya products, Mud blocks for housing.

ISKCON Italy & Govardhan Eco Village in India – producing cold pressed olive and essential oils.

City Temples

ISKCON Salem - Construction using local materials such as stone and mud. Creating exemplary temple and ashram buildings, minimizing dependence on outside resources such as electricity.

ISKCON Copenhagen – Urban farming

Bhaktivedanta College Budapest - Solar panels, reducing electricity bills.

Radhadesa - Solar panels, covering all electricity costs, wood chip heating.

ISKCON Juhu procuring all its flowers, vegetables, incense, ghee, from their farm at Nilacala Dham.

Seattle Farm - Supplying flower needs for the deities and producing organic food.

Initiatives of individuals

Gokula Prabhu Australia - sustainable housing, textile spinning, etc.

Adi Karta Prabhu, organic farm in USA.

Hyderabad city Caitanya Das growing food on apartment veranda.

Saksi Gopal Prabhu, Budapest - Selective waste collection.

Sustainable Development – Sustainable ISKCON:

Sustainable development refers to any system that can be sustained into the future. ISKCON can go well beyond sustainability; we can positively thrive! Children educated according to their unique individual aptitudes can find deeply rewarding futures within our communities and temples both rural and urban. Eventually they can help provide all the goods and services ISKCON needs. SVC will promote

aptitude based training centers for youth and adults in all our centers to ensure the sustainable and independent growth of ISKCON into the future.

ISKCON Farms and City Temples

Srila Prabhupada established a formula of city temples supported by rural farms. The GBC body has passed resolutions that require city temples to procure many of their needs from our farms and other devotee providers. SVC will provide extensive information, training and support on ways in which these ISKCON directives can be easily adopted in every continent and climate. By reviving this relationship through cooperative endeavor, ISKCON can make tangible strides towards self-sufficiency.