



# Villages: A Country Without Borders

By Ron Dembo

July, 2009, Original Version

Zerofootprint is an organization dedicated to a mass reduction in global environmental impact. We provide software and services to individuals, governments, universities, and corporations that measures and manages carbon footprint and engages employees and citizens worldwide in combating climate change.



## **Villages: A Country Without Borders**

A Zerofootprint Initiative .....	1
The Importance of Scale .....	1
A Rallying Point.....	2
How it Works .....	2
Empowering villagers .....	3
Conclusion .....	4
The Zerofootprint Personal Carbon Manager for Villages.....	4
Features.....	4
Customization .....	5



## **A Zerofootprint Initiative**

Villages have a source of power to fight climate change that has yet to be tapped, and that is their sheer number. Around the world, there are thousands of villages whose residents are concerned about global warming. Although villages must obviously be included in any program of climate change action, there has been little attempt to involve their residents. Yet if we aggregate the total population of villages across the globe it is equivalent to a significant country – a 'country without borders'.

The Zerofootprint Villages: A Country Without Borders initiative is harnessing the power of this global community. By linking the Zerofootprint calculator and networking software to the international community of villagers, we will create the first country without borders. This country will grow over time, with villagers working together to reduce their environmental impact in a way that cumulatively could have as much positive effect as the actions of one wealthy nation.

We will build the community one village at a time, helping people measure and manage their carbon footprint, and to link around shared environmental goals. Each village will report its reduction in footprint using the Zerofootprint Personal Carbon Manager for Villages, which will also show the cumulative reduction of carbon emissions for all the participating villages. As village participation grows, so will the country without borders. We will be able to quantify the achievements of this country over time.

## **The Importance of Scale**

The most important ingredient in catalyzing meaningful change is having the scale with which to achieve the chosen goals. Villages meet these criteria. Even modest participation of the world's villages in a program to reduce their emissions will bring significant results.



## **A Rallying Point**

We are envisioning a kind of country that stands outside of the customary definition. Instead of sharing a geographical homeland or ethnic or cultural background, the citizens will share a set of values and a common goal to repair our damaged global ecosystem. Their rallying point will be a participatory website, not a political party; their symbol a focused idea, not a flag.

Unlike traditional nations, members of this community of villagers will join on their own terms. Working as a cross-border organization, the villagers will help formulate a global climate change strategy from the ground up.

The country without borders will be extra-governmental, and operate in its own way. With the Zerofootprint Personal Carbon Manager for Villages acting as a website meeting point, the citizens of this country without borders will have the ability to bring about lifestyle changes that are often tough for governments to achieve. It will engage individuals, and empower villages, demonstrating the value of their combined actions, and make them effective players in the push to lower global emissions.

## **How it Works**

Villagers input their personal lifestyle information into the Zerofootprint Personal Carbon Manager for Villages, and the software calculates and records their carbon footprints. Villagers will also be able to see how they measure up against others around the world. When villagers re-input their carbon information after making lifestyle changes, the software will be able to recalculate their footprint, and aggregate the reductions made by all users. Villagers will be able to see that when many members makes even small lifestyle changes, it aggregates into large overall reductions. This is inspiring, and encourages further action.

The software enables villagers to connect with one another through discussion forums, through groups they are able to create or join, and through an accompanying educational wiki. All content will be generated with the guidance of participating villagers, ensuring that it stays relevant and accessible.



This format allows villagers to become participatory citizens in a way they cannot always achieve with traditional government structures. They become a part of the process, and participate in decision-making, providing input, giving feedback, and seeing their thoughts and ideas taken into the mix. The software will give them full, quantitative accounts of their achievements.

This new country without borders will have the ability to form goals and objectives, and these could mimic those of their real governments. For example, many nations have currently pledged to reduce their emissions by 10% before the Copenhagen conference on climate change in December 2009. The Zerofootprint Personal Carbon Manager for Villages enables its community of users to set this type of goal, as well as recommend actions, create targets, record feedback, and report on what has been achieved.

## **Empowering villagers**

The Zerofootprint Personal Carbon Manager for Villages enables villages to step up and take a leading role in the fight against climate change. It will demonstrate how, working as a unified group, villages can produce significant real carbon reductions which can match those of traditional nations. This will not only give the villagers a sense of making a meaningful contribution, but will allow them to demand that their conventional political and social leaders follow their example. Once a group of villages has set a precedent, others will begin to follow suit in a viral process, as they realize the possibility for real change in a country without borders.

Traditional governments have an essential role to play in fighting climate change, such as in setting industry and building regulations. But they are less effective at mobilizing their populations to change their lifestyles. We need alternative mechanisms, and engaging villagers in a country without borders that can set and achieve meaningful emissions reductions could be a major contribution. We cannot afford to ignore the massive potential of our villages help in the fight against climate change.



## Conclusion

Organizing and mobilizing villages to take positive action on climate change is but one part of a global strategy that is required to reduce our emissions. However, it is one for which the tools are now available, and which will engage a significant section of the world's population in ensuring a healthy planet for future.

## The Zerofootprint Personal Carbon Manager for Villages

The Zerofootprint Personal Carbon Manager for Villages is a customizable software application that can be tailored to any village. It allows villagers to measure and manage their carbon footprint, and connect with others around shared environmental goals. It is an online application that is hosted by Zerofootprint, which makes it simple to implement.

### Features:

- Each user can calculate his or her own carbon footprint.
- Users can create their own user profile with privacy settings.
- Users can see their footprint relative to others.
- Users can set footprint reduction goals.
- Users can see the impact of achieving goals on their footprint.
- Users can pledge and commit to taking certain actions to meet goals.
- Users can see and link to others who are also using the calculator, and create or join groups around goals.
- Users can also use Zerofootprint's One Minute Calculator for a quick measure of their footprint.
- The application links to a marketplace of green products services, events and news.
- Users can link the calculator 'tips' to web pages for other environmental initiatives.



### **Customization:**

- You can customize Zerofootprint Villages to your requirements.
- You can co-brand and link to your website, with your logo appearing on all pages.
- You can customize categories: e.g. travel, home, food.
- You can use missions data sets from your village.
- You can link to existing initiatives within the tips section, with update of links quarterly, if desired.
- Payment gateway if you wish to sell local carbon offsets through the Zerofootprint Villages application.