



CASE STUDY

Welcome home
Welcome to The ARK

SANTA TERESA, COSTA RICA

By
B the Light Consulting
Brenna St. Onge



The ARK



Why? We are living in a time of system breakdown. The structures we have depended on for generations are changing rapidly and we can no longer rely on them for stability (food, healthcare, government, infrastructure etc.). As the poly-crisis (multiple crises that fuel each other) intensifies, how we organize locally to strengthen community fibers will determine our experience and well-being in the years to come.

What? Regenerative Living represents a way of living in deep connection with self, each other and the natural world. It is a paradigm shift beyond extraction, and consumption that represents a way of being, acting, governing, and living in deep harmony with nature. It is the fullest expression of self-sufficiency and resilient community design. Rather than simply mitigating future climate impacts, regenerative living seeks to enhance the vitality, abundance, and long-term health of social, economic, and ecological systems; creating the conditions for all life to thrive through holistic management.

How? The systems break down we are living through was human generated and we can recode the systems to create shared prosperity on a healthy planet. This way of living is alive all over the world, it is just not evenly distributed or widely known.

The Regenerative World Quest (Quest) is an immersive research project to study and uplift communities all over the world that are living in a regenerative way. We will explore the systems, successes, challenges, and insights to create a database of scalable solutions. How can we redesign human systems that are healthier, more resilient and holistically managed? By honoring indigenous wisdom, and modern innovations, the Quest seeks to uplift and replicate best practices to craft a blueprint for shared prosperity on a healthy planet.

Who? The project was founded by Brenna St. Onge and is fiscally sponsored by Savory International, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. This case study is part of a series of ten projects researched in Costa Rica as part of the Regenerative World Quest's 2025 fieldwork. There are three phases to the Regenerative World Quest: 1- immersive, international research, 2- content creation and awareness building and 3- local implementation.





The Ark

SANTA TERESA, COSTA RICA

FOUNDER:

Marat Omarov

WEBSITE:

<https://www.theark.world>

SHORT YOU TUBE VIDEO:

@Regenerative World Quest: The Ark



Just 15 minutes from Santa Teresa, The Ark sits atop a lush mountain with sweeping ocean views, a short drive from the beach and world-class surf. The project is designed to be entirely off-grid, producing its own energy and water while providing residents with 100% of their produce and herbs. Rooted in the principles of circular design and community co-creation, The Ark functions more like a living organism than a conventional development. The Ark has no investor or ROI beholden to a third party. Residents are considered co-owners and share the profits generated by the community's enterprises, such as an herbal supplement line, house rentals, and events.



At its core, The Ark is a regenerative living community and a hospitality project designed to live in harmony with the land. The community is attracting change makers from around the world who want to live and share solutions. For The Ark, regenerative development means creating a place where people and the ecosystem thrive together through renewable energy, green building, syntropic farming, and water conservation. The community is guided by four core pillars: regeneration, community, autonomy, and health.



“PEOPLE TELL ME I AM SO BRAVE TO
LEAVE MY HOME COUNTRY AND MOVE
TO A REGENERATIVE COMMUNITY IN
COSTA RICA. I ACTUALLY THINK THEY
ARE THE BRAVE ONES FOR STAYING IN A
WORLD CONTROLLED BY BROKEN
SYSTEMS. AT THE ARK WE ARE LIVING
THE SOLUTIONS.”

SUSANNE- RESIDENT

PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS:

- Zoned as an 'Agricultural Subdivision'
- 80 hectares (197 acres) total
- 88 residential lots, with ~25% sold to date
- 90% of each lot preserved for green space and ecosystem regeneration

SHARED AMENITIES:

- Community gardens
- Recycling stations
- Composting areas
- Community Center & Kitchen
- Hiking, running, and biking trails
- Yoga and movement spaces
- Medicinal garden
- Childrens play area
- School
- Natural swimming holes and creeks
- Sports center and swimming pool (to be built)
- Village center with retail and coffee shops (to be built)





The ARK

AMENITIES

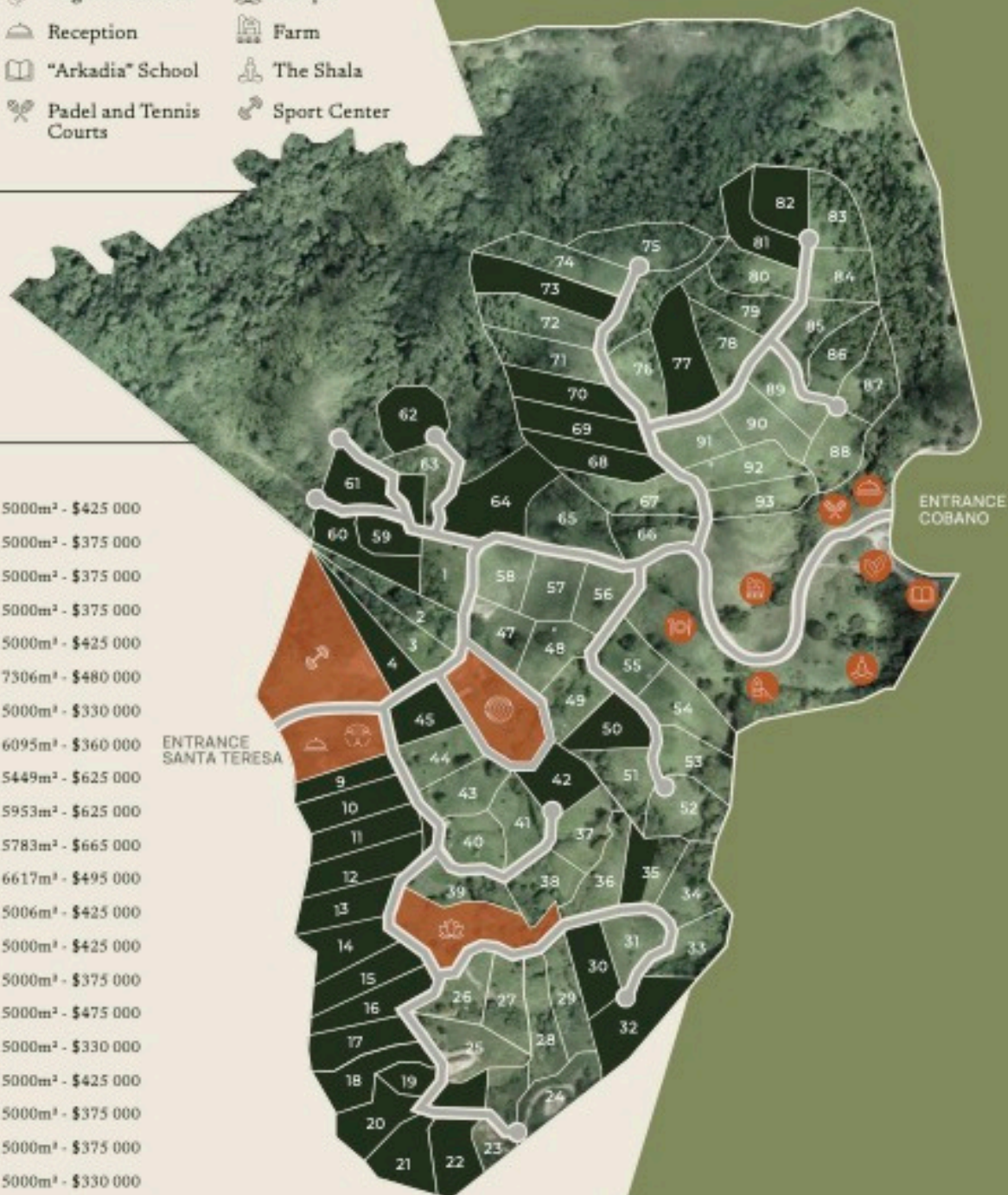
- | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| Co-creation Lounge | Organic Market | Temple |
| Art Center | Reception | Farm |
| Kids Playground | "Arkadia" School | The Shala |
| Community kitchen | Padel and Tennis Courts | Sport Center |

○ Available

● Amenities

● Sold

1	5000 m² - \$425 000	55	5000m² - \$425 000
2	5000 m² - \$330 000	56	5000m² - \$375 000
3	5000m² - \$330 000	57	5000m² - \$375 000
23	5000m² - \$699 000	58	5000m² - \$375 000
24	5000m² - \$525 000	63	5000m² - \$425 000
25	5864m² - \$387 000	65	7306m² - \$480 000
26	5000m² - \$330 000	66	5000m² - \$330 000
27	5000m² - \$375 000	67	6095m² - \$360 000
28	5000m² - \$330 000	71	5449m² - \$625 000
29	5000m² - \$330 000	72	5953m² - \$625 000
31	5000m² - \$425 000	74	5783m² - \$665 000
33	5000m² - \$375 000	75	6617m² - \$495 000
34	5000m² - \$375 000	76	5006m² - \$425 000
35 B	2500m² - \$160 000	78	5000m² - \$425 000
36	5000m² - \$375 000	79	5000m² - \$375 000
37	5000m² - \$375 000	80	5000m² - \$475 000
38	5000m² - \$330 000	83	5000m² - \$330 000
39	5000m² - \$330 000	84	5000m² - \$425 000
40	5955m² - \$393 000	85	5000m² - \$375 000
41	5000m² - \$375 000	86	5000m² - \$375 000
43	5000m² - \$425 000	87	5000m² - \$330 000
44	5000m² - \$330 000	88	5000m² - \$425 000
47	5000m² - \$330 000	89	5000m² - \$425 000
48	5000m² - \$375 000	90	5000m² - \$475 000
49	5000m² - \$375 000	91	5000m² - \$475 000
51	5000m² - \$425 000	92	5000m² - \$475 000
52	5888m² - \$500 000	93	5000m² - \$475 000
53	5000m² - \$425 000		
54	6029m² - \$510 000		



OCEAN

MOUNTAINS

SOCIAL STRUCTURES, GOVERNANCE, EDUCATION, AND COMMUNITY:

The Ark fosters a self-organizing community model that emphasizes shared leadership and participatory governance. Residents are integral to decision-making processes, engaging in weekly alignment meetings that shape the community's direction. This collaborative approach ensures that the community evolves in alignment with its members' values and needs. Education is a cornerstone of The Ark's vision. A Montessori-inspired school is planned within the community, aiming to provide holistic, nature-based education to children. Community life at The Ark is enriched through various shared spaces and activities. From communal gardens and kitchens to wellness centers and cultural events, residents have ample opportunities to connect, collaborate, and celebrate together. These interactions foster a strong sense of belonging and mutual support among community members.



LAND REGENERATION EFFORTS AND MEASUREMENTS:

- 70% of the 80-hectare property reforested.
- Overgrazed pastures transformed into a regenerative landscape.
- 500 trees planted in a food forest with syntropic agroforestry.
- Regenerative farming boosts soil health, biodiversity, and water retention.
- Biochar produced for carbon capture and soil enrichment.



FOOD SELF-SUFFICIENCY:

- Working toward 100% food self-sufficiency via on-site permaculture and local farmer partnerships.
- 6-hectare regenerative farm with over 200 useful plant species, including fruits, vegetables, herbs, and trees.
- Syntropic agroforestry boosts productivity, biodiversity, and ecosystem health.
- Soil-focused farming supports long-term fertility and resilience.
- Residents trained in regenerative agriculture; volunteer days engage the direct and broader communities.
- The community produces herbal supplements and holistic medicine from the forest garden.

WATER MANAGEMENT:

- The Ark is designed for full water autonomy, primarily sourced from on-site well water.
- There are several natural water features, rainwater harvesting, and watershed regeneration.
- Six strategically placed water retention basins (one pictured below) slow, spread, and sink water into the landscape, improving groundwater recharge and reducing runoff.



RESOURCE FLOWS AND CIRCULARITY:

- Working toward zero waste through composting and on-site material reuse.
- Topsoil reused during construction.
- Paper, glass, plastic, and aluminum recycled.
- Eco-construction uses recycled, local, and low-impact materials.
- Fallen trees and existing structures repurposed to reduce resource extraction.

ENERGY:

- The ARK is fully off-grid, powered by a solar system designed for year-round autonomy.
- Each lot includes built-in solar infrastructure for energy independence.
- Included in each lot:
 - Solar panels generating up to 17 kWp (~2,000 kWh/month)
 - 40 kWh battery storage for power during nights and cloudy days
 - Advanced monitoring tools for energy use and battery levels
 - Energy-efficient construction and passive design reduce energy demand and boost system efficiency



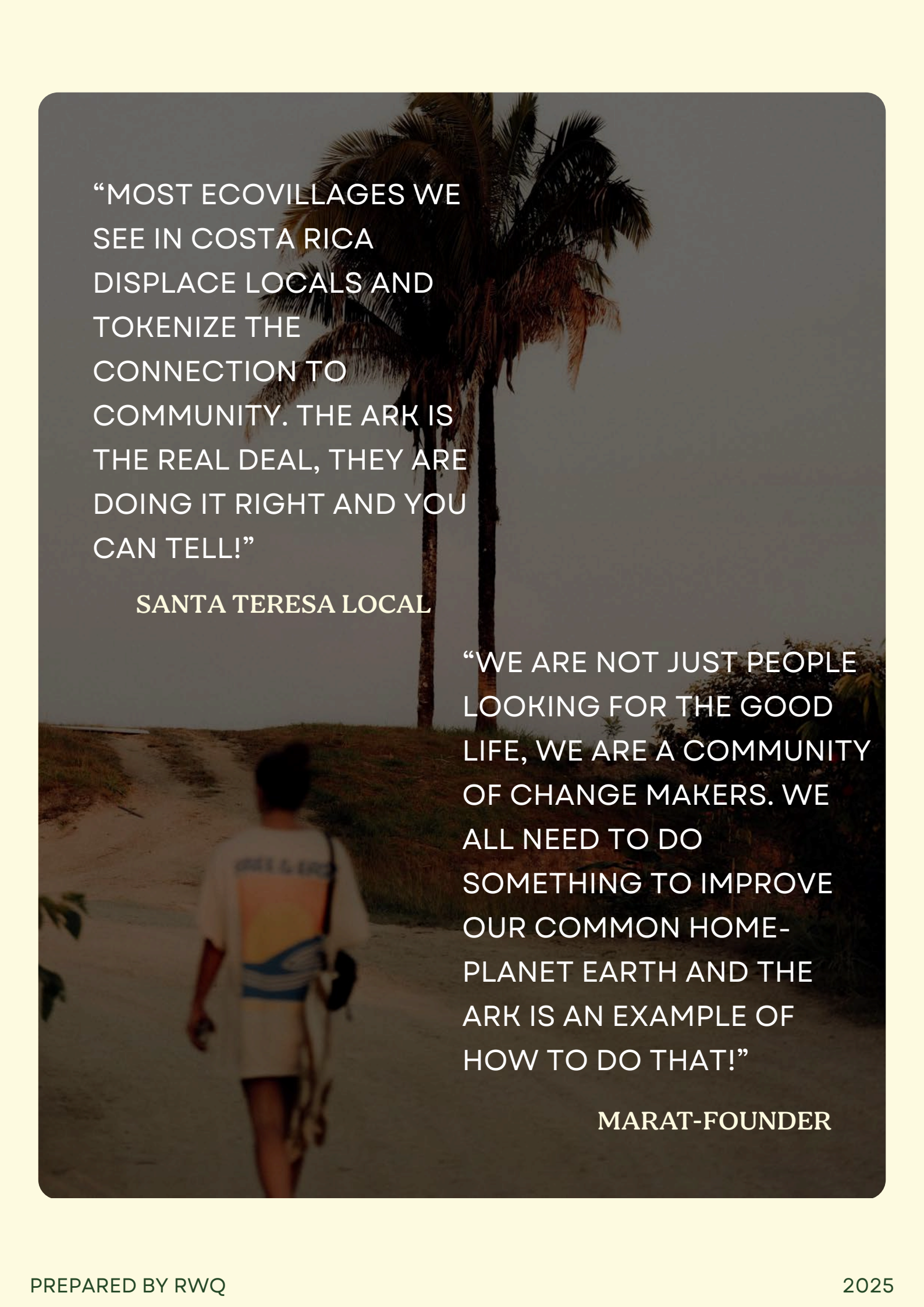
CARBON FOOTPRINT REDUCTION: MEASUREMENT:

- N/A not able to measure at this time

SOCIAL EQUITY AND INCLUSION:

- The Ark created a profit share community co-op where residents become part owners of the entire project and receive passive income starting in 2028 from profits from events, rentals, and food sales.
- The local family who sold the land to the Ark receives 15% of all profits from the community for life.
- The Ark has brought the only pediatrician back to the area who is a local Costa Rican.
- Volunteer days and events engage the local community and deepen connection to the land.
- Lots can be shared and equity based financing/pricing is available.
- Wealth is defined through health, autonomy, and participation in shared prosperity. With no outside investors, financial flows stay within the community. Profit sharing, self-governance, and off-grid systems promote holistic well-being.



A person is walking away from the camera on a sandy path. In the background, there is a tall palm tree and some greenery. The scene is slightly blurred, giving it a candid feel.

“MOST ECOVILLAGES WE
SEE IN COSTA RICA
DISPLACE LOCALS AND
TOKENIZE THE
CONNECTION TO
COMMUNITY. THE ARK IS
THE REAL DEAL, THEY ARE
DOING IT RIGHT AND YOU
CAN TELL!”

SANTA TERESA LOCAL

“WE ARE NOT JUST PEOPLE
LOOKING FOR THE GOOD
LIFE, WE ARE A COMMUNITY
OF CHANGE MAKERS. WE
ALL NEED TO DO
SOMETHING TO IMPROVE
OUR COMMON HOME-
PLANET EARTH AND THE
ARK IS AN EXAMPLE OF
HOW TO DO THAT!”

MARAT-FOUNDER

The Ark

REGENERATIVE ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENT



Key



Not Present



Early Stage



Operational

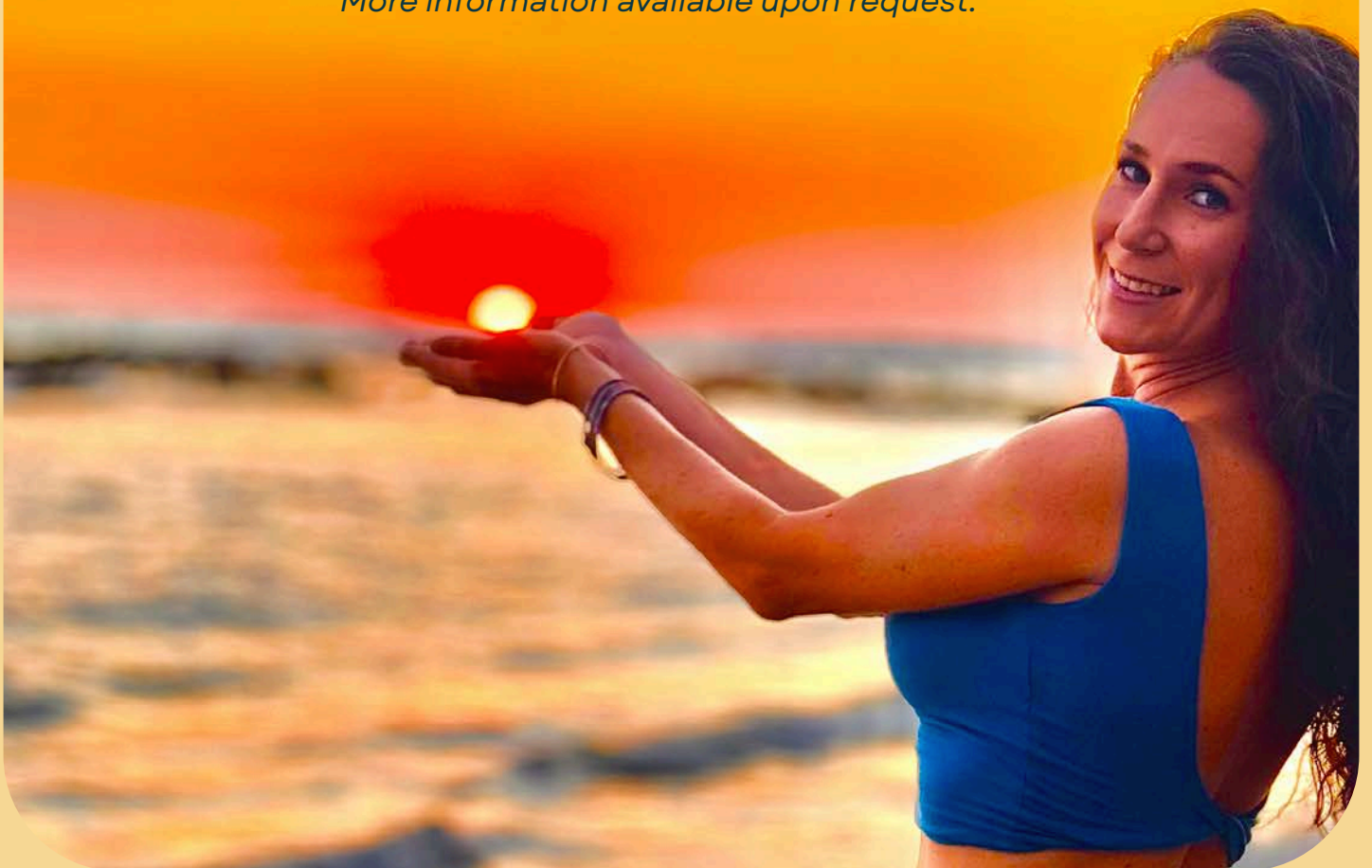


Thriving

A NOTE ABOUT THE ASSESSMENT:

There are many ways to assess communities. Each person must identify their own best use case. This assessment was created by studying leading regenerative frameworks and mapping them to regenerative living (defined on page one) and holistic management. The community's ability to maintain a thriving lifestyle if/when global supply chains are interrupted is a key element in all areas. Aspects of community life and culture are essential parts of resiliency, as well as food, water, education, healthcare and infrastructure systems etc. The Quest has a weighted numerical scale to assess each project which provides the qualitative and quantitative data behind the assessment.

More information available upon request.



REGENERATIVE ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENT DEFINITIONS AND THE ARK SCORING



Regenerative Food and Water Systems: farming as a service to restore landscapes, connect people with nature and provide a healthy and holistic diet in a way that restores the carbon cycle, builds soil, heals watersheds and ecosystems. Healthy soils=healthy communities.

The Ark's score here is *Operational*. Their goal is for 100% food self-sufficiency. The community started with the farm as the first priority with a 6-hectare organic farm and syntropic agroforest. Over 200 useful plant species are cultivated, including fruits, vegetables, and medicinal herbs for residence and for sale. The community is creating six water retention basins to slow and spread water on the landscape.



Communal structures for **Governance** that enable **empowered participation** by all in the ecosystem through transparent and just decision making, holistic management, distributed authority with clear delineation of duties and responsibilities.

The Ark's score here is *Thriving*. Residents participate in weekly alignment meetings, shaping the evolving direction of the project. All residents are considered co-creators and profit partners, with no outside investors. Governance is participatory and formal conflict resolution systems are still emerging.



Circular Resource Flows (energy, water, trash, recycling, compost, information etc.) where there is no waste, no extraction and all elements from one system can be inputs into another system. Communities are designed to not just minimize but neutralize and heal any negative impact to the land and surrounding areas, while flourishing economically.

The Ark's score here is *Operational* as they are progressing toward zero waste with composting, on-site recycling, and reusing building materials. Eco-construction uses low-impact, local materials. Residence are building local and circular economic flows through farm to market products (food, herbs, medicinals) as well as ecotourism and events for robust economic inputs- local to local.





Intentional Design and Community Living by which individuals in the community can share living, working and communal space that honors place and people while holding appropriate boundaries for the unique needs of each individual and the community through holistic management.

The Ark's score here is *Thriving* as the community emphasizes off-grid, nature-connected living and holistic management/governance. Shared amenities provide spaces to gather, residents co-create community infrastructure and engage in collective projects, events, workshops and education.



Balance of Sovereignty and Solidarity where the good of the community does not come at the cost of an individual and the good of the individual does not impair the community at large.

The Ark's score here is *Thriving* as residents have autonomy through private lots, energy independence, food self-sufficiency and lifetime passive income through the community. Residence can engage in both strategic and day to day decision making. Shared amenities and events help to bring cohesion and celebrate a diversity of culture and economic flows.



Right Relationship to Place and People by honoring the natural ecosystem where the community is (healing the land through human stewardship) and by being in an intentional relationship with indigenous wisdom and locals (healing the community and human relationships), living with love of place, honoring its history and all life it supports.

The Ark's score here is *Thriving* as there is a deep respect for Costa Rican culture and place. There are discounted lots for locals and a 15% lifetime profit share returned to the original family who owned the land. The Ark has helped to bring pediatric health care to the region and has a focus on integral relationships and reciprocity.



Valuing True Wealth where money and finance are not the end goals. Wealth is defined as quality of life, a sense of belonging, purpose and meaning and all resources are holistically managed.

The Ark's score here is *Thriving* as they redefines wealth through health, autonomy, and participation in shared prosperity. With no outside investors, financial flows stay within the community. Profit sharing, self-governance, and off-grid systems promote holistic well-being.



Value all life and the contributions to the larger ecosystem where communities treat both the youth and the elderly with respect and intentionally create cross-generational connections. The value of ecosystem services are revered and service roles (teaching, health care, youth and elderly care etc.) are respected and valued.

Ark's score here is *Thriving* as they honor and uplift all generations and are actively creating an intergenerational community. A school and wellness center support long-term community learning and wellbeing. Herbal knowledge and holistic medicine are being cultivated, taught and shared.



Resilient Infrastructure and Resources The necessary skills, resources and infrastructure to sustain life are within the community, from growing food to energy production, to building shelters and water systems, education, health care, community economic systems, arts, and entertainment etc. Focus on sourcing locally with little to no reliance on global supply chains.

The Ark's score here is *Operational*. The entire project is off grid for shared infrastructure as well as each residential lot, including battery back up. Food and water autonomy are advancing, and land management supports ecosystem resilience. The project is in an agricultural zone which means the public infrastructure/shared amenities are optional and they will take ongoing financial resources to fully establish and maintain.



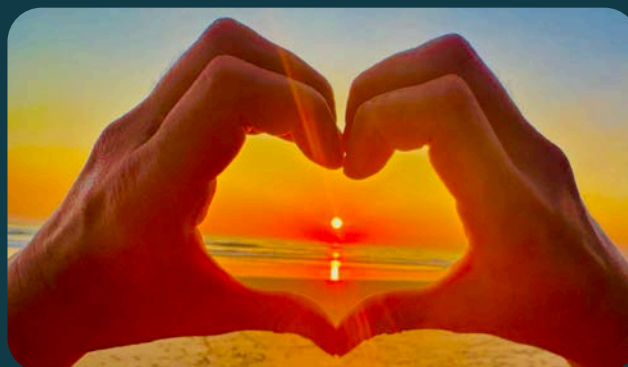
Place-Based Solutions with Global Connections While knowledge, connections, and sharing are connected globally; solutions, actions and projects are nuanced for local culture and climate, led by people from the area and living in the community.

The Ark's score here is *Thriving* as they are building bridges through education, media, and local partnerships. The herbal supplement business and ecotourism presence aim to connect global wellness and environmental communities with the project.



Solutions Based Living whereby the simple act of HOW the community lives is a solution to climate change, inequality, injustice, violence and greed. It is not about telling others how to live, rather living the solutions in day to day lives as a model.

The Ark's score here is *Thriving*. The Ark reflects a systems-level shift in how people can live regeneratively. Education, food, energy, water, health care, governance, community and land use design serve as replicable templates for other communities. While the Ark is not actively scaling, they are creating a replication model.





THANK YOU

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