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BIOREGIONAL ZONING – ZONES A TO G

Bioregional Zoning is a zoning system which considers our activities and impacts *beyond* the house and plot (i.e. beyond Zones 0 to 5) – in particular it provides a rough target for the degree of needs we meet from each zone. This is particularly useful for *a wider sense of what sustainable living means in practice*, in our relationships with the wider world. In this system Zones A to G cover:

A. The site i.e. house / building and grounds, farm, small-holding, etc (i.e. Zones 0-5).
B. The immediate environment, neighbourhood or local settlement.
C. The district/town (or municipality).
D. The bio-region.
E. The country as a whole.
F. The global region (e.g. Europe, north America, Australasia).
G. The Earth, the planet as a whole – so G is for Gaia, or the Globe as a whole.

The practicalities of sustainable lifestyle design with Zones A to G are:

Zone	Needs Met		Where & What Needs Met In Each Zone
A	50%	If 0%	**The Site (Zones 0-5):** aim for *at least 50%* of needs to be met within this zone e.g. food needs, social needs, security, energy, etc.
B	25%	50%	**The Neighbourhood / Community:** at least 75% of needs from Zones A + B e.g. more food, energy and social needs, etc.
C	12%	25%	**The Municipality:** ideally approx 87% of needs from zones A-C e.g. work needs, most energy, food, education, most leisure, health etc.
D	6%	12%	**The Bioregion:** ideally approx 93% of needs from zones A-D e.g. construction needs, higher education and research, some leisure and energy, specialist health. And if 0% of needs can be met in Zone A, for example for someone who is very ill, 87% of needs are met by A-D.
E	3%	6%	**The Nation or State** in US/Canada /Australia, etc: at least 96% of needs from zones A-E.
F	2%	3%	**The Global region** (e.g. W Europe): >98% of needs from zones A-F.
G	1%	2%	**Gaia / the Globe**, the planet as a whole: >99% of needs from A-G.
Which leaves up to 1% of needs being met from cosmic sources of supply!			

The same zoning system can be applied of course to the relationships and elements in designing a naturally health creating lifestyle.

In the permaculture courses I teach, this zoning system helps people gain a sense of context, for their life beyond the home, and gain a meaningful sense of what sustainability means in practice. It gives permaculture's Zones 0 to 5 a context and a connection with the locality, the bioregion and beyond, so that you can see the local-to-global picture as a whole.

This is a flexible model, to be used as a rough guide. However, after years of work on local to national sustainability projects, and grassroots permaculture, the figures it provides for the proportion of needs to be met from within each band of Zones are practical, easy to understand and generally realistic. It works well as a practical guide

for people wanting to look at how to transform their impacts by focusing on how they meet their needs – or more simply, how and where they spend their energy and money.

Basically, if the local to bioregional levels (Zones A to D) are sorted, most of the rest is. So, if 85-95%+ of your needs are met within the BioRegion you are living a pretty sustainable life. This should include social, education and leisure needs, food, energy and other essentials. For example, until relatively recently in building our homes and towns, virtually all our building needs were met at the local or bioregional level, and led to regionally distinct styles of building. It's one area that could shift relatively easily, both in the design and the performance of buildings if we evolve our thinking, learning from the excellent examples of ecological design and building that already exist.[1] Needs for information, higher education, business and social networks, research and so on are other areas that are very well met at the bioregional level.

In terms of Transition Town[2] thinking for example, our energy needs are currently met from remote regional or national power generation, through large power stations and the national grid. A transition to sustainable energy systems means creating a balanced mix of renewable energy generation in Zones A (home / on-site generation), B (neighbourhood / near-site generation), C (local / municipal generation) and D (regional generation) with the proportion of generation within these zones depending on the particular situation. (Plus much higher efficiency of course!)

Thinking in terms of these zones helps to change your consumer impacts in a significant and positive way. Thinking about diet runs from Zone G to Zone 00, the one zone not yet mentioned. ***Zone 00*** is the person, and in many ways *this is a book about design in Zone 00* – one of the first. Diet has huge implications for so many aspects of lifestyle, within your living space and with major implications across Zones A to G.

For example, humanity's use of just five crops – wheat, maize, rice, soya and potatoes – to supply more than 50% of its global food consumption is directly linked to the typical diets people eat. All these mono-crops, apart from some types of maize (which is deeeee-licious raw), need to be cooked (though you can sprout some rice and wheat). If you change what you eat and how you obtain it, you can change the inter-connected chain of effects in all these zones, from Zone 00 to Zone 5, and from Zone A to Zone G. Think about that and then intelligently design some positive changes to benefit yourself, others and nature/the earth as a whole.

An eat more raw diet is essentially a matter of designing the designer. And as all design comes from the designer (Zone 00) it seems particularly sensible to design for health and productivity in that part of the overall system. 'Real Health' is about the design of Zone 00 and its interconnections out through all the zones from to Zones 0 to 5, and from Zones A to G.

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[1] See www.sustainablehousing.org.uk or www.aecb.net if you are interested in green building and design. Also www.carbonlite.org.uk if you are interested in designing ultra low energy buildings.

[2] This model can be of value to the Transition Town movement, which is a good focus for communities responding practically to climate change & sustainability issues i.e. for considering the 'energy descent plan'. A need in the Transition movement is for adaptable, replicable models for creating and growing local social enterprises that are focused on a) energy efficiency and renewable supply (ESCo's), b) low carbon refurb and sustainable building, and c) local food production and distribution – but that's another book.