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Sustainable Community Development

BSC-Environmental Management 322

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Moderated by Dr. **Ann Dale**

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Day 1: Sustainable Community Development: A Definition?

Day 2: Globalization and Sustainable Community Development?

Day 3: Governance and Sustainable Community Development?

Dialogue Day 1: Sustainable Community Development: A Definition?

Question 1: What does a Sustainable Community look like?

Ann Dale

Welcome to our first e-dialogue as a class together. I am pleased to introduce Dr. Jenny Onyx, one of Australia's leading scholars in social capital and community development, and Melissa Edwards, a lecturer from the University of Technology at Sydney.

Jenny Onyx

Hi, I must say it is a great pleasure to be here at beautiful Royal Roads.

Melissa Edwards

Hello everyone, I am Melissa Edwards from the University of Technology, Australia. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for hosting me during this e-dialogue. I look forward to engaging with you all for the generation of new and insightful information regarding sustainable community development.

Ann Dale

Our first question is, what does a sustainable community look like? Perhaps some of the class can respond to this and Jenny and Melissa will reply. Or put another way; is Toronto a sustainable community when it ships its garbage to the United States?

Dave Warner

I think a truly sustainable community should be closed loop. Therefore, not shipping garbage to the US as Toronto does.

Matthew Paisley

Dave, perhaps the shipment to Michigan of Toronto's waste does exemplify a closed loop - but perhaps simply on a scale larger than just Toronto itself. Perhaps the garbage dumping involves more aspects of sustainability that we realize - aspects merely the environmental.

Dan Sonmor

The way I see and understand it, a sustainable community is one that does not withdraw from the environment any more than it can put back. As well, it is one that does not degrade the natural environment from its original condition.

Joanne Roach

I prepared the following earlier today. What does a sustainable community look like? The following would be evident in a sustainable community:

- signs of prosperity and absence of poverty
- clean natural and urban areas
- low vehicle to person ratio
- no urban sprawl
- the recycling facility is bigger than the landfill
- healthy ecosystems and watersheds
- enough local food to feed the population
- manageable (zero?) population growth
- access to health care and financial support for wellness
- use of renewable resources, very little or no mining of resources

It sounds a bit Utopian, but basically in a sustainable community, the way I see it, humans can meet their needs, but not at the expense of other humans or the environment.

Lori Marchand

A sustainable community is one that meets its needs without impairing its ability to meet the needs of future generation, again no shipping garbage to the United States. However, doesn't the USA also ship garbage to Ontario?

Jennifer Maxwell

Here are some thoughts on what sustainable communities look like:

- a place that provides a good quality of life for people. Quality of life includes social, economic, ecological, psychological and spiritual aspects.
- governance is open, fair and democratic
- optimizes key resources and understands the stocks of human, natural and economic resources and their finite quantity.
- maintains scale and capacity where the natural and built environments are not overdeveloped, overbuilt, overused, or overpopulated. Sustainable communities have mechanisms for recognizing signs of stress and are able to adapt to avoid environmental, economic or social disasters.
- adopts a systems approach to create and maintain harmony between all of the living and non-living elements of the community.
- supports natural, human and economic life cycles.
- responsive and proactive in mitigating hazards to community well being and maximizing opportunities.
- values human, economic and natural diversity.

- values culture and history of place.

Reference: Geis, D. and Kutzmark, T. Developing Sustainable Communities: The Future is Now.

<http://www.sustainable.doe.gov/freshstart/articles/future.htm#envision>.

Dave Ewanishin

To start, maybe a definition of what a sustainable community might be: "People in a sustainable neighborhood find "win-win-win" practices that avoid harming the economy, the environment, and the community." So in short, even though they are shipping the garbage to the states, in an indirect way it is not a sustainable practice- they have money leaving the community.

Shannon Pagotto

I thought a sustainable community is one that has the 3 major aspects of sustainability balanced and balanced well. One that is socially healthy (i.e., suicide, employment is low etc.), the economy is happening, but not going to crazy where fast money = fast problems but one that looks after it's ecological interests as well. I can't think of any that would make a good example but Toronto.... no way. They have tons of social problems- look at their air and they can't even contain the capacity of their garbage!

Lori Marchand

Starting with a definition, this one caught my attention. According to "Urban Use and Land Policy" (http://eco.gn.apc.org/resguide/2_.html), a sustainable community could be defined as a settlement which:

1. has a stable, healthy population.
2. understands that humans are only one of many life forms which share a sustainable region.
3. is a population with a strong sense of place, history, and global responsibility.
4. is empowered to guide an ecologically regulated economy based on the sustainable harvest and conservation of local natural resources.
5. shares both its surplus production and culture with other communities and regions.
6. has a collective ethic of conserving its culture and natural resources for future generations.
7. does not export pollution to other regions.
8. does not base its affluence on the draining of other regions.
9. reduces to a minimum income leakages which leave the community.
10. gains fullest possible value from harvest and manufacturing of natural resources through use of locally controlled and adapted appropriate technologies

11. is committed to the goal of providing equal opportunity for a high quality of life for all.

Jennifer Black

A sustainable community must be able to support itself, drawing from its own resources as well as replenishing its resources.

Shipping garbage out of the area suggests that the community cannot support its citizens.

Melissa Edwards

An interesting way to begin an answer to this type of question is to consider where are the community boundaries (if any).

Cassandra Caunce

Closed loop was definitely the first thing to my mind as well. But then I got to thinking that may not be entirely possible from an industrial perspective. You would need to define the boundaries before you could define what the loop encompasses.

Ann Dale

With respect to closed loop, it may be that communities should be a closed loop with respect to waste, but open in other ways?

Toni Bragnalo

David Suzuki introduced a theory on the nature of things, called Biomimicry. Where we could learn a lot from natural cycles and try to incorporate the same ideas into our society. Everything in nature is self-sufficient, there is no such thing as "waste" one creature's waste is used by another part of the system...like Dave Warner was saying, a closed loop system.

Jenny Onyx

I have problems with the notion of "closed loop". Particularly in relation to social capital, it is very important to have open systems. Open systems are not closed, but contain porous boundaries.

Jennifer Maxwell

Jenny, is it possible to have some open systems and some closed systems in a sustainable community? The earth is a closed system in terms of matter, but open in terms of energy.

Melissa Edwards

One of the fundamental problems with the closed loop system is that there still needs to be intercommunication between "Closed-loop" communities. This is perhaps one of the critical roles for social capital in terms of bridging the gaps between 'closed-loop' communities. Conceptualizations of the sustainable community need to make careful consideration of the benefits and costs of each imperative.

Cassandra Caunce

Some components, such as water, energy and food streams, could be closed loop but I wouldn't want to have a social system that was "closed". Diversity is just important to the success of any system as waste control.

Dan Sonmor

When speaking of a community, I think you have to break it down into sections. The first community is the household, progressing larger into neighborhoods, cities, provinces, countries, continents, and eventually the world. After all, it is a global economy.

Joanne Roach

I agree with you here Dan, but I will take it a step further. While it is important to keep the big picture, I believe that the most important changes start at the site or individual level. To put it another way, if we tried to come up with a global solution we probably would go crazy. But if we start at the lowest common denominator and build from there, it won't be so daunting a task.

Dan Sonmor

Joanne, right on. Small steps can lead to big change.

Toni Bragnalo

Joanne and Dan, I believe individual action is a great starting ground. Often we as the consumers don't realize the power we truly have over big businesses. I know in our community everyone is always talking down Bowater (our pulp and paper mill), but I think if you're using paper products, and more so wasting paper products, then you're causing the demand for the company to stay in business and are as much at fault.

Lynne Magee

Great points Toni - when you live in a rural area, you can't have all the amenities in a compact group within walking distance. People in rural communities, the "Heartland" in BC provide a significant proportion of the provincial economy through their resources and industry, yet they certainly don't receive the same types of services as city folk.

Cassandra Caunce

I whole-heartedly agree with you Joanne. Start with changing the values of the individual. Educate them and make them aware of the problems at hand. Make it personal and show them the benefits of the changes needed. Only then will the global changes start to fall into place.

Joanne Roach

Cassandra, I think this also applies to actions. Sometimes people don't realize the power they are exercising by simply making a compost pile or doing more sophisticated things like reusing wastewater.

Lori Marchand

Dan, in light of the emerging global economy, the concept of the sustainable community seems somewhat paradoxical, doesn't it?

Dave Warner

"2. Understands that humans are only one of many life forms which share a sustainable region." I really like this point from Lori's post. I think all too often that when talking sustainability humans dictate their needs over the other life forms. Human social usually wins out over the environmental aspect. I believe in a sustainable community (large scale) that organisms should be equal to humans.

Lynne Magee

When we are looking at transport of contaminants, through air or water, we know they can affect areas well beyond the municipal boundaries where they are produced. A community has to consider the effects of their actions on a much larger scale than the municipal line.

Matthew Paisley

I wonder if we would even recognize a truly sustainable community if we saw one. There seems to be many definitions, and we seem to pick aspects of each one to suit our argument and needs. I actually liked the definition from the Brundtland Commission - indicating that a sustainable community was one in which there was a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, direction of investments, orientation of technological development, and institutional change, was made consistent with future as well as present needs. It doesn't elaborate on human needs, but leaves many doors open in order to apply sustainability to individual situations.

Lori Marchand

Matthew, actually I thought that was the whole point. Maureen Hart responded to that question by saying that "There are as many different ways to create a vision as there are communities that have done so. What is most important is that the vision be created by the entire community: the well-to-do and those living in poverty, business owners and union workers, young and old."

Jenny Onyx

Lori raises the dilemma of sustainable communities in a global context. When we think global, we cannot talk meaningfully about "community", at least if we consider communities of place. So how do you define community?

Jennifer Maxwell

Jenny, good question. My first thought is that communities define themselves...

Dave Ewanishin

Jenny, the biggest problem here is if you want to think globally or localized which leads to other complications such as globalization

Ann Dale

Matthew, the Brundtland Commission is a good definition, but we have no consensus on what constitutes needs. Some people would argue they need a 10,000 square foot house. There are, of course, fundamental needs, clean air, water, food and shelter. But what about other needs that sustain us, such as relationships, connections, sharing knowledge?

Lori Marchand

Ann, but what about other needs that sustain us, such as relationships, connections, sharing knowledge? I thought that Shuler had a pretty comprehensive list, including my favorite -conviviality! Douglas Schuler - a network and community activist based in Seattle, Washington Author of New Community Networks, Wired for Change.

Six core values that are necessary for all communities

1. culture and conviviality
2. education; strong democracy
3. health and well-being
4. economic opportunity
5. equity, and sustainability
6. information and communication

Different communities may go about addressing these core values in different ways.

Matthew Paisley

Ann, you're right that this definition is lacking some of the more intangible aspects to our survival. Perhaps this is where our subjective nature is able to glean from the definition, and apply it to personal aspects that need to be addressed...

Shannon Pagotto

I think it's a question of personal values. I think I "need" to show my kids the importance of loving the land but other people "need" to buy their kids a cell phone. What's important to some, might not be important to others.

Lynne Magee

For most of us, what seems to be important is money, not the value of the biosphere to our continued life.

Matthew Paisley

Shannon, Is this not why achieving sustainability has not been so readily adopted?

Cassandra Counce

How can you achieve sustainability if no one can even agree on what it means to begin with?

Lori Marchand

That is a great question Matt, I have also wondered if they have suddenly emerged in popular culture, or have I just more aware of them, and statistically, where are they most dominant and successful?

Shannon Pagotto

Matthew, I think that we as a society often get too caught up in measuring success by material ownership (the car we drive, or the house we own) and we don't think sustainability when we measure this way. I think if we started measuring success with our mental, emotional and physical well being we could shift the attitude to more accepting.

Lynne Magee

By the time we have a common definition, the for action will be past. We have to do what we can, what we believe to be right now and try to change the attitudes of the people.

Dan Sonmor

For most of us, what seems to be important is money, not the value of the biosphere to our continued life.....Lynne... Is money that important or just a necessary tool that we need to live in today's world? I see it as a tool to use to get what you require, be it a cell phone or a sustainable community.

Murray Ball

I think we need to look at governance. A sustainable community will have a government structure that can set limits on ecological, economic and social impacts. Governance also has to reach beyond the local community. Here is an interesting view from a quote by Vandana Shiva: "Strengthen the United Nations. The UN is a symbol of global governance for confronting the dominance of private interests and the private sector. Sustainable development does not result from profit seeking alone – it is a public sector concern and a global one".

Matthew Paisley

A sustainable community is one that is able to meet its current needs, while ensuring that adequate resources are available for future generation. a better quality of life for their residents is sought, while maintaining nature's ability to function over time. social, ecological, and economic imperatives are all resolved through this.

Dave Warner

In thinking about it I find it hard to have a clear cut community. The image in my mind when stating the community would be closed-loop was of a small community hidden away (or just cutoff from outside influences) in the hills that were self-reliant. However, I realize that short of people living in a bubble like the biodome or something that this is impossible.

Jenny Onyx

You see, it is not easy to think seriously about community. Usually community is taken to refer to a group of people who identify themselves as a community but also who have some sort of real connection with each other. I see that interconnectedness as crucial to the possibility of sustainable development

Jennifer Black

So how do you define community? A community is defined by physical, economic and social boundaries. Probably most important in defining a community is the social boundaries in which a group of people comes together sharing resources and sharing lifestyles.

Dan Sonmor

Jenny, not only for sustainability, but for survival.

Dave Warner

"A community is defined by physical, economic and social boundaries." The problem with this is that they could be different for each, thus ending up with three different boundaries.

Cassandra Counce

Another thing that needs to be taken into consideration is that boundaries will be different because values will be different as well. Just look at the various religions out there and what they feel is important to a community and day-to-day life.

Jennifer Black

A community is defined by physical, economic and social boundaries." Dave Warner - The problem with this is that they could be different for each, thus ending up with three different boundaries. Dave, I think this is my point. A community is defined when all these boundaries are shared by a group of people.

Joanne Roach

We could probably debate all day about the definitions of needs and communities, and we can probably whittle it down to some basics that we can agree on, but I have to think that it is really the earth that will have the last word on which (and how many) of the needs of a community that it can support.

Dave Warner

Good point Joanne.

Cassandra Counce

I think the earth is already sending us signals on that front. Anyone check out the hurricane frequency lately? Interesting....

Dave Ewanishin

It seems to me that the industrialized world has the "economic" boundary down pat....now for incorporating the other two aspects...

Question 2: How does the rural-urban divide affect communities?

Ann Dale

We heard about closed and open loops; diversity; governance; interconnected; biodiversity and conviviality. We'll pick these threads up in the third question. Now to the second question. How does the rural-urban divide affect communities? Lori's list raised two points that pertain to this question-- a sustainable community does not export pollution to other regions and does not base its affluence on the drawing of other regions?

Toni Bragnalo

The more spread out a community is the more resources are required to support the population. When people choose to live in a rural setting, infrastructure needs to be in place for a larger geographical area, rather than having everything nicely condensed. The distance of travel required also boosts the number of hours spent on the road and increases the need for a personal vehicle and, as we all know, pollution created from the transportation industry has a whole long list of negative affects on our environment.

Cassandra Cauce

Toni, I'm not sure I'm convinced on that just yet. Those who live on farms are in rural settings and can be self-sustaining to a certain degree. That's the way it was for 100's of years. That could still go on today...

Dave Warner

I think generally people like city planners, councils etc. would like to think that their community ends at the urban edge, but in reality it includes the rural areas as the urban will depend on the rural for many products. Likewise the urban can transport products (air pollution) into the rural.

Lori Marchand

I hadn't really thought about the rural urban divide before, and so I thought that this was a good synopsis of the issue for me. "Rural areas have long been a source of food, raw materials and labor for cities. So too, are cities places of opportunity for rural dwellers, providing markets for agricultural products, specialized services and sources of temporary employment and shelter". In other words, we are interdependent, symbiotic if you will.

Reference: Urban Rural Population, 95 Canada 72,
<http://home.worldonline.nl/~mvp/world/wurban.htm>

Murray Bal

Rural communities are based on PLACE whereas urban communities are more likely based on ideas or opportunities. We are compelled to deal with people on a personal level at the same time as any formal relationship in rural areas because we know and deal with the same person in many ways outside of the formal relationship. According to Onyx and Bullen, this is indicative of high social capital. Social capital does form around urban communities and networks, but it is more difficult to establish these networks when proximity is not a defining factor. Following the cake analogy, urban social capital has a different flavor from rural social capital. This may mirror the different strengths of each community. Rural communities are adept at rallying around common needs in a crisis. Urban communities may be better at developing a range of options.

Joanne Roach

I think that I took a different approach to this question. I thought of it in terms of what is different in urban and rural populations. How does the rural-urban divide affect communities? My first instinct on this question is to say that people living a rural lifestyle could be closer to nature or more in touch with environmental considerations than urbanites. Nature might be in their back yard, along with their septic field, their garden and their rainwater collection barrel. The urban lifestyle is more removed from nature. There is less natural green space, and wastes are flushed, compacted, thrown out and forgotten. The differences in lifestyle and perception between urban and rural populations can result in the two groups having very different priorities; for example environmentalism vs. consumption and convenience. Groups with different priorities are bound to have conflicts over issues.

Jenny Onyx

I have been visiting small remote communities in Australia, in Canada and in Sweden. The thing that has surprised and worried me is that they are all suffering the same

decline...loss of jobs, loss of services, young people leaving town, despair...much of it driven by global economic trends and the global market which is driving down commodity process. These communities are struggling to survive. In Australia it is generally considered that a community must be at least 10,000 populations to have any hope. So what does that mean???

Matthew Paisley

Jenny, as communities shrink, their needs will change as well. There should be no compromise in their ideals of how to be sustainable, as this may be fundamental to their existence - simply how they go about achieving it.

Joanne Roach

Jenny, your comments have got me thinking about a conference I went to recently in Cumberland on Vancouver Island called Saving Small Towns; Low Impact development solutions. The keynote addressed touched on the character and defining properties of small towns and used Carmel, California, as an example of a small town that has prospered because it was unwilling to develop the way that cities do, using traditional development and infrastructure strategies. The property values and tourist volumes are now very high in Carmel because it is a small town, a desirable place to live. A place where you can call your kids in for supper from the front porch.

Matthew Paisley

The property values and tourist volumes are now very high in Carmel because it is a small town, a desirable place to live. A place where you can call your kids in for supper from the front porch. Isn't that how Las Vegas started? I recently went on vacation there and (thanks to Ann) simply marveled at the fact that there are virtually no resources to support the community, other than the obvious, and that absolutely every commodity must be brought in. Is tourism a valid means of maintaining a sustainable community?

Jenny Onyx

Joanne, "The property values and tourist volumes are now very high in Carmel because it is a small town, a desirable place to live. A place where you can call your kids in for supper from the front porch."... I have seen this phenomena before. It seems marvelous until you realize that local people, particularly young people, are pushed out of the housing market and have to leave town. High property values disadvantages the poor.

Dave Ewanishin

Feeling the stress of an industrializing society, many small towns turned to industrial recruitment – trying to become a city rather than a town – as a means of survival. Others have tried to capture natural advantages in climate or landscapes to become destinations for tourists from the cities. Those near the growing industrial centers "rented out their communities" as bedrooms for those who are willing to commute to the city. But, most rural communities in agricultural areas have not been successful in their efforts to regain prosperity – or even to survive.

Matthew Paisley

Increased urbanization is putting more and more pressure on the rural areas of the planet. Changes in economic and social circumstances, new technologies, mass migration - all contribute the urban spread. Increasingly, I believe that the divide is less distinct - that there is more of a "urban" zone, and as such must be treated as a transition area, downplaying divisions.

Lori Marchand

Matthew, that zone is known as the peri-urban zone. "Urban-rural linkages are particularly intense in the peri-urban interface, characterized by constant flux, complex social structures, fragmented institutions and shifting locus". Different policy solutions are clearly needed for peri-urban areas to those advanced for rural or urban areas.

Ann Dale

Matthew, good response. So, even though communities differ in size (scale) the same principles apply?

Dan Sonmor

I remember growing up on a farm and that I always wanted to go to town. Conversely, the town kids always wanted to come out to the farm to ride horses, etc. I guess the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence.

Cassandra Caunce

My point was it would be really difficult to have an urban centre without its rural counterpart producing food. I really wouldn't want to live in high-density housing with a cow or two.

Toni Bragnalo

Cassandra, I agree, there are benefits for rural areas, they have a purpose, my thoughts were more toward those whose lives are in the "city" yet who's homes are in the "country".

Lynne Magee

Great points Toni - when you live in a rural area, you can't have all the amenities in a compact group within walking distance. People in rural communities, the "Heartland" in BC provide a significant proportion of the provincial economy through their resources and industry, yet they certainly don't receive the same types of services as city folk.

Jennifer Maxwell

To get a handle on this discussion, I have compiled a preliminary (though not complete) list of differences between rural and urban communities:

- access to resources/services (health, education, water)
- economic diversity
- human diversity
- rural – more closely linked to the land
- population density
- local governance structure and capacity differences

These differences create a divide between rural and urban communities, though their interdependencies are crucial to the sustainability of all. There are flows between rural and urban communities of:

- people
- production
- information
- commodities
- capital/income
- natural resources
- waste and pollution

References: Satterthwaite, D. and Tacoli¹, C. . Rural–Urban Transformations And The Links Between Urban and Rural Development. World Bank.

<http://www.worldbank.org/urban/urbanruralseminar/papers/rural-urban-transform.pdf>.
<http://www.id.org/insights/insights/insights-issu01-art00.html>

Lynne Magee

There are definitely differences in access to health care in rural areas. Not only isn't there a population base to support expensive diagnostic equipment, doctors don't want to come to small towns and live the rural lifestyle.

Ann Dale

Does there have to be a divide?

Dave Warner

Does there have to be a divide? No they could be considered the same community.

Jennifer Maxwell

Ann, no, but it takes integrated systems at higher levels of government - and they can't even integrate themselves (speaking from experience!).

Shannon Pagotto

Ann, I think that's where I'm stuck. Living in Yellowknife with a population of 18,000 I think we are both. We have urban values and we have rural values but both exist together.

Ann Dale

Dave, is there a way to reconnect rural and urban communities? Think about what we are doing here today?

Dave Warner

Ann, I think they can be reconnected by development of Sustainable Community Planning. The urban areas need to realize and integrate in there planning the needs and affects they have on the rural.

Dave Ewanishin

I grew up in a small town outside of Calgary and the way it has survived was to bring in things such as tourist and other industries. As in any community, it should look to the future and plan to keep it marketable to the people with jobs, lifestyle, etc.

Dan Sonmor

Although the physical division is there, the mental or spiritual divide does not have to exist. You see any division lines dropping real fast in times of crisis, but in normal day to day activity, the lines seem to appear. It really does not make any sense.

Matthew Paisley

I like what you had to say, Dan. The spiritual, mental commonalities may be what is able to bridge these differences.

Lori Marchand

Ann, many regions and communities seem to be aware of it as an unsustainable element and are attempting to reduce/eliminate it from both ends. The Great Plains Initiative is trying to bridge the gap from the rural perspective, while provinces such as Ontario have their own initiatives in place stemming from an urban recognition that the present divide is not sustainable. Great Plains Institute for Sustainable Development, Promoting a sustainable future for the great plains communities.

http://www.gpisd.net/Programs/renewing_the_countryside.htm.

The Ontario Rural Council Rural Campaign

http://www.ruralonline.on.ca/uploaddocuments/d10+Case_for_Campaign_Dec_02.PDF

Matthew Paisley

Does there have to be a divide...perhaps not. With communication and understanding on the parts of planners from both sides of the fence, a common perspective on the development of the urban, rural, and regional areas can be achieved. This can all be part of a national economic and social policy. This divide also does not exist geographically - within each area will be economic and demographic zones which must also be linked.

Murray Ball

Yes there does have to be a divide. Rural areas are more susceptible to the vagaries of the "markets" and of nature for that matter, as they are often dependant on only one or two economic niches. There are more options and more opportunities in larger centers.

Jennifer Black

I like Lori's statement that the urban community relies on the rural and the rural on the urban. It made me think, could one survive without the other?

As mentioned, the rural provides necessities to the urban, such as food. I think Cassandra mentioned that people have been living on self-sustaining farms for many years. So, it appears that the urban part of the community is dependent upon the rural. So there are interdependencies within a community.

Matthew Paisley

Jennifer, what may be necessary is a decentralization of urbanization. A conglomerate of smaller linked communities that may make up a larger entity may be more sustainable than a Mega city importing all that it needs from the rural surrounding - both human and non-human resources

Dan Sonmor

Matthew, this would be good, as long as there is not the burden of extra layers of government. We all know that there is too much of it already.

Dave Warner

Dan, when I think of decentralization of urbanization I think of Seattle where the downtown is becoming more and more blurred. There are increasingly more "downtowns". The result I see is bad rush hour traffic heading in every direction. I think for decentralization to work people need to live and work in the same community.

Jenny Onyx

There is often perceived to be a divide. One thing we have not really looked at yet is the levels of human capital in rural areas. Does the community have access to the resources of skills and knowledge and the capacity for entrepreneurial activity? And if

they don't then they are behind the eight ball when it comes to re-inventing themselves economically.

Lori Marchand

Jenny, not to be a downer, but won't that exacerbate as a global economy emerges? And won't the divide as well?

Shannon Pagotto

Jenny, we are seeing this now in the Northwest Territories with the possible building of a pipeline down the Mackenzie Valley. Community capacity cannot keep up the work required. People are untrained and those that are can't pass the drug test. This major project is in their backyard and communities can't keep up. How do they expect to get ahead economically?

Melissa Edwards

The primary concern occurs here in that we are conceptualizing the divide. Some of you have made mention the urban or the peri-urban zone. If we reconsider this question considering that both are communities within the same global biosphere then perhaps we can commence with the development of solutions that seek to sustain both the urban and the rural through a positive flow between the interconnected nodes.

Jennifer Maxwell

Ideas for connecting rural and urban communities. In one of my previous posts, I stated that we need integrated government. Well, maybe that's my bias since I work for government. A more community-based approach could start small by rural and urban communities in close proximity to each other building partnerships to bridge social and economic gaps.

Melissa Edwards

Jennifer, I agree, once again it is important to look at the 'communities of practice' within both urban and rural communities and facilitate communication as a bridge for the development of deeper institutional ties.

Toni Bragnalo

Jenny, I think all too often the “entrepreneurial activity” consists of using the natural resources of the area for profit, which usually can’t be sustained and degrades the environment.

Ann Dale

I know about a on-line biodiversity project between scientists here in Canada and a small community in South America. The people there were given a computer lab and digital cameras, they put pictures of the 'critters' on-line, and our scientists identify them and help them build up their database, without ever visiting the area.

Cassandra Caunce

I think there should be a divide but not in the sense we might think it - it's more of a fuzzy divide really. The divide needs to be there as both the rural and urban regions of a community have different needs and requirements (ie. septic vs. sewer). The regions will have impacts on one another so there will be a degree of interconnectedness as well. Did that make sense?

Dave Warner

I thought I had, was if there isn't some sort of divide kept in planning will we not end up with urban sprawl taking over the rural areas. The Agricultural Land Reserve in BC is a decent means of combating this.

Dave Ewanishin

In the sense of "divide" I don't believe there has to be one. Look at any major city (as Matt said), it will have little communities within a larger one, although it is still all considered urbanized.

Jennifer Maxwell

Shannon and Toni speak to one aspect of the rural-urban divide which is that often economic activity undertaken in rural areas only benefits the community in providing jobs - most of the profits go to the cities or other countries.

Murray Ball

NASA in rural Saskatchewan. Two doctors of physics from Berkley University have set up shop in a very small (~300 People) rural village in northern Saskatchewan, and brought their contracts with them. Overcoming the divide between communities of "place" and communities of ideas will mean more than social capital in supporting rural communities.

Lori Marchand

Ann, how does bioregionalism fit into all this?

Ann Dale

What about Mel's idea of interconnected nodes? Is there a way that computer technology could ease the pressures on urban areas?

Cassandra Counce

Ann, absolutely! Look at what we are doing now? We're all sharing ideas from all across Canada. Learning online....

Ann Dale

Cassandra, yes, it makes sense, the interconnectedness means that there is really is no divide, the urban is dependent upon the rural and incidentally other global rural areas, and as **Jenny Onyx** has pointed out, the rural is dependent upon the urban for resources of a different kind.

Lori Marchand

Ann, re: interconnected nodes, I definitely think so, I think the notion of community engagement free public access "community networks" are critical. Community Networking Information <http://www.scn.org/ip/commnet/info.html> Schuler says: "I can't really imagine an empowered, democratic community that didn't have a free (or nearly free) public access community network. Communication is key to almost everything that humans do and we need to shape the new technology in ways that support democratic communication."

Joanne Roach

My sister in law and her husband are active and successful in Internet related industry and they live in a concrete tower in downtown Vancouver, near their office. They told me a while ago that they are just waiting for the technology to advance a little more and be a bit more reliable so that they can move to a smaller community and a more desirable (to them) lifestyle and work from home. I think that this kind of migration could happen as the virtual world develops.

Dan Sonmor

Ann, we have some communities in northern Manitoba that are supplying top quality education to the citizens without having to transport them to Winnipeg. It eases the burden on the accommodations in the city as well as the stress on the individuals that would otherwise have to leave their community and, in a sense, security. So, I guess I am saying - YES.

Ann Dale

Dan, couldn't one live in a rural area and electronically work in an urban community?

Dave Ewanishin

More and more people are working from home now than ever because of computer technology. Now I get it!!

Lynne Magee

Ann, theoretically possible - although in many of the smaller communities in BC if you don't have high speed internet access it may not be viable.

Cassandra Counce

Dave, now try and convince those corporations run by folks from the "old school" that working from home is not only good for the environment but good for the mental health of the employee. I work with dinosaurs here and my proposal only received a bunch of giggles and "keep dreaming, kid"

Lori Marchand

Dan, I think that is another form of divide in the limelight right now isn't it? Trying to bridge the digital/rural gap?

Jennifer Maxwell

Lori, yes, I was wondering what effect bridging the "digital divide" would have on the rural-urban divide and creating more sustainable communities. My thinking is that it is all in how you use the technology. We also must not forget the environmental impacts of technological waste as well.

Dan Sonmor

Ann, of course. But it depends on the nature of the work. Not all careers would lend themselves to tele-working.

Jennifer Maxwell

What impacts would that have on social capital?

Cassandra Caunce

Jennifer, I think if everyone started working from home, you would end up with a whole lot of depressed people out there. We are meant to live and interact in communities. We need social interaction with people other than our families.

Melissa Edwards

Cassandra, exactly, and it is this reconciliation between imperatives that creates a sustainable model. It is not essential for each imperative to always have equal value. One can be of greater significance, such as tele-commuting reducing the environmental cost. Yet this can then be facilitated by social capital development within the de-urbanized community.

Dave Warner

Could this not lead to increased urban sprawl though?

Matthew Paisley

Perhaps not urban sprawl, but a better distribution of people, and resources.

Ann Dale

Lori, I think that we may achieve sustainable communities with respect to governance if we adopted a bioregional approach combined with an ecological footprint analysis? What do you think?

Lori Marchand

I think that both are critical, the former more important in urban communities (re-connectedness), and the latter obviously more of a serious priority in affluent countries like ours that represent 5% of the population but use % of the resources. If people aren't asked to question if they really need one television per room, it's not necessarily something that would occur to ask themselves. I really liked how NOVA in their 'What's up with the weather' documentary, listed how much Carbon was emitted for regular household uses like making toast. It really hit home, public awareness of tangible ways to make changes is needed to (empowerment).

Dave Ewanishin

On top of working from home, companies are building their head offices away from downtown areas near where most employees would live.

Ann Dale

Dave, no, precisely the opposite, you don't have to commute by car, if you were networked to your downtown office. Thus, e-commuting reduces transportation demand. Try and convince your office to allow everyone to work from home one day a week, and then, compute the savings in GHG emissions by not using transportation and inform the government.

Dave Warner

Ann, what I mean is that generally I feel most people want to live in houses away from others on decent sized lots. So, take Vancouver's population of 1-2 million people, give each of them an acre or so of land and we will see the destruction of a lot of forested land for their homes. Add to that the need for electrical, gas, water, etc. lines and their production and you may create a whole different problem.

Lynne Magee

Dave, why can't they live in areas that are not suitable for forestry or agriculture? Would the services need to be provided for them, or could they rely on themselves for alternate energy sources, a private well, an onsite sewage system?

Toni Bragnalo

Ann I love your idea, you've actually got the makings of a good "clean air" project there. I'm going to bring that up at work, we could send out a community challenge --we've had bike to work week, why not work from home week!

Lynne Magee

The most compelling argument I have heard for working from home. Thanks Ann.

Cassandra Caunce

Lynne, but for a lot of older business, you need to talk in \$\$ not tonnes CO2. I've been down this road and it wasn't easy. There are issues related worker safety (is your desk safe?), theft and confidentiality (what if your PC is stolen?) and the list goes on.

Melissa Edwards

The solution of de-urbanization does not necessarily imply greater levels of the web of government. Instead, it makes an appeal to the resurgence of the civil society. The question to consider again links with the idea of social capital and if a stronger civil society fostered by de-urbanized communities creates greater social cohesion and decreases pressures for institutional governance?

Jenny Onyx

The question of tourism....I have mixed feelings about that. Certainly many communities have been able to survive by turning to tourism. However I have also heard them complain that they are forced to lose their own essential identity to do so. And then of course they are very susceptible to the vagaries of the tourist market, like SARS etc.

Matthew Paisley

Perhaps the loss of a previous identity may be necessary in the evolution to a new one - and if into a new and sustainable environment, who can complain (at least on the outside) ?

Joanne Roach

I tend to agree with you Matt, but I was trying to highlight the low impact development approach that this community has taken. With a united effort they have put hard a fast boundaries on development so that they don't outgrow their resources or damage those that remain. I'm sorry I am not describing it too well.

Murray Ball

The solution of de-urbanization does not necessarily imply greater levels of the web of government. Instead, it makes an appeal to the resurgence of the civil society. The question to consider again links with the idea of social capital and if a stronger civil society fostered by de-urbanized communities creates greater social cohesion and decreases pressures for institutional governance? My experience in a rural lifestyle doesn't give me any hope for reduced need for institutionalized government.

Melissa Edwards

If bridging this digital divide is one means for creating a node between geographical locations, then what implications does this imply for each of the major stakeholders?

Shannon Pagotto

Melissa, it means my boss would get a healthier employee because I am able to work from home and use that extra "commute" time to spend with my family. Taking them to soccer, or baseball. A lot of families don't often see each other until 7:00 pm when they get home from work, then they make supper and kiss their kids good-night. I think if I were to say to my boss that I would like to work from home and the benefits to you are:

- I'll be happier and healthier
- I'll be more focused in my own home without office distractions
- the space we save on my office can be used for someone else. He'd be happy to do it, as long as I produced that is!

Ann Dale

Wow, de-urbanization, re-connecting the urban-rural divide by eliminating the digital divide, interconnected networked communities.

Question 3: **Are there generic principles for sustainable community development?**

Ann Dale

Okay, moving on to the next question, are there generic principles for sustainable community development?

Dave Warner

I think from the definition Matt posted "providing for future generations" could be a generic principal.

Matthew Paisley

On that note - I was actually thinking of them in more general terms. Principles or values, we must include a choice and design in the formulation of applicable indicators, and their interpretation. Also, their final communication and action on the result must be included.

Jennifer Maxwell

Matthew, I am curious what you mean about the formulation, interpretation and communication of indicators. Indicators of what?

Matthew Paisley

Hi Jennifer, by this, I was speaking about the constantly evolving climate in which we live. In assessing a level of sustainability, these principles we are setting forth may act as guidelines form what will come, but only guidelines. When applied to real situations, a reduction of disease in one area is not the same as an increase in crop productivity in another. Still, the final goal may be the same for each community

Murray Ball

Education. Remember Margaret Meade and don't doubt that a small group of dedicated people can change the world. We need social capital and education to produce these people.

Dan Sonmor

Make do with what you have - live within your means.

Ann Dale

What are some of the specific principles, drawing from the first question?

Dave Ewanishin

A few from a good paper:

- patronizing locally-owned businesses and buying locally-made goods
- insisting that renovations and new construction follow sustainable building guidelines in order to save residents money, avoid toxic materials, and reduce energy use and water consumption
- calming automobile traffic, building sidewalks, and encouraging a mixture of residences and businesses so that the neighborhood is friendlier
- maintaining an active neighborhood association with good contacts at city departments such as police, planning, public works, and utilities
- enabling local entrepreneurs by allowing compatible home offices and workshops maintaining attractive public spaces
- avoiding expensive, thirsty lawns
- planting native trees which clean and cool the air
- supporting local schools by volunteering
- fostering diversity by including a variety of housing options
- encouraging an appropriate level of density along transit corridors so that bus or train service becomes more efficient and user-friendly
- staying informed about government (local, state, and national) activities and policies which affect neighborhoods - and voting

Reference: International Institute for Sustainable Development
http://www.iisd.org/pdf/casl_issues_principles.pdf

Melissa Edwards

Dave Ewanishin's list reconfirms some of the practical ways to foster social capital in order to also enhance economic capital. How could these be transformed into generic principals?

Jennifer Maxwell

Boyd states that numerous initiatives have tried to answer this question and that they fall into the following four categories:

- respect and care for the community of life
 - ecological integrity
 - social and economic justice
 - democracy, nonviolence and peace
-

Jenny Onyx

I think the question of civil society comes in here. One difference between governance and government is the capacity for broader decision-making involvement by more stakeholders. If you can get that, then you can get a dynamic community, which is willing and able to solve emerging problems. This requires communication between people of very different backgrounds. That requires acceptance of diversity, a willingness to embrace difference. That tolerance may be more likely to emerge in the city than small rural community that is suspicious of difference.

Matthew Paisley

Jenny, tolerance may be paramount in this question. One of the issues to be dealt with is human nature. By this I mean desires, and the fact that everyone desires different things differently. In establishing principles, we must take this into consideration, and they must be both specific, and encompassing.

Dave Warner

Excellent point Matthew. I think generally most humans are selfish and brought up to want more and more. We need to somehow change this way of thinking.

Lori Marchand

Dave, this seems like the primary barrier against sustainability for affluent Canadians does it not? Especially when much of our economy depends on natural resources.

Jennifer Black

From previous discussions, it is difficult to define sustainability in generic terms, so how can we define generic principles for a sustainable community?

Lori Marchand

Jennifer, I think partially we can look at sustainable communities that are already in progress, and work backwards can't we? My favorite sustainable community being New Mexico's Earth Ship Sustainable Communities (<http://www.earthship.org/>). Earth Ship Biecture – New Mexico, Earthship Community - A sustainable subdivision started in 94, 6 acres of rolling mesa with a deep gorge. Lots Available! Probably the most intense collection of independent, sustainable housing in the world.

Rae-Ann Shaw

I think some of the key principles include:

- maintaining a holistic perspective
 - think locally
 - promote diversity
 - reduce, reuse, recycle
 - emulate nature in design
-

Jennifer Maxwell

Here are some of the principles I have brainstormed:

- systems thinking and processes – mimicking the natural world as much as possible
- interrelatedness and interconnectivity within the community and with the larger world
- long-term vision recognizing multigenerational (interconnectivity across time) links
- inclusiveness
- collaboration
- multidisciplinary
- valuing diverse perspectives
- open communication
- respect for nature and human spirit
- appropriate use of technology

Lynne Magee

From Patrick M Condon, Smart Growth Canada:

- design complete communities
- build a healthy economy
- provide linked streets, parkways, greenways and gardens
- establish green infrastructure systems
- lighter, greener, cheaper infrastructure
- preserve present homes and introduce new ones

Reference: <http://www.smartgrowth.bc.ca/index.cfm>

Joanne Roach

Are there generic principles for sustainable community development? This question brought the cities plus project to my mind. This is an award winning 100 year sustainability plan for Greater Vancouver. Sheltair Group- <http://www.sheltair.com/> takes you to the Sheltair Group Site and from there you can view portions of the plan. CitiesPlus http://www.citiesplus.ca/images/DevelopingThePlan_a.pdf - describes the development of the plan and it describes what I feel are some principles for sustainable community development. A sustainable urban system is comprised of the physical place, people who call this place home, infrastructure that supports our habitation of the place, and the governance structures that enable the community to function as a unit. The core themes identified by the plan are livability, sustainability and resilience. Sustainability is defined as living and thriving within the assimilative capacity of the biosphere.

The Key Principles of sustainability according to the cities plus vision are:

- efficiency
- interdependence
- connectivity
- stewardship
- durability
- appropriateness

Resilience is the capacity of the urban system to adapt and change in response to unexpected events. Key principles of resiliency include:

- adaptability
- robustness
- reliability
- responsiveness
- diversity
- precaution

Livability refers to quality of life for individuals. Key principles of livability include:

- equity
- dignity
- accessibility
- conviviality
- participation
- empowerment

The document goes on to describe the vision in further detail. I have not read it in its entirety (because of time issues) but I think it would be a valuable read.

Melissa Edwards

Thanks Joanne, sounds like a broad coverage of the contributing principles.

Jennifer Maxwell

Joanne, the positive and simple flavor of your list really appeals to me. You have hit on a broader range of principles than I had originally thought. Thinking of communities in BC - resiliency is a concern.

Rae-Ann Shaw

Joanne, I also appreciate your list of principles, particularly the resiliency and livability points.

Lori Marchand

What are some of the specific principles, drawing from the first question?

Ann, a few off the top of my head:

- community engagement
 - free public access “community networks”
 - effective Sustainability Indicators
-

Toni Bragnalo

Generally speaking, principles for sustainable community development are to find a balance between economic development and environmental protection.

Dave Warner

Toni, and balanced with social issues.

Ann Dale

You've built a pretty comprehensive list of principles here. Any last thoughts?

Lori Marchand

I am wondering if the panel has a sense of how much momentum the concept of sustainable communities has gained recently?

Lynne Magee

Lori, In BC there seems to be a lot of interest, particularly in the Greater Vancouver area where demand to live is high, but space is limited.

Rae-Ann Shaw

We are definitely seeing this more and more in the federal government. More buildings are being designed to LEED standards, incorporating green design and sustainable elements.

Dave Warner

I believe it is really gaining momentum here in Vancouver as companies (ie. forestry, mining, mine) are utilizing it as a marketing tool. The initial push from the local communities has really started to be taken over by the companies claiming their product is more sustainable.

Lynne Magee

Both UBC and SFU have departments for sustainability and they both have ongoing projects in developing sustainable communities. Burnaby Mountain at SFU is one project. East Clayton is another big name.

Melissa Edwards

Ann, Lori, in response I can give you an indication from the Australian perspective. Due to factors of isolation and the shift from primary to tertiary industry, the idea of rural renewal has become a key factor on the political agenda. In particular overcoming isolation through the development of social capital and empowering small communities to develop grassroots solutions.

Murray Ball

The reality is that we may never achieve sustainability, but we must try. Lets look at ecological sustainability like we look at native prairie. Prairie can be sustained in an overgrazed condition with dominance of sage and sedges rather than the most productive grasses (category C). It can be sustained with full diversity and presence of the most important grasses in a short-grazed condition (B), or it can be sustained with areas of un-grazed prairie complete with the “wool” of previous year’s growth (A). These are all versions of sustainability, but only recently have scientists discovered that the prairie is more PRODUCTIVE in the A category. Let’s err on the precautionary side if at all possible.

Joanne Roach

I think that the deciding factors for humanity will likely be hope and the will to survive. If we have those in spades we will be better able to let these principle guide us.

Dan Sonmor

Joanne, simply put. I couldn't agree more.

Shannon Pagotto

Ann, I think it's also time that we started measuring success with our mental, emotional and physical well-being. I don't think it matters how much money someone makes if they are on the verge of a nervous breakdown or why we need 00 square foot houses when it really only matters if it is a happy home or not. It is a shift in measurement but not a shift in values. I think most people want a happy family with healthy kids but how we measure that has to change.

Toni Bragnalo

Shannon, I agree, when measuring success people's first thought is often toward the financial, how wonderful if that were shifted to measuring a person's success by what they've done, rather than what they have.

Cassandra Caunce

Sustainability is a noble goal but difficult to achieve as the world is full of opinionated people! The only thing we can do is stick to our guns on what we believe is to be the best for society as a whole and walk the talk.

Matthew Paisley

Any principles developed should ultimately lend themselves to achieving economic growth, environmental protection, and equity simultaneously by reconciling the irreconcilable. Brundtland again... And I still like "Rurban".

Jennifer Maxwell

So Matthew, you are referring to the need to measure our progress toward sustainability? We can use these principles as the starting point for developing objectives and subsequently, indicators, to measure how we are doing in meeting those objectives.

Matthew Paisley

Jennifer, must we not measure it? if not, how will we know where we were, where we are, are going, and if we got there? And then, how we could have made it better

Lori Marchand

I came across some great websites on sustainability indicators today, alas I can't find them, I will send them to you Jennifer, if I come across them.

Ann Dale

Lori, I know that in Canada many communities are beginning to "talk about" the meaning of sustainable community development, particularly those struggling to diversify, ironically, many of them rural communities. We have just spent five days

researching on Salt Spring Island the lessons learned from the Texada case, that maybe we can start tomorrow's dialogue from.

Jenny Onyx

I am very impressed by the broad range of issues that you have all canvassed. I think you are thinking across disciplinary divides and that is crucial if we are to seriously work with sustainable communities. Clearly we have to find ways of reconciling the social, the economic and the environmental. I think we need to engage the spiritual in this as well. But I have become convinced that even the environmental, especially the environmental, requires social action to find sustainable solutions. In the final analysis we have to find more effective ways of connecting, or re-connecting and of organizing. I don't think we have even begun this task yet.

Dave Ewanishin

Awareness is the first step to succession.

Day 2: Globalization and Sustainable Community Development?

Question 1: **What are the most immediate pressures on Canadian communities?**

Ann Dale

Welcome everyone. Jenny will begin today's dialogue.

Jenny Onyx

Today we are looking at constraints and pressures. I'd like to reflect back on what we were talking about yesterday. If you re-read the postings, you might have noticed an apparent contradiction. We are talking about globalization, and that is about reaching out, the sky is the limit. But we were also talking about local communities, keeping the economy local and "closed loops". Perhaps this is the dilemma...we can't do both. Or can we, as Ann suggested. How do we reconcile the local and the global? What are the constraints on this?

Ann Dale

So our first question is, what are the most immediate pressures on Canadian communities? in the context Jenny gave us.

Dave Warner

I believe that we need to have both globalization and local communities. The problem is how?

Joanne Roach

What are the most immediate pressures on Canadian communities? If we define communities by the numbers of inhabitants, I think that small and large communities or rural and urban communities can be facing different pressures, but also some that are universal. For example, large urban centres may be faced with housing crunches, large homeless populations and high costs of living, while smaller communities may have affordable and plentiful real estate and a low cost of living, but not enough jobs to keep people there.

Other pressures on small communities:

- shrinking tax base
- lack of professionals (doctors, dentists, etc.)
- workers who live and spend money elsewhere
- citizens who spend money elsewhere

Other pressures on large urban communities:

- lack of full time jobs
- social welfare costs

Some universal pressures could be cost associated with replacing aging infrastructure, globalization, polluted environments, lack of effective governance, and pressures to provide more services for less money and to provide employment for citizens. I think there is also pressure to act in an environmentally responsible way that could conflict with the economic aspirations of some community members. I am thinking specifically of the debate concerning salmon aquaculture, especially the economic benefits vs. the potential environmental harm.

The CitiesPlus document also describes the main forces that are shaping cities and will continue to do so in the future:

<http://www.citiesplus.ca/images/ContextOfOurVision.pdf>

- technological transformations
- climate change
- demographics

- resource scarcity
- globalization
- world view shifts

I think that the last two are particularly important because it is very difficult to predict the exact effects that these two will have on our communities in the future.

Rae-Ann Shaw

I think some of the pressures facing Canadians include: •poverty •lack of access to education, safe housing, transport, clean water, sanitation, and health care. •no access to property rights, capital and market opportunities. "One of our major challenges will be to maintain and improve the health, well-being, and quality of life of the earth's increasingly urban population while also maintaining and improving ecosystem health".

Reference:

Trevor Hancock "Healthy Sustainable Communities: Concept, Fledgling Practice and Implications for Governance"

Cassandra Caunce

My initial thoughts were as follows:

- access to education and health care
 - subsidies on energy, water
 - greed – value of money & possessions over environment
 - governance – too many levels, all with different ideas on how things should be done
 - natural resource-based economy could have future ramifications in trade if global policies do not coincide – softwood lumber dispute.
-

Lori Marchand

Capitalist globalization: to dominate markets and sources of raw materials (Kaltornyk, 01). Its hard to sort it all out, on the one hand globalization forces Canada to shift its economy from natural resources to other forms, so that is good from a sustainability perspective, but on the other hand, globalization or global control of our economy, particularly from a "expand the general agreement on Trade in Services" perspective, is dangerous, because 74% of Canadian jobs are in the service sector, and including health, education and other services that are part of the public domain. Neo-liberalism/globalization as McBride put it :could "decimate the public sector but to strike debilitating blows to fundamental Canadian institutions and values such as public education and universal health care" McBride.

Shannon Pagotto

I'm thinking locally but some of the pressures on communities up north are that they have rich resources but not the knowledge (or desire) to get at them. Southern companies come in, offer a lot of money, jobs etc. Then the communities start having social problems because they aren't used to the fast money. Other pressures are lack of space for sewage, garbage and people. Then we have the problems of health, SARS and Walkerton come to mind.

Rae-Ann Shaw

I agree Shannon. I'm thinking to some small communities who rely on resource based industries (logging, mining, fishing, etc) and when those industries cease, the entire community is devastated and basically shuts down.

Cassandra Counce

Rae-Ann, this is not always the case. I know of a few companies that have stepped in prior to leaving to help bolster the community with jobs and such. Not leaving them high and dry, so to speak.

Shannon Pagotto

I'm thinking more up front when you have a "trapper" who suddenly starts driving heavy duty equipment for 70,000 a year. We see it a lot up here with the mining companies. Alcohol related offenses rise and so do domestic disputes. They don't know how to spend \$70,000 a year and that causes problems. For what? They don't get the diamonds or the gas, as far as I'm concerned, they were better off without the new jobs.

Cassandra Counce

If I may continue the digression briefly...that's why a lot of the newer mine camps up north are dry. No alcohol or drugs as well as random testing.

Ann Dale

Boy, Shannon raises a good point, the 'dark side' of capital, and for social capital.

Shannon Pagotto

Cassandra, it's not the time in camp that's a problem; it's the 2 weeks at home when they go absolutely crazy!

Matthew Paisley

In reply to Jenny, I suspect the balance can be reached in local and global communities by ensuring the ebb and tides of economies do not cause a similar change in direction in the focus of the community. The harvesting of a local product must not be at the detriment of the community for the profit of the global economy. Nor should the global distribution of a local commodity cause the local economy to rely solely on it, which would result in a reduction of sustainability

Jenny Onyx

Matthew, I agree totally. But achieving that is something else.

Matthew Paisley

Which is obviously where the constraints Jenny mentioned come in. I think that the most immediate constraints on communities are very much the same as what are exerted on all of us as individuals. There is the constant barrage to do more with less, and this sentiment does not go away as we move from the micro level. From small groups to large cities, a pressure exists to accommodate more people, with more needs, wants and demands. This includes everything from healthcare to housing, and all with an eye on incomes, standards of living, and the environment. The social, economic, and environmental imperatives are under a constant barrage to not only be maintained, but also to perform for us.

Dave Warner

Jenny, maybe we need to set up sustainable community plans in conjunction with other ones, ie. local communities have ones that coincide with provincial, national, and the global sustainable community plan. Sound like an insurmountable task though.

Matthew Paisley

Dave, one thing I got from yesterdays discussion was the interconnectedness many groups can have. I believe the task of achieving a sustained social architecture is with the development of individual groups, all of which are able to act autonomously. being

on solid ground by themselves, when many groups come together for a common goal, the resultant web is stronger BECAUSE of the strength of the individuals, and not in spite of it.

Melissa Edwards

Matthew has a strong point. There is defiantly need to strengthen the foundations before building the castle, but don't forget the bridge to let people over the moat. Instead of closed loop systems, I was thinking after yesterday's session that we need to envision an interconnected web of closed loops systems similar to the model of industrial ecology.

Ann Dale

Matthew, social architecture and web structures, bang on.

Lori Marchand

Melissa, that reminds me of Ann's Unit 4 Notes in our BSC-EM 322 course:

We perceive the environment and economy as separate cycles connected by a one-way movement of resources from nature to human kind. Paradoxically, ecological and economic systems, in fact, have very similar needs in terms of maintaining essential structures and ensuring performance. They each require energy, elemental diversity and free-flowing circulation in order to function.

We must move away from a open economic system to a close system. We perceive the environment and economy as separate cycles connected by a one-way movement of resources from nature to human kind. Paradoxically, ecological and economic systems, in fact, have very similar needs in terms of maintaining essential structures and ensuring performance. They each require energy, elemental diversity and free-flowing circulation in order to function... we must move away from a open economic system to a close system (Dale, 2003 notes).

Toni Bragnalo

Being from a small northern Ontario City (population 100,000) I know the two biggest pressures for us is finding enough doctors to deal with the aging population, and trying to keep young people here (ie jobs) because a lot of talented youth graduate and move onto to bigger centers.

Dave Warner

Immediate pressures include loss of our national identity. For example, loss of Canadian made products to third world countries with cheap labor.

Lori Marchand

Excellent point Dave, I agree and would like to add: Globalization promoters have never been shy about their agenda to promote profit over environmental protection, ecologically sustainable development, human rights, consumer protection, labor rights and the needs of local communities. Globalization is a neo-liberal globalized context. The World Trade Organization's dispute settlement panels have replaced the nation-state as the dominant regulator of corporate and economic conduct. The nation-state, once the sole provider of security, law, and enforcement, has been thinned to the point that no longer are political governments making individual decisions effecting their economy and culture. Indeed, as Beck stated, all national actions, inventions, and catastrophes have the potential to reverberate throughout the entire world.

Karen Larson

Yes this is a dilemma - the constraints on reconciling global to a community level are huge. Corporations own everything (some even say Governments); it seems that the social fabrics which hold communities together are disappearing with economic cutbacks the failing healthcare and social welfare systems we have in place. How do we compete? yet hold our communities together? Locally we used to be a sawmill/pulp mill town now we have one company who owns it all.

Melissa Edwards

Lori, Beck also links this reflexivity and distancing of communication with the sub politics of organization. Highlighting the linkage between the local, national and global.

Rae-Ann Shaw

I came across an interesting quote last night regarding sustainable communities and globalization: Operating in conflict with community efforts are the forces of globalization, which seek to eliminate local restrictions on the flows of capital and the manner of doing business. Current economic globalization does not promote an interdependent world, but an homogenous one, with a uniform agenda of profit and control of markets, systems, and ultimately, populations. Reference:

Sustainable Communities, Globalization and Increasing Complexity Joseph Kruth© 99
As published in Future's Research Quarterly, Summer, 98

Murray Ball

We can take some lessons from the strong economies that shape the world economy today: USA, Japan, EU. All of these countries built up their own economic capacity through protectionism until they reached a position of strength. Local economic sustainability policies are about doing the same, but at the same time we need a strong international order to interact with, and opportunity to develop the efficiencies available through trade.

Melissa Edwards

Continuing on from Murray's comment and applying this to the local context can you think of ways in which such a model can also apply to the national context? There is obviously a case for this argument at the international level, but how can we begin to conceptualize these linkages between the community and the national levels?

Joanne Roach

From some of the reading that I did today I am not convinced that the local and the global can be totally reconciled. Economic globalization, if you believe the critics, will continue to extend the gap between the rich and poor, funnel taxes to the rich, and weaken government. Meanwhile large multinationals will become more powerful and influential and have no allegiance to any particular country.

Dan Sonmor

From listening to the news, reading articles, and through conversations, these four topics always seem to come up: Health care, Viability, Economics, and Infrastructure

Jenny Onyx

And globalization reduces diversity? That is another paradox. You would expect with the whole world to choose from that we would magnify the possibilities for diversity. Yet we seem to have more homogeneity, the loss of the diversity in the local community.

Dave Ewanishin

Jenny, I agree with this for the reasons of unifying products and services worldwide. I know there are several companies that do this for the sake of saving a dollar.

Dan Sonmor

I guess the way I see it is it boils down to the basic needs. Food, water, clothing, possessions are all those things that everyone wants and needs. The diversity comes through in the arts and culture. I don't believe you will ever reach a homogenous state with those.

Joanne Roach

Dan, yes, in fact I think we see many examples of people willing to take up arms when they feel that their culture is threatened.

Lori Marchand

Jenny, it's like we are going to end up having one giant global community that is controlled by: An assortment of trading blocs to control economic activity, the most notable being:

- European Union (EU)
 - North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)
-

Cassandra Caunce

To share a very interesting quote I found: "To truly promote sustainable development, environmental goals must be linked to and integrated with trade and investment rules and norms--not in a neo-liberal framework which blindly asserts the primacy of trade but in a new approach to regional economic governance based on the co-equal status of economic development, environmental protection, and social justice. It is a tall order. But it is worth fighting for."

Reference:

APEC, Globalization and the "Sustainable Development Agenda" by Lyuba Zarsky 1998.

Ann Dale

My own research has identified fear (of change) and a sense of powerlessness.

Karen Larson

I think that other countries are also resisting at the community level globalization. I remember touring Alcatraz (the infamous US Prison) as the prisoners from the 30's and 's entered they were told that they would have access to safe food, water clothing and

medical care. In the 's prisoners in the worst penal institute in the USA were guaranteed this yet today food security and medicine are not a universal thing even in our country. I think the UN wishes to meet this goal. Unless communities everywhere resist the global McWorld concepts and buy local and act local there may be no hope.

Toni Bragnalo

Globalization can be a valuable tool if used to share information and ideas. I work for a non-profit environmental group but we are a part of a larger province-wide association (that also does work nation-wide). We have been able to accomplish common environmental goals by working together to achieve success in similar programming areas such as pollution prevention, waste diversion, water/energy conservation and green space enhancement. Sharing our successes (and failures) as well as combining efforts in preparing education campaigns (ie. information packages/presentations) all assist in saving time and money which has helped us all do more with less.

Dan Sonmor

Toni, so by drawing on the national-international experience, the local community can become more viable and sustainable.

Dave Warner

I agree Toni. Sharing cures or medicines for diseases and providing access for all citizens of the world would be for the greater good. However, big business tends to become a speed bump and would rather see economic profits rather than increasing social capital. Companies need to change their way of thinking in this context.

Cassandra Cauce

You are right Dave - 100%. It's not just companies that need to change though - it's the people who are behind the wheel making the decision. Those are the ones you have to convince that social capital is just as important as making a buck.

Matthew Paisley

Dave, the trick is to demonstrate that long-term sustainability cannot be attained with only a 5-10- year plan. One-hundred year plans must be in place in order for large companies to realize that meeting the bottom line right now will cause the bottom to drop out later

Lynne Magee

It seems in BC that a lot of the smaller communities are also dealing with the loss of government jobs, downsizing of industry such as mills through modernization of the plants.

Jenny Onyx

One of the issues is that the so called free trade agreements actually constrain local products. So for instance we are afraid in Australia that we will lose the capacity to generate our own film industry or maintain our own arts, because those industries will be swamped by the cheap and uniform, high volume American products, and we will be powerless to resist.

Dave Ewanishin

Jenny, that gives a new meaning to the terms "independent" and "alternative" films / art.

Lynne Magee

One of the big fears with the privatization of BC Hydro is that through NAFTA we will end up paying more for our own electricity and perhaps even lose access to it as it gets sold to the highest bidder.

Toni Bragnalo

I agree Lynne, selling off our resources, be it space/land, water, energy is all risky business!

Jennifer Maxwell

Globalization is in its infancy. Increasingly sustainable development is a goal to work towards by governments and the private sector. Is it possible, given enough time and international will, that globalization could evolve into a mechanism for creating a sustainable world?

Lori Marchand

Jennifer, I'm not sure that globalization is in its infancy. My perception from research is that it is inevitable and a run-away freight train. To me globalization in the neo-liberal context directly contradicts the sustainable world. To me it is more a reflection of global capitalism where even more resources and people are exploited than ever before.

Joanne Roach

Lori, whenever I read information like this I always consider the source. My perception is that it is the stakeholders who have the most to gain by economic globalization that say that it is inevitable, that it's the only way to create wealth in the world. I think there are other ways to create wealth, if indeed wealth is what is going to save the world.

Dan Sonmor

Globalization is in its infancy...great thought. Not likely though. It would be nice if things would naturally work out for the benefit of all, but, as we have read time and time again, there are though behind the scenes secretly pushing their own agenda.

Jennifer Black

I agree Dan. Globalization is always going to benefit some more than others and in that regard it would be difficult to use it as a mechanism for promoting global sustainability.

Jennifer Maxwell

Dan, I believe that if we are not smart enough to do it before then we will reach a point at which sustainability will become the only option for anyone who is interested in survival.

Murray Ball

The break down of WTO talks in Cancun gives me hope for this. We need to accept that globalization must account for the social dimension at the same time as the economic one.

Jennifer Maxwell

Lori, currently the global economy is operating under "neo-liberal" principles, but what I am trying to say is, does it have to? Could we not create a global economy that promoted sustainability?

Murray Ball

Yes, Jennifer there are alternatives to the neo-liberal model. Revisit Breton-Woods.

Karen Larson

If we could set up a local sustainable policy on one level ie) food systems which were consistent with provincial and national strategies that would be a great start. However many of the stakeholders at the table are the multinationals they seem to set the agenda?

Melissa Edwards

Karen, your observation only serves as a justification for the need to reinforce and strengthen the local and regional strategies. Essentially, you are highlighting an inconsistency between two models for development, the top-down versus the bottom-up. We need to explore ways to bridge the divide.

Jenny Onyx

Again, part of what we are identifying as constraints arise because the economic dominates the other capitals and overwhelms them. Globalization should be a benefit to all, but not until there is a reconciliation of the economic with the ecological and the social.

Lynne Magee

Jenny, in working on the sustainability initiative with my employer, the emphasis does seem to be on economics rather than environment or social. Anything to save a buck such as sourcing all the food in the facilities to a large multinational company, then laying off skilled union workers and hiring back unskilled because everything is prepackaged. The cost of providing may drop, but a lot of people are out of work, or having to deal with significant wage reductions, which affects the sustainability of the entire community.

Rae-Ann Shaw

Lynne, not to sound cynical, but it seems like economics will also come ahead of social or environment.

Dave Warner

Jenny, regarding free trade agreements, there are also a number of instances where companies can use clause in Free Trade agreements to their benefit, for example oil companies suing governments because the government has set regulations eliminating MTBE or MMT in order to protect human health and the environment, but the companies claim that it is detrimental to their business.

Karen Larson

Yes I agree Lynne, it seems that globalization of everything from one company owning all the mills to one company providing all the food. I think there is a worldwide grass roots movement occurring i.e. Africa sending Kraft dinners and GMO food back even though they were starving... We need to stop unfair trade subsidies and protectionism and allow even trade worldwide. Perhaps it is time for a revolution of the common people?

Murray Ball

Karen's taking power at the regional level revolution has occurred before. Where do you think Medicare came from?

Karen Larson

One of the issues is that the so called free trade agreements actually constrain local products. So for instance we are afraid in Australia that we will lose the capacity to generate our own film industry or maintain our own arts, because those industries will be swamped by the cheap and uniform, high volume American products, and we will be powerless to resist. This is scary indeed we in Canada are part of NAFTA - it is a social and economic constitution which overrides Canadian Government Law. The effects of globalization and NAFTA are increasing everyday; our social welfare system does not fit well with the American capitalistic way.

Ann Dale

Another issue facing communities from our research is access to information communication technology (ICTs). And what is the relationship between ICTs and access to intellectual capital and its links to economic diversification?

Cassandra Counce

Ann, if I'm understanding your question correctly - the link has to do with economics. You need to have a reasonable income to afford a computer, TV and/or phone. Unless these devices needed to access the information are free, there will be barriers to those less fortunate.

Matthew Paisley

ICTs have removed the limits to accessing intellectual capital. No idea is yours alone, as it can instantly be shared with millions, all at once. It removes the boundaries set by the constraints of income, demographics, and geography. A downside is that it removes privacy, and a sense of individualism. Is it worth it? Is this the cost of an intellectual global economy?

Joanne Roach

I got the feeling from some of my reading that increased access to ICTs may be the very thing that stems the tide of globalization, because there will be more equal access to information and average earthlings can educate themselves. They can then act as their conscience tells them.

Rae-Ann Shaw

I think that with the ever-increasing access to information communication technology, globalization increases dramatically.

Karen Larson

Joanne, I disagree that access to ICT is a good thing. When I lived in Yukon computers and satellites brought in more American culture and advertising and appeared to increase peoples wants for things they did not need (Reebok and Nike) etc. It was interesting to watch how elder knowledge and status was eroded in favor of TV.

Dave Ewanishin

Karen, I think you have to take the good with the bad...technology has several advantages and it is a matter of deciding what limits to use and to have proper guidance with these powerful tools.

Lori Marchand

I agree Joanne, I think that public information access will play a key role creating a new global community and in watch dogging the multi-nationals as well, an extreme example: Greenpeace IT will also create a new type of solidarity amongst like minded thinkers, as long as that is not all that they do-think.

Dan Sonmor

Karen, the switch from need to want happened everywhere, despite influence of US shows and communication. A truly sustainable system would have no wants, only needs. It is the desire for those things you don't need to survive that skews the sustainability aspect.

Karen Larson

Your observation only serves as a justification for the need to reinforce and strengthen the local and regional strategies. Essentially, you are highlighting an inconsistency between two models for development, the top-down versus the bottom-up. We need to explore ways to bridge the divide (From Melissa). I find this topic quite an interesting one as when governments change policies change for example in BC local food democracy networks were changing government policy on a provincial level...buy local act local was in the BC policy. Now with the new government they have gone back and realigned with the national agriculture policy and it is all for big business ...so ???

Melissa Edwards

Karen, this is a similar phenomenon to that which we are currently experiencing in Australia. With the Liberal government there has been a strong shift towards a National Food and distribution strategy. This has had one of two effects; essentially to either strengthen the community bonds through the development and ongoing community support of local community markets, or to the buying out of smaller landholder by larger agribusiness. In response to the change of government policy, again I believe this highlights the need for civil society to strengthen their bonds at the grassroots level. A premise of the sustainable model suggests that in the long term it is those who follow the first path that will survive.

Dave Ewanishin

For Canada to succeed in a globalized environment, we must ensure that we have cities and towns that are strong enough to compete for jobs and investment internationally. This means that we should have a skilled and knowledgeable workforce, reliable transportation and communications networks, a clean environment and a social and cultural environment that is attractive. Education is also key.

Erin Gorman

Sometimes cities, communities, and municipalities can do on a small scale is develop an environmental strategy. A lot of larger cities have already started, what this does is addresses resource management, reduces emissions (which we can all do as individuals), protect the land and water in the area and the resources within the city. I think that when the local governments acknowledge the fact that sustainability is key in maintaining and improving our environment and ultimately the human population, public support is easier to come by. Leadership and communication are essential in trying to gain support and a proactive approach to sustainability.

Lori Marchand

My perception is that it is the stakeholders who have the most to gain by economic globalization that say that it is inevitable, that it's the only way to create wealth in the world. I think there are other ways to create wealth, if indeed wealth is what is going to save the world. Part of what I was referring to in terms of inevitability, is that if control of our resources falls outside national jurisdiction and into the hands of multi national orgs, then...what? We also have a lot of pressure to supply our natural resources to other countries. We are one of the only countries in the world that exports more of its oil and natural gas, than it consumes. Globalization and decentralization effects would no longer allow us to have national control over these areas and so environmental concerns and biodiversity go out the window. However, it is also worth noting that outside forces alone did not shift our Kinesian economic paradigm to Neo-liberalism. Our own government had a hand in that experiment as well.

Jenny Onyx

OK, OK, now you are all getting rather despairing and negative. I do think there is an answer to the dominance of multinationals and the over-emphasis on the economic. Come right back to the grass-roots. After all we get the government and the policy that we deserve. Are we really helpless victims or are we colluding in the recreation of our world?

Dan Sonmor

Jenny, most still have the "Not in my Backyard" (NIMBY) attitude. As long as we still have what we need, many are not willing to look beyond and see what is needed.

Jennifer Maxwell

I agree with Dan - when people are comfortable themselves, they tend to not really look too much beyond their immediate surroundings and the near future (retirement is about as far as it goes). This impedes our view of the multigenerational aspect of sustainable development as well as being able to ignore environmental destruction, social injustices and impoverished nations. Obviously television and the Internet have a lot to do with this complacency. What is the larger impediment to sustainable development: globalization or TV?

Dave Warner

Jenny, I don't think we are really helpless, but I think that even us knowledgeable people are still biased towards economics before social and environmental capital. I think it does get back to education and shifting the focus in everyone's minds to the point of all being equal.

Melissa Edwards

I think that Dave Warner makes a valid point. There is a definite need for a long-term commitment, especially through invaluable courses such as these, which allow us to even entertain and explore the idea. It fascinates me that the Agenda envisioned statement has taken 10 years to even reach our national education systems. The course at Royal roads is only in it's infancy and in Australia we have only implemented our sustainable business course in the last months. A long road... and we need to continue.

Lori Marchand

We do have a voice even if we choose not to use it, and there is always hope. Countries must address this crisis, and the demarche for:

- greater accountability,
- transparency

- more active civil society working to enlarge the public space and defend basic freedoms “For it is only through engagement, and not through resistance, that countries in the region will be able to address the challenges of globalization” (Hattotuwa).

Resource: Imagining solutions: Responding to key challenges in our region
<http://canada.takingitglobal.org/express/article.html?cid=10>.

Cassandra Caunce

It can't get any more basic then "You are what you eat". We created this society and only we can change it. Some people do get too caught up their busy lives. The stress of day-to-day life really has caused us to put the blinders on to the outside world. As long as it isn't personally affecting us, no one seems to care. Kind of a bummer, really. Especially when you are faced with making a change and need support.

Joanne Roach

Cassandra, I totally agree that there is a silent indifferent majority in most of Canada, but I don't think that all cultures share this apathy. For example, the Europeans felt passionate enough to ban GMO's and Canadian forest products based on environmental principles. I think that all Greenpeace has to do is feed them a little information that leads them to believe that there are no trees left in BC and they mobilize fairly quickly, to our economic detriment.

Ann Dale

Joanne raises an important point, don't forget that the MIA was defeated by internet communications, particularly led by academics. The 'science' shall we say really moved around the world quickly.

Question 2: **What are possible community strategies in response to globalization?**

Ann Dale

Now let's turn the cake upside down. What are possible community strategies in response to globalization? And Dan, if I remember correctly, you brought up spirituality, which we mustn't forget, especially when people feel fear and powerless.

Lynne Magee

Educating the community on the issues facing us regarding sustainability, global warming etc and a call to action at the local level.

Karen Larson

At the community level we are planning, forming policies, working with different groups , greening buildings, buying and supporting local foods and other businesses, building relationships sharing our strengths and visions, caring for one another. At a local level we are building sustainability, caring societies. If only 5% of the people have this vision that is at least a start. Good people are everywhere.

Rae-Ann Shaw

For communities, a shift from economic development to human development will bring significant changes in design and operation because human development is centered on a view of development as an integration of health/social well being, environmental quality/ecosystem health and economic activity. Reference:

Trevor Hancock "Healthy Sustainable Communities: Concept, Fledgling Practice and Implications for Governance"

Melissa Edwards

Rae-Ann, this is an excellent observation, taking it down again to the individual level. This works under the notion that every individual can make a difference. What other ways?

Erin Gorman

Community strategies are established over short term (0-2 years), medium (3-5 years) and long term (+10years). In each of the terms a number of issues need to be addressed and plans such as material management, waste management, reduction of GHG emissions, policies, and city programs, leadership in promoting environmental stewardship, watershed management practices, land development and the reporting that must go back into the community for the public to see. Progress is a great way to boost moral and encourage support.

Karen Larson

Erin, by supporting our "local heroes" and recognition of their efforts a movement can occur. We are doing a sustainability newsletter in our local NHA paper and every week a local hero will be honored and given a local good food box....programs such as healthy eating active living , community gardens, community foodbanks, etc. all these things foster relationship and build community

Jennifer Maxwell

Erin, your point - the need to develop a clear plan over time - illustrates the next step beyond the community vision I suggested was needed. You allude also to Matt's point yesterday of the need to develop indicators, monitor them and report on progress towards goals and objectives.

Melissa Edwards

Jennifer, ongoing monitoring at the community level in terms of sustainability is another idea worth pursuing. We are encouraging companies to do it through the GRI, so why not regional and local planning? Or more informally, at the individual level in our everyday lives. Anyone tried this one: <http://www.earthday.net/footprint/info.asp>.

Lori Marchand

Ann, if I could answer your question with one of your own quotes: "We must realize the commonalities between natural and industrial systems and the lessons that we can learn from natural systems about integration, connectedness, organization, limits, efficiency and feedback loops of material and energy " (Dale).

Jenny Onyx

What did Margaret Mead say about changing the world??

Lynne Magee

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has" (Mead).

Murray Ball

Margaret Mead said something like: Don't think for a minute that a small group of dedicated people has the power to change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has.

Dan Sonmor

Niche market – find something that is unique to your region and promote the heck out of it. For example, a small town in Saskatchewan called Hershel has a cliff with some petroglyphs on it. It has drawn a lot of people around to see them. However, to be truly sustainable, communities have to draw businesses into them, making it attractive to set up shop in their neighborhood. The additional tax base along with the employment will help the community.

Dave Warner

Dan, hmmm, can this not lead to overexploitation? I think that in choosing this path it would need to be done carefully.

Lori Marchand

I found some general suggested principals that looked promising.

A system of sustainable commerce would involve these objectives:

- it would reduce absolute consumption of energy and natural resources among developed nations by 80 percent within-to 60 years
 - it would provide secure, stable, and meaningful employment for people everywhere
 - it would be self-actuating as opposed to regulated, controlled, mandated, or moralistic
 - it would honour human nature and market principles
 - it would be perceived as more desirable than our present way of life
 - it would exceed sustainability by restoring degraded habitats and ecosystems to their fullest biological capacity
 - it would rely on current solar income
 - it should be fun and engaging, and strive for an aesthetic outcome
-

Shannon Pagotto

Dan, I'm just wondering why we would need to draw people in to be successful. Couldn't a town strive on it's own, growing it's own food, etc? Just curious?

Lori Marchand

Shannon, I think it depends on how you go about it, otherwise you could end up like Poland.

Erin Gorman

Yes, good point Lori-community business.

Murray Ball

What about organizing to get our message up to regional and national decision-makers.

Dave Warner

I agree with the things that others are posting, but we need to ensure that strategies harmonize between communities.

Ann Dale

Dave raises a key point, strategizing between communities, or perhaps building relationships between communities, sharing information. There is a new concept--s-strategies that believe it or not IBM UK is working on with us on the research side, "sharing strategies" and of course, software to facilitate s-strategies. Maybe to play the devil's advocate, we also need business to influence environmentalists, rather than environmentalists just influencing business. We need to learn from one another, close the loops that divide us.

Dave Warner

I agree with Ann. I've heard a number of times on this topic that big business drives the globe in certain directions. So, I think big business that take sustainability into account should drive as they do have a lot of influence.

Joanne Roach

What are the possible community strategies in response to globalization? In formulating my response to this question, I reread part of Pal's Beyond Policy Analysis to get reacquainted with the pressures of economic and cultural globalization. I am pretty convinced that our policy makers will be the ones to come up with strategies to protect

our domestic markets and our cultural uniqueness. These strategies should insulate our local markets from the destructive effects of globalization and support and promote our local cultures.

Examples might be:

- local currency systems
- funding for arts and culture programs
- support for research and technology development
- encouraging public support of fair trade
- educating citizens about globalization

Reference: <http://www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/econ101/americanDream.html>

(This link is for an article that outlines the ramifications of economic globalization, powerful multi-national corporations, and unequal distribution of wealth. According to the article, the minority rich are getting richer and the majority poor are struggling, or getting poorer in some instances and this is an outcome of economic globalization).

Rae-Ann Shaw

Community strategies include: -economic co-ops -credit unions -local currency and service exchanges -community supported livelihoods -land trust and easement development

Matthew Paisley

Strategies? Well, just listing a few from the tip of my top, we should start with safety, and move on to the development of a sense of community, dealing with residential issues, development from an economic and sustainability standpoint. The ultimate goal is a live-and-work environment - one where lives and well-beings are cultivated, and not just managed.

Melissa Edwards

Matthew, creating safety is a strategy worth development. Should this necessarily be enforced institutionally? What other strategies can we conceive?

Jennifer Maxwell

Communities need to first develop a vision for themselves. I think that pro-activeness is a key aspect of change (or responding to the forces of change). One strategy for

communities in response to globalization is to develop opportunities around their particular strengths.

Cassandra Caunce

Community involvement and participation I believe is the key here. I think the digital world has stolen time spent in these areas. Think of how much has changed since we were kids. I wasn't allowed inside on a nice day to watch TV and "pollute" my mind. Now, kids plunk down in front of the computer instead of getting out there and involved.

Shannon Pagotto

Cassandra, this takes me back to my thoughts yesterday and how we as a whole society need to change the way we measure success. It is the materials we own or the way or are emotional well being?

Dan Sonmor

Shannon, from what I have seen, most communities have problems hanging onto their young people. If you are going to sustain yourselves, you can't have the 60 to 80 year old folks out in the fields. You need something top keep/bring back that youth.

Cassandra Caunce

I agree - youth are typically dazzled by large pay cheques in busy cities. High tech jobs instead of working with the earth, so to speak.

Ann Dale

Shannon, imagine a world in which media is both substantive and fun, part of my efforts in this e-dialogue research is to demonstrate the power of the medium for literacy and not pornography!!!!

Lynne Magee

Whatever happened from reading books? Why do we need so much immediacy in our lives?

Shannon Pagotto

Did I say something wrong?

Ann Dale

No, Shannon, you did not say anything wrong, and thank you for clarifying. My exclamation marks were only to emphasize my own passion at trying to raise the bar for the media, you are right, they are used for the lowest common denominator. Let me share a dream, where we have multi-media forums, an e-dialogue on let's say, energy security in Canada, followed by a television town hall, followed by Arthur Black reporting on the other, and so on.

Shannon Pagotto

Ann, yes, I see your point. You mean for something other than advertising and marketing?

Dave Ewanishin

I think that fighting globalization is not necessarily the correct method but community reinvestment is a powerful way to pump up the local economy. The expenditure of a dollar in a community generates more than just one dollar's worth of activity. Every expenditure cascades into a larger number of transactions that enrich the community. The same proliferation of transactions occurs whether the expenditures are associated with consumption or with investment. In a sense there will still be imports and exports but to keep a community strong reinvesting with in is key.

Lynne Magee

Dave, yet our government is working to decrease the wages of the workers to increase profits. And it is these people who pay the taxes and keep communities alive.

Matthew Paisley

Dave, I'd have to agree with you there. I believe the establishment of a global community, thorough such a process, may be the only way the planet will make it. The problem I have, as I'm sure you will agree, is the direction trans-national corps seems to be taking the globalization movement

Dave Ewanishin

Matthew, I agree...easier said than done, but I guess one has to explore the options.

Toni Bragnalo

The ever-popular saying, “think globally act locally” sums it up nicely. It is important to be educated on world issues, as well as local ones. It’s important to think for ourselves rather than having high-powered marketing executives sell us on what should be important to us. It’s important to be involved within the community and have a solid appreciation for all the things we have (and I don’t mean material possessions). We need to stand strong in our beliefs and not get discouraged by the actions of others around us.

Lynne Magee

Think for yourself and question authority - Timothy Leary

Ann Dale

Earlier Rae-Ann raised a key strategy, co-operatives. Jenny, do you want to comment?

Jenny Onyx

There are many examples of positive action taken by isolated communities. To take Sweden for example, I visited many communities that were supposed to die. They refused. Instead they formed community businesses (there term) which are part government funded, part user pays (or market) and part local volunteer contribution (community activism). these community businesses are everything from pre-schools to tourist facilities, to local shops to aged care. The village is rejuvenated. And they are on-line!

Matthew Paisley

Jenny, this sounds like sustainable capitalism to me...

Jenny Onyx

Mathew, if you like, it is sustainable capitalism, but with a big difference. Several people have talked about co-operatives and credit unions (which are a form of co-operatives in the financial sector). The community businesses of Sweden are as much public sector

as private, but really bringing in the third sector. That is civil society. And deliberately staying small. When successful businesses grow too fast they split off into a new one, to keep the small cells manageable. I have several examples in the field of electronics where the small businesses were able to out compete the multinationals, because of their flexibility.

Erin Gorman

Positive actions...like a growth management plan focused on the responsibilities and management of the city or municipality towards the environment. Ottawa has developed a / plan where four comprehensive environmental goals are to be achieved over the next years. These include:

- 1) A Green City i.e.: trees, parks, forests, health rivers and watersheds which will improve air quality, reduce GHG emissions, reduce climate change etc.
- 2) Development in Harmony with the Environment, using developed spaces wisely to make better use of existing infrastructure and minimize disturbances to greenspace and watersheds
- 3) Walking, Cycling and Transit, the creation of public transportation corridors. incentives for alternative modes of transportation or disincentives for single vehicle use
- 4) Clean Air, Water and Earth, incorporates clean air, clean drinking water, healthy groundwater and aquifers to support a prosperous aquatic environment, and health soils to support agricultural uses

The City already has several plans already in action...Groundwater Management Strategy, Greenspace Master Plan and the Integrated Waste Management Plan (pat on the back!)

Ann Dale

There are many gems out there-meaning many small communities are undertaking sustainable community practices. For example Red Deer Alberta, as many of you who live in Alberta may know this is one example: Through proactive environmental planning, the City of Red Deer and its citizens, in conjunction with the development industry, are working together to ensure a well-defined mix of housing and green space. The city is preserving its natural habitat, while allowing for human growth, through a program designed to evaluate ecological areas with consideration to ecological and development factors. Now a formal component of land planning and development in Red Deer, the 96 Ecological Profile Process successfully strikes a balance between future residential, industrial, and commercial development and the need to preserve natural habitat and biodiversity found in those areas.

Lori Marchand

Gems. Murray, isn't Neilberg Saskatchewan also an example if I am not mistaken?

Murray Ball

Neilburg is a community that is growing through sheer stubbornness. Maybe not a bad strategy?

Erin Gorman

Winnipeg, Calgary, Whistler and Portland Oregon have Environmental Strategy plans currently in place. How do we encourage smaller communities to do the same?

Toni Bragnalo

Erin, in a word, FUNDING [Wink]

Lynne Magee

Erin, presentations through the Union of Municipalities annual convention on efforts and successes. Quesnel city hall has a bit sign in its front lobby \$900,000.00 saved so far by implementing Power Smart incentives (or something like that). They are also in the process of developing an air shed management plan to improve the air quality with stakeholders from industry, government, health, environmental groups and community groups like the Rotary Club.

Karen Larson

Lynne, your town is a leader. Our sustainability initiative has also applied for funding to raise awareness in the north on what global warming will mean to their lifestyles and how sustainable development means. I also like Quesnel's strategy for the new university in using heat from the wastewater to heat buildings!! Kudos to Quesnel.

Lynne Magee

Karen, I hope the campus of UNBC does manage to harness the heat from the treatment lagoons. Lots of good ideas here although the city does want to fill in a wonderful natural wetland with all its diversity of organisms and create an artificial pond.

Ann Dale

Erin, good question, how do we link? ICTs, media, town hall meetings, dialogue. By the way, I remember I was going to tell you about our Salt Spring findings and their 'success' in buying the Texada lands. Key to their campaign was the time spent in meetings dialoguing (talking) and the power of ICTs to quickly convene meetings.

Jennifer Maxwell

There is power in bringing people together to achieve a common goal. Fostering social capital in this way is key to sustainable development. We are becoming disconnected and numb to each other.

Karen Larson

I think there is a new wave of understanding happening and people are really looking to each other? Do you really see people as being numb? Maybe small towns are better that way?

Shannon Pagotto

Jennifer, agreed, aboriginal people don't call it consultation unless they are spoken to in their own home communities.

Lori Marchand

Going back to the ICT's for a second, that also reminded me of something that really stood out in the Unit 4 Notes: 9. Shift from electronic literacy to biologic literacy. Where Paul Hawken talks about saving the whole enchilada, and this step in particular referring to how people don't know the native vegetation of their own geographical region, yet they know thousands of advertising logos.

Ann Dale

We touched on this somewhat yesterday, waste-management. Here is another excellent example in Nova Scotia- how a small community took on a proactive approach to waste diversion: Nova Scotia is one of the leading provinces in waste diversion in Canada, having achieved % in 00 by official calculations. They have the most extensive set of disposal bans in North America, beverage container deposits that reward refillable, and other progressive programs. "Zero Waste 05" is this town's low-tech, cost effective,

locally managed and very successful waste management initiative. To achieve its waste-free goal, the Town of Annapolis Royal implemented its "Only in your Backyard" project in 99 to facilitate the on-site composting of waste. Using food/waste digesters (Green Cones), along with traditional backyard composting units and Earth Tubs, the majority of households can now dispose of all food and yard wastes on-site. This means Annapolis Royal is able to dispose of its organic wastes within the town's limits - an achievement that delivers significant cost savings to the community.

Dave Warner

An example I find interesting is here in Delta. The Municipality really isn't dealing with sustainability, but the Chamber of Commerce is in the process of having a sustainability study done of the entire community. They hope to influence council's future decisions with the outcome of the report.

Karen Larson

Small communities are doing the same thing. One of the problems is that the financing for policy development and visions is not always available to the little guys. For example, many people do not know what sustainability means and while computer education is nice on a bps modem hookup is difficult and downloading time consuming I think that the federal and provincial government need to put more \$\$ into small community development and education

Joanne Roach

I wonder where the core family comes into this whole question. As Ann pointed out, we need hope and spiritual health to fortify us for our challenges. I have read items that indicate that this is the domain of the core family and that our families are so pressured from everything that we have discussed that they have little energy for forming the new generation with progressive ideas and a strong sense of responsibility.

Cassandra Caunce

Very good point Joanne. How do we slow down these fast-paced lives of ours so we can focus on the family and communities we live in? By the way, when was the last time you called your mother? [Smile]

Joanne Roach

Cassandra, actually, I gave her a hug just a while ago. She is staying with me to help me through this busy week. One of my key strategies for survival, know when to call in the reinforcements!

Ann Dale

Joanne, you called on your network?

Joanne Roach

I certainly did. My partner is away and my mom is here helping with the kids, so I can free my mind for my schoolwork.

Ann Dale

As for examples of community growth, here in BC is the Greater Vancouver's regional growth strategy. I am also curious what those of you in the lower mainland think of this strategy: The LRSP — Greater Vancouver's official regional growth strategy - was adopted in 96 by the province of British Columbia. It provides the framework for making regional land use and transportation decisions in partnership with GVRD's -member municipalities, the provincial government and other agencies. The purpose of the plan is to manage population growth, protect and enhance environmental health and quality, and create livable and complete communities linked by effective transportation systems through coordinated actions. The plan's strategies are built around four main goals:

- protect the 'Green Zone'
- build complete communities
- achieve a compact metropolitan area
- increase transportation choice

Dave Warner

Ann, its kind of funny, because I know what they are trying to achieve, but it sometimes makes me mad. The problem is it seems to be big picture, but they forget the details. i.e. get people out of their cars and onto sky train, etc. However, I would never let my wife ride the sky train alone due to security issues that have not been addressed.

Cassandra Caunce

Being a local of the GVRD, I would have to say that is a seriously big dream that will promptly be put on the back burner thanks to the 10 Olympics. The GVRD has done

some good for the region but the GVRD is so large and challenged by its geography that I don't know how it could be done.

Ann Dale

Dave, key point--security issues. Other comments?

Cassandra Counce

Dave, that's exactly why I won't go near the Sky Train either. There are massive security issues when you start piling people 10-deep into high-density urban centres. It's a breeding ground for crime, unfortunately. Look at NY! Safety is another reason why people don't like living in the urban centres as well. Not to mention the transportation system is too expensive and not well planned out.

Dave Warner

Ann, I personally find it difficult to change as well. Like Cassandra mentioned the fast pace lifestyle tells me that I can get there quicker in my vehicle than by mass transit. Therefore, accessibility and ease of use are issues as well.

Dave Warner

Another one is money. Most people including myself would rather not have increased taxes, etc. required to pay for many of the programs the GVRD proposes.

Lynne Magee

Do we stay at home because it is unsafe out there in the city, or because we perceive it to be unsafe, requiring us to buy weapons to protect ourselves, creating further violence unintentionally?

Melissa Edwards

The real solution lies in the antithesis. Proactiveness in the community sense is another key ingredient for the development of social capital.

Ann Dale

You are aware that violent crime statistics have consistently been going down in Canada, and yet, we are all feeling less safe. Perhaps, and I am going to get a little esoteric here, if we feel unsafe, we buy more to feel more secure????

Shannon Pagotto

Ann, it depends what "safe" you are talking about. I know that when I go to the big cities I don't usually wear my engagement ring because I don't want anyone attacking me, thinking I'm rich or something. But I see your point, we do buy more to feel safe and successful. To keep up with the Jones' so to speak.

Matthew Paisley

Ann, the concept of surrounding ourselves with the items we believe will keep us safe. For those that have realized it, surrounding ourselves with the people that matter most, family and friends, will more than make up for the security of ADT. Too often we curl up amongst our things, rather than opening up and reaching out and beyond.

Karen Larson

Hmm, basic psychology or we drink, eat, or have sex? Yet the more we buy the less security we have (unless your buying blue chips) and the more debt we have...it's out of control. We feel unsafe because we are told to feel unsafe (9-11, Iraq wars, people killing each other every day on the TV, radio, newspapers. When was the last time they showed a mother Teresa saving a child??

Dan Sonmor

You are aware that violent crime statistics have consistently been going down in Canada...Probably not for long. A ruling today allowed a year old to get away with murder because of the new young offenders act. This kid took a pool ball, put it in a sock, and beat a year old to death. What did he get? One day in custody (waived because he spent that day in court) and months community service. What is that telling us about the sustainability of our justice system?

Melissa Edwards

People are making reference to social capital as a point for providing the foundations. Safety has been raised on a few occasions, but again I want to question whether this is

something that needs to be legislatively enforced? A key element for social capital is the development of trust... is there a need for individual self awareness (again a throw back to spirituality). To put it more bluntly, there is no point in having sustainable development if we are all dead.

Dave Warner

Maybe security/personal safety issues go down even further because everyone is more equal (no homeless stealing for food).

Lori Marchand

Melissa, I think taking action before a complete solution reveals itself is important too. Make a change—any change. Don't wait for "the solution," but act without guarantees of success or proof of purchase (Hawken).

Joanne Roach

Lori and Melissa, so we have to conquer our own fears and have some faith in our fellow human (a risky proposition sometimes) in order to get out into our community and take back what is ours?

Cassandra Counce

Melissa, how does one build trust when no one even trusts the politicians and the corporations in the city?

Jennifer Maxwell

Cassandra, this goes back to Ann's comment about getting the politicians we deserve. Hey, we elected them! Where are all the visionary leaders? Why is it always the corrupt real estate developers and lawyers that go into politics?

Lynne Magee

Because decent people like you and I, all of us here couldn't play the games the way it is done now.

Karen Larson

Yes the development of social capital involves trust and building trust involves faith, listening and hearing, and communicating what you have heard back. People have forgotten to talk to each other....

Ann Dale

Cassandra raises a key point, how do you build trust? Melissa?

Melissa Edwards

There are many different approaches to the development of trust which are based within the bounds of the definition of the term. I always like to begin conceptualizations at the micro level. To begin trusting others you must first have faith in your own capacity to be honest and transparent. When there is transparency in the connections between individuals, organizations and even nations then there is a greater capacity for the development of trust. Another view is that trust can be created through institutional mechanisms, such as the basic rules of contract that underpin the legal system. However, this does not necessarily entail commitment to the rules of the game. I believe the organic development of trust from the individual level has greater multiplicity.

Shannon Pagotto

Ann, like in any other relationship. Being open and honest. Trust has to be earned.

Erin Gorman

Increasing trust and confidence in public institutions can be implemented through facilitating discussions around environmental, social and economic goals and improving the quality and quantity of public management.

Jenny Onyx

I do seriously think that social capital is the key strategy, indeed the only one that is going to work in the long term. However I am also beginning to realize that a strong spirituality is needed to underpin the mobilization of social capital. By that I mean a deep sense of connectedness with the land and with each other. And to a larger vision.

Shannon Pagotto

Jenny, I agree but that has to start at a young age. I like to take my kids outside and teach them the importance of enjoying what nature has to offer but it is a never ending battle with video games and TV.

Lynne Magee

Jenny, hard to do in a city - find a connection with the land. Green spaces, roof top and community gardens will help, not to mention increase natural infiltration. I think we need to realize how interconnected all our actions are, kind of like spider webs.

Toni Bragnalo

Yep, people need to acknowledge and appreciate their natural environment, otherwise why would they care or work to protect it.

Jennifer Maxwell

I too have been seeing the need for a larger vision (globally), but cannot grasp at what level that vision needs to operate to achieve sustainability. Any thoughts on this Jenny?

Lori Marchand

Respect the human spirit- Paul Hawken.

Jenny Onyx

Jennifer, an interconnected universe. That is the vision. Starting with the fascination of watching an ant work.

Ann Dale

This comment by Jenny makes me think of the e-Dialogue on Cosmology, Education and Sustainability that we held in January, 2003.

If anyone is interested, you may want to look at it in the e-Dialogues archives.

Murray Ball

The ups and downs of the international markets are really hard on communities with specialized economies. The power of stock market fluctuations or pressures from countries with large economies and can determine the viability of a community. We can organize and spiritualize and educate and invest in our own communities, but sustainability is still a gamble with no guarantees.

Dave Warner

Good point Murray. Maybe markets need to see changes. The Sustainability Index comes to mind as a move in the right direction.

Matthew Paisley

Globalization is not necessarily the evil of the world. The strategy for communities is to develop within themselves a solid footing, making the most of their social, environmental, and economic capital. Thereafter reaching out to the global community, with all that advantages of technology, will result in the development of strong interlinked web - one that will sustain itself, because the individual sections are sustained themselves. It all stems from the smaller community first looking inward, before going global.

Joanne Roach

Matthew, are we talking about a bottom up solution? Individuals to families to community to globe, each strong on its own and stronger because of its connection to all the others?

Lori Marchand

I think that people start by seeing the need for change in their own lives, acting on it, then suddenly developing an awareness or simply noticing others that do the same-likeminded people and from there a new synergy of ideas spawns and visions begin to take shape.

Lori Marchand

"To begin trusting others you must first have faith in your own capacity to be honest and transparent. When there is transparency in the connections between individuals,

organizations and even nations then there is a greater capacity for the development of trust." I totally agree with that simple truth.

Jenny Onyx

Well, we have been on something of a roller coaster ride today, from hope to despair and back again. Like all good riddles, this riddle of life gets more complicated and fascinating the further we go. Thanks for some fascinating dialogue.

Ann Dale

Thank you, dear learners, for trusting me to participate in this great experiment, our first learner-led e-dialogue. I am truly honored to be able to teach you. I look forward to tomorrow's dialogue about governance and sustainable communities.

Day 3: Governance and Sustainable Community Development?

Question 1: What can and should governments do?

Ann Dale

Today, we will be discussing governance and sustainable development. I believe Dr. Onyx wants to reframe the questions a little, Jenny, over to you.

Jenny Onyx

OK, lets start with the question, what can and should governments do?

Dan Sonmor

Governments should listen to the people that they were elected for and not to special interest groups. The special interest groups do not take everyone's thoughts or wishes into consideration. What can Governments do? I hate to be cynical, but usually Government just spins its wheels and does a whole lot of nothing. Committees are formed and try to solve problems without taking into consideration the trials and errors previously done by other committees.

Rae-Ann Shaw

I agree Dan, good points. It would be helpful if government allowed for meaningful public participation, as they are supposed to be representing us!

Rae-Ann Shaw

I think that government should lead by example and get their own house in order. I also think they should commit resources towards sustainable development and try out new, innovative technologies.

Matthew Paisley

I don't think that we can get away from governments, though Dan. Governments are a very needed aspect of society, even with its spinning wheels. I too work for the feds, and definitely see their shortcomings. Still, all of their "wasting of time and spinning of wheels" are deemed to be necessary, as they may be making decisions that may be precedents for the future. The governance of communities can have a dramatic effect in the eventual success of its sustainability endeavors. Through successful and successive governance, many characteristics of a sustainable development can be seen, including controlled population, efficient basic civic amenities, adequate infrastructure, efficient transportation planning, effective environmental infrastructure, an efficient health-care system, and adequate governance services.

Melissa Edwards

Mathew makes a valid point here. Perhaps we can explore the relationship between the role of government and the role of civil society for good governance.

Dave Ewanishin

A lot of rural/urban planners work with national political elite's and multinational corporate leaders to manage sustainability crises. The problem is that these designs and strategies can duplicate the social and organizational problems that helped to produce the same problems in the first place.

Murray Ball

There have been variations on this approach. Switzerland structures its government so that individual people must vote on all significant legislation - very strong connection to

civil society. The question is whether this works any better than other governance structures.

Joanne Roach

Murray, in Canada, I think you would have to overcome a lot of apathy and out and out hostility toward government to get that level of participation.

Dave Ewanishin

There is a lack of incentive to control the rural/urban drift particularly for skilled and qualified people at the community level. People are attracted to urban centers in search for jobs where major factories, businesses and other employment generating activities are located. With this in mind, the government could add extra incentive to make the rural areas more attractive. But the bureaucratic system itself takes quite a while to get projects approved; consequently the community may lose interest due to the delay and other priorities at the national level. So I guess this poses more problems than answers.

Joanne Roach

Dave, this really rings true on Salt Spring. Even positive and benign projects get mired in many levels of approvals and bureaucracy.

Erin Gorman

Hopefully we haven't already exceeded the Earth's carrying capacity. Slowing the rate of population growth will enable us to have more time to find solutions and start acting responsibly with regards to sustainability.

Joanne Roach

Jenny, I think that government restructuring and formation of coordinated multi-stakeholder groups would be a start.

Dave Warner

Governments should do all they can to promote sustainable development. For example:
1. Education - From children (school curriculums) to adults
2. Influence business and industries in the direction. For example, all government projects must be sustainable

and bidders on those projects must outline their own sustainability 3. Influence the general public by setting the example. Develop their own sustainability plans.

Rae-Ann Shaw

Dave, all federal departments are required to submit a sustainable development strategy every 3 years under the Auditor General's Act and progress is submitted to Parliament.

Dave Warner

Rae-Ann, I believe examples like these show some hope that we may be moving in the right direction

Lori Marchand

Rae-Ann does this include plans for sustainable employment in rural areas?

Matthew Paisley

Lori, how can it not? Sustainable employment in rural areas must be employed for the report to be complete, covering all areas. Admittedly, I have not seen, or heard, of our agencies report...

Murray Ball

I think governments must balance the economic, social and ecological needs of society. These three imperatives need to be balanced on as local a basis as possible, as we are all well aware. They must be able to connect with other governments on an international level to effect global governance that actually represents all communities and not just the powerful ones (world federalism).

Jenny Onyx

Governments are actually crucial in this whole process, but they often go in the opposite direction. What I mean by that is that governments have a neurotic compulsion for "command and control" mechanisms instead of facilitating mechanisms. Social capital can be nurtured or (very easily) destroyed, but it cannot be commanded. The World Bank has suggested a new maxim for themselves..."do no harm".

Lori Marchand

Good Domestic Governance: "Without a foundation of good governance, no amount of outside assistance will produce sustainable development." -- Undersecretary of State Paula J. Dobriansky, May , 02. Almost every aspect of sustainable development will be affected by:

- the quality of civil society
- political participation and decision-making
- responsible and reliable governance.

Because good governance is the fundamental requirement for progress and sustainability, improving it should be a primary government strategy.

Reference: <http://usembassy.state.gov/tokyo/wwwhgl0469.html>

Melissa Edwards

I would like to pick up on the idea of political participation and brainstorm some of the ways this could be enabled.

Lori Marchand

Melissa, cities have many existing roles and responsibilities, which must be carried out in an environmentally responsible fashion. Cities plan land use and transportation systems, manage solid and liquid waste, often manage water and energy utilities, administer building codes, build and maintain infrastructure, and more. In other words, cities' traditional roles and responsibilities are absolutely at the center of what needs to be done to seize the opportunities to promote sustainable communities. This research paper indicated that government involvement at the city level was key, since these governments have more flexibility than governments at higher levels.

Rae-Ann Shaw

Lori, no, it doesn't which I feel is something lacking in SD strategies-they don't take into account the social imperative. PWGSC's SD targets are about reducing GHG emissions, solid waste, training, etc.

Joanne Roach

Melissa, like other aspects of sustainability, I think that good governance is built from the bottom up. Like our web of communities from yesterday. So how do you attract

knowledgeable thoughtful people to the game of politics? I think an indirect way is to encourage involvement in NGOs.

Ann Dale

Perhaps governments should stop trying to control and monitor, and lead by catalyzing new strategic alliances, reinforcing community networks?

Jenny Onyx

I agree with Ann. How specifically can this be done?

Dave Warner

Ann, I think these days with decreased government budgets and less employees, that this may be the only way to go. Some sort of hybrid public/private partnership with a sustainability slant.

Ann Dale

Without pre-empting Rae-Ann, I sit on the Commissioner for the Environment and Sustainable Development's external advisory committee, and I don't believe the Sustainable Development plans are mandated to include any reference to rural communities. Excellent idea, however.

Cassandra Counce

I'd just like to add that it is much easier to pick on government for "wheel-spinning", as Dan so gracefully pointed out, because they are more in the public eye and under scrutiny. Businesses have just as much of that going on...it's just not open to the public to see.

Ann Dale

Cassandra, bang on, bureaucracy is not systemic to governments, but rather, large organizations, big business. Yes, scale enters into it again.

Cassandra Counce

Jenny, by fostering community involvement - whether it be through information sessions or free ice cream days - they should act more as facilitators rather than controllers.

Dan Sonmor

Unfortunately, as Matt so brilliantly stated, government does have a specific role, and that role is to ensure things do not spin out of control. However, as Rae-Ann said, the Feds are trying to lead by example with SD strategies and getting their own house in order.

Matthew Paisley

Dan, this is a problem. It must be difficult to manage the second largest country in the world, with 30 million people, when individual, and smaller communities, cannot ratify solutions to their sustainability issues. Perhaps the best thing the feds can do is give the tools and support to the smaller groups, and then foster growth from there.

Rae-Ann Shaw

I agree with Ann-perhaps undertaking consultations with stakeholders within communities to agree on a broad-based, long-term strategic vision for the city, using tools such as city development strategies would help communities achieve their SD goals.

Lori Marchand

Rae-Ann, a good example of a city with a long term strategic vision that utilizes the "indicators" Matthew introduced on Day 1: Local Initiatives Awards Winner: For excellence in governance for sustainable development. City of Hamilton, Ontario Canada. Vision Renewal. In 90, the Hamilton/Hamilton-Wentworth launched the Sustainable Community Initiative, which through a two-year consultation process with the community, developed VISION for the region. The community consultation process identified 11 key areas that required major policy shifts including:

- natural areas and corridors
- water resources
- air
- waste
- energy use
- land use
- transportation;

- health and well-being
- community empowerment;
- the local economy;
- rural economy.

In addition, they identified 300 recommendations related to these areas. In 94 The Sustainable Community Indicators Project was established to develop a set of community-developed indicators for measuring the community's progress towards achieving VISION. Once a year, on Sustainable Community Day, the community gathered together to evaluate their progress and to determine priorities for the upcoming year.

Melissa Edwards

Lori, you are also making an important point between the role of government at different levels. In order to reduce the levels of bureaucracy and make government systems more sustainable perhaps there needs to be a redefinition of the roles at different levels. What does everybody think?

Ann Dale

What about governments adopting the subsidiary principle, that is, that decisions should be made closest to the people responsible for them?

Jennifer Maxwell

Ann, I agree with the principle of subsidiary, but think as I have mentioned a couple of times in the past couple of days that we need an overarching vision and leadership. Here is a quote from the United Nations Development Programme's Development for Governance for Sustainable Human Development document

“Whatever the structuring of the collectivities and layers of governance within a nation, the degree to which responsibility rests at the lowest levels at which it can be effected -- the degree of subsidiary -- is critical to the degree of participation and inclusiveness. This is not only a matter of empowering individuals and organizations – of pushing power down -- but also a matter of taking higher collective responsibility, especially, at the national level for defining the moral basis and vision of society, for human rights and human dignity, for poverty, livelihood, equity and for care for the environment. There needs to be development at both the "lower" and the "higher" levels of the social hierarchy.”

Reference:

<http://magnet.undp.org/cdrb/LENJOY1.htm>.

Matthew Paisley

Jennifer, would it not be better for individual communities to develop within their own styles and ideals, rather than impose a national mandate on them. I doubt the "Shoot, Shovel, and Shut-up" *Alberta Attitude would make it on Salt Spring Island. *Reference unknown ;).

Rae-Ann Shaw

Matthew, if we had every community doing their own thing, wouldn't that create a bunch of closed loops not interacting with one another?

Cassandra Caunce

Good one Matt (as always, you clever lad...). I think that guidelines on a national level are required. Guidelines, not regulations, which allow for flexibility and customization. Bioclimatic zones will dictate the true needs - an assert the individuality - of a region.

Melissa Edwards

So should government be responsible for opening the nodes between the systems?

Matthew Paisley

Rae-Ann, only if they themselves were to close that loop. In the development of a development plan would be the incorporation of creating a support structure with other groups. Given time, I believe we would have a nation within a nation, all having come together with a common goal. Developed within individual groups, and fostered by the governing body.

Melissa Edwards

Another role for government perhaps.... and a richer vision would be created through consultation with those who are to support this vision in their everyday lives...participative democracy??

Lori Marchand

Melissa, a little off the topic maybe but that reminds me of when Greenpeace came to

Alberta and installed solar panels on the premiers house, only to have him remove and discard them himself.

Rae-Ann Shaw

Overall, I agree with the principle of subsidiary, but think as I have mentioned a couple of times in the past couple of days that we need an overarching vision and leadership. I agree Jennifer. Without vision and leadership, nothing would get accomplished.

Cassandra Caunce

I found a wonderful website hosted by the EPA (I think) that is geared towards communities and helping them achieve their sustainability goals. A lot of fantastic resources there - including multiple success stories. I think I might email it to my local city hall!

Reference: <http://www.sustainable.doe.gov/> .

Jennifer Maxwell

You are also making an important between the roles of government at different levels. In order to reduce the levels of bureaucracy and make government systems more sustainable perhaps there needs to be a redefinition of the roles at different levels...Yes, but there are some fundamental principles that all levels of government should operate under to increase social capital and facilitate sustainability:

- political legitimacy and accountability
- freedom of association and participation
- a fair and reliable judicial system
- bureaucratic accountability
- freedom of information and expression
- effective and efficient public sector management
- cooperation with civil society organizations

Reference:

United Nations Development Programme. Capacity Development for governance for Sustainable Human Development <http://magnet.undp.org/cdrb/LENJOY1.htm>.

Dave Warner

I think that is possible that we run the risk of increasing bureaucracy if the government is left to champion sustainability on its own. Ann mentioned yesterday the GVRD Sustainability plan (don't remember the specific name) but this is in fact created by a

building full of bureaucrats. With the potential for the need for more to implement their plans.

Cassandra Caunce

In order to reduce the levels of bureaucracy and make government systems more sustainable perhaps there needs to be a redefinition of the roles at different levels... I couldn't agree more. It's the turn around time in the decision making process that can be a real killer for a simple, yet important project. If it takes too long, the community loses interest. It's hard to keep their attention so it must be used wisely.

Ann Dale

Cassandra, you raise the important point about direct action, perhaps we get the governments we deserve?

Jenny Onyx

No one is talking about Multi-stakeholder round-tables. What are they and what do they have to do with good government?

Dave Ewanishin

Jenny, I believe that non-government governance ultimately governs the government. Yes indeed! Everything from voting to town meetings with all the stakeholders involved help bring back the power to the community.

Ann Dale

Dave, what can overcome plans made by bureaucrats?

Dave Ewanishin

Collaboration among citizen and community groups and a willingness to engage in meaningful dialogue rather than procedural grounds and the delegation of responsibility to elected officials. It is a politics rooted in direct participation by citizens and community groups.

Erin Gorman

Stricter land use planning from the "City" would ensure that the consequences of urban growth would be minimized. Being positioned on a smaller scale the municipal government is in a better position to actually make a difference, educate, and really get their message across. Not only for large cities but Townships, Corporations etc.

Dan Sonmor

No one is talking about multi-stakeholder round-tables. What are they and what do they have to do with good government? Jenny, we touched on this in the Aquaculture assignment with Ann. Bringing in everyone's views is important. But, as I stated before, I feel getting those viewpoints on a one on one basis will bring more truth and honesty to the forefront. Intimidation at a round table is very significant, even when dealing with the most trivial issues, let alone significant ones such as SDS.

Melissa Edwards

Dan, this observation concerning intimidation, advocates an important role for government at the roundtable [Smile]

Ann Dale

One example of how cities like Toronto are beginning to see the necessity for new governance structures: From the Canadian News Wire, September 2003: "It's time for Toronto to have a governance structure that reflects our city's size and complexity," says Elyse Allan, President and CEO of the Toronto Board of Trade. "Regardless of what promises are made by mayoralty candidates, or what the election outcome is, our city won't be able to thrive if the decision-making process remains the same." In a report released today by its City Governance Task Force, the Toronto Board of Trade calls for changes that would radically alter how decisions are made at City Hall. Strong leadership: Effective city governance depends on strong leadership, clear lines of accountability and overall sound management. The Task Force believes this is best accomplished in a structure that empowers the Mayor and an Executive Committee to deliver a vision and a strategic plan for the city. "We're a city of 2.5 million people and we're adrift - we have no direction," says Allan.

Cassandra Caunce

Jenny, multi-stakeholder round-tables are an admission by government that they don't know everything... But really, they are a great tool for getting valued input by concerned

parties, technical or not, on a particular issue. I think they worked really well in the BC Land Resource Management Planning (LRMP) context.

Murray Ball

We have seen this kind of planning process in our community. It does result in addressing local concerns, but there are problems - the process can be dominated by input from groups with large resources (and financial stake in the outcome). Another shortcoming is the tendency to exclude radical ideas due to the compromising nature of the process.

Lori Marchand

I wonder if "good governance" is only as effective as the strength of the community itself?

Dave Warner

What can overcome plans made by bureaucrats?

Ensure that plans aren't made by just the bureaucrats alone but instead multi-stakeholder groups. I think bureaucrats like the GVRD need to be made more accountable to the public. There has been a number of cases where the GVRD has had public consultation on development of a certain plan, only to have the senior bureaucrats throw out all the comments and write the bylaw/plan they wanted in the first place.

Ann Dale

Dave, with your kind permission, I shall use your phrase "a politics rooted in direct participation by citizens and community groups" in my meetings in Ottawa. Or perhaps "a politics influenced by the direct participation of citizens and community groups"? Isn't this dependent on an informed and engaged citizenry?

Dave Ewanishin

Ann, yes, awareness of all the issues for the particular community would have to be presented in a way so that all members of the community would be on the same page. Most likely the simplest form of government would have to be involved being Town Council but also any corporate leaders and or representatives in the community.

Jennifer Maxwell

I believe in the concepts of participatory decision making processes, but question the efficiency in practical applications. Is this being used widely anywhere?

Rae-Ann Shaw

Jennifer, the public consultation process is sometimes required under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act for certain projects.

Jenny Onyx

Jennifer, I don't think it is easy, but yes, there are lots of examples of it in operation, from the village level to the national (Switzerland) to the recent UN initiative WSIS.

Joanne Roach

Here is one of the constraints identified in a paper I read today: • failure to develop a shared ethic – uniting all levels of government and all global communities under a mutually agreed upon goal to manage resources in a sustainable manner.

Reference: <http://www.earthsummit02.org/es/issues/Governance/whatgov1.pdf>

Jenny Onyx

I have problems with this notion of leadership, as Ann knows. What kind of "strong leadership"? When people use that term they usually mean that they intend to get really autocratic. Or else others want them to. What about shared or dispersed leadership?

Cassandra Counce

Jenny, that's a toughie. In my experience, you typically need someone who is the driver of the bus - leading the way in a general direction. If you don't have someone driving, you have everyone arguing over which way to go. Someone has got to have the final word.

Lori Marchand

Just playing the devils advocate here, but at the other end of the spectrum, decentralization, and specialization too for that matter, doesn't that also come into play? A dilution of accountability?

Murray Ball

As Lori pointed out earlier - shared decision-making is only as good as the individuals or community doing the sharing. We still need to worry about autocratic or poorly developed decisions.

Ann Dale

Acceptance of the value of public participation to decision-making is not universal in business or government. Too often, it is "more used as a symbol of an expanded democracy, i.e. for optics, than for its real purpose of contributing to the decision-making process." Evidence is mounting that the Canadians are becoming disillusioned about participation. This is reflected in a 1995 public poll (Ekos, 95) indicating that most citizens want to be consulted on major issues but are cynical about their ability to influence government decisions. A recently released study by the Canadian Policy Research Network supports the findings of others that citizens are dissatisfied with current approaches to public participation. Thoughts?

Rae-Ann Shaw

Ann, I would agree with that statement. For the government, I thought a lot of public participation is undertaken merely to keep them off the 6:00 news.

Dave Warner

In any public consultation process our companies have done we have had great participation at the beginning of hot topics. Day to day topics or issues that take awhile to come to a conclusion end up with people getting bored and the loss of participants.

Cassandra Counce

Initial thoughts are that it is easy to think your vote doesn't make a difference when it's part of such a vast population size. You are more likely to be listened to - attentively - in a smaller community than in a large one. Of course, if you are a parent, you might not think so... *grin* .

Lori Marchand

In response to Ann's question:

That reminds me of the Salmon Aquaculture policy problem (video by Nitya Harris). There are so many stakeholders, and regulatory groups it would make your head spin, yet nobody really has a voice. The research scientist who sent thousands of letters asking the government to address the environmental aspects? First Nations issues? etc. Not to sound negative, but no wonder Canadians don't have confidence in their participation efforts.

Joanne Roach

Ann, what I find discouraging is the vocal minority. Sometimes it is the people with the most tenacity and resources that wield the most influence, not necessarily the ones that have all the facts. This happens continuously on SSI. A public meeting will be crowded with disgruntled members of a specific group and the silent majority is nowhere to be seen. I think this can really lead to lopsided decision making at times.

Cassandra Counce

Joanne, this made me think of "The squeaky wheel gets the grease..." Combined with Dan's comment about presenting your case right, I suppose if you are grumpy enough and cause a big enough kaffuffle (that's a technical term) someone will listen to you to make you go away. Isn't that what kids do? Scream until they get what they want? Maybe we should just take a more simplistic approach to getting attention.

Joanne Roach

You're right about squeaking, but what makes me the most irritated is that they don't take the time to gather facts, they base decisions on heresay (small island) and when they come to a meeting to get things clarified, they don't necessarily believe what they are being told. A lot of mistrust.

Ann Dale

Am I hearing shared decision-making?

Jennifer Maxwell

I think it is more than shared decision-making. What is needed is a process that addresses divergent interests. There can also be conflicts between different sustainable development priorities. For example, on the one hand, land can be preserved to maintain biodiversity, or cleared for agriculture to feed a hungry population.

Ann Dale

Jennifer, interesting point you bring up--exactly the focus of our current public forum: Kyoto-Governing for a healthy Global Community (www.rrupublicforum.ca).

In that, we look at addressing how the Kyoto Accord will affect global human security, its all an issue of sustainability on one level or another.

Erin Gorman

I see a major government constraint as the method by which they decipher who or what needs help first: industry then the elite then the general public and finally the environment? Good stewardship is often not practiced making these policies and procedures less effective. Something else I wonder about- Is the governments ability to protect our environment and promote a sustainable future restricted by budget and funding cuts?

Dan Sonmor

Erin, If there is one thing I have discovered working for the Feds for the past years is that there is no shortage of funds. All you have to do is present your case right and you will more than likely get your money. Trust me.

Ann Dale

There is a raging debate in Ottawa between parliamentarians and their official over the rights to e-consultation. I have been trying to influence them to move beyond consultation to e-dialogues and increasing citizen literacy on key public policy issues, integrating an educational role with seeking information.

Jenny Onyx

Reflecting on our discussion, I think we have made interesting insights into what should happen, but not how. We need systems in place where government has a clearly

defined and transparent role in facilitating broader consultation/ multi-stakeholder roundtables, but in which the decision is then made by government in a balanced manner. Idealistic I guess and requires integrity.

Lori Marchand

It seems that for sustainability to be achieved the biggest shift of attitude should be from traditional "reactionary" tactics -whoever screams the loudest gets the money- to "proactive" future-contingency planning.

Question 2: What are some new ways of governance for sustainable development?

Ann Dale

We have already begun to discuss some of the solutions, and let's dare to dream here, what are some new ways of governance for sustainable development?

Lori Marchand

Starting from the bottom up, this compendious document contained a plethora of good ideas: Strong Communities: •seek appropriate solutions together •provide people with a sense of belonging & purpose •share a vision and common values •have capable, enterprising leadership •have proactive, inclusive organizations •are resilient and resourceful •manage their own self-determined, sustainable Development Reference: Government of New Zealand, Internal Affairs, A Framework for Developing Sustainable Communities http://www.wri.org/wr-96-97/ud_b4.html .

Cassandra Caunce

I didn't have time to cook much up but here it is:

- effective and timely decision making processes. Sometimes even the basic, most straightforward things that need to be done get stuck in a pile of paper on someone's desk waiting for a rubber stamp.
- community involvement and education – Get the attention of the people in the community and show them the importance of community participation and involvement. We all love to complain about bad government but if you don't make your voice heard on matters you love to complain about in the right forum, how can you expect any changes to be made?
- use existing technology to get the word out and show people the benefits and the ultimate "vision" for the community. Visuals are very powerful especially if produced using 3-D GIS modeling software. If the community knows what is going on, the more

likely you'll get support. Would you buy a car without knowing what make or model it was?

- once a project is completed, continually monitor its progress and effects on the community, don't let it become a memory.
-

Dan Sonmor

True accountability. If decision makers know that they are going to be held accountable for their action (or lack there of), more progressive steps will be made.

Cassandra Cauce

Dan, which goes hand in hand with transparency.

Joanne Roach

...or they may be paralyzed for fear of screwing up? Hopefully not.

Dave Warner

Work together. Maybe we can move towards a system where the public/government/business division becomes increasingly blurred and all work in conjunction towards sustainable development

Joanne Roach

Here are some possible solutions that I gleaned from my readings:

- universal access to credible information and scientific knowledge
- greater participation of civil society in governance
- risk analysis of proposed changes to assess impacts
- creating a diverse toolkit of policies because the solutions may be very complex and many won't be universally applicable
- take small, manageable and affordable steps towards goals

I also think that trust is a factor here. Stakeholders will have to trust each other and believe in the process if they are going to overcome the challenges and reach the goal of ecological governance.

Murray Ball

Research and education are key. We need public money to support both.

Melissa Edwards

Cassandra makes a valid point: "Once a project is completed, continually monitor its progress and effects on the community. Don't let it become a memory".

An ongoing commitment is required, but also the development of indicators to make the dream real.

Cassandra Caunce

If I could just share these two quotes which seems relevant to me in terms of solutions: Experience is a wonderful thing. It enables you to recognize a mistake when you make it again.

Learn from the mistakes of others. You can't live long enough to make them all yourself.

Jennifer Maxwell

Improvement of processes for decision making and action ("the realization of effective processes -- competently operating with sensitivity and effective responsiveness to specific, concrete, human -- including environmental -- concerns, and reflective of fundamental values and principles -- mutual respect, participation, subsidiarity").

Performance measurement for SD:

- integrated government that employs systems perspective
- capacity development for sustainable development at all levels
- multi-sectoral and participatory
- policy-planning-budgeting processes
- advocacy of values and principles –
- "respect, participation, inclusiveness, equity (including, especially, gender equity), subsidiarity, transparency and accountability and of concern for the well-being of all and for the common good".

Reference: United Nations Development Programme. Capacity Development for governance for Sustainable Human Development
<http://magnet.undp.org/cdrb/LENJOY1.htm> .

Rae-Ann Shaw

- enhancing democracy and participation
- overcoming 'sectoralization'
- managing public goods
- tackling distributive aspects avoiding 'short-term-ism'
- articulating government levels and
- sharing knowledge

Reference:

Newsletter of the International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change.

Erin Gorman

Environmental assessments and collaborations between individuals, private sector, governments and First Nations using policy tools such as:

- voluntary actions (group, individual., industry., communities)
 - government expenditure
 - technology sharing, information and awareness
 - implementing environmental initiative programs
 - taxing for environmental implications (ie: fuel)
-

Matthew Paisley

Communities often see their resources being manipulated and abused by third parties, both in the efforts of corporate advancement, and under the umbrella term of “sustainability”. There is an overwhelming sense of loss of both land and resources for the indigenous peoples of the community. There is a sense that their basic human rights are being exploited for reasons that are not in their best interests. They feel unable to cope with long term foreshadowing. In order for sustainable governance to be effect, there must be an empowering of the community at a level that can be felt by the community. Only when they feel that their position has fully been taken into consideration can the community then grow from that position.

Lori Marchand

Matthew, there seems to be confusion surrounding the definition of sustainability, overuse and possible abuse of the term.

Some activities address only one area while others are more comprehensive. If a community focuses only on energy issues, is it really a sustainable community effort or just an energy activity?

Jennifer Maxwell

I think this is key, Lori. We need to use systems thinking in addressing issues and decision-making. We cannot address energy issues without considering the environmental, social and economic implications of each possible option.

Melissa Edwards

Considering that we are dreaming about solutions here, what are some of the ways that this could be achieved?

Cassandra Caunce

Melissa, the first thing that comes to mind is that the steps towards "community empowerment" need to start small and allowed to build over time. Get them warmed up to the idea of participation by doing small things that require little time. Once they see what a difference even the small things can make, the more involved they will get.

Lori Marchand

Well assuming that other sustainabilities already exist, couldn't we avoid reinventing the wheel by following pre-existing examples of sustainability in progress and learn from them? We could then later add to it based on indicators, and it would become a dynamic process? Process of Developing a Sustainable Community: Communities develop sustainability initiatives in many different ways.

Below are seven common procedures that communities often go through as they develop sustainable community efforts:

1. Developing ongoing governance structure for the sustainable community efforts;
2. Creating a sustainable community vision;
3. Setting goals and objectives along with indicators;
4. Developing sustainability guiding principles;
5. Designing and prioritizing potential activities;
6. Choosing and implementing activities; and
7. Evaluating progress and revising activities accordingly.

Reference: <http://www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR8/mr8.ch3.html>

Matthew Paisley

Once a community has deemed that it has reached a comfortable level, branching out may be a scary thing, and one that may be viewed as unnecessary. Only with a long-term sustainability plan that has the realization that expansion and branching out is needed for the situation to become universal, could this growth be achieved.

Dave Ewanishin

Since many communities are different from each other in terms of environmental, economic and social problems it probably doesn't make much sense to go with a one-size fits all method to SD. Each community at the lowest level should band together to design and implement their own SD strategies.

Cassandra Counce

Dave, actually I'm not sure I agree with that. Methods provide a framework to ensure that every consideration has been weighed and evaluated. A basic set of guidelines may help a community reveal a problem they didn't know they had. Methods of evaluation are just tools for getting to the end point.

Jennifer Maxwell

Dave, how do you then integrate them as a whole?

Matthew Paisley

Only as strong as your weakest link. I like it - how sustainable can you be as a whole, when you may have individual sectors/nodes who may not have progressed as far as the rest of the body. Focusing on the individual first would be better for the whole, rather than trying to attack on a large scale

Dave Ewanishin

I guess I should clarify...each individual community would have their own strategy. Granted there would probably be common bonds between town to town, but because they all would have their own issues pertaining to SD, they would have to be community specific. I don't know if integrating one large plan would work.

Jennifer Maxwell

I'm thinking that if it is going to be truly sustainable, the linkages to the larger world have to be made. There are inflows and outflows of people, information, waste, energy, etc.

Ann Dale

Dave, I like your approach, individual community strategies, perhaps 'nested' into regional and national strategies?

Jenny Onyx

Ann, all of which then have to be negotiated and mediated (by government).

Erin Gorman

And apply these to our international obligations and 'keep up our end of the bargain'.

Cassandra Caunce

Clarity is everything. Thanks Dave - that makes sense now and it would work. Nested plans that integrate. But I still think a basic set of guidelines or tools to get the plans completed is essential.

Dave Ewanishin

Cassandra, I think so also, and as Jenny had mentioned these guidelines and or tools (more on the national side) would have to be set by the government. Quite possibly, these communities would also be able to adopt and modify these tool for their specific areas.

Dave Ewanishin

If (like Matt had also mentioned) communities were to start the SD ball rolling for their needs and issues then yes a regional plan nested in a national plan seems like it a good start. Didn't think of it quite like that!

Jenny Onyx

I want to talk about the commons. See Ostrom. The commons, that is those resources that are owned by no-one and freely accessed by a large number of people. Resources held in common for the mutual benefit of all. The "problem of the commons" refers to the "free-loader" effect that is when it is everyone's short-term interest to maximize the use of the commons, thus making the long term unsustainable. The free rider effect is not universal, but occurs most among strangers who have no specific or personal knowledge of other users, who have a short-term interest and who are physically removed from the site.

The problem of the commons can be solved in one of three ways, all of which have problems:

1. removing the commons into public ownership and control by the state.
2. placing it into private ownership and control.
3. maintaining commons control of the commons (ie by the local community). the latter normally is the most sustainable in the long term.

Dave Warner

Jenny, number 1 sounds like a move to communism. The overall concept sounds good.

Cassandra Caunce

Careful Dave...I said a similar thing to my boss once and he told me I could be hanged for making that kind of reference! [Smile]

Lori Marchand

Jenny... "The "problem of the commons" refers to the "free-loader" effect... Do you mean for example, public overuse and abuse of an environmental park?

Jenny Onyx

Lori, the commons refers to anything- yes a public park, a pond of fish, clean air. the more locally defined the commons is, the more likely to get local ownership (buy-in) then the more successful will be local control at a sustainable level.

Lori Marchand

I have experienced that phenomenon first hand, but hadn't made those connections and considered the application to planning communities-accountability.

Ann Dale

"We can act as nested sets of communities and then scale upward, trying to engage people functioning at all levels. Those are communities of citizens, really-but ones with different roots in scholarship, business, government and non-government enterprise. If Shell Oil can invent ways to open their visions of the future, and British Petroleum can begin strategic subsidy of untraditional energy supplies, surely small groups of scholars and government and citizen groups can invent experiments with them outside each of their own organizational constraints" (Holling).

Ann Dale

One of the students I am supervising is trying to develop a business plan for a not-for-profit group. It is mired, however, in competing visions of what should happen to that particular land. I said "why not devolve the decisions, if a volunteer has a vision, is prepared to lead it, and find the money to implement it, why disempower them? Perhaps we need to develop more organic ways to make decisions, that allow for spontaneity, emergent actions and yes, there will be failures, but how else do you learn? But how to scale that up to national levels?"

Joanne Roach

I would think that activities and policies that increase social capital would help to promote public participation. Also, making sure that basic needs (water food shelter employment health care education) are met through effective policy would give citizens a comfortable place to start from.

Dan Sonmor

Joanne, well said. Unless people are comfortable where they are, they won't give a rats ass on where the world is heading.

Melissa Edwards

This again reiterates the point that individual empowerment is the first step towards sustainable solutions. We have to start with small strategies in our own lives and spread awareness to everyone that we know within all our communities of practice.

Joanne Roach

I feel that my individual empowerment has increased dramatically from taking this course (education) and I am starting to become more comfortable discussion environmental issues in my spheres

Dave Warner

Ann, I agree that traditional decision-making needs to be revised. The problem at the national level and getting a change is that we have politicians trying to get re-elected and currently this might be political suicide. Maybe it gets back to the grass roots and needing to educate people to change the whole process from the bottom up.

Murray Ball

Fees on movement of speculative capital - the Tobin tax will move power closer to those who are affected by (financial) decisions.

Cassandra Counce

Dan, well said indeed! I think convenience plays a role too. If it's too hard, it won't get done. I.e. My mom to this day still doesn't use her blue box. Too much work, she says. Any ideas on how to conquer the lazy?

Rae-Ann Shaw

Unfortunately not. We had enough trouble trying to implement a multi-material recycling program in the office.

Ann Dale

Cassandra, perhaps you can tell your Mum she is doing it for her children and her grandchildren.

Cassandra Caunce

Ann, no dice. I've tried everything right down to setting up a little bin system for her and offering to come over once a week to haul it out. Still too much work, according to her. She doesn't see the benefit in doing it. Never fear, I haven't given up yet! I'm just as stubborn as she is! [Smile]

Ann Dale

I believe we know enough to act know, we have enough science, we have enough information, but we have a profound implementation gap, and a social problem, we need to allow new ways of organizing our institutions and ourselves, of making decisions.

Dan Sonmor

I believe Jenny has certainly touched on this. There needs to be a shift in the basic way of thinking. Going in the current direction along the same thought lines will not lead us into any new age of sustainability but only down a path of continual searching for ways to make a change.

Matthew Paisley

Cassandra, I'm not lazy - I'm only one person - what can I do? Maybe the focus should not be to show that one person can make a difference, but that we are not just one person. We are in fact part of a community - from the family level to the national level. Making change from ourselves does make change beyond ourselves

Melissa Edwards

Matthew, yet again it is about individual awareness, but the recognition that we each contribute to the greater whole. Sustainable solutions empower the individual and at the same time make us accountable to the web.

Lori Marchand

"I believe we know enough to act know, we have enough science, we have enough information, but we have a profound implementation gap, and a social problem, we need to allow new ways of organizing our institutions and ourselves, of making decisions." ... Ann, just wondering...that sounds great but I have to admit sometimes

there is a part of me that wonders if it is really possible to overcome human nature, and our tendency not to address problems unless we absolutely have to, here in such an affluent nation? Do you think that change is more often motivated by necessity? And many Canadians just don't see the necessity yet? Not enough global warming catastrophes, haven't run out of natural gas yet?

Jennifer Maxwell

In order for sustainable development to become a reality in developed countries such as Canada, accustomed to levels of consumption beyond the capacity of the Earth to support over the long term, social norms have to change. Materialism has got to go. Do governments have a role here? Do they have the "power?"

Cassandra Counce

I think they do and this is where tax shifting would come into play. Tax the heck out of the stuff that isn't truly needed. Materialism will probably never go as it goes hand in hand with greed.

Lori Marchand

Not only convenience and lethargy, but affluence, abundance and standard of living. If you tell someone in Calgary that they can remove themselves from the coal electricity grid and move over to wind, they almost always respond, but then I would have to pay \$5 more? No thanks. Many of us like to look at price as the bottom line, without taking into consideration the true cost.

Melissa Edwards

Jennifer, I would exercise a little precaution with this idea. The idea of corporate sustainability is not to end production, but to recreate innovative techniques to reduce the impact upon the natural and human environment. We still live within an economic paradigm that support the notion of production and hence a need for a degree of materialism.

Lori Marchand

In other words the Canadian economy would collapse if there were no materialism.

Cassandra Caunce

I don't know about collapse but it would put a seriously large dent in it! Why? Because we are natural resource based. Base line products needed for base line life. I.e. lumber, metal for housing

Dave Warner

Here's a thought: Do we need a major collapse of our current systems in order to attain the desired outcome of new ways of thinking, new decision making, new economies?

Ann Dale

And perhaps because we are always searching for the big solutions, and value the complex over the simple, that we miss the simple steps that can empower and bring about a cascade of change for sustainable development?

Murray Ball

Are round tables and e-Dialogues these simple things?

Dave Warner

I wouldn't feel those are the simple things. Education and implementation in my mind is the simple step that often gets overlooked.

Melissa Edwards

Dave, exactly, the point that I wanted to discuss. There are already ways that we are trying to work within the current systems to increase accountability and transparency to essentially reduce the impact of the capitalist system on society and the environment. A perfect example is the GRI. Recently, in Australia, a conglomeration of Not - for - profit organizations formed an umbrella watchdog organization to monitor business activities and in particular company reporting. Another development is Ecological economics, which is seeking to account for environmental costs within the economic system. I think I could go on with examples...there does not have to be a recreation of the system, but a reconceptualization of the mechanisms through which it operates.

Joanne Roach

Ann, so one of the barriers to implementation is that overwhelming feeling of trying to tackle the whole thing at once, with one act? I also think that people need to see risk assessments to show them the impacts of their actions/inactions. Perhaps the government can provide more information in this area.

Cassandra Caunce

It's hard to break down a problem into manageable pieces when it is so complex and large scale. Even if you reduce the scale, it can still be a complex problem. Not only that it is much easier to talk about taking action on such a large scale than to walk out the door and actually get your hands dirty doing what needs to be done. It relates back to the "I'm just one person" complex.

Jennifer Maxwell

Based on Melissa's comments, how is that accountability asserted at the individual level? This reminds me of a time when as I sat in traffic at a familiar stop light, the young man in the car (a Jaguar to boot!) threw some garbage from McDonald's out the sun roof. I was so enraged that I put the car in park (still red light) and got out and picked up the garbage ensuring that he saw me do it. I also told him that I found his action unacceptable. I think we have a responsibility to hold ourselves and each other to standards of conduct that support sustainability.

Ann Dale

I would like to wrap up now. I listened to Martin Luther King's speech on the radio last week, I have a dream, and the subsequent analysis about how this speech changed the world--one speech. Any last comments?

Dan Sonmor

I can't remember who said it, but "the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step". Anyone willing to start walking?

Matthew Paisley

Thank you, everyone, for this dialogue. If nothing else, It caused me to think on my feet, and to innovatively support a position. We can all see that taking care of this planet will be necessary if we want it to take care of us. We need to define where we are, where

we want to be, and how to get there. We are not islands, but we must start small before trying to fix things on the large scale. Then, we can branch out and create a web of commonality.

Jenny Onyx

I would like to thank everybody for allowing Melissa and I to take part in this e-dialogue. I agree that it is potentially a very powerful thinking and learning tool. For myself, I have come to a better understanding of the idea of "nesting communities" within some sort of larger structure. And of course it is becoming more and more apparent that reconciliation is where it is all at! Good luck in your course everyone and good-bye.

Cassandra Counce

Yes, Dan. We've got to start somewhere. I think I'll start with my family. Wouldn't all these ideas be a handy Christmas present? A step away from materialism...

Ann Dale

Thank you, EM322, and thank you to our Australian panel, Jenny Onyx and Melissa Edwards. Another time, another place and another space. It's been an excellent dialogue!

Melissa Edwards

I agree, it has been an excellent learning experience for me in terms of "on-the-spot" thinking, and I have learnt a lot from all of you. Hopefully, if enough people continue to engage with this dialogue we will start to not only develop but actively implement systems.