Discussion Resources

for a Sustainable Future

Local Libraries: Global Awareness

A partnership of

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Discussion Resources for a Sustainable Future
Local Libraries: Global Awareness

INTRODUCTION

Librarians have always been gatekeepers to the world for their communities, whether in the library's collections, research or programming, and they now bear a responsibility to widen the partially opened door for people of all ages toward a fuller awareness of our global home.

As the 21st Century dawns, there are not only movements toward expanding democratization and the accelerating integration of a global economy, but also conditions of persistent poverty, widening disparity and inequity, depleting resources, a degrading environment, and all-too-frequent recourse to violence. In light of these challenges and opportunities, the concept of **sustainable development** provides a global vision for forging a more just, humane and ecologically benign future.

First defined in Our Common Future, a 1987 report to the General Assembly of the United Nations, sustainable development is "*development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.*" This definition stresses the interrelationship of the three concepts of **environmental protection, economic/political development,** and **social equity** and has permeated not only the UN system, but national and local governments and major corporations as well.

The Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and special UN sessions in June 1997 provided assessments of the status of sustainability around the world. In this country the President's Council on Sustainable Development released its major report, Sustainable America, in 1996 and is planning a *National Summit on Sustainable Development* in Detroit for early 1999. Local cities and towns have joined nonprofit groups in promoting sustainable communities across the nation.

This discussion guide seeks to provide public and school librarians with a variety of practical resources for contributing to the public's understanding of major global trends and relationships that affect our local communities as well. The concern for a future that is sustainable is shared by peoples around the world.

This guide has three sections: 1. Suggested Readings, 2. Supplemental Videos, 3. Study Circle Handbook: A Manual for Study Circle Discussion Leaders, Organizers, and Participants.

1. Suggested Readings

These readings are suggestive and can easily be replaced by your own preferences. These were selected by the Global Awareness Team to reflect a wide variety of topics that might appeal to

library goers across the country. Issues span life style choices that individuals might consider, as well as public policy and economic decisions. Readings were also selected to reflect multiple perspectives and a variety of sources, print and Internet alike. Please note that the *Public Opinion Poll: Views of Foreign Aid* in the third section of readings can be used to start the discussion of that section. It can also be used as a poll with your library's general public as a way to generate interest in the discussion series. Local respondents can then compare their answers with the responses from the national surveys, as provided.

2. Supplemental Videos

These videos were originally previewed and included in this project's central publication. *Local Libraries: Global Awareness – A Librarian's Guide to Global Programming for a Sustainable Future* was published by the American Library Association as a 16 page insert in the June/July 1998 issue of *American Libraries*. The videos are included here because they can supplement a discussion series based on readings.

3. Study Circle Handbook: A Manual for Study Circle Discussion Leaders, Organizers, and Participants

This manual, reprinted with the permission of the Study Circles Resource Center, provides excellent suggestions for anyone who wants to organize a public discussion series. The manual distinguishes between the *series organizer* and the *discussion leader* so that if you are not comfortable leading the discussion groups, you might still be encouraged to initiate the use of these resources in your local setting.

This is a working draft of the *Discussion Resources for a Sustainable Future.* A final version will be available on line from ALA at http://www.ala.org/work/international/ or from Global Learning, Inc. at http://viconet.com/~schnarr/global.htm. It will also be available in hard copy for a limited time from the ALA International Relations Office at 50 East Huron Street, Chicago, IL 60611.

Jeffrey L. Brown
Project Director
June 1998

Discussion Resources for a Sustainable Future
Suggested Readings

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YEARNING FOR BALANCE – helps to begin where people are/might be and then move out to sustainable development as a possible response to this "yearning."

What is Sustainable Development? -- an overview

FROM ONE EARTH TO ONE WORLD – excerpts from Our Common Future, the seminal report from the United Nations on sustainable development

WHAT DO HUMAN RIGHTS HAVE TO DO WITH ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION? EVERYTHING -- links environment with equity issues, giving examples from around the globe.

II. ECONOMICS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT 1997 excerpts – gives a hopeful picture of changes that have been made and what needs to get done for a better global future.

CITIES ON THE BRINK – gives global examples of challenges and hopeful responses.

A GLOBAL GAME OF WINNERS AND LOSERS – some of the tensions of globalization

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III. U.S. GOVERNMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AROUND THE WORLD

PUBLIC OPINION POLL: VIEWS ON FOREIGN AID – introductory activity for discussion group

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INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS STRATEGIC OVERVIEW & FY 1998 INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS BUDGET – a brief foreign policy overview and breakdown of expenditures from U.S. Department of State's strategic plan

FOREIGN ASSISTANCE – a progressive critique

SHARPENING THE TOOLS OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY – a conservative critique

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A VISION OF COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY: MODEL PRINCIPLES – focuses on sustainable communities as local options for citizen action

CITY OF PORTLAND SUSTAINABLE CITY PRINCIPLES – at work on the streets since 1994

POLITICS FOR A HUMANE, SUSTAINABLE FUTURE – succinct yet visionary view of political action

PRINCIPLES OF A SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY – a thoughtful, philosophical statement

THE EARTH CHARTER – a philosophical introduction to one global movement (Earth Charter Project in Costa Rica)

WHAT YOU CAN DO – can be used as either a handout after the above readings, or as a total group reading to be discussed after the above readings.

I: THE SEARCH FOR BALANCE:

A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Sustainable America

A New Consensus for Prosperity, Opportunity, and a Healthy Environment for the Future

The President's Council on Sustainable Development

In June 1993, when President Clinton created the President's Council on Sustainable Development, he asked us to find ways "to bring people together to meet the needs of the present without jeopardizing the future." He gave us a task that required us to think about the future and about the consequences of the choices this generation makes on the lives of future generations. It is a task that has caused each of us to think about human needs, economic prosperity, and human interactions with nature differently than we had before.

No one can predict the future--how people will live, or what exactly they will need--but it is possible to foresee the likely effects of some of today's decisions and to make choices that honor the interests of present and future generations. In the nearly three years of the Council's work, in our meetings across the country, we heard concern that despite America's great wealth, power, and technological prowess, Americans cannot assume that the future of their children's lives will be better than the present. Those who met with us see, as we do, trends that lead in troubling directions and opportunities that must soon be seized or lost.

We view this challenge with considerable optimism because the potential benefits of knowledge are essentially inexhaustible; because global attention to developing sustainably is growing; and because many communities, companies, and individuals are independently taking first steps toward responding to the need for change.

But optimism is not complacency. Opportunities for change and anecdotes of progress do not by themselves redirect global trends. There are substantial obstacles to overcome that require conscious and concerted action, sometimes by government, sometimes by the private sector, or sometimes by citizens in communities or as individuals--but often, all sectors need to be actively involved. The recommendations in this report are not only for government, but also for the private sector and citizens since government by itself cannot overcome apathy, spur innovation, or inspire new values....

National Goals Toward Sustainable Development

The following goals express the shared aspirations of the President's Council on sustainable Development. They are truly interdependent and flow from the Council's understanding that it is essential to seek economic prosperity, environmental protection, and social equity together. The achievement of any one goal is not enough to ensure that future generations will have at least the same opportunities to live and prosper that this generation enjoys: all are needed.

Goal 1: Health and the Environment

Ensure that every person enjoys the benefits of clean air, clean water, and a healthy environment at home, at work, and at play.

Goal 2: Economic Prosperity

Sustain a healthy U.S. economy that grows sufficiently to create meaningful jobs, reduce poverty, and provide the opportunity for a high quality of life for all in an increasingly competitive world.

Goal 3: Equity

Ensure that all Americans are afforded justice and have the opportunity to achieve economic, environmental, and social well-being.

Goal 4: Conservation of Nature

Use, conserve, protect, and restore natural resources--land, air, water, and biodiversity--in ways that help ensure long-term social, economic, and environmental benefits for ourselves and future generations.

Goal 5: Stewardship

Create a widely held ethic of stewardship that strongly encourages individuals, institutions, and corporations to take full responsibility for the economic, environmental, and social consequences of their actions.

Goal 6: Sustainable Communities

Encourage people to work together to create healthy communities where natural and historic resources are preserved, jobs are available, sprawl is contained, neighborhoods are secure, education is lifelong, transportation and health care are accessible, and all citizens have opportunities to improve the quality of their lives.

Goal 7: Civic Engagement

Create full opportunity for citizens, businesses, and communities to participate in and influence the natural resource, environmental, and economic decisions that affect them.

Goal 8: Population

Move toward stabilization of U.S. population.

Goal 9: International Responsibility

Take a leadership role in the development and implementation of global sustainable development policies, standards of conduct, and trade and foreign policies that further the achievement of sustainability.

Goal 10: Education

Ensure that all Americans have equal access to education and lifelong learning opportunities that will prepare them for meaningful work, a high quality of life, and an understanding of the concepts involved in sustainable development.

Source: Sustainable America. President's Council on Sustainable Development, Washington, DC, 1996.

Yearning for Balance

Views of Americans on Consumption, Materialism, and the Environment

This report, prepared by The Harwood Group, was commissioned by the Merck Family Fund as part of a broad, long-term effort to examine patterns of consumption in the United States and the consequences of those patterns for our society and the environment. The Fund's interest in the culture of consumerism and American lifestyles was sparked by a growing concern that the nation is on an unsustainable path--one that robs resources from future generations, generates far too much waste, and undermines community and family life for many Americans.

Yearning for Balance is a report of citizen perspectives on the issue of consumption. It is based on a series of focus group discussions and a national survey designed to allow Americans to frame the issue for themselves--to describe the concerns, beliefs, and values they bring to bear in thinking about the role of consumption in their lives and in our society.

In January 1995, The Harwood Group conducted four focus groups across the country--in Dallas, Los Angeles, Indianapolis, and Frederick, Maryland--with Americans from all walks of life. We listened as people talked together about their concerns, and how those concerns are shaped by our patterns of consumption. We listened for the language people use, the values they emphasize, and the hopes, fears, and aspirations they share around this set of issues.

We then developed and conducted a national public opinion survey--a survey framed by the expressed concerns and language of citizens themselves, rather than solely that of experts or advocates. This survey, taken in February 1995, provides a statistical portrait of how Americans are thinking today about a wide range of issues connected to consumption, the environment and the values and priorities of our society. Together, the survey and focus groups constitute a rough map of the political landscape that anyone who wishes to work on these issues should consider.

Four key findings emerged as we explored people's concerns in the focus groups and survey:

1. **Americans believe our priorities are out of whack.** People of all backgrounds share certain fundamental concerns about the values they see driving our society. They believe materialism, greed, and selfishness increasingly dominate American life, crowding out a more meaningful set of values centered on family, responsibility, and community. People express a strong desire for a greater sense of balance in their lives--not to repudiate material gain, but to bring it more into proportion with the non-material rewards of life.

2. **Americans are alarmed about the future.** People feel that the material side of the American Dream is spinning out of control, that the effort to keep up with the Joneses is increasingly unhealthy and destructive: "The Joneses is killing me," declared a man in one focus group. People are particularly concerned about the implications of our skewed priorities for children and future generations--they see worse trouble ahead if we fail to change course.

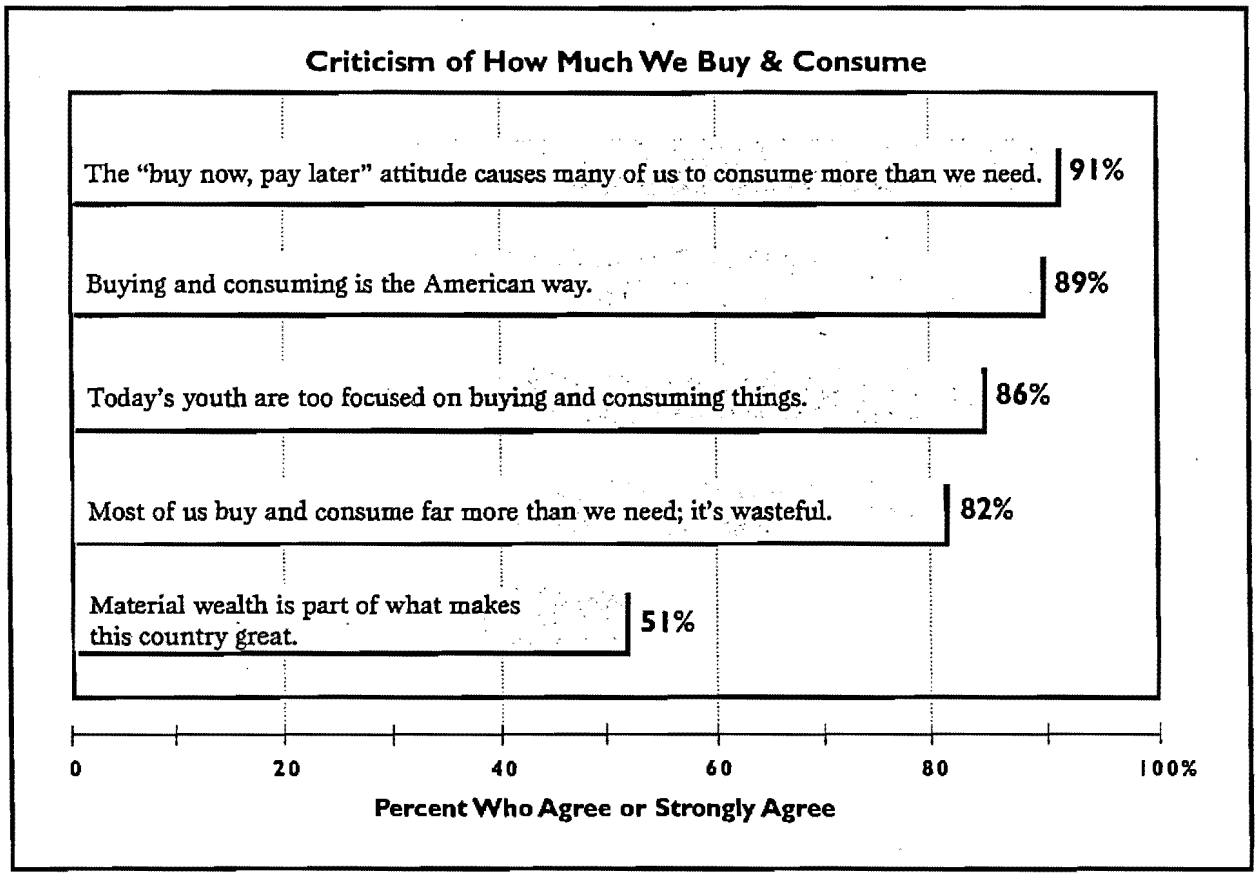
3. **Americans are ambivalent about what to do**. Most people express strong ambivalence about making changes in their own lives and in our society. They want to have financial security and live in material comfort, but their deepest aspirations are non-material ones. People also struggle to reconcile their condemnation of other Americans' choices on consumption with their core belief in the freedom to live as we choose. Thus, while people may want to act on their concerns, they are paralyzed by the tensions and contradictions embedded in their own beliefs. In turn, they shy away from examining too closely not only their own behavior, but that of others.

4. **Americans see the environment as connected to these concerns--in general terms**. People perceive a connection between the amount we buy and consume and their concerns about environmental damage, but their understanding of the link is somewhat vague and general. People have not thought deeply about the ecological implications of their own lifestyles; yet there is an intuitive sense that our propensity for "more, more, more" is unsustainable.

People are struggling to find a vocabulary that captures their concerns. Indeed, one obstacle to moving forward on the issue of consumption is language. People share a sense of what the problem is but have trouble agreeing on what to call it. "Consumption" as a word has little public resonance. In the focus groups, most people eventually agreed on the word *materialism* as a useful catchall term. Others preferred terms such as *consumerism*, *selfishness*, and/or *waste*.

Meanwhile, there seems to be a latent consensus that we need to alter our priorities and behavior, but there are obvious tensions and ambivalence embedded in people's views. Americans want change, both to achieve more balanced lives and a cleaner environment for their children, but they are nervous about the implications of taking action and skeptical that others are willing to be part of the solution. To embark on a course of sustainable action, people will need an opportunity to discuss these issues with others, to work through their ambivalence, and to forge a sense of common purpose. The citizens we interviewed for this report have given us some starting points from which to begin that process.

Merck Family Fund
Takoma Park, MD
1995



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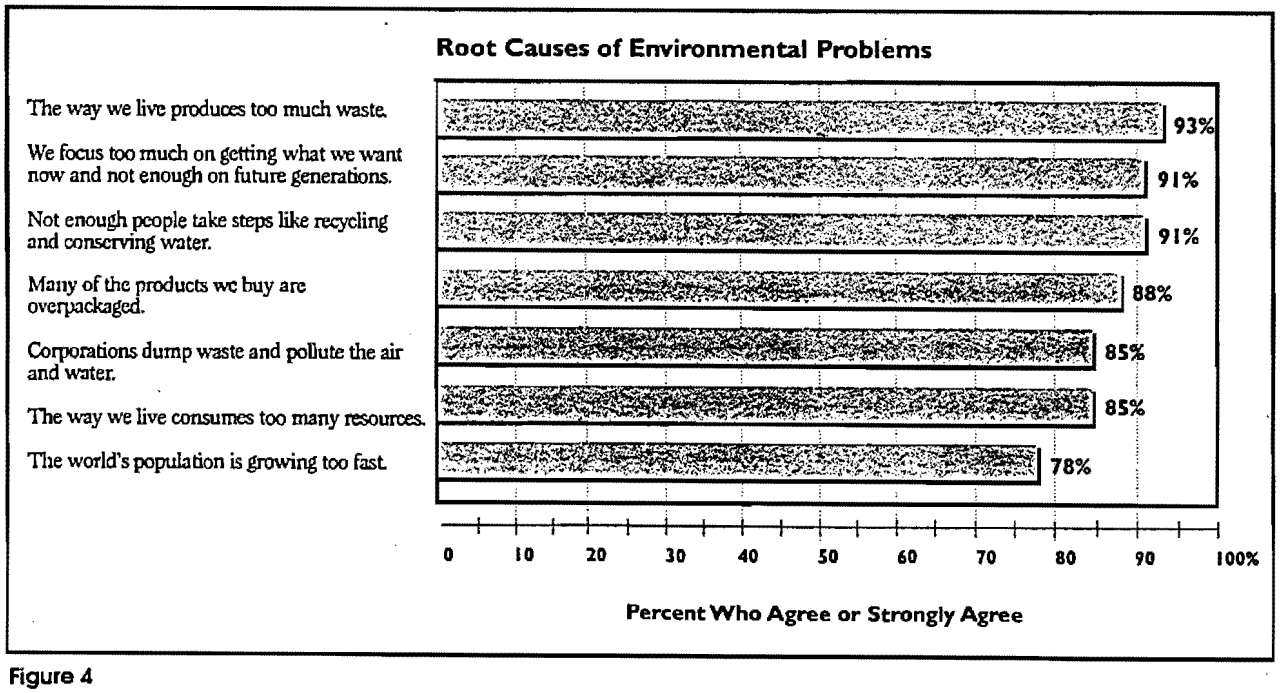

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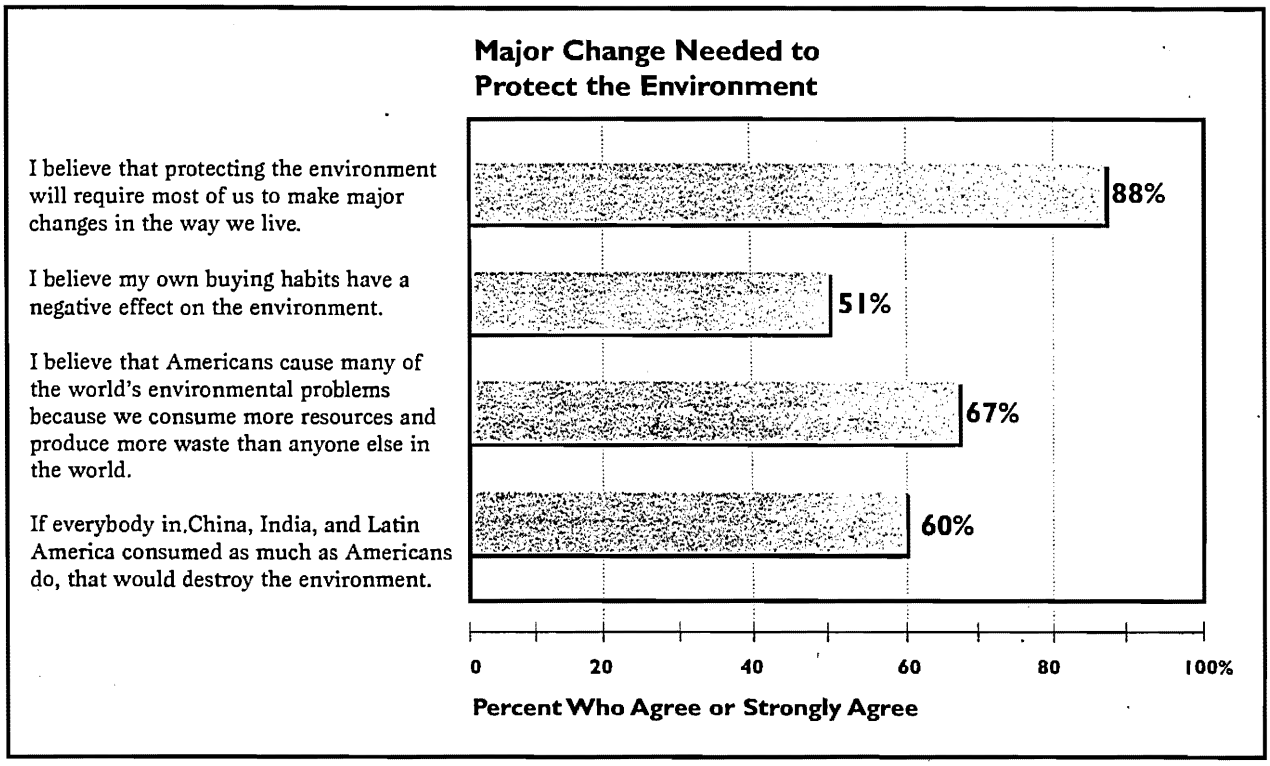

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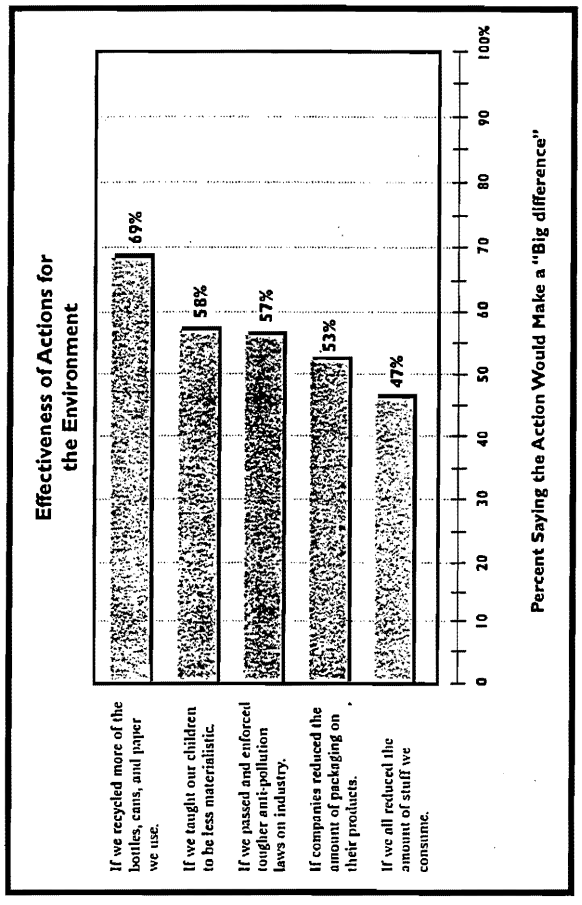

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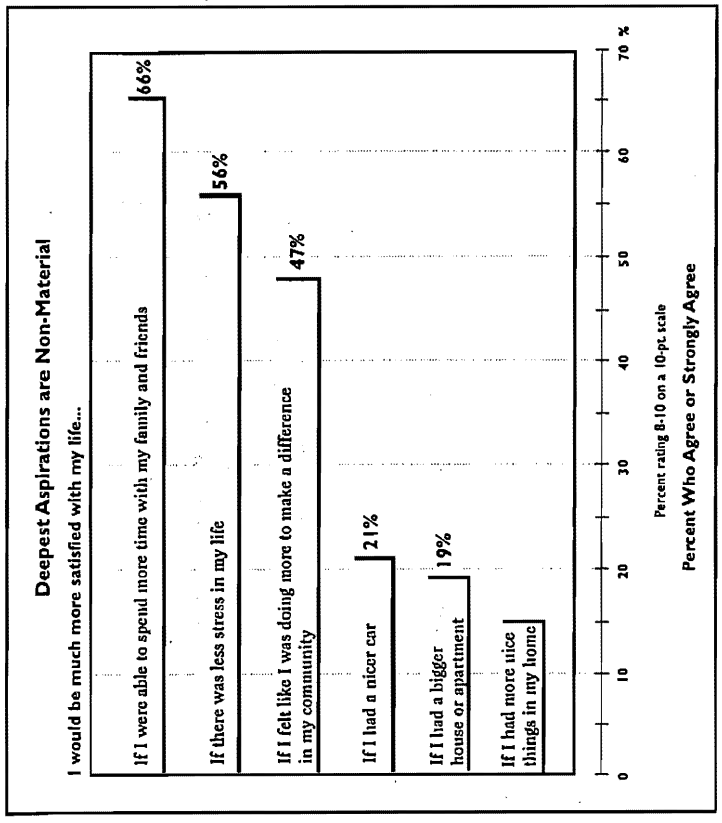

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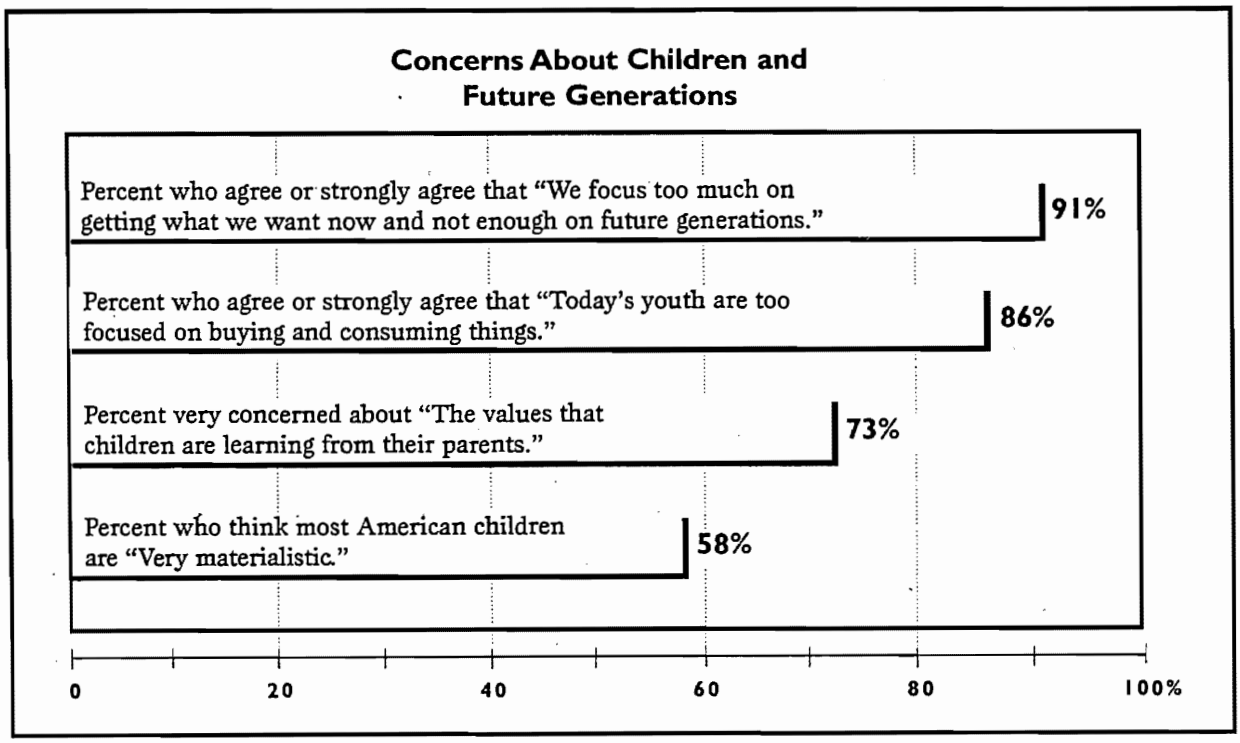

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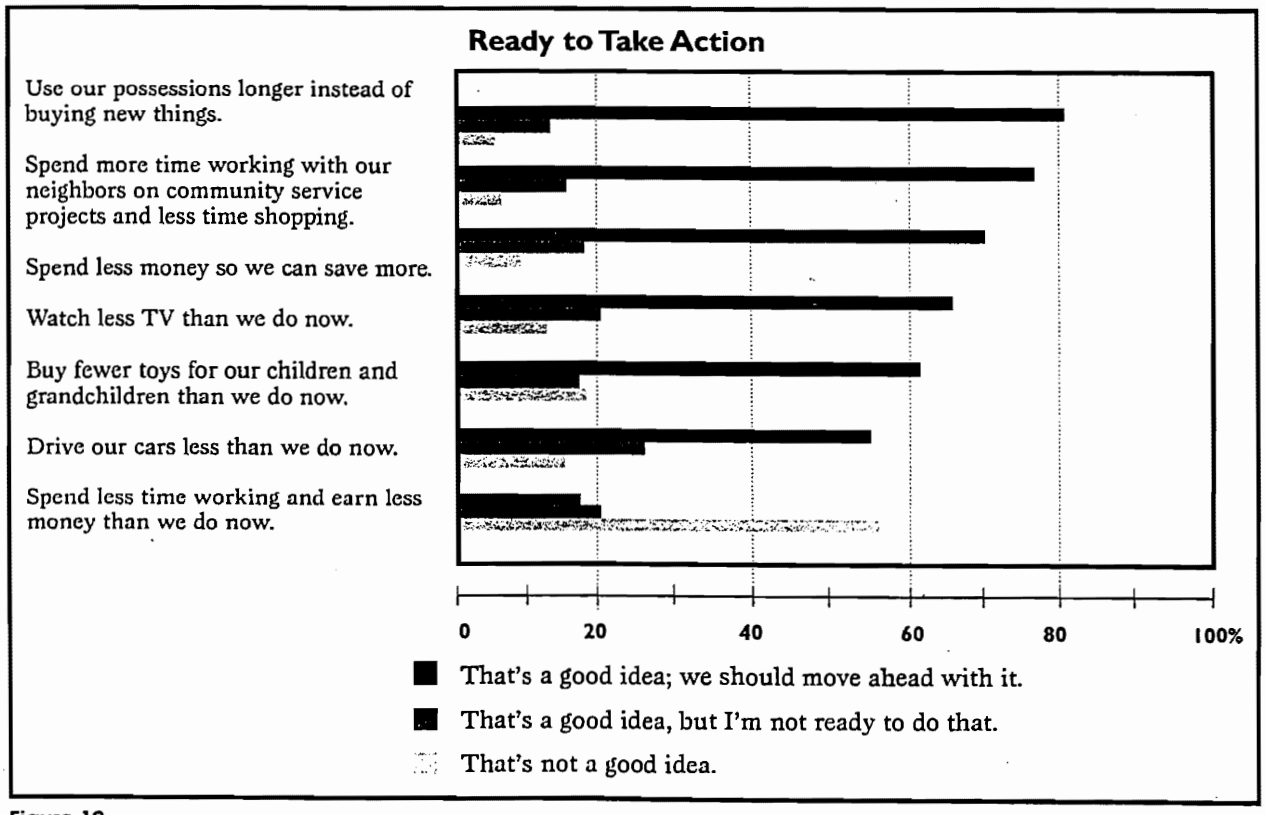


Figure 10

What Is Sustainable Development?

Jeffrey Brown, Global Learning, Inc.

We were camping that summer, 30+ years ago, when we crossed into Mexico and headed for the open air markets. The three legged stools with their hand tooled leather seats were a great buy. The sturdy walnut stained legs were cleverly joined in the middle by three interlocked eyes about the size of your index finger looped to the base of your thumb. And they folded up compactly for the ride home in the back of a VW Bug. The only problem was, when we got back to the campground, those legs didn't seem to want to stand for me anymore. I twisted them this way, then that and only occasionally did I accidently discover the mysterious interconnections among them that would re-create the functional seat.

These three-legged Mexican stools came to mind after I heard someone describe the concept of sustainable development as a three-legged stool. At first I pictured a wooden stool with "sustainable development" neatly lettered in a big circle around the seat. In my mind, each wooden leg was fixed in place with dowel braces between them, and each leg was labeled with the three essential elements of sustainability -- the environment, economic development, and social equity. But as I considered the tensions among these three elements, I realized this picture was too neat and static. My somewhat inept struggle to get the Mexican three-legged stools to interlock in a supportive fashion seemed a more accurate description of the interactions among the environment, development and equity within the context of sustainability.

The generally accepted definition of sustainable development has survived more than a decade since the UN's Commission on Environment and Development first promulgated it -- "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs." The Earth Summit in Rio in 1992 was a five year temperature check on the UN's and member states' progress toward that goal. And each of the other five major global conferences since then has referenced sustainable development in one shape or form.

Most of the debate about sustainable development seems to revolve around whether or not the three legs of the stool indeed can be put together, or whether one or another of the legs is receiving adequate attention. Some people claim that sustainable development is an oxymoron. They critique the North's industrial economies and highly consumptive life styles as incorrigible assaults on the integrity of Mother Earth. They feel that people who talk about sustainable development are kidding themselves. Industrialized society is such an evil and is having such a negative impact on the ecosystem and on a majority of human beings within it that industrialized development cannot be salvaged. It must be scrapped, and we should start over with something smaller scale and more "appropriate."

A second critique holds that sustainable development is either too environmentally or too business oriented; not enough attention is paid to the needs of poor people and those most adversely affected by environmental impacts, who, in this society, usually are ethnic/racial minorities. These critics usually propose "people-

centered" development as an alternative to large infrastructure projects like huge dams or highways.

So-called "Third World" countries from the global South have reacted negatively to the issue of conditionality. They claim that sustainable development is a dangerous imposition of more conditions to be placed on aid and investments from industrialized countries. Even though official development aid is at its lowest point since 1970 as a percentage of GDP (gross domestic product) among the G7 countries, private investment is transforming parts of the South. It has nearly quadrupled since 1990, reaching approximately $170 billion in 1996. And recipient countries do not want the industrialized North to attach more restricting strings on either aid or investment in the guise of environmental protection.

The term "development" itself is a problem. To many it suggests a western, ethnocentric view of a belief in ongoing progress; this linear view of history clashes with other cultural views of history, e.g., circular or spiraling worldviews. Thus these critics propose alternative language, such as sustainable *communities,* because community is a central building block of societies in all their diversity.

Despite these critiques, we at Global Learning have decided to continue to use the term sustainable development in our educational work. It is a concept accepted by a majority of nations in the world & the UN system. Primary source materials are available in abundance, and the fact that Brazil or Bangladesh is wrestling with sustainability just as the U.S. is helps establish local-global connections for students. For example, as a follow-up to the Earth Summit in Rio, the Clinton administration appointed a President's Council on Sustainable Development with broadbased representation from businesses, environmental organizations, and governmental agencies. Their 1996 report, *Sustainable America: A New Consensus*, affirms, among other things:

> Economic growth, environmental protection, and social equity are linked. We need to develop integrated policies to achieve these national goals.... A growing economy and healthy environment are essential to national and global security....
>
> Finding common values and shared goals is a better way to shape the future than endless reruns of the stale drama of confrontation....We believe that consensus will move America forward both faster and farther than confrontation. Moreover, we believe that consensus is the public's job, not the government's. Government is important in implementing what people agree on, but we all need to do the hard work of listening, learning, and finding common ground.

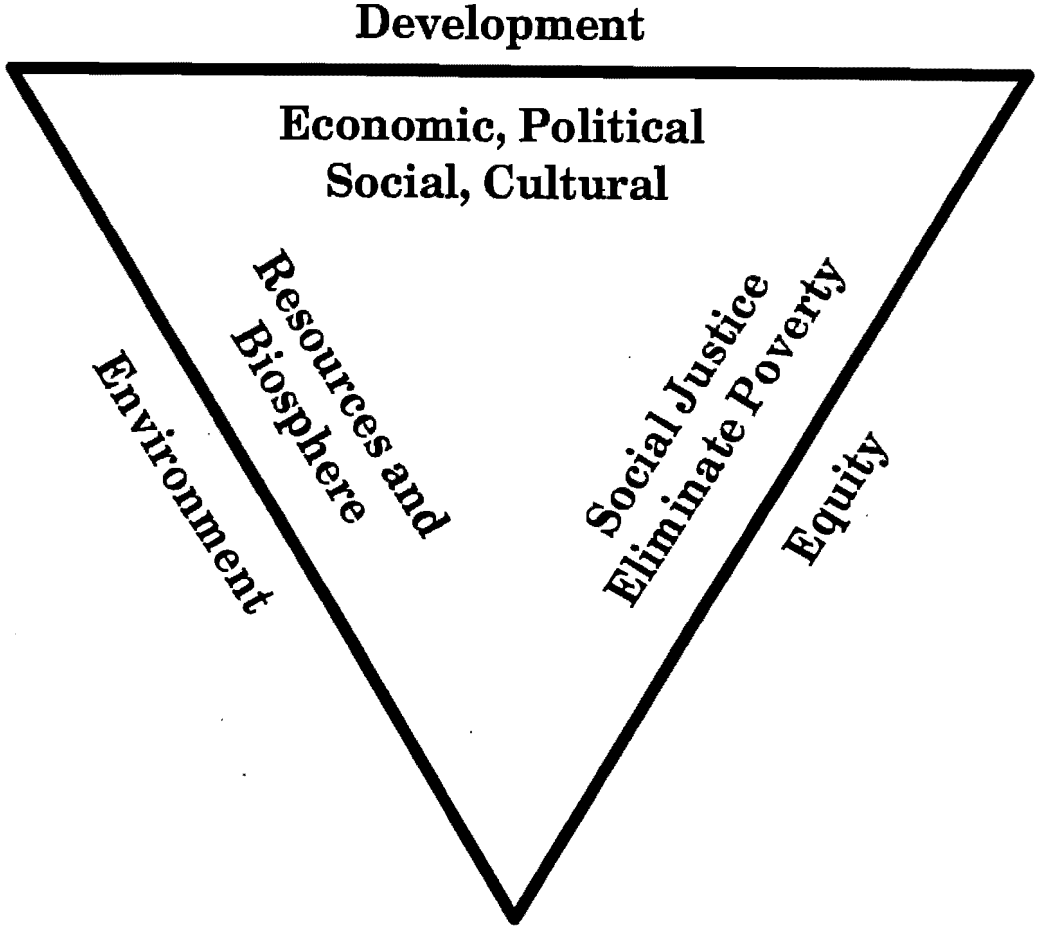
Both nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and government officials here in the State of New Jersey have visited the Netherlands and studied their national "Green Plan" -- another national response to the call for sustainable development -- to learn how we might shift from a command and control approach to environmental protection to more of a consensus and mutual goal-setting process.

We at Global Learning have also seen impressive responses to sustainable development when posed as a challenge. For example, responsible corporations are moving into product life cycle design and redesign,

eliminating hazardous solvents, reducing toxic emissions, and saving millions of dollars in the process. They are also switching to full cost accounting systems to incorporate what had been hidden and less tangible environmental health and safety costs into the economic evaluation of projects and programs. They are evaluating the environmental practices of their suppliers as well. And when businesses *have* polluted their surroundings, community groups have raised the equity issues of fairness, expeditious remedies and disproportionate impacts on people of color.

The elements of sustainable development have challenged and stretched our thinking as we've worked with it over the past decade. We feel we're part of a global community of local citizens, governmental representatives, business executives and union members, environmental professionals and international bureaucrats who are on a stimulating, sometimes frustrating, but always energizing ride of an accelerating learning curve.

What is sustainable development? The full answer's not in yet, and probably never will be. But the direction toward the answer is getting clearer all the time.



FROM ONE EARTH TO ONE WORLD

An Overview by the World Commission on Environment and Development

In the middle of the 20th century, we saw our planet from space for the first time. Historians may eventually find that this vision had a greater impact on thought than did the Copernican revolution of the 16th century, which upset the human self-image by revealing that the Earth is not the center of the universe. From space, we see a small and fragile ball dominated not by human activity and edifice but by a pattern of clouds, oceans, greenery, and soils. Humanity's inability to fit its doings into that pattern is changing planetary systems fundamentally. Many such changes are accompanied by life-threatening hazards. This new reality, from which there is no escape, must be recognized--and managed.

Fortunately, this new reality coincides with more positive developments new to this century. We can move information and goods faster around the globe than ever before; we can produce more food and more goods with less investment of resources; our technology and science give us at least the potential to look deeper into and better understand natural systems. From space, we can see and study the Earth as an organism whose health depends on the health of all its parts. We have the power to reconcile human affairs with natural laws and to thrive in the process. In this our cultural and spiritual heritages can reinforce our economic interests and survival imperatives.

This Commission believes that people can build a future that is more prosperous, more just and more secure. Our report, *Our Common Future*, is not a prediction of ever increasing environmental decay, poverty, and hardship in an ever more polluted world among ever decreasing resources. We see instead the possibility for a new era of economic growth, one that must be based on policies that sustain and expand the environmental resource base. And we believe such growth to be absolutely essential to relieve the great poverty that is deepening in much of the developing world.

But the Commission's hope for the future is conditional on decisive political action now to begin managing environmental resources to ensure both sustainable human progress and human survival. We are not forecasting a future; we are serving a notice--an urgent notice based on the latest and best scientific evidence--that the time has come to take the decisions needed to secure the resources to sustain this and coming generations. We do not offer a detailed blueprint for action, but instead a pathway by which the peoples of the world may enlarge their spheres of co-operation.

A CALL FOR ACTION

Over the course of this century, the relationship between the human world and the planet that sustains it has undergone a profound change.

When the century began, neither human numbers nor technology had the power radically to alter planetary systems. As the century closes, not only do vastly increased human numbers and their activities have that power, but major unintended changes are occurring in the atmosphere, in soils, in waters, among plants and animals, and in the relationships among all of these. The rate of change is outstripping the ability of scientific disciplines and our current capabilities to assess and advise. It is frustrating the attempts of

political and economic institutions, which evolved in a different, more fragmented world, to adapt and cope. It deeply worries many people who are seeking ways to place those concerns on the political agendas.

The onus lies with no one group of nations. Developing countries face the obvious life-threatening challenges of desertification, deforestation, and pollution, and endure most of the poverty associated with environmental degradation. The entire human family of nations would suffer from the disappearance of rain forests in the tropics, the loss of plant and animal species, and changes in rainfall patterns. Industrial nations face the life-threatening challenges of toxic chemicals, toxic wastes, and acidification. All nations may suffer from the releases by industrialized countries of carbon dioxide and of gases that react with the ozone layer, and from any future war fought with the nuclear arsenals controlled by those nations. All nations will have a role to play in changing trends, and righting an international economic system that increases rather then decreases inequality, that increases rather than decreases numbers of poor and hungry.

The next few decades are crucial. The time has come to break out of past patterns. Attempts to maintain social and ecological stability through old approaches to development and environmental protection will increase instability. Security must be sought through change. The Commission has noted a number of actions that must be taken to reduce risks to survival and to put future development on paths that are sustainable. Yet we are aware that such reorientation on a continuing basis is simply beyond the reach of present decision-making structures and institutional arrangements, both national and international.

This Commission has been careful to base our recommendations on the realities of present institutions, on what can and must be accomplished today. But to keep options open for future generations, the present generation must begin now, and begin together.

To achieve the needed changes, we believe that an active follow-up of this report is imperative. It is with this in mind that we call for the UN General Assembly, upon due consideration, to transform this report into a UN Programme on Sustainable Development. Special follow-up conferences could be initiated at the regional level. Within an appropriate period after the presentation of this report to the General Assembly, an international conference could be convened to review progress made, and to promote follow-up arrangements that will be needed to set benchmarks and to maintain human progress.

First and foremost, this Commission had been concerned with people--of all countries and all walks of life. And it is to people that we address our report. The changes in human attitudes that we call for depend on a vast campaign of education, debate, and public participation. This campaign must start now if sustainable human progress is to be achieved.

The members of the World Commission on Environment and Development came from 21 very different nations. In our discussions, we disagreed often on details and priorities. But despite our widely differing backgrounds and varying national and international responsibilities, we were able to agree to the lines along which change must be drawn.

We are unanimous in our conviction that the security, well-being, and very survival of the planet depend on such changes, now.

Source: Our Common Future. NY: Oxford University Press, 1987.

What do human rights have to do with environmental protection? EVERYTHING.

Aaron Sachs

One November day in 1996, a line of logging trucks rumbled into an old olive-growing region of Turkey, near the ancient Pillars of Pergamum. The government-paid loggers had come to clear land for a new gold-mining project sponsored by the French-based conglomerate Eurogold. But they were able to fell only about 2,500 trees before a small group of incensed olive growers got in their way. The stand-off lasted for months, to the increasing annoyance of Eurogold and the Turkish government. Early this April, out rolled the logging trucks and in rolled a line of tanks.

The confrontation had been years in the making. When Eurogold first proposed the mine in 1993, the farmers had been willing to listen. But after preliminary drilling rendered their water undrinkable for four months, they ended negotiations and started protesting. Backed by environmental and human-rights groups in Turkey, Germany, and the United States, the farmers filed a legal appeal and then began to familiarize themselves with cyanide heap-leaching, Eurogold's planned mining technique.

Eurogold, meanwhile, had launched a public-relations campaign designed to convince the farmers that their concerns were backward and outdated. At a public meeting in Ankara, turkey's capital, one company representative even went so far as to claim--falsely--that "an influential group in the United States called the Sierra Club" had recently endorsed the use of cyanide in gold mining. But the farmers quickly rebuffed this and other misleading assertions at meetings of their own, to which they invited the 300,000 people who lived near the mine site, next to the old Asia Minor city now called Bergama. They pointed out, for instance, that Eurogold's "leakproof" tailings pond would in fact be situated on an active fault line. When the olive growers organized a referendum on the mine last year, nine of ten eligible voters in the immediate vicinity turned out. Not one voted in favor of the project.

The farmers were prepared, then, when the tanks descended on Bergama. They immediately countered with a peaceful demonstration that involved 10,000 people and 1,000 tractors. At this point, if the Turkish government had used force to repress citizens exercising their basic civil rights, it would have compromised its claim to democracy. Within days, Turkey's highest administrative court had declared the mine unconstitutional, shutting it down completely.

Given Eurogold's financial resources and the Turkish government's desperation to attract foreign investment, the farmers will probably have further battles to fight. But the court's watershed decision has international implications. The judges ruled that Eurogold's mine violates the provision of Turkey's recently amended constitution that protects every Turk's fundamental right to a healthy, intact environment. They set a precedent, in other words, for regarding pollution not as a matter to be debated among technicians but as an issue of basic human rights.

The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which turns 50 next year, does not mention pollution--environmental contaminants received scant attention in 1948--but it does cover such issues as health, safety, and self-determination. In the wake of World War II and the crimes against humanity perpetrated by the Nazis, the United Nations

established certain rights as inviolable regardless of ethnic, religious, or national heritage. As Javier Perez de Cuellar asserted in 1987 while serving as U.N. secretary-general, international human rights law "has equal relevance and validity for every political or social system and also every cultural tradition. It can truly be said to belong to the peoples of the world."

Since 1948 the health and safety promised in the Universal Declaration have increasingly been secured by environmental laws. And a growing number of today's crimes against humanity are in fact environmental in nature. As mining, logging, oil drilling, and waste-disposal projects push into more and more regions and ecosystems, people all over the world are seeing their basic rights compromised; they are losing their livelihoods, their traditional culture, and even their lives.

Many of the worst cases of ecological damage occur in countries under the control of authoritarian, rights-repressive regimes, where affected communities have no way of holding governments accountable for their actions. In Nigeria, for instance, where oil exports bring in 90 percent of foreign exchange, military ruler General Sani Abacha has sacrificed the health of entire villages to accommodate multinationals like Royal/Dutch Shell, and has responded to protests with violence. Two years ago, the Abacha regime provoked international outrage--though no economic sanctions--by executing the writer/activist Ken Saro-Wiwa, a Nobel Peace Prize nominee, and eight other leaders of the Ogoni people. Saro-Wiwa and his colleagues had committed the crime of documenting the toxic spills and military repression that continue to devastate their oil-rich homeland in the Niger River Delta.

The Turkish olive growers succeeded in blocking Eurogold's mine because they were able to mount the kind of protests that are still impossible in Nigeria. In general, protecting basic civil rights may be the best way we have of ensuring that future generations inherit a planet that is still worth inhabiting.

Upholding human rights can also help victimized communities even after the damage had been done by enabling them to seek financial compensation for the destruction of their resources. While judges in many countries still have few environmental standards on which to base their decisions--what level of which pollutants constitutes contaminated water?--they do have accepted international human-rights standards. And while no court exists to try repressive regimes themselves, it is possible to sue the multinational corporations whose business ventures keep those regimes in power.

Earlier this year, two communities did just that. A group of Burmese citizens, denied due process in their own country, sued the Unocal oil company in California for its involvement in a disastrous natural-gas project in Burma. And a number of Indonesian tribal leaders filed a class action suit on Louisiana against the mining giant Freeport-McMoRan for its actions in their homeland of Irian Jaya.

The case against Unocal involved not only the destruction of tropical forests, wetlands, and mangrove swamps in territories inhabited by the Karen, Mon, and Tavoy peoples, but also human-rights abuses ranging from forced relocation to rape, torture, and murder. While these abuses were not directly perpetrated by Unocal employees, the lawsuit seeks to hold company executives liable for allowing their hosts, Burma's State Law and Order Restoration Council, to conduct a systematic terror campaign against everyone who stood in the path of the pipeline. The suit claims that given SLORC's horrendous human rights record--documented by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the U.S. State Department--Unocal's negotiators must have known what to expect when they asked

SLORC to set up the company's field headquarters and build access and service roads. According to independent observers, SLORC military personnel have murdered peaceful demonstrators and destroyed entire Karen and Mon villages, forcing the inhabitants to break rocks, haul dirt, and cut trees.

The Burmese plaintiffs, represented by a coalition of environmental and human-rights organizations, including EarthRights International and the Center for Constitutional Rights, overcame their first challenge on March 25, when a federal court judge rejected Unocal's argument that the case was outside the court's jurisdiction. Though there has not yet been a final ruling on the suit, the judge's decision set an important precedent for prosecuting multinationals on U.S. soil for actions in other countries that violate international human-rights agreements.

In the Freeport-McMoRan suit, the Indonesian citizens charge that gold and copper extraction at Freeport's Grasberg mine in Irian Jaya has resulted in the daily dumping of about 100,000 tons of rock waste into local rivers, poisoning the water and food supply of several thousand indigenous people. Tom Beanal, leader of the Amungme Tribal Council, first brought this case before a federal court last May. The judge dismissed it, citing the lack of international environmental standards. In an extensive opinion, however, he suggested that the suit focus on the killing of an estimated 2,000 indigenous protesters by Indonesian soldiers, who receive housing, food and transportation from Freeport in return for "security" services. A human-rights approach, the judge wrote, would almost certainly guarantee the court's acceptance of the complaint. Beanal and his lawyer, Martin Regan, have revised and refiled the $6 billion suit and expect it to be heard late this year.

Of course the human-rights approach to environmentalism is most effective when it is integrated directly into development projects, allowing those affected to voice their concerns from the very beginning. Local people who get to participate in relevant decisions and who have access to ecological information are well positioned to act as stewards of the local environment.

This type of community-based development is only a pipe dream in places like Burma, Indonesia, and Nigeria, but it has been extremely successful in other developing countries, where governments were willing to explore alternatives to conventional extraction projects. In the West African nation of Burkina Faso, for instance, and anti-desertification program has dramatically improved the lives of farmers living in 240 marginal villages--mainly because project officers conducted surveys to find out what sort of agricultural assistance the farmers themselves desired. Some farmers ended up using custom-designed irrigation devices; others spread manure composts over previously unfertilized crops. After just a few years, the participants had reclaimed 24,700 acres of formerly unproductive drylands, and the 1,400-pound deficit in the average family's annual food supply had turned into a 300-pound surplus.

Occasionally, though, communities that have already suffered culturally and economically from intrusive development choose to ignore environmentally sound options in favor of what they hope will be quick fix. The Kayapo Indians of the Brazilian Amazon, fed up with both impractical ecological solutions and the government's inability or unwillingness to keep loggers and miners from invading their lands in search of mahogany and gold, have begun selling off extraction privileges for hard cash. Forced to accept mercury poisoning in local rivers and widespread destruction of the rainforest, some Kayapo chiefs decided that they should at least get paid for the loss of their culture.

In the northwestern United States, the Makah Indians have expressed similar frustrations. The Makah's tribal identity was formerly based on whaling culture, but the group stopped hunting 70 years ago, when commercial whaling nearly wiped out the local species. Now the Makah have submitted the proposal to the International Whaling Commission to be granted a yearly aboriginal quota of five gray whales.

Given the comeback of the eastern Pacific gray, whose population now numbers around 20,000, the Makah's request does not seem unreasonable. But some environmentalists--and some traditional Makah--are concerned that granting the tribe's request could result in the widespread resurgence of whaling under the guise of honoring "cultural" traditions. Norway and Japan, traditional whaling nations that oppose the Whaling Commission's ban on whale hunting, are giving the tribal leaders their full support because they believe that the Makah request could yield the precedent they need to resume commercial whaling at full capacity. Meanwhile, there have been reports that the Makah elders who oppose the whaling request have been harassed and told to keep silent by younger tribal leaders. "They've ostracized us," says elder Dotti Chamblin, a descendant of whale-hunting chiefs. "They say they're traditional, but they are not listening to or protecting the elders. And shooting a whale with a machine gun is not spiritual."

Environmental organizations can play a crucial role in resolving such situations by providing conflicted communities with relevant information and alternative development strategies that address both economic and ecological concerns. "I know no safe despository of the ultimate powers of society but the people themselves." Thomas Jefferson wrote, "and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not take it from them, but to inform their discretion." In the case of the Makah, organizations like Greenpeace and the Cousteau Society, while endorsing the community's right to self-determination and its effort to affirm its cultural ties with whales, have proposed whalewatching as an alternative to the hunt; it would strengthen the Makah's maritime traditions as well as provide employment opportunities.

"The environment,"wrote the late Ken Saro-Wiwa in a letter smuggled from his Nigerian jail cell, "is man's first right." Today more and more activists are using this concept not just as a theory but as a practical strategy. Human-rights workers and environmentalists have begun a fruitful partnership, combining the moral authority of human-rights law with the power of ecology to show that each of us is equally dependent on a healthy environment. Recent collaborations between groups like the Sierra Club and Amnesty International mirror the two movements' longstanding cooperation at the local level, where activists have been struggling for years to get vulnerable people more involved in deciding how to use--and protect--the ecosystems upon which they depend. People like the Ogoni in Nigeria, the Amungme in Indonesia, and the olive growers in Turkey are some of the world's most powerful defenders of environmental resources. But they cannot continue their struggles without the basic freedoms of a civil society.

Aaron Sachs is the author of *Eco-justice: Linking Human Rights and the Environment*, World Watch Paper 127 (Washington, D.C.: World Watch Institute, December 1995).

Source: Sierra. Sierra Club, San Francisco, November/December 1997.

II. ECONOMICS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT 1997

United Nations Development Program

Edited Highlights

Human development to eradicate poverty

The great success in reducing poverty in the 20th century shows that eradicating severe poverty in the first decades of the 21st century is feasible. This may seem an extraordinary ambition, but it is well within our grasp. Almost all countries committed themselves to this goal at the World Summit for Social Development in 1995. And many, including some of the largest, have embarked with all the seriousness necessary to achieve it.

Although poverty has been dramatically reduced in many parts of the world, a quarter of the world's people remain in severe poverty. In a global economy of $25 trillion, this is a scandal - reflecting shameful inequalities and inexcusable failures of national and international policy.

Human Development Report 1997 reviews the challenge to eradicate poverty from a human development perspective. It focuses not just on poverty of income but on poverty from a human development perspective - on poverty as a denial of choices and opportunities for living a tolerable life.

The progress in reducing poverty over the 20th century is remarkable and unprecedented . . .

Few people realize the great advances already made. In the past 50 years poverty has fallen more than in the previous 500. And it has been reduced in some respects in almost all countries.

The key indicators of human development have advanced strongly in the past few decades. Since 1960, in little more than a generation, child death rates in developing countries have been more than halved. Malnutrition rates have declined by almost a third. The proportion of children out of primary school has fallen from more than half to less than a quarter. And the share of rural families without access to safe water has fallen from nine-tenths to about a quarter.

These advances are found in all regions of the world. China, and another 14 countries or states with populations that add up to more than 1.6 billion, have halved the proportion of their people living below the national income poverty line in less than 20 years. Ten more countries, with almost another billion people, have reduced the proportion of their people in income poverty by a quarter or more. Beyond mere advances in income, there has been great progress in all these countries in life expectancy and access to basic social services.

The accelerated progress in reducing poverty in the 20th century began in Europe and North America in the 19th century - in what can now be seen as the first Great Ascent from poverty and human deprivation. The ascent started in the foothills of the industrial revolution, with rising incomes, improvements in public health and education and eventually programmes of social security. By the 1950s most of Europe and North America enjoyed full employment and welfare states.

The second Great Ascent started in the 1950s in the

developing countries. The end of colonialism was followed by improvements in education and health and accelerated economic development that led to dramatic declines in poverty. By the end of the 20th century some 3-4 billion of the world's people will have experienced substantial improvements in their standard of living, and about 4-5 billion will have access to basic education and health care. It is precisely these gains that make eradicating poverty not some distant ideal - but a true possibility.

. . . but the advances have been uneven and marred by setbacks - and poverty remains pervasive.

Some stark figures summarize the balance sheet of poverty towards the end of the 20th century:

· More than a quarter of the developing world's people still live in poverty as measured by the human poverty index introduced in this Report. About a third - 1.3 billion people - live on incomes of less than $1 a day.

· South Asia has the most people affected by human poverty. And it has the largest number of people in income poverty: 515 million. Together, South Asia, East Asia and South-East Asia and the Pacific have more than 950 million of the 1.3 billion people who are income-poor.

· Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest proportion of people in - and the fastest growth in - human poverty. Some 220 million people in the region are income-poor. Indeed, the Sub-Saharan and other least developed countries are poverty stricken - and it is estimated that by 2000 half the people in Sub-Saharan Africa will be in income poverty.

· In Latin America and the Caribbean income poverty is more pervasive than human poverty - affecting 110 million people - and it continues to grow.

· Eastern Europe and the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) have seen the greatest deterioration in the past decade. Income poverty has spread from a small part of their population to about a third - 120 million people below a poverty line of $4 a day.

· And in industrial countries more than 100 million people live below the income poverty line, set at half the individual median income. Thirty-seven million are jobless.

Within these broad groups some people suffer more than others - particularly children, women and the aged....

From a human development perspective, poverty means the denial of choices and opportunities for a tolerable life.

It is in the deprivation of the lives people lead that poverty manifests itself. Poverty can mean more than a lack of what is necessary for material well-being. It can also mean the denial of opportunities and choices most basic to human development - to lead a long, healthy, creative life and to enjoy a decent standard of living, freedom, dignity, self-esteem and the respect of others.

For policy-makers, the poverty of choices and opportunities is often more relevant than the poverty of income, for it focuses on the causes of poverty and leads directly to strategies of empowerment and other actions to enhance opportunities for everyone.

Poverty must be addressed in all its dimensions, not income alone....

The human poverty index combines basic dimensions of poverty and reveals

interesting contrasts with income poverty. This Report introduces a human poverty index (HPI). Rather than measure poverty by income, it uses indicators of the most basic dimensions of deprivation: a short life, lack of basic education and lack of access to public and private resources. Like all measures the HPI has weaknesses - in data and in concept. Like all measures it cannot capture the totality of human poverty. But by combining in a single poverty index the concerns that often get pushed aside when the focus is on income alone, the HPI makes a useful addition to the measures of poverty.

Among 78 developing countries ranked by the HPI, Trinidad and Tobago comes out on top, followed by Cuba, Chile, Singapore and Costa Rica. Human poverty has been reduced in these countries and now affects less than 10% of their people....

The scale of poverty is daunting, but we should take heart from what's already been achieved - and focus on six priorities for action to eradicate poverty.

...The strategy for poverty reduction will naturally differ from country to country, but there are six priorities for action.

1. Everywhere the starting point is to empower women and men - and to ensure their participation in decisions that affect their lives and enable them to build their strengths and assets....

2. Gender equality is essential for empowering women - and for eradicating poverty....

3. Sustained poverty reduction requires pro-poor growth in all countries - and faster growth in the 100 or so developing and transition countries where growth has been failing....

4. Globalization offers great opportunities - but only if it is managed more carefully and with more concern for global equity.

Proceeding at breakneck speed but without map or compass, globalization has helped reduce poverty in some of the largest and strongest economies - China, India and some of the Asian tigers. But it has also produced losers among and within countries. As trade and foreign investment have expanded, the developing world has seen a widening gap between winners and losers. Meanwhile, many industrial countries have watched unemployment soar to levels not recorded since the 1930s, and income inequality reach levels not recorded since the last century.

The greatest benefits of globalization have been garnered by a fortunate few. A rising tide of wealth is supposed to lift all boats, but some are more seaworthy than others. The yachts and ocean liners are rising in response to new opportunities, but many rafts and rowboats are taking on water - and some are sinking.

The ratio of global trade to GDP has been rising over the past decade, but it has been falling for 44 developing countries, with more than a billion people. The least developed countries, with 10% of the world's people, have only 0.3% of world trade - half their share of two decades ago....

5. In all these areas the state must provide an enabling environment for broad-based political support and alliances for pro-poor policies and markets....

6. Special international support is needed for special situations - to reduce the poorest countries' debt faster, to

increase their share of aid and to open agricultural markets for their exports....

The least developed countries, most of them in Sub-Saharan Africa, face the biggest challenges in eradicating poverty in the next two or three decades. These are the countries in greatest economic difficulty - and most often in conflict. And these are the countries in which human poverty is growing fastest.

Yet Sub-Saharan Africa has many examples of success - and with sustained support the progress could be accelerated....

Eradicating absolute poverty in the first decades of the 21st century is feasible, affordable and a moral imperative.

Eradicating poverty everywhere is more than a moral imperative and a commitment to human solidarity. It is a practical possibility. The time has come to eradicate the worst aspects of human poverty within a decade or two - to create a world that is more humane, more stable, more just.

At the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, governments committed themselves to eradicating poverty. As follow-up action, they agreed to set national goals and prepare strategies geared to reducing overall poverty substantially, reducing inequalities, and eradicating extreme poverty in the shortest time possible - by target dates to be set by each country.

These commitments, and the success many countries have had in reducing poverty rapidly, make inaction immoral. But accelerated action will be spurred only if all countries develop a new vision of the possibility of poverty eradication and a stronger sense of how they will gain from it - through greater security, greater stability and greater prosperity.

The costs of eradicating poverty are less than people imagine - about 1% of global income and no more than 2-3% of national income in all but the poorest countries. Further cuts in military spending, with the savings channelled to poverty reduction and pro-poor growth, would go far towards providing the resources required. The challenge of mobilizing resources is thus mostly a challenge of restructuring priorities - and of steadily mainstreaming these priorities into a new programme of pro-poor growth. Combining growth with a small but steady redistribution towards poverty eradication could ensure all the resources required within this generation.

To restate: The unprecedented progress in reducing poverty in the 20th century sets the stage for eradicating absolute poverty in the early 21st century - a moral imperative, an attainable goal. No longer inevitable, poverty should be relegated to history - along with slavery, colonialism and nuclear warfare.

*The full **Human Development Report 1997**, including this overview section, is available at UNDP's website: www.undp.org/undp/hdro/97high.htm*

Cities on the Brink Try New Tactics

by Kristin Helmore

For half her life, ten-year-old Bilkish has lived in a hut of black plastic on a sidewalk in central Bombay. It's a small space, about three by four metres, and too low for an adult to stand in. Nine people live there: Bilkish and her five brothers and sisters, her parents and her father's brother. The hut's only opening is the "door," a dirty quilt draped over a rope. There is no other ventilation or source of light, and even in the breezy Bombay winters black plastic makes a hot, dark and airless home.

Every morning at five o'clock, Bilkish and her sisters line up at a communal water-tap several blocks away. After waiting more than an hour, they stagger home with sloshing pails of water on their heads: a day's supply for bathing, washing, cooking, drinking and making tea. There is also a public toilet several blocks away, but using it costs more money than the family can afford.

The family moved to Bombay from a dusty, sleepy village in eastern India five years ago. Bilkish's mother now works as a servant whenever her frail health permits, which is not often. The child's father works as a day-labourer on construction sites, but he suffers from tuberculosis, a common complaint among slum dwellers the world over. His working days are numbered, so to make ends meet, the children are sent out into traffic to beg. Soon Bilkish will start working as a servant. She has never been to school.

This family's situation is multiplied by hundreds of millions in cities throughout the developing world, from Rio de Janeiro to Nairobi to Manila.

Urban crush

A hundred years ago, roughly five percent of the world's people lived in cities with populations over 100,000. Today, an estimated 45 percent--about 2.5 billion people live in urban areas. In recent years, the most explosive growth has been in the developing world, where urban populations have tripled in the last 30 years. Between 1950 and 1995, the number of cities in the developed countries with populations of more than one million doubled, from 49 to 112; in that same period, cities of more than one million people in the Third World increased sixfold, from 34 to 213.

There is little room for more families on the sidewalks and in the slums of such cities, yet they keep coming. There are few jobs to sustain them. The basic infrastructure they require--housing, clean water, waste disposal, electricity, transport--seems beyond the capacities of many cities to provide, yet the families pour in, convinced that the city will offer them a better life.

In terms of sheer numbers, urban concentrations are greatest in Asia, where cities are home to over one billion people, roughly one-third of the region's population. In Africa, urbanization is a relatively recent phenomenon; still, more than a third of the population already lives in cities, and the rates of urban migration are increasing. In Latin America, on the other hand, 74 percent of the population is already urbanized--a scenario that could very well represent the future for the rest of the developing world. And for many observers it is not the growth of cities that is disturbing, it is the glaring disparities between the lives of the poor and those who

are better off. "These are two different worlds," says Akhtar Badshah, director of programs at Mega-Cities, a New York-based organization that promotes replicable solutions to urban problems. "The conditions of the poor are getting worse and worse, because governments are simply unable to keep pace with the level of services that is needed. As a result, the ill effects of city life are concentrated among the poor." He cites as an example the appalling environmental conditions in many cities that cause harm to the poor. They lack the luxury of air-conditioners or even the option of closing windows against the miasma of leaded-fuel emissions, smoke and dust that passes for air in many cities. Nor can the poor stay healthy by buying bottled water or maintaining hygienic conditions in their homes.

"The gap is widening dramatically," says Badshah. "For example, the poor are often pushed farther and farther onto the fringes of cities where there is industrial pollution. Yet transport is not keeping pace with the needs, so the poor often take longer and longer to get to work, if they can get there at all, or if they can find work in the first place." Indeed, services in cities today are a problem for all levels of society. But the list of basic services to which the poor have little or no access in the over-stretched cities of the developing world is virtually endless. They suffer disproportionately from a lack of basics, such as health care, schools, job opportunities, food, transport, training, adequate housing, security, information and access to the justice system and the rule of law.

Equity, participation, decentralization

These inequities represent not only a moral crisis of staggering portions, but the potential for political chaos and large economic losses. "If cities don't function properly, the productivity of an entire country is negatively affected," says Shabbir Cheema, director of the management, development and governance division at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), pointing out that cities are the major engines of economic growth in developing countries. "And if the poor are deprived of services, this can have a negative effect on political stability."

The dangers are so acute, in fact, that they are forcing new thinking about the problems of cities, and new approaches to development in general. More and more development professionals agree that lack of equity is the core problem of urban poverty, and that traditional, hierarchical systems of city management cannot meet the needs of cities today and in the future.

Development planners insist that political decentralization is essential to ensure that those in power are accountable to citizens at every level of society and responsive to their needs. "How do we create cities that work for everybody?" asks Robertson Work, a senior programme officer at UNDP. "It is possible. But it's got to be neighbourhood by neighbourhood, community by community. You can't stand at the top and order change."

Indeed, the very crisis of overcrowding, poverty and environmental decay that is driving cities to the brink of disaster also provides the incentive for those in power to get their house in order, to try new solutions to complex problems and to begin to share responsibility--and decision-making power--with city dwellers themselves.

One of the most innovative aspects of this new approach is the concept that all

sectors--even traditional "enemies" such as slum-dwellers and real estate speculators--can, and must, learn to identify common goals and work together to achieve them. Many development strategies today, including those supported by UNDP, take as their starting point the building of partnerships among diverse groups--officials from national and municipal governments, the business community and community-based organizations--to help define problems and bring about solutions. Usually an outside mediator, an "honest broker" trusted by all parties, is needed to establish an atmosphere of collaboration rather than suspicion, and to encourage all parties to put aside traditional rivalries and get on with the task of meeting urban need.

Juan Manuel Salazar, a UNDP programme officer based in New York, recalls a situation in which just such an approach was taken, with rather dramatic results. In the 1980s, Salazar was an advisor to the mayor of Bogota, Colombia, a city of seven million people, more than one million of them slum-dwellers living in extreme poverty. He explains that in the area of urban development and poverty alleviation, bureaucrats and planners at all levels felt a profound sense of frustration. The city administration, he says, was blocked from being responsive to the concrete needs of the people by bureaucratic traditions and abstract, theoretical thinking. Yet the necessary resources were there--in the private sector as well as in the public coffers--if only they could be harnessed to accomplish specific, concrete goals.

With UNDP support, the mayor of Bogota convened work sessions among city officials, the business community, voluntary organizations and mothers from slum areas, who were responsible for the welfare--often the very survival--of their families. To further promote a sense of trust, UNDP suggested the mayor draw up a "social contract" with the people, signed by all parties, and committing both public and private institutions to take specific steps to respond to the needs of the people. "There used to be a theory that you join the highest person from the community with the lowest person in the administration," says Salazar, "but that's a mistake. Our strategy was to link people from the lowest level in the community with the highest level of authority."

"The most felt need was for child care," he says, because when women went out to work, often children were left home alone. "That was the hook that started the whole thing," he adds. Although there were many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private businesses ready to participate in providing child care, the perception was that buildings to accommodate the children had to be constructed first, and that this would take two years. So UNDP procured a number of military tents from Israel to be used on a temporary basis. At the same time, it called on 50 mothers from the community to come for training, and engaged the services of public institutions to train the mothers and provide equipment for the centres. A foundation donated tables and chairs. The day-care centres--a network of tents, each sheltering 50 children--were functioning within one week. One year later, in half the time anticipated, the children moved from the tents into new buildings.

"The buildings were constructed through this same participatory process," says Salazar. "Eventually this became a national programme serving hundreds of thousands of children."

The need had existed for years before, and many

promises had been made, but nothing had been accomplished under the old hierarchical system, in which bureaucracy and political maneuvering had made collaboration impossible. To be effective, says UNDP's Robertson Work, urban management must be "a self-organizing system, where everyone is responsible, everyone is a player."

Initiatives for change are as diverse as the cities that are spawning them, yet they all point to a global trend toward equity, participation and democracy. Increasingly it is recognized that the role of outsiders, including international organizations, is not to impose solutions. Rather it is to promote dialogue and cooperation to bring to the attention of local actors a menu of examples of success from which they can shape their own, home-grown strategies for renewal. One positive change, says Mega Cities' Akhtar Badshah, is that development thinkers are beginning to turn away from the old paradigm of studying problems, to studying solutions instead. "Traditional research tries to figure out what is not working and what the problems are," he says. "Instead, we need to look at what is working--to value strengths, to envision what might be."

Source: Excerpted from Choices: The Human Development Magazine. United Nations Development Programme, New York, Vol.5, No. 1.

A Global Game of Winners and Losers

Paul Streeten, Professor Emeritus, Boston University

From Ladakh to Lima and from Beijing to Buenos Aires, people across the world are adopting similar tastes in dress, food, entertainment and popular music. But this phenomenon, sometimes referred to as "McCulture," has not affected everyone everywhere. Either through choice or lack of opportunity, large groups of people still cling to their traditional ways of life.

Similarly, economic integration and trade liberalization have produced an unstoppable movement toward economic globalization. Most economists applaud the trend, pointing to the modernization and growing wealth that have resulted. But many countries have been left on the sidelines or have even been harmed by globalization.

What have been the positive and negative effects of the trend? And more importantly, since globalization seems certain to continue, what can be done to make its benefits as widespread as possible?

Growing trade. The Principal cause and effect of global integration is international trade, which has expanded substantially since World War II as measured by the ratio of goods. But in the developing world, the benefits of expanding trade have been concentrated in East Asia, Brazil, Mexico and, most recently, China. The populous countries of South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa have generally been left out. Overall, the bulk of the international flow of goods, services, direct investment and finance is among the United States, Europe and Japan.

An increase in trade has often been followed by higher economic growth, although not in all cases. Annual growth rates of gross domestic product in East and Southeast Asia were 6-8: in Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa they averaged less than half a percent per year.

Unemployment. While expanded trade has generally resulted in more jobs, the parallel growth in competition has forced many companies to shed workers in order to cut costs, boost efficiency and increase profits. Higher productivity only becomes a plus for the overall economy if output grows quickly enough to generate employment for the whole workforce. In the industrialized world, where a number of countries are currently grappling with the problem of growth without jobs, high unemployment has become a political issue. Developed countries have been especially affected by new information and communication technologies that boost efficiency but make some white-collar workers redundant.

Some less-developed countries have also had to deal with jobless growth. China, which has experienced an economic boom in recent years, has begun to struggle with unemployment, particularly in urban areas. The need to cut unit labor costs to compete in the global market has led to the elimination of guaranteed employment and over staffed factories. Unemployment has also grown as a result of proliferation of low-cost imports from low-wage countries. Though these imports are a small part of the total, they are concentrated in labor-intensive sectors such as shoe-clothing and toy-making.

Income distribution. Both theoretical and empirical evidence suggest that increased trade between North and South has reduced income inequality among skilled and semi-skilled workers in the South while increasing inequality among such workers in the North. This is because manufactured exports from the South raise demand and wages for workers

with only limited skills and education. But the effect in the North is the opposite. There the service and technology industries pay top wages to highly skilled workers but have little use for semi-skilled labor.

Overall, globalization appears to have deepened inequalities in the international distribution of income, though the evidence is mixed. Between 1960 and 1994 the share of developing countries in the global distribution of wealth declines. This can partly be explained by the growing impact of mutinational corporations that funnel profits to the parent country and allocate the highest wages to highly trained managers from industrial nations.

Technology. Some observers worry that new technologies will deprive developing countries of their comparative advantage in labor-intensive activities and prompt industries to relocate plants back to the developed countries.

But in fact, the skills required to use many new technologies, particularly in the field of electronics, can be taught cheaply in classrooms nearly anywhere. Moreover, the manufacturing technique of flexible specialization, which is increasingly replacing mass production, is neither capital- nor foreign exchange-intensive, and is thus well suited to developing countries.

Policy pointers. This analysis of globalization's winners and losers suggests a number of policies that can be adopted to diminish the liabilities while encouraging the benefits of economic integration:

Create transnational institutions to develop and enforce global anti-monopoly, anticartel and anti-restrictive practices and legislation.

In the developed countries, implement training and education programs, provide income support for low-wage workers, and adopt tax policies that create jobs.

In developing countries, change policies that overprice labor, under-price capital and overvalue exchange rates as a means of reducing unemployment. Promote world-class exports and improve living standards.

Improve the share of developing countries in the global distribution of wealth, using their collective bargaining power with multinational corporations to retain a greater proportion of profits. Use these funds to alleviate poverty, improve social services and invest in local human capital through education.

Through such measures, developing countries can gradually increase the domestic value added to their exports and expand the local economy--the essence of development and one of the major forces behind globalization itself.

Source: THE IDB, Inter-American Development Bank, December 1996.

Uneven effects of globalization

Policymakers face challenge of ensuring equity

Winners	*Losers*
East, S.E. Asia	*Africa, Latin America*
Productive output	*Employment*
People with assets	*People with no assets*
Profits	*Wages*
Skilled workers	*Unskilled workers*
Adaptive firms, workers	*Rigid firms, workers*
Techno-specialists	*Primary producers*
Creditors	*Debtors*
Those not dependent on public services	*Those dependent on public services*
Large companies	*Small companies*
Men	*Women*
International markets	*Local communities*
Global culture	*Local culture*

Trade and Labor

Pharis Harvey, International Labor Rights Fund (ILRF)

A fundamental challenge facing policymakers and activists is how to set and enforce rules to protect workers from repression, exploitation, and danger. Today, most labor occurs within the evolving context of a globalized economy in which countries and communities increasingly compete for scarce investment by lowering or repressing working conditions and wages. In this global workplace, transnational corporations (TNCS) exercise more power than many sovereign nations. Global institutions such as the International Labor Organization (ILO) lack the power to enforce standards. Meanwhile, U.S. policy makers have responded inadequately to the need to establish and enforce international regulations.

The crisis facing the world's workers is intensifying:

- At least one billion adults, more than 30 percent of the global work force, are unemployed or seriously underemployed. Wages and working conditions are declining--in the U.S. by one percent annually for the past 20 years, in poor countries at a much faster pace.

- Throughout the global North the number of "3-D" jobs--dangerous, dirty, and difficult work--done for extremely low pay by illegal or unprotected immigrant workers is rapidly rising.

- Child labor is used increasingly for production of exports in countries with massive adult unemployment.

- In China, imprisoned workers produce goods entering international commerce in competition with the work of wage labor, even in such complex industries as aerospace. Prison labor in the U.S. forms a growing part of the manufacturing work force.

New technologies enable corporations to diversify production to take advantage of comparative vulnerabilities of countries across the globe. Under such conditions, the ability of even the strongest national governments to reverse these trends through progressive national labor laws or policies is clearly inadequate. Establishing effective international labor policies is not a new problem--just the urgency is new. Attempts to condition trade with protective labor standards date back nearly a century. In 1905 the Berne Convention outlawed the production or sale of matches made with white phosphorus because of its horrible crippling effects.

In 1919, following World War I and the Bolshevik Revolution, the western capitalist nations formed the International Labor Organization to regulate the conditions of work internationally--under the clear threat that the failure to do so could lead to a further spread of radical worker unrest. Since then, 178 international conventions, regulating everything from freedom of association to the rights of indigenous and migrant workers, have been established. The U.S. has ratified only 11.

After World War II an effort was made to establish the International Trade Organization (ITO), whose "members recognize that unfair labor conditions, particularly in production or export, create difficulties in international trade." This effort failed largely because of U.S. Senate resistance. In its place world leaders established the Generalized Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which, according to economist

Robert Gilpin, operates on the assumption "that a liberal world of self-adjusting free trade, freedom of capital movements, and an efficient division of labor provides the natural and best economic order." This perspective has dominated international trade policy throughout the past half century. The principles of free trade are codified in successive GATT agreements, most recently the Uruguay Round in 1994, which established the World Trade Organization (WTO). Since the end of the cold war, extreme ideological support for this "free market" approach has resurfaced.

Workers in both wealthy industrial and low-income countries are experiencing an unprecedented assault against their rights, safety, and livelihood. Increasing international trade, an instrument of accumulation for some, has for many others resulted in deepening impoverishment and oppression.

Source: Tom Barry & Martha Honey, eds. Global Focus: A New Foreign Policy Agenda 1997-1998. Washington, DC, Institute for Policy Studies, 1997.

Eco-Industrial Parks:

A Foundation for Sustainable Communities?

by Ernest Lowe, Indigo Development

What exactly do we mean by "sustainable community development"? How do we begin implementing principles of sustainability in our communities?

The new concept of eco-industrial parks (EIPs) offers one starting point for addressing these questions. In order to be economically viable, most communities attempting to move toward sustainability will need to include an industrial sector in their economic mix. But to involve industry in strategies for sustainability will require fundamental improvements in industrial environmental performance and resource efficiency, as well as better integration of companies into their host communities. Though still a nascent concept, the EIP has emerged in a remarkably brief time as one interesting approach to this challenge.

The EIP concept was first formalized in 1992-93 by Indigo Development, a team of people from Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia, and Cornell University's Work and Environment Initiative. In 1994, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) awarded a contract to Research Triangle Institute and Indigo to flesh out the concept and undertake a case study. By the fall of 1996, 17 projects declaring themselves eco-industrial parks were on the drawing boards in the U.S.; at least two had recruited their first tenants.

What is an EIP?

An eco-industrial park involves a network of firms and organizations, working together to improve their environmental and economic performance. Some planners and researchers of EIPs have used the team "industrial ecosystem" to describe the type of symbiotic relationships that develop amongst participating firms. Specifically, Indigo's EPA research project defined eco-industrial parks as follows:

"An eco-industrial park is a community of manufacturing and service businesses seeking enhanced environmental and economic performance through collaboration in managing environmental and resource issues, including energy, water, and materials. By working together, the community of businesses seeks a collective benefit that is greater than the sum of the individual benefits each company would realize if it optimized its individual performance only. The goal of an EIP is to improve the economic performance of the participating companies while minimizing their environmental impact."

Components of EIP design

EIPs have a rich menu of design options, including site design, park infrastructure, individual facilities, and shared support services. The following highlights some major strategies an EIP design team can draw upon in planning a park.

Natural Systems--An industrial park can fit into its natural setting in a way that minimizes environmental impacts while cutting operating costs. The Herman Miller design plant in Phoenix illustrates the use of native plant reforestation and the creation of wetlands to minimize landscape maintenance, purify storm water run-off, and provide climate protection for the

building. At another level, plant design, landscaping, and design choices in materials, infrastructure, and building equipment, can reduce a park's contributions to global climate change and its consumption of non-renewable resources.

Energy--More efficient use of energy is a major strategy for cutting costs and reducing burdens on the environment. In EIPs, companies seek greater efficiency in individual building, lighting, and equipment design. Examples include flows of steam or heated water from one plant to another (energy cascading), or steam connections from firms to provide heating for homes in the area. Finally, in many regions, the park infrastructure can use renewable energy sources such as wind and solar energy.

Material Flows--In an eco-park, companies perceive wastes as lost opportunities that ideally are potential products to be re-used internally or marketed to someone else. Individually, and as a community, they work to optimize use of all materials and to minimize the use of toxic materials. The park infrastructure may include the means for moving by-products from one plant to another, warehousing by-products for shipment to external customers, and common toxic waste processing facilities.

One emerging strategy for EIP planning involves anchoring the park around resource recovery companies that are recruited to the location or started from scratch. The park could then support the establishment of aggressive waste reduction goals for all sectors of a community. A cluster of recycling, reuse, remanufacturing, and composting firms could process by-products and supply recycled inputs to manufacturers at the EIP, as well as to other firms in the region.

Water Flows--In individual plants, designers specify high efficiency building and process equipment. Processed water from one plant may be re-used by another (water cascading), passing through a pre-treatment plant as needed. The park infrastructure may include mains for several grades of water(depending on the needs of the companies) and provisions for collecting and using storm water run off.

Park Management and Support Services--As a community of companies, an EIP needs a more sophisticated management and support system than a traditional industrial park. Management supports the exchange of by-products among companies and helps them adapt to changes in the mix of companies (such as a supplier or customer moving out) through its recruitment responsibility. It may maintain links into regional by-product exchanges and a site-wide telecommunications system. The park may also include shared support services such as a training center, cafeteria, day care center, office for purchasing common supplies, or a transportation logistics office. companies can add to their savings by sharing the costs of these services.

Sustainable Design and Construction--EIP planners design buildings and infrastructure to optimize the efficient use of resources and to minimize pollution generation. They seek to reduce the impacts on the ecosystem by careful site preparation and ecologically appropriate buildings and park systems. The whole park is designed to be durable, maintainable, and readily reconfigured to adapt to change. At the end of its life, materials and systems can be easily re-used or recycled.

Pioneers of industrial symbioses

A cluster of companies in Kalundborg, Denmark, has inspired others to replicate its network of by-product exchanges, which participants call an "industrial symbiosis." Kalundborg is a community west of Copenhagen where a coal-fired power plant, a refinery, a pharmaceutical and industrial enzyme plant, a wallboard company, and the town's heating facility have developed one-on-one deals to trade steam, hot water, and materials such as gypsum, sulfuric acid, and biotech sludge. (See diagram.)

Erich Schwarz, and Austrian researcher, discovered a much larger industrial recycling network in the Austrian province of Styria. Materials traded in the Styrian network include familiar recyclables like paper, power plant gypsum, iron scrap, used oil, and tires, as well as a wide range of other by-products. The plant managers in Styria were not aware of the larger pattern of exchange as it evolved. They were motivated purely by the revenues from by-products they could sell and the savings in landfill disposal costs for either sold or free outputs. In some cases the by-products were less expensive or higher quality than primary materials would be. While the exchange of by-products has both environmental and financial benefits, no one is yet sure to what extent such a regional trading network can be developed elsewhere.

Other international work on industrial ecosystem projects and EIPs is being carried out by researchers, companies, and developers in the Netherlands, Austria, Spain, Costa Rica, Namibia, South Africa, Australia, and several Asian countries.

North American EIPs

EIP projects are in the works all over the United States. At least two EIP projects involve military installations--a closed Air Force base in Plattsburgh, NY, and an inactive Army dynamite plant in Chattanooga, TN. In addition to those two, other communities and regions in North American planning EIPs include: Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, CA; Burlington, VT; Eugene, OR; Brownsville, TX; Cape Charles, VA; Londenderry, NH; Minneapolis, MN; Raymond, WA; Trenton, NJ; Tucson, AZ; Wake Forest, NC, and Matamoros, Mexico. These projects range from six to hundreds of acres. Some are basically seeking to link existing companies into by-product exchanges. Others are new industrial park developments with a variety of strategies for improving environmental performance.

Either eco-industrial park or industrial ecosystem projects can be used in sustainable community planning to provide a base for improving environmental performance across the whole industrial sector of a community. The many projects in the US and other countries are an exciting laboratory for sustainable community planning. Hopefully their failures as well as their successes will provide valuable learning for those of us seeking to integrate industry into the sustainability game.

Electronic Resources on EIPs
Cornell Work and Environment Initiative (with link to Baltimore EIP project): http://www.cte.cornell.edu/wei/

DOE Center for Excellence in Sustainable Development: http://www.sustainable.doe.gov/industrial/index.html

Indigo Development: http://www.indigodev.com

Source: Positive Alternatives, Center for Economic Conversion, Mountain View, CA, Summer 1997

III. U.S. GOVERNMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AROUND THE WORLD

Public Opinion Poll: Views on Foreign Aid

1. How do you feel about foreign aid (the assistance that the United States gives to other countries) on a scale of 1 - 10, with 1 being very negative and 10 being very positive?
   1)___ 2)___ 3)___ 4)___ 5)___ 6)___ 7)___ 8)___ 9)___ 10)___

2. Do you feel the amount the United States spends on foreign aid is too much, too little, or about right?
   1) too much ___ 2) too little ___ 3) About the right amount___ 4) don't know___

3. What is your best hunch about what percentage of the federal budget goes to foreign aid?
   1) 1% ____ 2) 5% ____ 3) 12% ____ 4) 22% ____ 5) 34% _____

4. What do you think would be an appropriate percentage of the federal budget to go to foreign aid, if any?
   1) 1%____ 2) 5%____ 3) 12%____ 4) 22% ____ 5) 34% _____

5. Now imagine that you found out that the US spends 1% of the federal budget on foreign aid. Would you feel that this is:
   1) too little____ 2) about right____ 3) too much ____ 4) don't know ____

6. Giving foreign aid to countries who are strategically important to the US is a good idea because it ensures that they will stay friendly to us.
   1) strongly agree___ 2) agree somewhat___ 3) disagree___ 4) don't know___

7. The US should be willing to share at least a small portion of its wealth with those in the world who are in great need.
   1) strongly agree___ 2) agree somewhat___ 3) disagree___ 4) don't know___

8. Because the world is so interconnected economically and environmentally, we should help other countries to develop sustainably and become strong trading partners.
   1) strongly agree___ 2) agree somewhat___ 3) disagree___ 4) don't know___

9. As one of the world's rich nations, the US has a moral responsibility toward poor nations to help them develop their economy and improve their people's lives.
   1) strongly agree___ 2) agree somewhat___ 3) disagree___ 4) don't know___

10. Too much foreign aid goes to governments that are not very democratic and have poor human rights records.
    1) strongly agree___ 2) agree somewhat___ 3) disagree___ 4) don't know___

11. We should send aid to starving people irrespective of whether it will promote the national interest.
    1) strongly agree___ 2) agree___ 3) disagree___ 4) strongly disagree___

12. There is so much waste and corruption in the process of giving foreign aid that very little aid actually reaches the people who really need it.
    1) strongly agree___ 2) agree___ 3) disagree___ 4) don't know___

13. Do you agree or not agree with the following statement: If I knew that most foreign aid was going to poor people who really need it, rather than to wasteful bureaucracies and corrupt governments, I would be willing to pay more in taxes for foreign aid.
    1) agree____ 2) disagree____ 3) don't know ____

14. The US actually spends about 1% of the federal budget on foreign aid. This means that the average taxpayer spends about $28.00 per year for federal foreign aid. Would you be in favor of changing the amount you give in federal foreign aid in any of the following ways?
    1) increase a lot___ 2) increase somewhat___ 3) keep the same___ 4) cut somewhat___
    5) cut a lot___ 6) don't know___

15. The US spends about $3.6 billion dollars ($6.80 a year per taxpayer, out of the total $28.00 per year taxpayer foreign aid cost) for military aid, which provides weapons for countries friendly to US interests. Would you favor:
    1) increasing the amount a lot___ 2) increasing slightly___ 3) keeping the same___
    4) cutting somewhat___ 5) cutting a lot ___ 6) don't know___

16. For child survival programs to help feed poor children, combat childhood diseases and provide pre-natal care, the US spends about 72 cents for the average taxpayer. Would you favor:
    1) increasing the amount a lot___ 2) increasing slightly___ 3) keeping the same___
    4) cutting slightly___ 5) cutting a lot___ 6) don't know___

17. For environmental aid to poor countries to help them preserve their environment and reduce pollution, the US taxpayer pays $1.40 per year. Would you favor:
    1) increasing that amount a lot___ 2) increasing somewhat ___ 3) keeping the same___
    4) cut slightly___ 5) cut a lot___ 6) don't know___

18. For aid to Israel and Egypt, which includes military and economic aid, the average taxpayer pays $9.83 per year ($5.2 billion). Would you favor:
    1) increasing this___ 2) keeping the same ___ 3) decreasing___ 4) don't know___

19. For assistance to poor countries to help them improve their food production, their basic health care, and their schools, the average taxpayer pays about $8.70 per year ($4.6 billion). Would you favor:
    1) increasing this___ 2) keeping the same___ 3) decreasing ___ 4) don't know___

20. For aid to countries in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe making the transition from socialism to democracy and capitalism, the average taxpayer pays $2.27 dollars per year. Would you favor:
    1) increasing this___ 2) keeping the same___ 3) decreasing___ 4) don't know___

Adapted from: Steven Kull et al. The Foreign Policy Gap: How Policymakers Misread the Public. Center for International Security Studies, University of Maryland, College Park, MD, 1997.

Public Opinion Poll - National Responses

1.	median - 5	mean - 4.3				
2.	1) 75%	2) 4.2%	3) 17.4%	4) 3.4%		
3.	median - 15%	mean - 18.1%				
4.	median - 5.4%	mean - 8.4%				
5.	1) 33.1%	2) 45.5%	3) 17.5%	4) 3.8%		
6.	1) 15%	2) 30.1%	3) 51.4%	4) 3.5%		
7.	1) 38.1%	2) 42.2%	3) 18.4%	4) 1.3%		
8.	1) 24%	2) 38.9%	3) 34%	4) 1.3%		
9.	1) 25%	2) 40.55	3) 32.4%	4) 1%		
10.	1) 49.3%	2) 30.2%	3) 15.8%	4) 4.7%		
11.	1) 40.4%	2) 35.9%	3) 10.6%	4) 10.6%		
12.	1) 59.1%	2) 23.8%	3) 12.2%	4) 4.8%		
13.	1) 57.6%	2) 40.5%	3) 1.9%			
14.	1) 2.5%	2) 22.6%	3) 37.2%	4) 20.7%	5) 14.7	6) 2.2%
15.	1) 1.2%	2) 5.1%	3) 40.6%	4) 31.2%	5) 21%	6) .9%
16.	1) 21.3 %	2) 34.2%	3) 35.4%	4) 3.8%	5) 4.2%	6) 1.1%
17.	1) 13.4%	2) 24.1%	3) 41.4%	4) 10.6%	5) 9.5%	6) 1%
18,	1) 4.4%	2) 38%	3) 55.7%	4) 1.8%		
19.	1) 29.3%	2) 46%	3) 23.6%	4) 1.3%		
20.	1) 19.9%	2) 51.9%	3) 27.8%	4) .4%		

Adapted from: Steven Kull et al. The Foreign Policy Gap: How Policymakers Misread the Public. Center for International Security Studies, University of Maryland, College Park, MD, 1997.

THE U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STATES ITS CASE

The time is now

Today's post-Cold War world offers the United States an historic opportunity to help people around the world improve their lives, while securing American leadership in a prosperous and peaceful world. The time is now . . .

- To bolster democracy in the former communist bloc.
- To help the poorest of the poor empower themselves in Africa, Latin America and Asia.
- To heal the starving child and educate the village woman.

With the collapse of the USSR and the end of superpower competition, problems of development have emerged as the dominant force in global politics. Poverty, hunger, disease, oppression and environmental damage increasingly affect the affairs of nations across the globe.

These problems have replaced the specter of nuclear war as the new strategic threats to the United States. Failing economies and authoritarian regimes adversely affect world trade and global political stability. Disease and polluted air are not contained by national borders. Spiraling population growth leads to environmental degradation, increased migration, unemployment and poverty.

Foreign assistance has an important role to play in U.S. foreign policy at this critical juncture of history.

A people-to-people approach

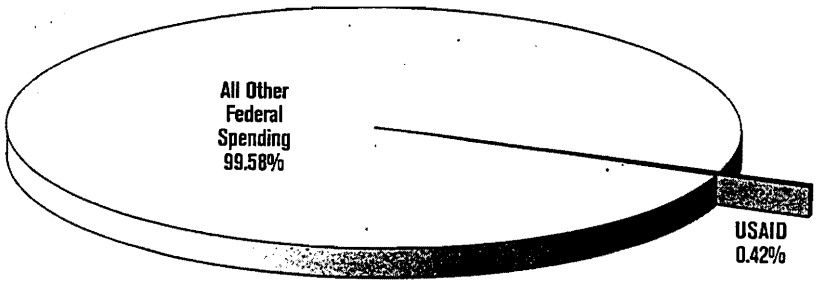
Since 1961, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has been helping people help themselves. In addition to humanitarian assistance, USAID's work concentrates on four areas—all interrelated—and all crucial to achieving U.S. foreign policy objectives: improving health and population conditions; protecting the environment; promoting economic growth; and supporting democracy.

A federal agency, USAID is based in Washington, D.C., but derives its strength from its field missions abroad. USAID staff work with teachers, farmers, microentrepreneurs, nurses and other members of the local community in four regions of the world: (1) Africa, (2) Asia and the Near East, (3) Latin America and the Caribbean, and (4) Central and Eastern Europe and the New Independent States of the former Soviet Union.

To promote development, USAID works in close partnership with other U.S. government agencies, U.S. business, other developed nations, private voluntary organizations, indigenous non-governmental organizations, international agencies and universities.

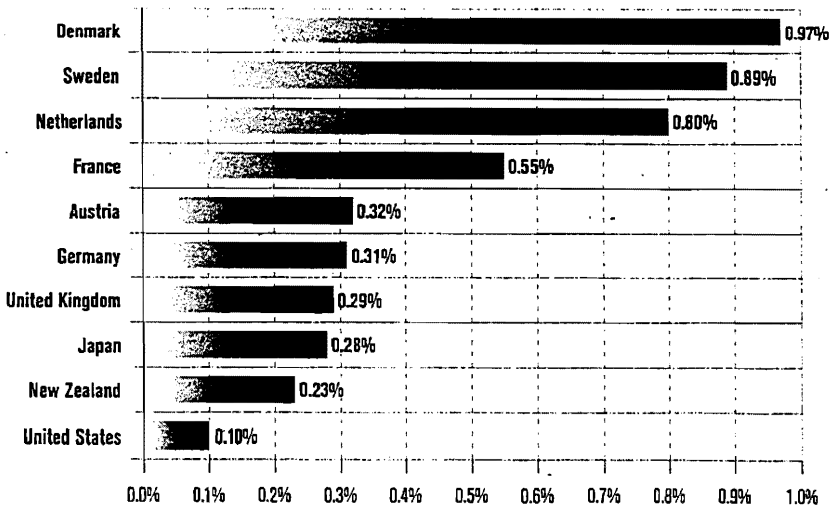
A small price to pay for progress

Fiscal Year 1998 Budget Request



The United States allocates less than 0.5 percent of its federal budget to USAID programs abroad, compared to 17 percent for defense and 21 percent for social security. This translates to approximately $30 per year for the average American taxpayer, or about 60 cents per week. Compared to other developed countries, the United States budgets the smallest percentage of its gross national product to overseas development assistance.

Foreign Assistance as a Percentage of Donor's GNP - 1995



TEN QUESTIONS COMMONLY ASKED ABOUT U.S. FOREIGN ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

1.) Isn't foreign assistance just throwing money away?

- Absolutely not. Foreign assistance programs work in America's best interests and are a sound investment in creating the markets of the future, preventing crises and helping advance democracy and prosperity around the globe.

- Foreign aid creates U.S. jobs and advances American economic well being. It is far less expensive for the United States to implement development programs and prevent crises, than to pay the costs of failed development through military operations, peacekeeping efforts and humanitarian relief.

2.) How does foreign assistance help Americans? Shouldn't we just spend the money here at home?

- Foreign assistance has helped create some of this country's most dynamic markets for exports, and the trade that has resulted from foreign aid has had payoffs far higher than the initial costs of sending American expertise abroad. Over the past decade, USAID has targeted $15 million in technical assistance for the energy sectors of developing countries. However, as a result of this commitment, and longstanding U.S. efforts to push developing nations toward privatization, U.S. assistance has helped build a $50 billion annual market for private power. U.S. firms are capturing the largest share of these markets, out-competing Japan and Germany. America can not afford to give our competitors free run of these rapidly growing economies. Private power generation, which replaces inefficient state-run companies, provides a high rate of return for the United States. For example, in Indonesia, a $3 million investment by USAID in support privatization of the energy sector, has led to $2 billion award to a U.S. firm for Indonesia's first private power contract.

- Foreign assistance is an investment. It combats global problems that increasingly impact the lives of Americans like the spread of AIDS, environmental degradation and rapid population growth rates.

3.) Isn't it true that no countries ever graduate from foreign assistance, and that our aid just perpetuates dependency for the nations that we give money to?

- Most Americans are surprised when they hear a list of some of the graduates of U.S. foreign assistance programs – France, Spain, Portugal, South Korea, Taiwan, Italy, Germany and others. Newly prosperous nations like Costa Rica, Thailand, Chile, the Czech Republica and Botswana have graduated from foreign assistance programs within the past few years.

- Foreign assistance programs since the Marshall plan have successfully created some of our closest allies and best trading partners. Many of these nations have gone on to become donors themselves. One measure

of the success of U.S. foreign assistance programs can be found in South Korea -- the U.S. now exports more to South Korea in one year than we ever gave that country in foreign assistance during the 1960s and 70s.

4.) Why don't we just put all the money that USAID gets into the Trade and Development Agency and the Overseas Private Investment Corporations programs?

- TDA and OPIC are natural compliments to USAID's programs. TDA and OPIC focus on creating export opportunities for American businesses in the near term. USAID focuses on creating an enabling environment for U.S. trade and investment in developing nations in the long term. USAID operates in many countries that are not ready for TDA or OPIC assistance because they lack commercial codes, banking systems and sound public institutions.

- USAID is creating the markets of the future for the United States, markets that will be vital to America's economic health ten and 20 years from now. By establishing fair business codes, viable commercial banks and reasonable tax and tariff standards in developing nations, USAID fosters the stable and transparent business standards that U.S. companies, as well as TDA and OPIC, must have to operate in a country. USAID helps create the institutional framework for business that must be in place to attract American investment and trade.

5.) Isn't it true that USAID is badly managed and wasteful?

- No agency in the U.S. government that has been a more active leader in Vice President Gore's National Performance Review than USAID. USAID has undertaken sweeping improvements as part of reinventing government that include: announcing the close-out of over 26 overseas missions; eliminating 90 organizational units in Washington; cutting back 70 senior staff positions; reducing total staff by over 1200; completing an agency-wide reorganization and "right-sizing" effort to streamline the agency; introducing reforms to open up USAID's procurement process; reducing project design time by 75 percent; and, developing a new electronic acquisition and procurement planning system that replaces 65 different systems and will standardize terms, eliminate tons of paperwork and expedite contracting.

6.) Why does the United States spend so much on foreign aid? Isn't it a huge percentage of our budget?

- U.S. spending on economic and humanitarian assistance abroad makes up less than one half of one percent of the federal budget. About the same amount is annually dedicated to foreign military assistance. In constant dollar terms, U.S. foreign assistance levels are at their lowest levels in over 50 years. The U.S. foreign assistance spending, when considered as a percentage of gross national product, is the lowest of all major donors.

7.) Doesn't the United States carry the heaviest load when it comes to foreign assistance? Why don't other nations help out?

- In the 1940s and 50s this was the case; it is not anymore. U.S. foreign assistance spending makes up only about 17 percent of total donor contributions for development. Japan, despite its small size and smaller economy, dedicates more to foreign assistance than the United States. In recent years, France and the Netherlands combined to contribute more to foreign assistance than did the United States.

8.) Has foreign assistance accomplished anything?

- U.S. foreign assistance programs have a long and distinguished list of accomplishments. Here are just a few examples. More than 3 million lives are saved every year through USAID immunization programs. Oral rehydration therapy, a low cost and easily administered solution developed through USAID programs in Bangladesh, is credited with saving tens of millions of lives. Investments by the U.S. and other donors in better seeds and agricultural techniques over the past two decades have helped make it possible to feed an extra billion people in the world.

- Eighty thousand people and $1 billion in U.S. and Filipino assets were saved due to early warning equipment installed by USAID that warned that the Mount Pinatubo volcano was about to erupt in 1991. USAID-sponsored energy efficiency experts working in Almaty, Kazakhstan helped local officials put in place improved systems that drastically reduced pollution and led to more than a million barrels of fuel oil being saved in just a three month period.

9.) Aren't we just propping up dictators with foreign assistance dollars?

- Just the opposite in fact. Promoting democracy and American ideals abroad are central goals of U.S. foreign assistance programs. USAID Administrator Brian Atwood has been very clear that he will only work with nations that are good partners in development. Atwood has driven that message home in the last several years by announcing the closure of several USAID programs in countries that had failed to embrace the principles of good governance.

- USAID support for democracy has proved very effective. There were 58 democratic nations in 1980. By 1995, this number had jumped to 115 nations. USAID provided democracy and governance assistance to 36 of the 57 nations that successfully made the transition to democratic government during this period.

10.) Aren't most Americans opposed to foreign assistance?

- Recent polls reveal that a majority of Americans think that up to 20 percent of the federal budget is spent on foreign assistance. When told the actual percentage of the budget spent on foreign assistance (less than one half of one percent spent on economic and humanitarian assistance), an overwhelming majority of Americans say that those spending levels should be maintained or increased.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS STRATEGIC OVERVIEW

United States Department of State

Changes in the world at the end of the 20th century make this a time of profound choice for the United States. The foreign policy goals of creating a more secure, prosperous, and democratic world for the benefit of the American people remain fundamental. However, deep and lasting changes to the global landscape, such as new technologies, increasing population, and economic and geopolitical transformations, have strategic implications for the U.S. international leadership.

Defined by reference to the past, the post-cold war era has as its most significant attribute the absence of any immediate, vital threat to national security. The demise of the Soviet Union has left the United States as the preeminent world power and invested it with unparalleled leadership responsibilities. But the end of superpower competition also eliminated the unifying strategy for U.S. foreign policy. Now, in addition to regional security issues, an array of threatsweapons proliferation, terrorism, ethnic and religious conflict, organized crime, drug trafficking, and environmental degradationchallenges U.S. interests and blurs the traditional dividing lines between domestic and foreign affairs.

Successful U.S. foreign policy depends on recognition of the conditions that are likely to prevail in this new and evolving international context. Six strategic assumptions about long-term global trends are an essential starting point for determining where, when, and how the United States is to engage in the world:

1. Multiple conflicts, crises, and threats--many of them transnational--rather than a single overriding challenge, will continue to emerge and may increase in frequency. While these may be small or localized in nature, they will frequently have potential for wider impact. These challenges will require determination, resources, and time to resolve.

2. New technologies, the information revolution, and economic growth have increased the rate of global change, accelerated communications, and diminished the importance of time and distance. As a result, the world is more interdependent, while the consequences of political, social, economic, and military developments are more interrelated.

3. Global problems, especially those related to the environment, population, and disease, will have ever greater impact. These problems demand international attention, and solutions must take implications for future generations and the integrity of the planet into account.

4. Multilateral cooperation and communication will prove increasingly feasible and effective to prevent crises, resolve problems, build trust, and advance common interests. Relations between nation-states will nevertheless remain central to the conduct of international affairs, but nongovernmental actors will gain increasing influence.

5. Democracy will continue to advance internationally, but democratic practices will vary among states and will be subject to countervailing influences and interests.

6. Economic interdependence will increase. Private enterprise will be the primary driver, although the role of government in maintaining stable macroeconomic conditions and promoting opportunities will remain critical. New centers of economic growth and power will emerge, trade and financial flows will accelerate, but distribution of the economic benefits, both internally and internationally, will

be uneven.

A clear understanding and articulation of foreign policy goals must be based on recognizing how these six trends affect U.S. conduct of its international relations. Security, political, economic, and global priorities are not uniformly fixed, but vary with time and circumstance, are interlinked, and often involve difficult tradeoffs.

Diplomacy is America's first line of defense. Sustained military strength and flexibility are necessary to assure national security, but the conduct of U.S. relations with the rest of the world through an effective international presence and discerning leadership is what makes the United States a force for peace. Relatively small investments in diplomacy and sustainable development now to prevent conflict, create the conditions for economic growth, promote democracy, enhance communication, and protect the environment decrease the possibilities of much more costly conflict later and help ensure the prosperity and well-being of the American people.

Foreign affairs today has many dimensions in addition to national security, trade, and other traditional concerns. The number of nation-states, international organizations, and other involved partieseach with their own interests and objectiveshas multiplied. Direct interaction and communication with foreign and domestic nongovernmental organizations and publics is an increasingly essential responsibility. Equally important, the intersection of domestic and foreign issues has expanded to affect every American and involve virtually the entire U.S. Government. In pursuing its international objectives, the United States must take into account the multiple and often competing intentions and interests of other governments and organizations, public opinion, Congress, and other U.S. agencies, as well as resource constraints.

Protecting national interests and advancing U.S. goals involves virtually every agency of the U.S. Government and requires a set of strategic assets:

· Expert diplomacy, a strong military, and effective intelligence, working in coordination to maintain national security;

· Fundamental capabilities to carry out international affairs missions in public diplomacy, sustainable development, and arms control;

· Full participation by domestic and specialized U.S. agencies in those aspects of international affairs that pertain to their particular scopes of authority and expertise;

· Programs in sustainable development, military cooperation, peacekeeping, law enforcement, finance, international information, academic and cultural exchange, and other fields to provide the means necessary to address problems and achieve objectives; and

· Diplomatic readiness consisting of the human resources, infrastructure and operations, and information resources management necessary for a strong U.S. international presence.

In order for the United States to fulfill its foreign policy goals with lasting effect, these assets must have the capability for worldwide deployment, be well coordinated, be stable enough to pursue long-term objectives, be flexible enough to prevent and mitigate emerging crises, have sufficient resources to meet established objectives, and have the support of the American people.

Source: U.S. Department of State Strategic Plan
http://www.state.gov/www/global/general_foreign_policy/overview.html

FY 1998 International Affairs Budget

(Accounts by Appropriations Subcommittee)

(Budget Authority - $ Millions)	FY 1996 Actual	FY 1997 Estimate	FY 1998 Request
TOTAL FUNCTION 150 (DISCRETIONARY)	**18,491**	**18,227**	**19,451**
FOREIGN OPERATIONS	**12,442**	**12,250**	**13,324**
Export-Import Bank	763	715	630
Overseas Private Investment Corporation	(93)	(131)	(158)
Trade andd Development Agency	40	40	43
Agency for International Development:	2,335	2,352	2,401
Development Assistance	1,617	1,133	998
Development Fund for Africa	0	0	700
Child Survival	0	500	0
International Disaster Assistance	181	190	190
USAID Operating Expenses (incl. IG)	524	518	502
USAID Credit Programs	13	12	11
Economic Support Fund (incl. Fund for Ireland)	2,350	2,363	2,498
Assistance for Eastern Europe and the Baltic States	510	475	492
Assistance for the New Independent States of the former Soviet Union	623	613	900
Partnership for Freedom..			[528]
Technical Assistance..			[372]
Debt Restructuring (Including Jordan debt forgiveness)	10	27	34
Peace Corps	218	220	222
Inter-American Foundation, African Development Foundation	31	32	36
International Narcotics and Crime	120	213	230
Refugee Assistance	721	700	700
Anti-Terrorism Assistance	16	18	19
Israel Emergency Counterterrorism	50	50	0
Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Fund	20	15	15
International Military Education and Training	39	43	50
Foreign Military Financing (incl. loan subsidies)	3,352	3,291	3,340
Peacekeeping Operations (Voluntary)	71	65	90
Special Defense Acquisition Fund	(173)	(166)	(106)
Multilateral Development Banks (incl. ESAF)	1,153	986	1,523
International Organizations and Programs (Voluntary)	285	331	365
COMMERCE, JUSTICE, STATE	**4,903**	**4,949**	**5,239**
State Department Operations	2,418	2,492	2,548
Machine-Readable Visa Fees	[115]	[137]	140
Other Administration of Foreign Affairs	65	72	67
Contributions to International Organizations (Assessed)	892	882	1,023
Contributions for International Peacekeeping Activites (Assessed)	359	352	286
US Information Agency	1,083	1,059	1,078
Arms Control and Disarmament Agency	39	42	46
Other Programs	47	50	51
AGRICULTURE	**1,134**	**1,018**	**887**
PL-480 Title I	263	151	10
PL-480 Title II	821	837	837
PL-480 Title III	50	30	30
LABOR/OTHER	**11**	**11**	**11**
United States Institute of Peace	11	11	11

Source: http://www.state.gov/www/global/general_foreign_policy/fy98_ia_bud.html

Foreign Assistance

Tom Barry and Jason Oringer
Interhemispheric Resource Center (IRC)

The U.S. foreign aid bureaucracy took shape following World War II as part of a two-pronged effort: 1) to ensure the dominance of U.S. business in the postwar capitalist world, and 2) to stop the advance of communism and leftist movements. Building upon the experiences of the Marshall Plan that supported the reconstruction of Western Europe in the 1940s, the State Department began providing economic aid to third world allies in the 1950s. Paralleling U.S. economic aid programs were military aid programs that bolstered anticommunist, authoritarian regimes.

Responding to the rising tide of leftist sympathies and dissatisfaction with the inequitable economic structures in the south, the U.S. government in 1961 passed the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA). The FAA established the Agency for International Development (AID) to coordinate development aid, humanitarian assistance, food aid, "free trade unions," and business-promotion programs. All these components of AID had the dual objective of 1) keeping recipient nations politically aligned with Washington and 2) promoting the economic interests of corporate America. The flagship program of the 1960s was the Alliance for Progress, which won the favor of some poor Latin Americans (mainly because of its support for agrarian reform and cooperative solutions to rural poverty). As a whole, however, AID's programs were more a part of the problem than of the solution. Military and police aid fortified repressive regimes, food aid created dependence on U.S. commodities, development assistance was linked to the purchases of U.S. agrochemicals and other goods, and support for "free trade unions" and other AID-dependent organization undermined independent popular organizing.

The close connections between economic aid and counterinsurgency programs, mainly in Vietnam and Latin America, combined with the failure of AID's economic modernization strategies led to a redefinition of U.S. assistance programs in the 1970s. The 1973 New Directions initiative stressed meeting the basic needs of the poor rather than implementing development strategies, and new human rights provisions limited the delivery of military aid to repressive governments. In the 1980s, beginning with the Reagan administration, the direction of U.S. international assistance shifted from basic needs toward using aid to subsidize private-sector development. To ensure that Reagan's "magic-of-the-marketplace" formula was instituted, the U.S. linked its aid to the imposition of structural adjustment programs of the World Bank and IMF. At the same time, there was also a shift back toward the coordinated use of all forms of U.S. foreign aid--development, political, food, military, and even humanitarian assistance--to promote U.S. national security objectives; namely to roll back communist, nationalist, and leftist advances.

In the early 1990s, after having promoted foreign aid as a cold war weapon for more than four decades, the foreign policy elite was left scrambling for a new rationale to win public and congressional support for these international operations.

The Clinton administration gained some support--particularly among nongovernmental organizations, environmental groups, and liberals--for redefinition of AID's mission as the promotion of "sustainable development" and the emphasis on more grassroots projects. In the end, however, the Clinton administration

did not attempt to promote a new vision of foreign aid or of international cooperation. Instead, lacking the national security justification for aid, it stressed the other traditional rationale for U.S. foreign assistance, namely the way aid served U.S. overseas business interests. Defending its international operations requests from budget slashers in Congress, the Clinton administration mounted a crass propaganda campaign declaring that foreign aid never really leaves home; 80 percent of economic aid goes to purchase U.S. goods and services.

The second Clinton administration faces the challenge of establishing the post-cold war objective of foreign assistance at a time economic insecurity is increasing at home and domestic social service programs are being slashed.

Problems with Current U.S. Policy

Despite a concerted administration lobbying campaign to convince policymakers that foreign aid directly serves U.S. interests, funding for most aspects of foreign aid has been severely cut. Those bilateral economic aid programs that directly serve either national security interests (such as large funding flows to Israel) or U.S. corporate interests (such as the U.S. Export-Import Bank) have been spared. Paralleling cuts in bilateral aid are reductions in support for international cooperation programs sponsored by the UN and multilateral development banks. The administration rightly points out to critics that its foreign assistance request are not large.

Together military and economic assistance represent only 1 percent of the federal budget. In total funding, U.S. economic aid ranks fourth behind Japan, Germany, and France. As a percentage of gross national income, the U.S. ranks dead last in economic aid among the 22 wealthiest nations--behind such countries as Portugal, New Zealand, and Ireland.

Since the mid-1980s the U.S. international affairs budget has been cut by one-half. Continued commitments to channel 40 percent of economic aid to Israel and Egypt undermine AID's argument that it is directing scarce resources to environmentally sustainable and equitable development initiatives. Similarly, the focus on restructuring the transnational states of the former Soviet bloc so as to pave the way for U.S. corporate investors and traders undermines efforts to build broad-based public support for foreign aid. Although AID's rhetoric has changed, it clearly remains highly political and highly influenced by corporate-driven models of economic development.

Nor is the Clinton administration's argument that U.S. tax revenues should be used to establish "free-market democracies" very persuasive. U.S. programs that condition aid packages on the implementation of free market reforms seem only to increase economic and social polarization--and certainly show no sign of ensuring sustainable development or democracy. Indeed, the practice of obligating recipient countries to change their economic policies to conform to U.S. demands seems to run counter to democratic principles espoused by these programs. In most countries, U.S. aid reinforces structural adjustment--notably in Russia, Central and Eastern Europe, and Haiti. There is also the irony--highlighted by critics on both the left and right--of the U.S. government using subsidies to promote private sector investment, all in the name of free enterprise.

Another factor in the administration's failure to build a new public and policy consensus on its budget request for international operations is the continued inclusion of large military aid expenditures that constitute 48 percent of annual aid allocations. This funding--along with the U.S. defense budget--sustains U.S. arms manufacturers while undermining global peace.

The Clinton administration has failed to take

advantage of the opportunities created by the end of the cold war to build a new constituency for U.S. international assistance. Instead of acknowledging the failures and limitations of bilateral aid programs, Clinton has largely continued the misdirected, ineffective policies of past administrations.

It is commonly acknowledged that the U.S. is no longer the economic powerhouse it once was. It cannot--and should not--assume the role of global policeman, lender of last resort, and political hegemonist. However, rather than arguing for a more multilateral and cooperative approach to addressing U.S. concerns about global peace and development, the U.S. routinely criticizes the UN and its affiliate institutions as bloated, ineffective, and unresponsive, while at the same time refusing to meet its financial obligations to the UN. And instead of cutting its own military budget to free up needed resources for international cooperation, Washington continues to prioritize military aid and defense spending. In sum, the U.S. foreign assistance program faces four main problems:

- Disintegrating consensus about the need for foreign aid in the post-cold war context.

- Failure of the administration to convince the U.S. public and policymakers how foreign aid furthers U.S. national interest.

- Continuing reductions in the international operations budget as the result of new efforts to reduce budget deficits

- Directing increasingly scarce foreign aid funds for business promotion and strategic objectives rather than to meet the newly defined objective of fostering sustainable development.

These and other problems have given rise to proposals to restructure the foreign assistance program.

Toward A New Foreign Policy

The first Clinton administration recognized the need to redefine and restructure the foreign assistance program because of rising budgetary pressures and in the absence of cold war rationales for extensive international operations. Although numerous positive steps were taken--including the new emphasis on slowing global environmental degradation, elimination of bureaucratic excess and unneeded country offices, and attempts to involve nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)--the administration failed to establish a new foundation for post-cold war foreign aid. Recognizing this failure, numerous NGOs and policy studies centers have offered alternative proposals. The policy recommendations here include elements from many of those proposals.

A viable reformulation of foreign aid must parallel a revisioning of U.S. foreign policy and a new conceptualization of what are U.S. national interests in international affairs. There are two main approaches each of which has merit. For their part, traditional progressive supporters of foreign aid and most of the NGO community with foreign programs back proposals to create foreign aid institutions that are more independent of U.S. foreign policy and more driven by grassroots concerns for development and humanitarian aid. It is argued that the creation of a government-funded foreign aid foundation or a new international cooperation agency independent of the political and commercial considerations would help change the top-down character of current programs and remove conflicting objectives (mainly strategic and business promotion) that now distort foreign assistance.

On the other side of the debate are those, mostly conservatives, who argue that foreign aid should be more not less responsive to U.S. strategic and commercial objectives. They contend that the foreign aid program should be less independent and more closely integrated

into the newly configured State Department whose portfolio includes foreign economic policy and international cooperation as well as the furthering of U.S. geopolitical strategy. They make the strong case that unless foreign aid is closely associated with the U.S. foreign policy establishment it will become increasingly vulnerable to budget cuts.

The ongoing discussions about the role and the structure of U.S. foreign aid are part of a larger debate about he direction of U.S. foreign policy. In reformulating and strengthening U.S. foreign aid, policymakers can contribute to the shaping of a more effective foreign policy. Even before decisions are reached about a more effective foreign aid structure, policymakers should do the following:

- Reaffirm the U.S. commitment to the UN by ending its debtor status and fulfilling its annual financial obligations to the UN's development, peacekeeping, and humanitarian assistance programs--all of which are relatively cost-effective responses to global economic and political problems.

- End most military assistance programs, except for programs that build the capacity of civilian-controlled police like those in Haiti and El Salvador. Multilateral peacekeeping, not the bilateral strengthening of local militaries, is the best guarantee for regional peace.

- End tied-aid programs that distort development objectives by focusing on the promotion of narrowly defined U.S. business interests. Aid that is justified as self-serving is hypocritical and effective.

- Delink bilateral foreign aid from structural adjustment programs that primarily serve the interests of Northern creditors and run counter to the stated U.S. commitment to equitable and sustainable development.

- Terminate the massive economic aid to countries, mainly Israel and Egypt, whose purpose is political not developmental or humanitarian.

In requesting new appropriations for foreign aid, the Clinton administration needs to redefine the relationship between aid and U.S. national interests. This should be part of a joint government-NGO effort to educate the U.S. public about the benefits of international cooperation and assistance programs that foster political stability, reduce threats to the global ecology, and ensure equitable development. Such tangible benefits as expanded markets for U.S. goods, reduced immigration flows, increased goodwill toward U.S. citizens, and a reduction in political violence should be pointed out. But it should be recognized that humanitarian and ethical considerations can also motivate U.S. support for foreign aid.

In addition, public support for U.S. international operations will also depend on a reorientation of U.S. national security away from cold war concepts requiring large military expenditures and linked to the interests of corporate America. Instead, U.S. national security should be more closely linked to concerns about health, education, and employment standards.

Structural reforms in the aid bureaucracy are needed but they too will fail unless U.S. policy makers make international cooperation a central principle of foreign policy. In this respect, a reformed foreign assistance program should do the following:

- Direct most aid through cooperative, multilateral channels rather than bilateral ones that are too easily influenced by short-term political and economic considerations.

- Channel this aid mostly through locally based NGOs that are democratic and not overly dependent on foreign funding.

Source: Tom Barry & Martha Honey, eds. Global Focus: A New Foreign Policy Agenda 1997-1998. Washington, DC, Institute for Policy Studies, 1997.

Sharpening the Tools of American Foreign Policy

Bryan T. Johnson, Thomas G. Moore, Thomas P. Sheehy

A SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

FOREIGN AID

During the Cold War, America spent enormous sums on foreign aid, in part to combat Soviet influence around the world.That purpose no longer exists, and there is clear evidence that economic and development aid does little to spur economic growth and prosperity in developing countries. The United States should:

- Eliminate U.S. government economic and development assistance to developing countries and emphasize instead that trade, economic freedom, and foreign investment are the means of genuine economic development.

- Abolish the Agency for International Development (AID) and vest remaining foreign aid programs in the State Department.

- Continue military assistance when it serves U.S. interests.

- Continue disaster aid and humanitarian relief on a case-by-case basis.

- End most food aid programs, retaining only emergency food aid.

- End U.S. government membership in and financial support of international aid organizations that do not serve U.S. interests.

FOREIGN AID AND THE NATIONAL INTEREST

America's $12 billion-a-year foreign aid program is coming under increasing scrutiny not only from the American public, but also from Congress. Although the total amount of foreign aid is a relatively small part of the federal budget, skeptics argue that the program is a waste of the taxpayer's money. Indeed, there is little evi- dence to support the contentions of proponents who argue that foreign aid is always vital to America's national interest. Moreover, even less evidence exists that this money actually helps alleviate poverty in less developed countries.

America's foreign aid program consists of three major projects:

- Military and security assistance. This portion of the foreign aid program is de- signed to promote America's national security abroad. It consists of such pro- grams as anti-narcotics efforts, joint military training exercises between U.S. and foreign forces, and grants to foreign countries to purchase U.S. military equip- ment and accounts for about 25 percent of the overall foreign aid budget. It is usually the most effective part of the U.S. foreign aid program.

- Humanitarian and disaster relief assistance. This program is designed to aid victims of natural disaster and prevent mass starvation. It accounts for some 15 percent of the foreign aid budget.

- Economic and development assistance. This aid is supposed to

promote eco- nomic growth in less developed countries and makes up some 60 percent of the foreign aid budget. It is always the least effective part of the U.S. foreign aid pro- gram.

The Clinton Administration argues that foreign aid is still vital to support Amer- ica's interests abroad. Skeptics questioned the merits of the program even during the Cold War. However, there is little evidence that even then the U.S. received its money's worth for the foreign aid dollars it sent overseas. For example, during the Cold War, the U.S. spent foreign aid dollars in such poor countries as Ethiopia, In- dia, Peru, Somalia, and Tanzania. All of these nations were recipients of U.S. foreign aid for more than 35 years, but their support for U.S. interests was at best question- able....

THE FAILURE OF ECONOMIC AID

There is abundant evidence that the U.S. foreign aid program does little to sup- port America's global interests. But there is even more evidence that it does even less to help countries develop economically. In fact, the data show that foreign aid often does more harm than good. Consider the following:

- Of the 64 countries receiving U.S. foreign aid for more than 35 years, many as long as 50 years, 36 are no better off today than they were before receiving such aid. [Figures based on an analysis of long-term recipients of foreign aid and the per capita GDP in 1965 and 1992 expressed in constant 1987 dollars. Those countries deemed no better off today than they were in 1965 had growth rates in their per capita GDP of 1 percent a year or less during the 27-year period from 1965 to 1992.]

- Of these 36 countries, 21 actually are poorer today then they were in 1965 [Brigid McMenamin, ``Environmental Imperialism," Forbes, May 20, 1996, p. 124.]....

....Development aid should be abolished. It has the potential to do great harm to a recipient country and is not necessary for development. However, if the U.S. development aid program continues, such aid should be given only to those countries advancing their economic freedom; that is, those developing countries which are privatizing industries, lowering taxes, protecting private property, welcoming foreign investment, and undertaking similar pro-growth economic policies. Such a U.S. development aid policy would help ensure that development aid does not subsidize statist and ruinous economic policies in recipient countries. [See Johnson and Sheehy, *The 1996 Index of Economic Freedom*.]

Source: This reading has been excerpted and somewhat rearranged from Restoring American Leadership: A U.S. Foreign Policy and Defense Blueprint, *published by The Heritage Foundation in 1996. http://www.nationalsecurity.org/heritage/nationalsecurity/blueprint*

IV. THINKING GLOBALLY,

ACTING LOCALLY

Dialogue and Education: Keys to Sustainability

President's Council on Sustainable Development

Steps Toward Sustainability

From individual consumers to international corporations, from youths to seniors, households to communities, this nation is taking its first tentative steps toward becoming a sustainable society. The consumer who selects a recycled paper product at the supermarket or who rejects a project because it is over-packaged is taking positive action. The corporation that redesigns its manufacturing process to save energy and raw materials has taken an equally positive step. The young person who devotes hours of after-school or weekend time to volunteer in his or her community is also participating--and it is a process of change that is gathering force across the nation and around the world.

A 1995 survey noted that 61 percent of Americans favor the idea of sustainable development, and that four out of 10 say they would tolerate changes in the price of consumer goods, such as paying more for a gallon of gasoline if they were sure it would help the environment. This willingness indicates that the public is developing attitudes and values that foster sustainable living. Further, a March 1996 survey asked respondents if the three goals of sustainable development--economic growth, environmental protection and the health and happiness of people--can be accomplished collectively without compromising any one of them, and 66 percent agree that it is possible to achieve all three simultaneously.

Another indicator of change is in the industrial sector. Manufacturers across the nation are adopting eco-efficient manufacturing processes, also known as "industrial ecology." Eco-efficient firms design industrial processes that mimic natural ecosystems, following nature's model by recycling valuable energy and natural resources. The goal is a closed loop with little or no waste--a system that makes good economic as well as environmental sense. Other evidence of change, drawn from the actions of individuals, businesses, and manufacturers, is mounting:

- Recent years have seen phenomenal success in converting a nation of "throwaway consumers" to conscientious recyclers. In 1990, Americans recycled 9.65 million tons of aluminum beverage cans, a recovery rate of 63 percent. The Berger family in Whitney Point, New York, has found ways to keep its trash to 3.0 pounds a year, rather than the 4.3 pounds of garbage produced every day by the average American. "It's integrated into our lives," explains Cindy Berger. "It's second nature, a habit."

- Production of bicycles reached 110 million units worldwide in 1994; 12 million were bought in the United States alone. Mail carriers in St. Petersburg, Florida, use bicycles on their rounds. Some police officers in New York City and Washington, D.C., patrol on bicycles, as do some Secret Service agents at the White House. While bicycles' overall impact on reducing energy use and air pollution may be small, it is growing.

- Nationwide, various high-profile retail chains have introduced environmentally friendly practices. McDonalds, for example, through a partnership with the Environmental Defense Fund, pays for independent evaluations of

manufacturers' claims of "biodegradable," "recyclable," and "saves energy." The company shares that information with consumers, enabling them to make informed purchasing decisions.

- Home Depot and Scientific Certification Systems pioneered the first U.S. private sector program to partner retailers, manufacturers, and third-party environmental certification to promote continuous environmental improvement in consumer products. Collins Pine, a sustainable forest products company, became the first to join the program by introducing Collins' wood, a certified sustainable product, at select Home Depot stores.

- Interface Flooring has started to implement a licensing program for carpeting. Interface manufactures the carpet (a petroleum-intensive product), ships and installs it, maintains it, and continues to own the carpet throughout its life. Because the carpet is made of free-laying carpet tiles, Interface's maintenance program includes periodic selective replacement of individual tiles that show wear and tear. Replaced carpet tiles are returned to a closed loop recycling center where individual components are recycled into new carpet tiles. Interface is also implementing The Natural Step, a program that combines science-based principles of sustainable development with total quality management to introduce sound environmental practices to the factory floor.

- Young people also are finding innovative ways to practice principles of sustainability. For the past three years, fifth-grade students at Kimbark Elementary School in San Bernardino, California, have lowered their school's energy bill by $5,000 a year. One of the student ideas was to hang signs reading, "Oops, you left your lights on," in empty classrooms. Students record each day's energy consumption, discuss possible causes when high readings occur, and carry out strategies for lowering energy use.

The individuals and organizations cited above may not call what they are doing "living sustainably," but they are making behavioral changes by conserving resources, saving money, and making collective and collaborative contributions to their community. Collectively, these actions--and others like them--will lead us to a sustainable tomorrow.

The Need for Public Dialogue on Sustainability

Despite the encouraging trend toward sustainable living practices, an overarching, incontrovertible fact remains: many Americans do not understand the concept of, or concepts involved in, sustainable development.

For example, they have little if any understanding of such pervasive environmental issues as biodiversity and global warming. A 1992 national opinion survey by Peter D. Hart Research Associates indicated that only one percent of respondents consider endangered species to be a serious environmental problem, and only one in five respondents had heard of the loss of biological diversity. This response, according to E.O. Wilson in *The Diversity of Life*, stands in startling contrast to the fact that approximately 27,000 species a year--74 per day, or three species every hour--are driven to extinction worldwide.

Additionally, many people confuse the issue of global warming with depletion of the ozone layer. A 1994 study by Carnegie-Mellon University revealed that even well-educated citizens

wrongly believe climate change can cause increased cases of skin cancer and are convinced that their personal response should be to give up aerosol sprays. Not only are these respondents confusing global warming and depletion of the ozone layer, they also seem to be unaware that ozone-depleting chemicals have been federally banned from aerosols for about 20 years.

If widely reported concepts such as global warming remain unfamiliar to so many Americans, it is not surprising that sustainability -- a complex and multidimensional concept, which involves finding a balance between achieving environmental protection, economic progress, and sociopolitical equity--is unknown to as many as four out of 10 citizens, as well as to many policy makers, business leaders, educators, and community leaders.

Many approaches can be used to raise public awareness of sustainability. But education--lifelong education, education within and outside the formal schooling system throughout our lives--is the major, perhaps primary, tool for creating a common understanding of this concept. This education may occur in formal schooling or in such nonformal venues as the media, adult education programs, museum exhibits, conferences and workshops, and nature center programs. The goal of this educational experience is for citizens to become active participants in dialogues about sustainable development and in developing meaningful sustainable development strategies--personally, locally, nationally, and globally.

Dialogues on sustainability must involve as many people and as many different viewpoints as possible. Multi-stakeholder dialogues compel people to work to discover common ground on which to build consensus and create change. Exploration of diverse views will result in wiser decisions leading to win-win solutions that provide benefits for all constituencies. Ultimately, this approach encourages "buy in" because participants feel they have a stake in the outcome. The result of a successful process in a cooperative atmosphere is that the stakeholders develop shared visions.

At the heart of a sustainable society is an integrated, supportive system that does not allow one component to dominate over another to the exclusion or extinction of another, but allows every component to flourish. The consensus needed to develop this system will be a gradual, cumulative process spreading outward from a few individuals, groups, and communities, and building over the years.

Overcoming Barriers Through Dialogue and Education

Projections by the United Nations indicate that the world's human population will increase from 5.5 billion to 8.5 billion by the year 2025. In 1988, 1.25 billion people worldwide breathed air containing unhealthy concentrations of suspended particulate matter. The average annual rate of deforestation worldwide between 1980 and 1990 was approximately equivalent to an area the size of Georgia. In the United States, citizens consume 25 percent of the Earth's resources although they constitute only 5 percent of the planet's population. The amount of energy used by a single person in the United States is equivalent to that used by three Japanese, six Mexican, and eight Native Americans. In the last 20 years, per capita consumption in the United States has increased by 45 percent. Because 35 percent of resources in America are consumed in households, it follows that lifestyle changes can make a direct impact on resource consumption.

Clearly, the time to chart and pursue a sustainable course is now. But lack of knowledge, indifference, and resistance must first be addressed.

If sustainability is to become a reality, educators, government at all levels, businesses, and non-governmental organizations must work together to foster an awareness of common needs, knowledge of the long-term impacts of decisions, and understanding of the benefits of achieving a sustainable society. The best way to allay any apprehensions about reductions in the standard of living and overcome anxiety and fear is to present positive visions and real-life examples of sustainability. Countless examples testify to sustainability-oriented changes across the United States. This report highlights some of these models, discusses the obstacles and efforts behind their success, and relates them to Task Force policy recommendations. By highlighting these stories, our hope is that their successes will inspire other grassroots efforts to spread the idea and practice of sustainability into other communities across the nation and the globe.

Progress toward sustainability will be realized if we as a nation can:

- build upon what is already working,
- identify success stories and share them as models,
- form productive partnerships to work for the common good and address system constraints, and
- educate individuals and communities for sustainability.

Progress means seeking synergy with ongoing initiatives and exploring new vehicles, such as experiential learning in the workplace, which will lead to an understanding of sustainability. A process like the one used by the President's Council on Sustainable Development and its Public Linkage, Dialogue, and Education Task Force can be replicated to continue moving us forward in examining strategies for advancing education for sustainability. The task is admittedly a big one, but is can be accomplished by working together to find common solutions.

Source: Public Linkage, Dialogue and Education: Task Force Report. President's Council on Sustainable Development, Washington, DC, 1997.

A Vision of Community Sustainability: Model Principles

Ontario Round Table on Environment and Economy

Principles are a popular way of expressing commitment to certain ideals. As used here, the principles can bring us a step closer to understanding community sustainability.

These principles...offer a starting point for addressing sustainability at the community level. Whether you use them as presented, or interpret them so that they reflect your community's particular circumstances, they act as a touchstone for all who may be involved in a community sustainability initiative.

A suggested approach to using these principles is to start by agreeing on the form and wording most suitable to your community. This may not be a straightforward exercise since people tend to be careful in their choice of preferred words. Then, with the support of those who helped develop the new version of the principles, consider how to translate the broad statements used in the principles into specific actions that different sectors, organizations, even individuals, in the community can take.

For example: What can the Municipal Corporation Public Works Department do in support of each principle? What about its Purchasing Department? How about the schools and school boards in the community? What can the business community as a whole, and specific businesses, do? What can the churches, the volunteer organizations, and social clubs do? What can you do in your own home and in your day to day activities?

Going through this exercise should help make the idea of a "sustainable community" more tangible. People and organizations can then see, in practical terms, actions they can take. Hopefully as a result they will more fully appreciate the need for these actions.

Also included is an illustrative set of examples that highlight some possible actions related to the model principles. These are actions that might be taken by a municipal government.

These examples are intended only to help demonstrate how principles can be identified with actions. The actions themselves do not necessarily represent preferred or recommended actions.

Model Principles

A sustainable community is one which:

1. Recognizes that growth occurs within some limits and is ultimately limited by the carrying capacity of the environment;

2. Values cultural diversity;

3. Has respect for other life forms and supports biodiversity;

4. Has shared values amongst the members of the community (promoted through sustainability education);

5. Employs ecological decision-making (e.g., integration of environmental criteria into all municipal government, business and personal decision-making processes);

6. Makes decisions and plans in a balanced, open and flexible manner that includes

the perspectives from the social, health, economic and environmental sectors of the community;

7. Makes best use of local efforts and resources (nurtures solutions at the local level);

8. Uses renewable and reliable sources of energy;

9. Minimizes harm to the natural environment;

10. Fosters activities which use materials in continuous cycles.

And, as a result, a sustainable community:

11. Does not compromise the sustainability of other communities (a geographic perspective);

12. Does not compromise the sustainability of future generations by its activities (a temporal perspective).

What actions can be suggested for each of the principles which could be undertaken in your community?

SUCCESS STORIES

Ottawa

"A Vision for Ottawa" is the title of the City of Ottawa's new Official Plan. As a municipal planning document, it is unique in its attempt to integrate the principles of sustainable development into the planning process. One of the key objectives of the Official Plan is balancing social, economic and environmental activities, based on the concept of environmentally sustainable urban development.

The City's commitment to sustainable development is manifested in the Mission Statement of Sustainable Urban Development, the Guiding Principles, and the Vision for Ottawa which are found at the beginning of the Plan. The specific policies contained in the Plan are designed to reflect this commitment.

For example, the housing policies promote affordable housing, infilling and intensification, which reflect the guiding principles of adequate shelter, and conservation and enhancement of the resource base. The transportation policies encourage increased use of public transportation, cycling, and walking, which reflect the guiding principle of increasing non-automobile transportation. In addition, the plan outlines the City's environmental impact assessment process, which is designed to address the cumulative impact of everyday practices and development projects on the environment.

Ottawa's Official Plan was developed through an elaborate public consultation process and gained solid community support. Since its adoption, the Plan has received considerable professional recognition, including the 1992 Canadian Institute of Planners' Award of Excellence.

For more information, contact: Planning Department, City of Ottawa
Tel: (613) 564-1663
Fax: (613) 564-8077

Source: http://www.web.net/ortee/scrp/20/23vision.html

SUSTAINABLE CITY PRINCIPLES

City of Portland, OR

Goal: City of Portland will promote a sustainable future that meets today's needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs, and accepts its responsibility to:

- Support a stable, diverse and equitable economy
- Protect the quality of the air, water, land and other natural resources
- Conserve native vegetation, fish, wildlife habitat and other ecosystems
- Minimize human impacts on local and worldwide ecosystems

City elected officials and staff will:

1. Encourage and develop connections between environmental quality and economic vitality. Promote development that reduces adverse effects on ecology and the natural resource capital base and supports employment opportunities for our citizens.

2. Include cumulative and long term impacts in decision making and work to protect the natural beauty and diversity of Portland for future generations.

3. Ensure commitment to equity so environmental impacts and the costs of protecting the environment do not unfairly burden any one geographic or socio-economic sector of the City.

4. Ensure environmental quality and understand environmental linkages when decisions are made and regarding growth management, land use, transportation, energy, water, affordable housing, indoor and outdoor air quality and economic development.

5. Use resources efficiently and reduce demand for natural resources, like energy, land, and water, rather than expanding supply.

6. Prevent additional pollution through planned, proactive measures rather than only corrective action. Enlist the community to focus on solutions rather than symptoms.

7. Act locally to reduce adverse global impacts of rapid growth of population and consumption, such as ozone depletion and global warming, and support and implement innovative programs that maintain and promote Portland's leadership as a sustainable city.

8. Purchase products based on long term environmental and operating costs and find ways to include environmental and social costs in short term prices. Purchase products that are durable, reusable, made of recycled materials, and non-toxic.

9. Educate citizens and businesses about Portland's Sustainable City Principles and take advantage of community resources. Facilitate citizen participation in City policy decisions and encourage everyone to take responsibility for their actions that otherwise adversely impact the environment.

10. Report annually on the health and quality of Portland's environment and economy.

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability has been defined as "meeting the needs of today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs." It means thinking about our behavior in a big context - recognizing

that our choices have a profound effect on our global environment and our future, and attempting to mitigate the negative impacts. A commitment to sustainability is a commitment to creative and responsible action.

The citizen members of the Sustainable Portland Commission advise City Council on sustainability as a central theme for planning and management of the City of Portland. The Sustainable City Principles was adopted by City Council in 1994.

The City of Portland Energy Office is actively advancing sustainability. Efforts include:

· **Portland: Progressing Towards Sustainability**

· **Carbon Dioxide Reduction**

In 1990, Portland became the first city in the United States to adopt a carbon dioxide reduction strategy.

· **Alternative Fuels/Clean Cities**

· **Businesses for an Environmentally Sustainable Tomorrow** (BEST)

The Energy Office, Bureau of Environmental Services, Traffic Management, and Water Bureau offer technical assistance to help businesses become more resource efficient and environmentally responsible.

· **EcoTeams** - Adopt sustainable lifestyle practices in Portland neighborhood.

· **Block-by-Block Weatherization**
A free weatherization for low-income Portland residents.

For a copy of *Sustainable Energy: A Guide for Local Governments*, contact the Energy Office.

Sustainability is a truly broad reaching, interdepartmental, citizen-based, and intergovernmental effort. For more information on sustainability, contact the City of Portland Planning Bureau, Office of Transportation, Bureau of Environmental Services, and Water Bureau.

City of Portland Energy Office
1211 SW Fifth Ave, Suite 1170
Portland, OR 97204
(503) 823-7222
Fax 823-5370
pdxenergy@ci.portland.or.us

Updated March 18, 1997

Source: http://www.ci.portland.or.us/energy/web/sustcityprinc.html

Politics for a Humane, Sustainable Future

By John A. Hoyt, The Humane Society

The central challenge facing humankind as it prepares for the new millennium is discovering how to reconnect ourselves to the earth community--a community of beings in which each life form is valued for its own intrinsic worth and is accorded the kind of reverential respect and consideration we all too often reserve for a chosen few.

This challenge seems virtually impossible to meet effectively in a world so thoroughly oriented to materialism and economic growth for their own sake. We must now come to grips with the nexus between this spiritually grounded vision of sustainability and the world of political power and reality.

Four major challenges must be addressed in mustering political support for sustainable societies in the political systems of post-industrial democracies.

The first is the recognition that the task of making society truly humane and sustainable must become of critical importance to the national political agenda. While individual pieces of legislation for the protection of one ecosystem or another, or for taking isolated actions to address the needs of certain segments of society are a part of the current political agenda. Neither the executive branch nor the legislative branch has yet acknowledged that there must be a serious debate of the larger question of how both consumption and economic accountability must be reassessed in order to achieve sustainability in the next century. In the United States, for example, the only mechanism for implementing the mandate of *Agenda 21* thus far has been the President's Council on Sustainable Development. And despite the release of a very useful report by that Council, there is substantial doubt that it will have any definitive impact, at least in the short run, on the national political agenda.

Secondly, the political constituency committed to the far-reaching changes required for a sustainable society must be enlarged. The vast majority of citizens remain unaware that such a political issue even exists and would not be prepared to support most of the policies and structural changes that are required.

Thirdly, leaders within most political parties lack any vision whatsoever of a sustainable society, which in turn makes it virtually impossible for this issue to be accorded a significant role in electoral politics. There are, of course, individual exceptions to this generalization. Vice President Al Gore, for example, is an unusually visionary political leader who understands the need for fundamental changes in values and attitudes as prerequisites to a sustainable society. But he, unfortunately, is isolated within the structure of his own party, where short-term political calculations normally override such visionary concerns.

Finally, the mass media, which tend to shape popular values as much as they register them, are, at best, timid about raising fundamental issues of sustainability. At their worst, they reinforce the very values and habits of mind that support the existing system of unsustainable living. They are intimidated and thus constrained in their potential role in reflecting critically on the issue of sustainable societies out of fear of losing advertisers--a

fear that has grown rather than diminished in recent years.

What must be done, then, to develop the political support needed to realize our vision of sustainable societies? A successful political strategy for a sustainable society must involve at least three strategies: (1) it must engage children and youth; (2) it must influence the messages that reach society through media of mass communications; and (3) finally, it must build broad coalitions that include major sectors of society.

The first task is to make a breakthrough with regard to children and youth. People are often heard to say they are concerned about the kind of world we will leave to our grandchildren, but equally critical is the kind of grandchildren we shall leave to the earth. The values and attitudes imparted to the children and youth of today are crucial in building the political will for sustainable societies in the next century. Children and youth must be reached with the message that living in harmony with all creation is critical to sustainable societies for their future. In particular, we must find new ways to instill this creed in the hearts and minds of the best and brightest among our children and grandchildren so that they can be a vanguard for their generation. Learning how to make sustainable living relevant to young people is perhaps both the most difficult and the most exciting of the political challenges we face.

The second strategic theme is the importance of the messages that media of mass communications carry with regard to living sustainably. The political arena in post-industrial societies operates within a culture that is saturated by media messages, most of which urge people to consume and live unsustainably. How can we influence these mass media messages, or, at the very least, counterbalance them?

We cannot afford to ignore the role of television, radio, film, and mass circulation commercial publications in shaping attitudes toward the goal of sustainable societies. Indeed, even now we should be trying to hold these institutions accountable for the values they are both promoting and reflecting in their programming--not just in their news coverage but in their entertainment programming as well. We should be asking people of conscience in the news and entertainment industries to convey the values of the movement for sustainable livelihoods rather than the values associated with the old paradigm.

Even at their most effective, however, these efforts to influence television networks and other commercially-run mass media inevitably will be limited by the power of advertisers to determine what the media may or may not convey to the viewing and reading audience. We must, therefore, make more effective use of alternative media to reach both the general public and particular audiences, such as youth and women. We should do more to use independent cable stations, educational print media and other media that are not commercially controlled. But, potentially far more important in the coming decade will be utilizing the programming distribution system offered through direct broadcast satellites (DBS), a system which can be used to compete with commercial television for the minds and hearts of the viewing public.

Making the message of sustainable livelihoods increasingly more prominent and more credible in the marketplace of ideas will require much more energy, time, money, and careful long-term planning than has ever been devoted to this challenge in the past. And because the mass media have become a crucible of

struggle over the ethical values that dominate society, finding a way to creatively exploit the media must become a high priority for organizations and individuals committed to transforming our societies.

The third strategic theme is creating new political coalitions that will broaden and enlarge the movement for sustainable living far beyond its core constituency. We must find common ground with organizations and sectors that do not currently see the issue of sustainable living as particularly relevant to their interests. In order to build such broad coalitions, organizations working to promote a transition to a sustainable society will have to establish a whole new set of linkages between entities dedicated to sustainable living and other central social and economic issues.

The Earth Charter process led by the Earth Council and Green Cross International is an excellent example of such coalition building at the international level. Representatives of many sectors--including the world's religions, environmentalists, and animal protection advocates -- must become seriously engaged in seeking to articulate a common ethical framework to promote a sustainable future. It is hoped that these ethical commitments may ultimately be translated into declarations, treaties, and conventions that will provide an agenda toward which political will can be mobilized.

An emerging concern around which protest coalitions can be developed is the growing pressure for even more economically efficient and, consequently, more environmentally exploitative multinational corporations. This pressure, which one author has called "turbo-charged capitalism," is not only accelerating environmental degradation but also creating growing social insecurity throughout the world. This issue is a ticking time bomb that portents the greatest threat imaginable to the realization of sustainable societies.

Those of us promoting sustainable societies will have to join hands with other concerned organizations and institutions to redefine the social and economic goals of post-industrialized societies. Indeed, in the coming decade, post-industrialized societies may well be driven by the sheer magnitude of technological change, to redefine the whole concept of work. It is vital therefore, that the movement for sustainable livelihoods be at the center of that discussion and that it seek to make common cause with a wide range of organizations and sectors sharing our concerns, including such groups as labor as well as those addressing issues central to gender and minority issues.

These suggested strategies for building a strong political movement for sustainable societies all have a common thread: they are aimed at reaching a widening circle of individuals with our message --a message that the new earth community that we seek to create shall not be realized until and unless literally millions of people embrace a new under-standing and appreciation of the sanctity of all life.

Source: Earth Ethics: Evolving Values for an Earth Community. Vol. 8, No. 1. Center for Respect of Life and Environment, Washington, DC, Fall 1996.

Principles of a Sustainable Society, Caring for the Earth: A Strategy for Sustainable Living

Living sustainably depends on accepting a duty to seek harmony with other people and with nature. The guiding rules are that people must share with each other and care for the Earth. Humanity must take no more from nature than nature can replenish. This in turn means adopting life-styles and development paths that respect and work within nature's limits. It can be done without rejecting the many benefits that modern technology has brought, provided that technology also works within those limits. This Strategy is about a new approach to the future, not a return to the past.

The principles of a sustainable society are interrelated and mutually supporting. Of those listed below, the first is the founding principle providing the ethical base for the others. The next four define the criteria that should be met, and the last four directions to be taken in working towards a sustainable society at the individual, local, national and international levels. The principles are:

1. Respect and care for the community of life.

This principle reflects the duty of care for other people and other forms of life, now and in the future. It is an ethical principle. It means that development should not be at the expense of other groups or later generations. We should aim to share fairly the benefits and costs of resource use and environmental conservation among different communities and interest groups, among people who are poor and those who are affluent, and between our generation and those who will come after us.

All life on earth is part of one great interdependent system, which influences and depends on the non-living components of the planet - rocks, soils, waters and air. Disturbing one part of this biosphere can affect the whole. Just as human societies are interdependent and future generations are affected by our present actions, so the world of nature is increasingly dominated by our behaviour. It is a matter of ethics as well as practicality to manage development so that it does not threaten the survival of other species or eliminate their habitats. While our survival depends on the use of other species, we need not and should not use them cruelly or wastefully.

2. Improve the quality of human life.

The real aim of development is to improve the quality of human life. It is a process that enables human beings to realize their potential, build self-confidence and lead lives of dignity and fulfillment. Economic growth is an important component of development, but it cannot be a goal in itself, nor can it go on indefinitely. Although people differ in the goals that they would set for development, some are virtually universal. These include a long and healthy life, education, access to the resources needed for a decent standard of living, political freedom, guaranteed human rights, and freedom from violence. Development is real only if it makes our lives better in all these respects.

3. Conserve the Earth's vitality and diversity.

Conservation-based development needs to include deliberate action to protect the structure, functions and diversity of the world's natural systems, on which our species utterly depends. This requires us to:

Conserve life-support systems. These are the ecological processes that keep the planet fit for life. They share climate, cleanse air and water, regulate water flow, recycle essential elements, create and regenerate soil, and enable ecosystems to renew themselves;

Conserve biodiversity. This includes not only all species of plants, animals and other organisms, but also the range of genetic stocks within each species, and the variety of ecosystems;

Ensure that uses of renewable resources are sustainable. Renewable resources include soil, wild and domesticated organisms, forests, rangelands, cultivated land, and the marine and freshwater ecosystems that support fisheries. A use is sustainable if it is within the resource's capacity for renewal.

4. Minimize the depletion of non-renewable resources.

Minerals, oil, gas and coal are effectively non-renewable. Unlike plants, fish or soil, they cannot be used sustainably. However, their "life" can be extended, for example, by recycling, by using less of a resource to make a particular product, or by switching to renewable substitutes where possible. Widespread adoption of such practices is essential if the Earth is to sustain billions more people in future, and give everyone life of decent quality.

5. Keep within the earth's carrying capacity.

Precise definition is difficult, but there are finite limits to the "carrying capacity" of the Earth's ecosystems - to the impacts that they and the biosphere as a whole can withstand without dangerous deterioration. The limits vary from region to region, and the impacts depend on how many people there are and how much food, water, energy and raw materials each uses and wastes. A few people consuming a lot can cause as much damage as a lot of people consuming a little. Policies that bring human numbers and life-styles into balance with nature's capacity must be developed alongside technologies that enhance that capacity by careful management.

6. Change personal attitudes and practices.

To adopt the ethic for living sustainably, people must re-examine their values and later their behaviour. Society must promote values that support the new ethnic and discourage those that are incompatible with a sustainable way of life. Information must be disseminated through formal and informal educational systems so that the polices and actions needed for the survival and well-being of the world's societies can be explained and understood.

7. Enable communities to care for their own environments.

Most of the creative and productive activities of individuals or groups take place in communities. Communities and citizens' groups provide the most readily accessible means for people to take socially valuable action as well as to express their concerns. Properly mandated, empowered and informed, communities can contribute to decisions that affect them and play an indispensable part in creating a securely-based sustainable society.

8. Provide a national framework for integrating development and conservation.

All societies need a foundation of information and knowledge, a framework of law and institutions, and consistent economic and social policies if they are to advance in a rational way. A

national programme for achieving sustainability should involve all interests, and seek to identify and prevent problems before they arise. It must be adaptive, continually redirecting its course in response to experience and to new needs. National measures should:

- treat each region as an integrated system, taking account of the interactions among land, air, water, organisms and human activities;

- recognize that each system influences and is influenced by larger and smaller systems - whether ecological, economic, social or political;

- consider people as the central element in the system, evaluating the social, economic, technical and political factors that affect how they use natural resources;

- relate economic policy to environmental carrying capacity;

- increase the benefits obtained from each stock of resources

- promote technologies that use resources more efficiently

- ensure that resource users pay the full social costs of the benefits they enjoy.

9. Create a global alliance.

No nation today is self-sufficient. If we are to achieve global sustainability, a firm alliance must be established among all countries. The levels of development in the world are unequal, and the lower-income countries must be helped to develop sustainably and protect their environments. Global and shared resources, especially the atmosphere, oceans and shared ecosystems, can be managed only on the basis of common purpose and resolve. The ethic of care applies at the international as well as the national and individual levels. All nations stand to gain from worldwide sustainability and are threatened if we fail to attain it.

Source: IUCN, UNEP, and WWF. Caring for the Earth: A strategy for sustainable living. Gland, Switzerland, 1991.
http://iisd1.iisd.ca/sd/principle.asp?pid=57&display=1

The Earth Charter
Benchmark Draft

Earth is our home and home to all living beings. Earth itself is alive. We are part of an evolving universe. Human beings are members of an interdependent community of life with a magnificent diversity of life forms and cultures. We are humbled before the beauty of Earth and share a reverence for life and the sources of our being. We give thanks for the heritage that we have received from past generations and embrace our responsibilities to present and future generations.

The Earth Community stands at a defining moment. The biosphere is governed by laws that we ignore at our own peril. Human beings have acquired the ability to radically alter the environment and evolutionary processes. Lack of foresight and misuse of knowledge and power threaten the fabric of life and the foundations of local and global security. There is great violence, poverty, and suffering in our world. A fundamental change of course is needed.

The choice is before us: to care for Earth or to participate in the destruction of ourselves and the diversity of life. We must reinvent industrial-technological civilization, finding new ways to balance self and community, having and being, diversity and unity, short-term and long-term, using and nurturing.

In the midst of all our diversity, we are one humanity and one Earth family with a shared destiny. The challenges before us require an inclusive ethical vision. Partnerships must be forged and cooperation fostered at local, bioregional, national and international levels. In solidarity with one another and the community of life, we the peoples of the world commit ourselves to action guided by the following interrelated principles:

1. Respect Earth and all life. Earth, each life form, and all living beings possess intrinsic value and warrant respect independently of their utilitarian value to humanity.

2. Care for Earth, protecting and restoring the diversity, integrity, and beauty of the planet's ecosystems. Where there is risk of irreversible or serious damage to the environment, precautionary action must be taken to prevent harm.

3. Live sustainably, promoting and adopting modes of consumption, production and reproduction that respect and safeguard human rights and the regenerative capacities of Earth.

4. Establish justice, and defend without discrimination the right of all people to life, liberty, and security of person within an environment adequate for human health and spiritual well-being. People have a right to potable water, clean air, uncontaminated soil, and food security.

5. Share equitably the benefits of natural resource use and a healthy environment among the nations, between rich and poor, between males and females, between present and future generations, and internalize all environmental, social and economic costs.

6. Promote social development and financial systems that create and maintain sustainable

livelihoods, eradicate poverty, and strengthen local communities.

7. Practice non-violence, recognizing that peace is the wholeness created by harmonious and balanced relationships with oneself, other persons, other life forms, and Earth.

8. Strengthen processes that empower people to participate effectively in decision-making and ensure transparency and accountability in governance and administration in all sectors of society.

9. Reaffirm that Indigenous and Tribal Peoples have a vital role in the care and protection of Mother Earth. They have the right to retain their spirituality, knowledge, lands, territories and resources.

10. Affirm that gender equality is a prerequisite for sustainable development.

11. Secure the right to sexual and reproductive health, with special concern for women and girls.

12. Promote the participation of youth as accountable agents of change for local, bioregional and global sustainability.

13. Advance and put to use scientific and other types of knowledge and technologies that promote sustainable living and protect the environment.

14. Ensure that people throughout their lives have opportunities to acquire the knowledge, values, and practical skills needed to build sustainable communities.

15. Treat all creatures with compassion and protect them from cruelty and wanton destruction.

16. Do not do to the environment of others what you do not want done to your environment.

17. Protect and restore places of outstanding ecological, cultural, aesthetic, spiritual, and scientific significance.

18. Cultivate and act with a sense of shared responsibility for the well-being of the Earth Community. Every person, institution and government has a duty to advance the indivisible goals of justice for all, sustainability, world peace, and respect and care for the larger community of life.

Embracing the values in this Charter, we can grow into a family of cultures that allows the potential of all persons to unfold in harmony with the Earth Community. We must preserve a strong faith in the possibilities of the human spirit and a deep sense of belonging to the universe. Our best actions will embody the integration of knowledge with compassion.

* * *

In order to develop and implement the principles in this Charter, the nations of the world should adopt as a first step an international convention that provides an integrated legal framework for existing and future environmental and sustainable development law and policy.

Source: Earth Council
http://www.ecouncil.ac.cr.
rio5/mar18/earthen.html
March 18, 1997

What You Can Do

Development is a process of change underway not only in the Third World, but also in industrial countries like the United States. Development is not contained within a country, but connects countries together and affects foreign territories. Actions of individuals in the United States and other industrial countries affect their own personal circumstances, the status of their countries, and the status of other countries.

Inform Yourself

Before beginning to act, increase your awareness of international development, the environment, and the factors that affect both, so that you can speak and write about them with authority.

- Contact organizations concerned with economic and social development, the environment, diverse human cultures, population, poverty, agriculture, food relief, health care, renewable energy, and other topics related to the links between development and the environment. Subscribe to their newsletters.

- Learn how local, national, and international decisions by government and private agencies affect development; learn what processes those organizations go through to arrive at decisions, and what information they rely on; learn what their goals are, and what successes or failures they have had.

- If you have the opportunity, travel to areas of the country or the world that have developed differently from your area, or that have faced different problems in achieving development.

- See how the development of your region affects its economy and your community. Consider the ways that the development of neighboring regions and distant countries also affect your community.

- Learn how the foods you eat and the common household materials you use depend on resources from distant lands. Learn more about the products that the poor produce in other countries and how the poor contribute to their national economies.

- Try to recognize the connections between the various elements of international development (such as population, energy, agriculture, foreign trade). Try to see how development must progress as a whole, rather than looking at each element separately.

Join With Others

Support organizations concerned with international development and the environment; go to their meetings; volunteer your services. Help such groups to become more involved in development issues. Learn about pending legislation that affects development and environment.

Develop a network of contacts. Attend meetings of your city council or county board and encourage them to consider issues that affect the future development of your region and other parts of the world.

- Work with local business forums, Chamber of Commerce, Young President's Association, Rotary Clubs, etc., to actively engage the business community in a dialogue on sustainable development. Encourage creation of a statewide forum of chief executive officers (CEOs) on the connection between economic growth and the wise, long-term management of natural and human

resources.

- Create environmental or sustainable development awards for responsible business practices and good corporate citizens.

- Ask businesses to review their foreign environmental and pollution control practices to see if they comply with local regulations. Businesses must be conscientious about their impact on the environment, here and abroad.

- Work with corporate planners to develop a definition of sustainable development for the business community.

- Work with shareholders and board members of corporations engaged in overseas development projects to see that their projects meet sustainable development criteria.

- Form a state-wide coalition on sustainable development with leaders from diverse sectors, business, finance, environment, government, education, peace, health, population, labor, etc., to create a long-term sustainable development plan for your state. Consider how the coalition can exert leadership internationally.

Review Your Habits and Lifestyle

- Look for ways to conserve and protect the resources that the global population shares. Try to recycle paper, glass, and cans; carpool, walk, or ride a bike instead of driving; turn off extra lights; eat less meat.

- Try to reduce your use of chemicals and industrial products. Reduced consumption will conserve the resources used in all stages of the production of those products.

- Consider installing energy-conserving appliances and equipment in your home, such as efficient heating, cooling, and lighting systems; solar panels, extra insulation, and energy-efficient windows.

- Avoid using products that directly reduce the natural resources base or the biological diversity of industrial or developing countries.

Work With Your Elected Officials

Contact your local, state, and national officials and find out their positions and voting records on development and environment legislation. In brief, clear letters and phone calls, tell your representatives where you and the organizations your represent stand on the issues, and urge them to:

· encourage the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and other multilateral agencies to incorporate environmental considerations into all decisions.

· increase national attention to international environmental and developmental concerns.

· increase national support for the United Nations.

· allocate more resources to developing renewable energy sources and improving energy efficiency.

Publicize Your Views

Inform your community leaders, policymakers, and the general public about the urgency of poverty in the Third World and its effects on industrial countries. Stress the irreversible nature of the human injury, environmental damage, and economic loss that result from poverty, and the potential of industrial countries for reducing poverty.

- Write letters to the editors of local newspapers about development and environment issues; help

your organization create a public service message for local television and radio stations.

- Help spread the views of people who agree with you on development issues, for example by supporting letter-writing campaigns to government representatives.

- Try to write articles for magazines, newspapers, and newsletters about subjects related to development and the environment.

- Meet with editorial boards of local newspapers about the issues of sustainable development and how they affect your community.

Raise Awareness Through Education

Find out whether schools and libraries in your area have courses, programs, films, and other educational resources related to development and the environment. If not, offer to help develop or supply them. Offer to speak to classes or organize projects on issues related to development and environment.

- Find out whether your state has a Global Issues Mandate. If it does not, work with teachers and local school administrators to get one adopted. See that curriculum materials on global sustainable development, environment, and population are available to elementary and secondary school teachers.

- Work with school administrators, teachers, and PTA groups to provide teacher in-service training sessions that include units on environmental and sustainable development topics.

- At the college level, work with professors of various departments, economics, biological and physical sciences, liberal arts, etc., to sponsor a sustainable development forum to discuss how that concept relates to their respective departments and course offerings. Encourage multidepartment events.

- Work to create a Foreign Student Speakers Bureau. Vising foreign students are an untapped community resource. Contact heads of university departments to see how these students can work with organizations in your community. Invite foreign students to speak on sustainable development issues as they relate to what is happening in their native countries. Encourage them to write articles for newsletters and participate in local projects.

- Start a development education project with your school or organization. Contact groups such as the American Forum (see Appendix) for a resource list of materials available.

Consider the International Connections

Try to travel or study in a Third World country. Before you go, learn about the country's history, culture, environment, and state of development. Observe the range of living standards and the quality of life, and consider how they are related to the country's economic and social development and to its environment. Compare the communities you visit to your own community. Learn which U.S. organizations have links with organizations in the country you visit, and how they operate. Become involved in exchange programs and sister-city initiatives.

Shaping Public Policy

There remains much to be done to encourage more positive and effective public policies at every level on long-term national and global issues.

Your Opinion Can Make a Difference

On most domestic issues that preoccupy Members of the

U.S. Congress, there are organized and vocal constituents back in the home states and districts. They make themselves heard, and Senators and Representatives listen, knowing that the message they receive today in a letter, phone call, or visit may very well influence how a vote will be cast on the next election day. On global issues, however, the constituency is often less visible, less organized, and much less often heard. The result, not surprisingly is that Members of Congress are often reluctant to appropriate funds for foreign aid or to support international organizations and activities that affect future global trends.

Changing this climate of apathy and inaction is one of GTC's key functions. GTC members recognize the need to address significant global challenges ahead of us, but know that we must work together, or else the multiplicity of voices may simply overwhelm our elected representatives. Together we can pool our unique resources in ways that will capture public attention for global issues. Working cooperatively citizen activists can tap those resources and magnify their influence at the local, state, and national level. Progress on this front must begin with the involvement of concerned individuals like yourself.

Think Globally, Act Locally

This is the essential guideline for your community activities and constituency building. Broader public awareness of global problems is essential to move our country toward greater participation in effective remedial action in our own self-interest. In the community at large, there is much that can be done by a local organization to promote awareness of the need for dealing with global issues. Because an issue may have consequences in many different areas, you should look for aspects of the problem that are likely to be of concern to local organizations.

Citizen Action

Information, organization, public outreach, and direct communication with elected officials are the keys to effective citizen activism. Start by carefully defining your objectives. Decide which global issues concern you the most and are most worthy of your devotion of time and energy. Identify local organizations and individuals that you think may have similar interest. Seek them out, verify your shared concerns, and find out what they might be willing to do together with you.

Get to Know Your Elected Officials

Begin your letter-writing campaign. A letter to a member of the House of Representatives is addressed to:

The Honorable

_____

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515
Dear Representative

_____:

A letter to a member of the Senate is addressed to:

The Honorable

_____

U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510
Dear Senator

_____:

Persuade others to write letters, too. Letter-writing is a simple but powerful political tool for communicating with elected officials. The staffs of Members of Congress and other elected officials read their mail and *count* it, too (sometimes, when the volume is exceptionally high, they even *weigh* it). Their offices have sophisticated systems for registering the receipt of mail, formulating

an official response on an issue, and communicating that response to citizens who request it.

Writing a letter on an issue to your elected representative shouldn't be a once-in-a-lifetime event but the beginning of a steady and increasingly respectful and productive relationship. Your letter should combine all the benefits of your information search, organization, and outreach. It should be short and direct, stating the facts of your concern clearly and politely in one page, if possible. Make the local relevance of your position clear. Work with others to make sure that they, too, write personal letters. Always ask your representative for a specific response, and always follow up politely, regardless of whether the response is positive or negative. Threats and accusations are counterproductive with most elected officials. If they disagree with you or are indifferent today, don't be put off. Instead, pursue the issue further, addressing or soliciting the particular objections the official may have and showing him or her that there are authoritative people who share your point of view.

The same is true if you send a telegram, make a telephone call, or pay a visit. Minds are made to be changed, and the holders of public office are as sensitive to that imperative of political life as anyone else. Successful political careers are based on responsive positions. No matter how urgent the crisis of today, keep in mind, that, more often than not, you will have another opportunity to work on it tomorrow. An elected official may be turned around the next time, if you don't burn all your bridges now. And every public official is keenly aware that there will be another election in two, four, or six years.

Some membership groups within the Coalition have detailed manuals describing the political process, and suggesting how you can help shape policy. Learn from these publications and from the experience of others.

Source: Walter H. Corson, Editor. Citizen's Guide to Sustainable Development. Washington, DC: Global Tomorrow Coalition, 1990.

SUPPLEMENTAL VIDEOS

Several excellent videos have been previewed for this project and can supplement the written materials in this discussion guide. This is a suggestive, not exhaustive, list. The abbreviations for environment, development and equity indicate which of these three crucial elements of sustainable development the videos address. The citation concludes with a suggestion of some special global day for which the videos would be appropriate discussion starters.

Note the three distributors at the end of this section from whom the videos can be purchased or rented, and the special project-related discounts available to libraries.

Borderline Cases: Environmental Matters at the United States-Mexico Border (BF) 65 mins. (1997) Produced & Directed by Lynn Corcoran The bi-national effort to craft remedies for 25 years of environmental neglect at the Mexico-US border shows the sense of urgency and imagination of diverse groups of people of both countries, from grass roots, government, academia, and industry. VHS ISBN 1-56029-681-X Env/Dev/Eq *Human Rights Day*

Changing the Focus of Foreign Aid (VP and CDI) 28 mins. (1997) Produced by CDI. Focuses on post-Cold War changes since only 1% of the Federal budget is spent on foreign affairs in general and only half of that goes toward promoting sustainable development. Env/Dev *International Day of Peace*

Cultivating Opportunity: Self-Help Solutions to Poverty in the U.S. and Africa (BF) 28 mins. (1997) By Michael Sheridan, produced by Oxfam America. The inspiring story of how two poor farmers, one in Georgia and one in Mozambique, use similar strategies in the self-help solutions they champion. VHS ISBN: 1-56029-731-X Dev/Eq *World Food Day*

Escaping from History (BF) 53 mins. - in two parts (1995) Produced by Catherine Mullens & Marrin Canell, Green Lion Productions. Uses the pollution problems in Mexico City, the world's fastest-growing city, to talk about the hope of worldwide democratization and the perils of the South's adopting the North's consumerist patterns. ISBN: 07722-0597-3 Env/Dev/Eq *World Health Day*

Fat of the Land (VP) 56 mins. (1996) Produced by Lewison, Konop, Dore & Todus. A humorous cross-country adventure for several young women driving a van across the U.S. fueled by left over vegetable oil, interspersed with serious interviews with alternative fuels researchers and incredulous by-standers. Env/Dev *Earth Day*

Garbage Into Gold (VP) 25 mins. (1995) Produced by Beth Pike & Stephen Hudnell. Recycling raised to new levels, from a barber who recycles hair into *Ferthairlizer* to a business that rescues and sells dump items as *"urban ore;"* offers economic hope for inner-city enterprises. Env/Dev/Eq *World Environment Day*

GREENBUCKS: The Challenge of Sustainable Development (VP) 55 mins (1992) Produced by Gabrielle Kelly & Nick Hart-Williams. Chief executives from major corporations, government officials, conservationists, public utilities and futurists look at the environmental crisis and come up with some ideas "to change their ways". EnvDev *World Environment Day*

Green Plans (VP) 56 mins (1995) Produced by John De Graaf & Jack Hamann. Profiling the Netherlands and New Zealand to show how government, business and environmentalists work together to devise a national environmental policy, this video illustrates sustainable development in action. Env/Dev/Eq *Earth Day*

No Dam Good (BF) 26 mins. (1987) Produced by Bullfrog Films. British scientist David Bellamy draws the issues surrounding the building of large dams (popular with development practitioners for years) in an entertaining manner. Env/Dev/Eq *World Habitat Day*

No Spare Parts (BF) 22 mins. (1990) Produced by Asterisk Film & Videotape Productions and the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. A lesson on ingenuity from Ghana, where nothing is thrown away in the recycling of parts to keep machinery going - a message for our throw away society! Env/Dev/Eq *Africa Industrialization Day*

Stopping War Before It Starts (VP and CDI)28 mins. (1997) Produced by CDI. By looking for the early warning signs of conflict, such as environmental catastrophes, economic crisis and refugee flow, policy makers can take steps to prevent war. Env/Dev/Eq *International Day of Peace*

Trees, Toilets, and Transformation - (VP) 28 mins (1996) Produced by Merran Smith & Michael Simpson. A recycling expert goes to El Salvador, the second most environmentally devastated country in the western hemisphere, expecting to "help out," but comes away deeply impressed with the ingenious methods everyday people are using to reclaim their environment, including the *Forest of Reconciliation.* Env/Dev/Eq *Arbor Day*

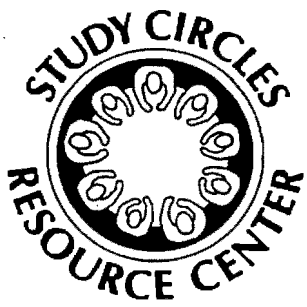
Witness to the Future - (VP) 50 mins. (1996) Produced by Brenda Miller. Citizens of three communities hard hit by human-made environmental disasters, Hanford, WA, San Joaquin Valley, CA, "Cancer Alley," LA, learn how to become environmental activists. Env/Dev/Eq *Human Rights Day*

Distributors:

BF = Bullfrog Films, Box 149, Oley, PA 19547, 800-543-FROG, email: bullfrog@igc.apc.org. **REQUEST THE SPECIAL LIBRARY SALE PRICE OF $89 PER VIDEO**, which Bullfrog is offering in support of this project -- a discount of 45%-75%.

CDI = Center for Defense Information, 1500 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20005, 202-862-0700, email: adminfo@cdi.org.

VP = The Video Project, 200 Estates Dr., Ben Lomond, CA 95005, (800-4-PLANET) email: videoproject@videoproject.org. **REQUEST THE SPECIAL PROJECT-RELATED LIBRARY DISCOUNT OF 10% FOR 1 OR 2 AND 15% FOR 3 OR MORE VIDEOS.**



The Study Circle Handbook

A Manual for Study Circle Discussion Leaders, Organizers, and Participants

Introduction

This handbook presents the fundamentals of successful study circle discussion leadership. It also includes pointers for study circle organizers and participants, and concludes with "A comparison of dialogue and debate," a piece that helps distinguish study circles from other types of discussion.

The study circle process is a simple and powerful method for learning that builds on the experiences and knowledge of group members and expands horizons by ensuring that a variety of views is considered. Since a study circle is small-group democracy in action, it requires a leader who can help give focus and, at the same time, encourage group ownership of the discussion.

The discussion leader is critical to the success of a study circle. This person does not "teach" in the usual sense of the word and doesn't have to be an expert in the subject being discussed. He or she must, however, have enough familiarity with the subject to be able to raise views that have not been considered by the group. The leader's main task is to create an atmosphere for collaborative learning, one in which each participant feels at ease in expressing ideas and responding to those of others.

Study circle leaders come from a variety of backgrounds, and many have had no formal training in discussion leadership. Whether you have the opportunity to participate in a training program or simply jump into the role of study circle leader, you'll find yourself constantly honing your skills as you gain experience and insights.

We invite you to call SCRC to discuss your study circle program with us. If you encounter difficulties, we'll do our best to help, perhaps by referring you to someone whose program is similar to yours. And if everything is going smoothly, we'll add yours to the growing list of study circle success stories.

We would also like to know what you find most, and least, useful about this handbook. Please call or write the Study Circles Resource Center to share your ideas.

The Study Circle Handbook © 1993 Topsfield Foundation, Inc.
Study Circles Resource Center • PO Box 203 • Pomfret, CT 06258 • (860) 928-2616 • Fax (860) 928-3713 • E-mail <scrc@neca.com>

What is a study circle?

A dozen people are comfortably seated around a living room or meeting room, one speaking, several others looking like they would like to make a point, one skimming an article as if searching for a particular item, another scanning the group, and the others listening attentively. This is a study circle in action.

A study circle is made up of 5–20 people who agree to meet together several times to learn about a social or political issue in a democratic and collaborative way. Complex issues are broken down into manageable subdivisions, and controversial topics are dealt with in depth. While single-session programs can result in meaningful and productive dialogue, multiple sessions generate continuity and camaraderie within the group. Reading material serves to catalyze the discussion and provides a common reference point.

Philosophy and background

As an informal, practical, and effective method for adult learning and social change, the study circle is rooted in the civic movements of 19th century America, and the use of study circles and similar small-group discussion programs is growing rapidly in the United States and many other places around the world.

Study circles are voluntary and highly participatory. They assist participants in confronting challenging issues and in making difficult choices. Study circles engage citizens in public and organizational concerns, bringing the wisdom of ordinary people to bear on difficult issues. Cooperation and participation are stressed so that the group can capitalize on the experience of all its members.

The study circle is small-group democracy in action; all viewpoints are taken seriously and each participant has an equal opportunity to participate. The process – democratic discussion among equals – is as important as the content.

Roles

The study circle leader is vital to the group's success. The leader makes sure the discussion is lively but focused. He or she models respectful listening and encourages participants to share their knowledge, experiences, and opinions. Some people find it helpful to share leadership tasks with a co-moderator.

The study circle organizer – who may be the same person as the leader – selects the reading material, recruits participants, arranges the logistics for the meetings, and chooses the discussion leader.

Participants, whose commitment and interest are essential for a study circle's success, ultimately "own" the study circle. Their clear understanding of both their role and the leader's role helps create a democratic and collaborative environment.

Goals

The goal of a study circle is to deepen participants' understanding of an issue by focusing on the values that underlie opinions. Perhaps the most important question a study circle leader can ask is: "What experiences or beliefs might lead decent and caring people to support that point of view?" The group works through difficult issues and grapples with the choices that society or their organization is facing. Study circles seek "common ground" – that is, areas of general agreement – but consensus or compromise is not necessary.

Study circles differ from typical meetings in that they do not begin with a specific desired outcome. *Deliberation* is the goal. However, study circles often lead to social and political action, both by individual participants and by the group. In the final session, leaders may encourage participants to share information about what is going on in their community or organization and to discuss action they might take after the study circle ends.

Suitability to a variety of organizations

Churches and synagogues, civic and community groups, businesses, advocacy organizations, schools, and unions have all used study circles to help their members consider vital issues. Sponsorship of study circles provides opportunities for members to gain knowledge, empowerment, and improved communication skills in an enjoyable and challenging setting.

Variations on the basic format

There are many variations to the basic format for a study circle. Though ideal study circles meet once a week for at least three sessions, other schedules can also work well. Some groups may want to combine a study circle with their regular monthly meetings. For those groups that cannot meet regularly, a workshop format can be used at a conference or a retreat, with the entire study circle taking place in one or two days.

Videotapes or audiotapes as well as written material can be used to spark discussion. Small-group activities and exercises are included in some study circles to add variety to the sessions.

The strength of the study circle is its flexibility. Every group's situation is unique, and study circle organizers are encouraged to adapt the basic format to the needs and goals of their community or organization.

Overview of a typical study circle

What follows is an outline for a single study circle session. It may be helpful to have this handy for reference as you lead a study circle.

1. Introductions. Start by giving group members the opportunity to briefly introduce themselves. If you've already met several times, at least go around the room to give names.

2. Ground rules. Remind everyone of the ground rules for study circles, and ask the group for their consent or possible additions to these ground rules. Be more elaborate in your first meeting, but even in subsequent meetings the leader can provide a brief reminder by saying, "My role is to keep discussion focused and moving along. Your role is to share your concerns and beliefs and to listen carefully to others. You should be willing to examine your own beliefs in light of what others say."

3. Discussion of personal connection to or interest in the issue. Ask group members to discuss why this issue is important to them. "Why are you concerned about this issue?" "How have your experiences or concerns influenced your opinions about this issue?" This is especially useful if this is your first session, or if the topic of discussion is a new one for the group.

4. Laying out a range of views. If the reading material you are using lays out well-defined and distinct views on the issue, this part will be straightforward. One useful way to make sure all the views are adequately presented is to ask for an explanation of each view. To accomplish this you can divide the participants into small groups of three to five people. Give each group the task of preparing a brief presentation of the best possible case for one of the views; when time is called, the small groups reassemble to make their brief presentations. This exercise may call for some degree of role playing, but it helps make sure that a variety of ideas will be considered in the discussion. Make it clear that this is just a way to give each view a fair hearing, that this isn't yet the time for an open discussion of the views.

If the reading material does not distinctly lay out a range of views, you may wish to ask participants to volunteer what they see as the main views on the issue based on the reading material and their knowledge of the issue. Here the leader's acquaintance with the subject will be necessary, so that he or she can help to raise views that did not come forth from participants.

5. Discussion and deliberation. This part of the study circle is devoted to wide-open discussion. Encourage participants to explore their true beliefs, as opposed to those that might have been assigned in small groups. One useful way to proceed is to ask group members to comment on what they find appealing and unappealing about the various views that have been put on the table for discussion: "Do you find yourself more in agreement with a supporter or a critic of that view, and why?" If the group neglects a major point of view, the leader should raise it for consideration and ask, "What are the concerns that underlie this view?"

6. Summary and common ground. Ask participants to summarize the most important results of their discussion. "Did any common concerns emerge?" "In what ways do you see the issue differently as a result of considering others' views?" Participants will likely have some common concerns and goals even though they have different ideas about how to address or achieve them.

7. Evaluation and next steps. Ask participants for their thoughts on the group process. What did they like or not like about the discussion? You may wish to ask for this in writing to give participants the opportunity to respond anonymously. If you'll be meeting again, remind the group of the reading for the next time. If this is your last session, give participants the opportunity to discuss how they could become further involved in the issue.

Tips for effective discussion leadership

Be prepared

The leader does not need to be an expert (or even the most knowledgeable person in the group) on the topic being discussed, but should be the best prepared for the discussion. This means understanding the goals of the study circle, familiarity with the subject, thinking ahead of time about the directions in which the discussion might go, and preparation of discussion questions to aid the group in considering the subject. Solid preparation will enable you to give your full attention to group dynamics and to what individuals in the group are saying.

Set a relaxed and open tone

- Welcome everyone and create a friendly and relaxed atmosphere.
- Well-placed humor is always welcome, and helps people focus differences on ideas rather than on personalities.

Establish clear ground rules

At the beginning of the study circle, establish the ground rules and ask participants if they agree to them or want to add anything:

- All group members are encouraged to express and reflect on their honest opinions; all views should be respected.
- Though disagreement and conflict about ideas can be useful, disagreements should not be personalized. Put-downs, name-calling, labeling, or personal attacks will not be tolerated.
- It is important to hear from everyone. People who tend to speak a lot in groups should make special efforts to allow others the opportunity to speak.
- The role of the leader is to remain neutral and to guide conversation according to the ground rules.

Stay aware of and assist the group process

- Always use your "third eye": you are not only helping to keep the group focused on the content of the discussion, but you will be monitoring how well the participants are communicating with each other – who has spoken, who hasn't spoken, and whose points haven't yet received a fair hearing.
- Consider splitting up into smaller groups to examine a variety of viewpoints or to give people a chance to talk more easily about their personal connection to the issue.

• When wrestling with when to intervene, err on the side of non-intervention.

• Don't talk after each comment or answer every question; allow participants to respond directly to each other. The most effective leaders often say little, but are constantly thinking about how to move the group toward its goals.

• Don't be afraid of silence. It will sometimes take a while for someone to offer an answer to a question you pose.

• Don't let anyone dominate; try to involve everyone.

• Remember: a study circle is not a debate but a group dialogue. If participants forget this, don't hesitate to ask the group to help re-establish the ground rules.

Help the group grapple with the content

• Make sure the group considers a wide range of views. Ask the group to think about the advantages and disadvantages of different ways of looking at an issue or solving a problem. In this way, the tradeoffs involved in making tough choices become apparent.

• Ask participants to think about the concerns and values that underlie their beliefs.

• Don't allow the group to focus on or be overly influenced by one particular personal experience or anecdote.

• Either summarize the discussion occasionally or encourage group members to do so.

• Remain neutral about content and be cautious about expressing your own values.

• Help participants to identify "common ground," but don't try to force consensus.

Use questions to help make the discussion more productive

Some useful discussion questions:

• What seems to be the key point here?

• What is the crux of your disagreement?

• Does anyone want to add to (or support, or challenge) that point?

• Could you give an example or describe a personal experience to illustrate that point?

• Could you help us understand the reasons behind your opinion?

• What experiences or beliefs might lead decent and caring people to support that point of view?

• What do you think people who hold that opinion care deeply about?

• What would be a strong case against what you just said?

• What do you find most persuasive about that point of view?

• What is it about that position that you just cannot live with?

• Are there any points on which most of us would agree?

Reserve adequate time for closing the discussion

• Ask the group for last comments and thoughts about the subject.

• You may wish to ask participants to share any new ideas or thoughts they've had as a result of the discussion.

• If you will be meeting again, remind the group of the readings and subject for the next session.

• Thank everyone for their contributions.

• Provide some time for the group to evaluate the group process, either through sharing aloud or through a brief written evaluation.

Dealing with typical challenges

Most study circles go smoothly because participants are there voluntarily and have a stake in the program. But there are challenges in any group process. What follows are some of the most common difficulties that study circle leaders encounter, along with some possible ways to deal with those difficulties.

Problem: Certain participants don't say anything, seem shy.

Possible responses: Try to draw out quiet participants, but don't put them on the spot. Make eye contact – it reminds them that you'd like to hear from them. Look for non-verbal cues to see if they want to speak. Frequently, people will feel more comfortable in later sessions of a study circle program and will begin to participate. When someone comes forward with a brief comment after staying in the background for most of the study circle, you can encourage him or her by conveying genuine interest and asking for more information. And it's always helpful to talk with people informally before and after the session.

Problem: An aggressive person dominates the discussion.

Possible responses: As the leader, it is your responsibility to restrain domineering participants. Once it becomes clear what this person is doing, you must intervene and set limits. Start by reminding him or her that you want to hear from all members of the study circle. Next, you might ask him or her not to talk until everyone else has had a chance to talk. Interrupt if necessary: "Charlie, we've heard from you, now let's hear what Barbara has to say." If a participant goes into a lengthy digression, you may have to interrupt: "Joan, we are wandering off the subject and I'd like to give others a chance to speak."

Problem: Lack of focus, not moving forward, participants wander off the topic.

Possible responses: Responding to this can be a hard call – after all, the discussion belongs to the group members. Yet it is the leader's job to help the group stay with the subject at hand. The leader must give some leeway to participants who want to explore closely-related topics. However, if only a few participants are carrying the discussion in a new direction, the others are likely to feel frustrated, resentful, and bored. The leader should try to refocus the discussion, perhaps by asking, "How does your point relate to _____?" or stating, "That's an interesting point, but I'd like for us to return to the central issue." If, on the other hand, most or all participants are more interested in pursuing a different topic than the one planned – perhaps one that has just become prominent in

current events – the leader should be sensitive to that and bring it to the group's attention in order to give them a chance to reconsider their goals.

Problem: Someone puts forth misinformation which you know to be false. Or, participants get hung up in a dispute about facts but no one present knows the answer.

Possible responses: Ask, "Has anyone heard of conflicting information?" If no one offers a correction, offer one yourself. And if no one knows the facts, and the point is not essential, put it aside and move on. If the point is central to the discussion, encourage members to look up the information before the next meeting. Remind the group that experts often disagree, and there may be no generally accepted answer.

Problem: Lack of interest, no excitement, no one wants to talk, only a few people participating.

Possible responses: This does not happen often in study circles, but it may occur if the leader talks too much or does not give participants enough time to respond after posing questions. People need time to think, reflect, and get ready to speak up. It may help to pose a question and go around the circle so that everyone has a chance to respond. Occasionally, you will have a group of people who are tired or who have had a bad day. Another possible reason for lack of excitement in the discussion may be that the group seems to be in agreement and isn't coming to grips with the tensions inherent in the issue. In this case, the leader's job is to try to bring other views into the discussion, especially if no one in the group holds them. "Do you know people who hold other views? What would they see as the strongest criticism of the views that you have expressed?"

Problem: Tension or open conflict in the group. Perhaps two participants lock horns and argue. Or, a participant gets angry, yells at another, or puts another person down.

Possible responses: If there is tension, address it directly. Remind participants that disagreement and conflict of ideas is what a study circle is all about. Explain that, for conflict to be productive, it must be focused on the issue: it is acceptable to challenge someone's ideas, but it is not acceptable to challenge them personally. *You must interrupt personal attacks, name calling, or put-downs as soon as they occur.* You will be better able to do so if you have established ground rules that disallow such behaviors and that encourage tolerance for all views. Don't hesitate to appeal to the group for help; if group members bought into the ground rules, they will support you.

The role of the organizer

The study circle organizer is the creator of a study circle. The organizer selects the print (or video) material that provides the framework and the substance for discussions (if this is not already done by the program's sponsoring organization), recruits participants, chooses the study circle discussion leader, and attends to all the logistical details surrounding the group's meetings. The organizer sets the tone for the program and must convey its purpose and goals to the leader and to the participants.

If you have organized a public program or a group activity of any kind, you can organize a study circle. Of course, the task will be easier if you are involved with an organization from which participants can be drawn.

There is no one model for organizing a study circle: shape the program in your community to meet the needs of the sponsoring organization and the participants. While the following suggestions are appropriate for most situations, special circumstances may call for modifications.

Selecting reading material

Some study circle programs have material that is expressly tailored to their purposes. However, many study circles use readings or videos that are not prepared with the particular interests and goals of your group in mind. You can easily make such material more interesting and useful for the members of your study circle. Some suggestions:

- Add discussion questions that emphasize the way the issue affects your community or organization.
- Use op-eds, letters-to-the-editor, or short articles from a local newspaper or your organization's newsletter.
- Ask participants to bring relevant clippings.
- Contact people in your community – such as teachers, cooperative extension agents, or public officials – who have an interest in the issue and may be able to share materials.
- Ask the Study Circles Resource Center for assistance. SCRC maintains a clearinghouse list of discussion material on many issues, developed by a variety of organizations. SCRC can also help you develop reading material suitable for specific discussion programs.

Remember, the reading material is important, but a good study circle does not require original or top-quality, professional-looking material. The key ingredients of a successful study circle are the leader's skill and the participants' energy and commitment to the program.

Recruiting participants for your study circle

Personal contact is the key to successful recruiting. Invitations are most effective when they are made on a personal basis: the key is conveying to potential participants that they have unique contributions to make to the discussions. Be sure to explain the goals of the study circle, and ask people to make a commit-

ment to attend each session, not only for the sake of continuity, but also to create a high level of familiarity and comfort within the group.

If initial response is small, it may be better to begin the study circle rather than waiting for more people to sign up. Ask participants to invite others. Try to get publicity in the local media or your organization's newsletter. Once the study circle is rolling, others are likely to hear about it and become interested.

Selecting the leader

Choosing the leader may be the most important decision that the organizer makes. A poor leader can ruin a study circle and a good one can make it a wonderful experience. The most important consideration in selecting a leader should be his or her skill and experience in leading discussions. Try to assess how the person would handle the most difficult aspects of leading a study circle. Would she keep discussion focused? Could he draw out the quiet people and restrain the aggressive ones?

If the person you are considering for the role of study circle leader has not been part of a training program, you will need to describe your program and explain how a study circle works. Be sure to share this handbook with your potential discussion leader.

Organizing the meetings

Find a meeting place that has minimal distractions and where participants can chat informally following the sessions. Someone's living room or a meeting room in an office or church can all be appropriate places.

The organizer must decide – preferably with input from the participants – on the date and time for the sessions. Most groups choose evening sessions, but some find that early morning or weekend gatherings are more convenient.

Unless reading material is very brief, participants should receive it several days in advance of the first session. You should also distribute ahead of time any introductory material about study circles or about the sponsoring organization.

Establishing feedback mechanisms

Once the study circle actually begins, the organizer's role becomes secondary to the leader's. However, the organizer is in the best position to provide feedback to the leader. For multi-session programs, you may want to conduct an evaluation at the end of each meeting, or at least at the halfway point and at the end of the study circle. By taking part in the study circle and being available before and after the sessions, the organizer can learn about any problems and help the leader correct them before the next session.

Be sure to share your study circle story with the Study Circles Resource Center so that it can be documented as part of a growing trend. Your comments on what went well and how you plan to modify future programs will help the SCRC staff advise others who are conducting similar programs.

The role of the participant

The goal of a study circle is not to learn a lot of facts, or to attain group consensus, but rather to deepen each person's understanding of the issue. This can occur in a focused discussion when people exchange views freely and consider a variety of viewpoints. The process - democratic discussion among equals - is as important as the content.

The following points are intended to help you make the most of your study circle experience and to suggest ways in which you can help the group.

• **Listen carefully to others.** Make sure you are giving everyone the chance to speak.

• **Maintain an open mind.** You don't score points by rigidly sticking to your early statements. Feel free to explore ideas that you have rejected or failed to consider in the past.

• **Strive to understand the position of those who disagree with you.** Your own knowledge is not complete until you understand other participants' points of view and why they feel the way they do. It is important to respect people who disagree with you; they have reasons for their beliefs. You should be able to make a good case for positions you disagree with. This level of comprehension and empathy will make you a much better advocate for whatever position you come to.

• **Help keep the discussion on track.** Make sure your remarks are relevant; if necessary, explain how your points are related to the discussion. Try to make your points while they are pertinent.

• **Speak your mind freely, but don't monopolize the discussion.** If you tend to talk a lot in groups, leave room for quieter people. Be aware that some people may want to speak but are intimidated by more assertive people.

• **Address your remarks to the group rather than the leader.** Feel free to address your remarks to a particular participant, especially one who has not been heard from or who you think may have special insight. Don't hesitate to question other participants to learn more about their ideas.

• **Communicate your needs to the leader.** The leader is responsible for guiding the discussion, summarizing key ideas, and soliciting clarification of unclear points, but he/she may need advice on when this is necessary. Chances are you are not alone when you don't understand what someone has said.

• **Value your own experience and opinions.** Everyone in the group, including you, has unique knowledge and experience; this variety makes the discussion an interesting learning experience for all. Don't feel pressured to speak, but realize that failing to speak means robbing the group of your wisdom.

• **Engage in friendly disagreement.** Differences can invigorate the group, especially when it is relatively homogeneous on the surface. Don't hesitate to challenge ideas you disagree with. Don't be afraid to play devil's advocate, but don't go overboard. If the discussion becomes heated, ask yourself and others whether reason or emotion is running the show.

• **Remember that humor and a pleasant manner can go far in helping you make your points.** A belligerent attitude may prevent acceptance of your assertions. Be aware of how your body language can close you off from the group.

A comparison of dialogue and debate

Dialogue is collaborative: two or more sides work together toward common understanding.
Debate is oppositional: two sides oppose each other and attempt to prove each other wrong.

In dialogue, finding common ground is the goal.
In debate, winning is the goal.

In dialogue, one listens to the other side(s) in order to understand, find meaning, and find agreement.
In debate, one listens to the other side in order to find flaws and to counter its arguments.

Dialogue enlarges and possibly changes a participant's point of view.
Debate affirms a participant's own point of view.

Dialogue reveals assumptions for reevaluation.
Debate defends assumptions as truth.

Dialogue causes introspection on one's own position.
Debate causes critique of the other position.

Dialogue opens the possibility of reaching a better solution than any of the original solutions.
Debate defends one's own positions as the best solution and excludes other solutions.

Dialogue creates an open-minded attitude: an openness to being wrong and an openness to change.
Debate creates a closed-minded attitude, a determination to be right.

In dialogue, one submits one's best thinking, knowing that other peoples' reflections will help improve it rather than destroy it.
In debate, one submit's one's best thinking and defends it against challenge to show that it is right.

Dialogue calls for temporarily suspending one's beliefs.
Debate calls for investing wholeheartedly in one's beliefs.

In dialogue, one searches for basic agreements.
In debate, one searches for glaring differences.

In dialogue, one searches for strengths in the other positions.
In debate, one searches for flaws and weaknesses in the other position.

Dialogue involves a real concern for the other person and seeks to not alienate or offend.
Debate involves a countering of the other position without focusing on feelings or relationship and often belittles or deprecates the other person.

Dialogue assumes that many people have pieces of the answer and that together they can put them into a workable solution.
Debate assumes that there is a right answer and that someone has it.

Dialogue remains open-ended.
Debate implies a conclusion.

Adapted from a paper prepared by Shelley Berman, which was based on discussions of the Dialogue Group of the Boston Chapter of Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR). Other members included Lucile Burt, Dick Mayo-Smith, Lally Stowell, and Gene Thompson. For more information on ESR's programs and resources using dialogue as a tool for dealing with controversial issues, call the national ESR office at (617) 492-1764.

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Stimulate Interaction:
Develop Thought-provoking Discussion Questions

Study circle questions help participants elaborate on the text and think more deeply about the issue. They also enable the leader to move the conversation along and to focus it on key points and issues.

Some questions that are helpful for focusing the discussion on almost any issue are:

Questions to Start the Discussion

- What experiences have you, or people you know, had with this issue?
- How is this an issue or problem in your community or organization?
- Why do you think it's such a problem? How does it affect you personally?

Questions About Key Points

- What is at the crux of this issue?
- Could you give an example or describe a personal experience to illustrate that point?

Questions That Encourage the Expression of a Diversity of Views

- What do you find most persuasive about that point of view?
- Does anyone have a different view?
- What do people who disagree with that view say?
- What are the strongest arguments against what you just said?
- What is it about that position that you just cannot live with?

Questions About Values

- What are the most important concerns that underlie your views?
- What do you think people who hold that opinion care deeply about?
- What experiences or beliefs might lead decent and caring people to hold that view which is so different from your own?
- Are there any common values, concerns, or ideas that unite all or most members of our study circle, despite different views on the issue?

Questions That Lead Toward Next Steps

- With what approach, if any, would most of this group agree?
- What is already being done in the community to deal with this problem?
- What are some first steps in dealing with this problem?
- What might we do about this problem?

Source: Guidelines for Creating Effective Study Circle Material, Study Circles Resource Center, Pomfret CT, 1994.