

PROFILE FOR
COMMUNITY
ACTION
SERIES



EXTRACT

Green Cities: a Guide for Sustainable Community Development

a companion
to Harmony
Foundation's
Community
Action
Workshop
Manual



OFFICIAL DOCUMENT
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Roll of Honour
for Environmental
Achievement



EXTRACT

Communities around the world are increasingly confronted with the challenges and opportunities of achieving sustainable community development. Informed and cooperative action will be vital to improve the quality of life now and for the future.

**MICHAEL BLOOMFIELD FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
HARMONY FOUNDATION**

Since 1985, Harmony Foundation's education programs and materials have helped communities around the world understand the vital issues facing us and to respond with innovative projects which address local needs while contributing to meeting national and international goals.

We are committed to working in partnership with other organizations to achieve positive results and reduce conflict around environment and development issues. Building bridges between community organizations, government and business demonstrates the practical benefits of multi-sectoral cooperation.

We gratefully acknowledge those whose support will enable this publication to assist many more communities.



Thanks to our World Environment Day 2005 Partners



World Environment Day is an official program of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

Harmony Foundation is a registered charitable organization recognized internationally for its leadership in multi-sectoral cooperation and creating innovative training programs and educational materials for educators, youth, schools, the workplace and communities.



EXTRACT

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Once while the sage Choni was walking along a road, he saw a man planting a (carob) tree. Choni asked him, "How many years will it require for this tree to give fruit?" The man answered, "It will require 70 years." Choni asked, "Are you so healthy a man that you expect to live that length of time and eat its fruit?" The man answered, "I found a fruitful world because my ancestors planted for me. So will I do for generations to come."

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inspiring success stories and a wealth of ideas on how to promote sustainable development in your community.

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Foreword

The Future is in Our Hands

A foreword by Hon. Maurice F. Strong

Civilization was born in the cities and it is in the cities of the world where our future is being determined. The phenomenal population growth of recent times has been concentrated in urban settlements which have expanded at speeds and on a scale unprecedented in human experience. Cities worldwide have been growing faster than their capacity to provide the homes, livelihoods, infrastructure and services required to meet the most basic needs of their people. The mega-cities that have proliferated are an agglomeration of many communities that have had little time to forge cooperation and understanding adding to the difficulties of governance and giving rise to communal tensions and conflicts. Such rapid growth also pressures the hinterlands which jeopardizes the resources upon which cities depend.

The demise of past civilizations clearly warns us of the dire consequences of pursuing our unsustainable path. In today's highly interdependent world local breakdowns have global impacts. The expanding human population and the intensity of the pressures we exert on the earth's resources and life-support systems threaten the future of life as we know it. The future is in our hands. It can be a very bright and promising future indeed. But collapse will be the tragic consequence of continuing on our present course.

Our global civilization will only be sustainable if the cities in which its populations and resources are concentrated are sustainable. This remarkable guide to green cities is the product of the extensive insights and experience of the Harmony Foundation and their colleagues at the Centre for Sustainable Community Development. It is rich in practical ideas and inspiring examples of what must be done and what can be done in every community to set it on the path to sustainability.

While the concept of sustainable community development is most frequently identified with the environmental movement from which it sprang it embraces the entire system of inter-acting activities and sectors which determine the character, health and directions in which communities develop. The means to make this transition must be found primarily in each community through the efforts of their own people. The benefits locally and globally will almost always exceed the costs, although some of these may only accrue in a future beyond the terms of those now in political office.

What is most needed now is leadership. Those who are participating in this transformation have already manifested the kind of leadership that is required, and I am sure that they agree that leadership cannot be confined to those who hold public office. Leadership is most effective when it inspires and facilitates the participation of people in their communities, instilling an ethos of participatory change involving all people and sectors. This is our best hope of ensuring a secure and stable future for the entire human community.

I am convinced that the future direction of our civilization will be set in the first two or three decades of this new millennium. Surely there could be no more exciting challenge to our generation or a more awesome responsibility. The insights, information and the practical proposals set forth in this guide will brightly illuminate the pathway to that future.



EXTRACT Overview of Sustainable Community Development

Introduction

An exciting transformation is underway in neighborhoods around the world. Citizens and governments are taking action in their cities and towns and across national boundaries to protect the environment, address poverty and other social issues, and improve the quality of life now and for the future. Communities are discovering that when residents, local governments and business work together, destructive patterns of development can be transformed into beneficial outcomes that provide prosperity which is ecologically and socially sustainable.

What many community leaders recognize is that the world's space and resources are shrinking and that we must find innovative new ways to live together. Over the past 50 years the world's population has doubled. Our consumption of natural resources and production of waste, some of it deadly toxic, also has risen dramatically. Our growing demands on the Earth's natural systems are creating serious social, environmental, and health costs. Grave predictions about the future have become common and many believe that we are threatening the survival of life on Earth.

But our purpose, here, is not to make gloomy predictions, but rather the opposite, to recognize and encourage community leaders who have found and who are searching for constructive alternatives, *people like you*. Our shared problems are global in scale, and yet it is at the community level where people live and work and raise their families, where the challenges will be met.

We need fresh ideas and innovative leadership to help transform urban growth into a positive movement toward long term economic prosperity, social justice and ecological stability. Sustainable Community Development (SCD) involves citizens, local governments, community organizations and businesses in a cooperative effort to find sustainable approaches to managing all aspects of urban settlements. Sustainable community development has demonstrated over and over, with meaningful results, that ecological sustainability, economic growth and social well-being are in fact mutually beneficial goals.

Confronted by complex and rapidly evolving issues, we cannot rely on outdated models of growth and development. Clearly, current patterns of urban growth are unsustainable in the long term and increasingly destructive in the short term to the people who live there. We must all take stock – whether as community leaders, public officials, or concerned citizens – and begin to reckon with the consequences of our day-to-day decisions. This re-orientation must begin today to inform how we act and plan for the future.

Our goal in writing this book was not to be exhaustive, but to provide you with a comprehensive overview of the exciting work being done towards sustainable community development and to share inspiring achievements from communities around the world. The power of SCD grows when people and organizations better understand the transformative potential of the decisions

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Overview of Sustainable Community Development

EXTRACT

that make use of the interconnections between social, economic and ecological processes. We hope that this book will help promote this understanding.

Green Cities is not intended to be read from cover to cover, although this would be a fine way to review the material. Green Cities was designed as a tool box, something to dip into when a problem arises to learn how others have successfully approached similar problems, and to find starting points, strategies to try and stories from which to seek ideas and inspiration. Our hope is that you will return again and again to these pages as the demands of your own community offer ongoing opportunities to introduce sustainable practices.

Sustainable community development offers a new way to plan our cities, to accommodate their growth, and ultimately to live in them. The transition to SCD presents each of us with challenges which at times will seem overwhelming. As with any problem we need to develop strategic plans, set clear priorities and commit ourselves to action. And there is comfort to be had in the fact that we are not alone. People around the world have risen to the challenge. We can take inspiration and encouragement from the innovation, commitment and practical success demonstrated in this book.

We commend you for contributing to that effort and for using your leadership in positive ways. It is our hope that this publication will provide you and your community with a wealth of ideas to incorporate into your own innovative strategies to meet the needs in your community. After all, words are meaningless unless they are backed up with meaningful actions. We have presented a path forward; now it is up to you.

We commend you for using your leadership in positive ways. After all, words are meaningless unless they are backed up with meaningful actions.

Over the second half of the 20th century, while world population more than doubled, food production almost tripled, energy use more than quadrupled, and the overall level of economic activity quintupled (Kates and Parris 2003).

Part 1 – What is Sustainable Community Development?

Today, 49% of the world's population, or some 3.6 billion people, live in cities. By 2030, the figure is expected to rise to 61% (PDDESA-UN 2003). Large urban settlements face an increasing number of problems: severe environmental degradation, pollution, water, energy and food shortages, solid waste accumulation, housing affordability and availability, disease and poverty.

Sustainable community development (SCD) responds to these problems based on three core principles:

- Environmental considerations must be entrenched in economic policy-making.
- Sustainable development incorporates an inescapable commitment to social equity.
- “Development” means more than simply “growth” – it implies qualitative as well as quantitative improvement. (Jacobs 1993):



EXTRACT Community Success Stories


Introduction

The inspiring Community Success Stories that follow represent some of the most successful and creative examples of sustainable community development initiatives from around the world that we found in our research. Each story examines the challenges involved and the results achieved thanks to the efforts of dedicated people like you.

These stories offer concrete and practical examples of strategies that have been effective. Each profile includes contact and other information to help you learn more about these innovative projects and how you might use them as models for projects in your own community.

They cover a wide variety of topics and range from small-scale pilot projects to larger and well-established programs. Most touch on several facets of urban life, a point important to keep in mind as you read them. They demonstrate the synergies that exist between various community assets and different aspects of community life and the transformative power of a dedicated group of people working together.











The stories are drawn from a wide variety of settings, from large urban centres and smaller ones; from developing countries and from the wealthier economies; from countries with long histories of peace and from regions experiencing political turmoil. Sustainable community development is being advanced everywhere in every type of community, and we hope that these stories will inform and inspire you. What all of these profiles have in common is that they have benefited their own communities and residents while contributing to the larger global effort to achieve sustainability.

The **Community Success Stories** directory on the following page lists all of the stories in this book. Beside each category in the directory you will find symbols, for example  for Transportation. These same symbols next to each story identify the categories of activity represented.



Community Success Stories Directory

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CATEGORY		SUCCESS STORIES (DOMINANT THEME)	HONOURABLE MENTIONS
Citizen Participation		Quanzhou, China – Housing project/ neighborhood revitalization Capetown, SA – Market gardens East St. Louis, USA – Community revitalization Dhaka, Bangladesh – Solid waste reduction/ commercial composting Middle East – Regional water conservation and peace-building	Denmark – Wind turbine cooperatives Seattle, USA – Community gardens Stockholm, Sweden – Water contaminate reduction Puerta Princesca, Philippines – Citizen environmental monitoring and enforcement Halifax, Canada – Community-based Environmental monitoring
Market Mechanisms		Dhaka, Bangladesh – Solid waste reduction/ commercial composting	Vienna, Austria – Green procurement policy Denmark – Wind turbine cooperatives
Land Use		East St. Louis, USA – Community revitalization Curitiba, Brazil – Transportation planning Capetown, SA – Market gardens Havana, Cuba – Urban agriculture Quanzhou, China – Housing project/ neighborhood revitalization	Saskatoon, Canada – Downtown housing incentive Seattle, USA – Community gardens Sri Lanka – Urban greening project
Transportation		Curitiba, Brazil – Transportation planning	Toronto, Canada – Community bicycle network
Waste Reduction		Dhaka, Bangladesh – Solid waste reduction/ commercial composting Toronto, Canada – District energy San Francisco – Climate action plan	Pittsfield, USA – Materials exchange Halifax, Canada – Community-based environmental monitoring Vancouver, Canada – Landfill gas extraction
Energy		Toronto, Canada – District energy San Francisco – Climate action plan	Vancouver, Canada – Landfill gas extraction Denmark – Wind turbine cooperatives
Water		Fukuoka, Japan – Water conservation Middle East – Water conservation and peace-building Seattle, USA – Runoff management Capetown, SA – Market gardens	Calcutta, India – Wetlands water treatment Stockholm, Sweden – Water contaminate reduction
Food Security		Havana, Cuba - Urban agriculture Capetown, SA – Market gardens	Seattle USA – Community gardens
Community Economic Development		East St. Louis, USA – Community revitalization Capetown, SA – Market gardens Havana, Cuba – Urban agriculture Dhaka, Bangladesh – Solid waste reduction/ commercial composting	Johannesburg, SA – Community revitalization California – Community Land Trust Nairobi – Community Land Trust Saskatoon – Downtown housing incentive Calcutta, India – Wetlands water treatment
Air Quality		San Francisco – Climate Action Plan	Vancouver, Canada – Liveable Region Strategic Plan

