



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

The Tragedy of the Commons

Trawsnewid Addysg; Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education; Transforming Lives



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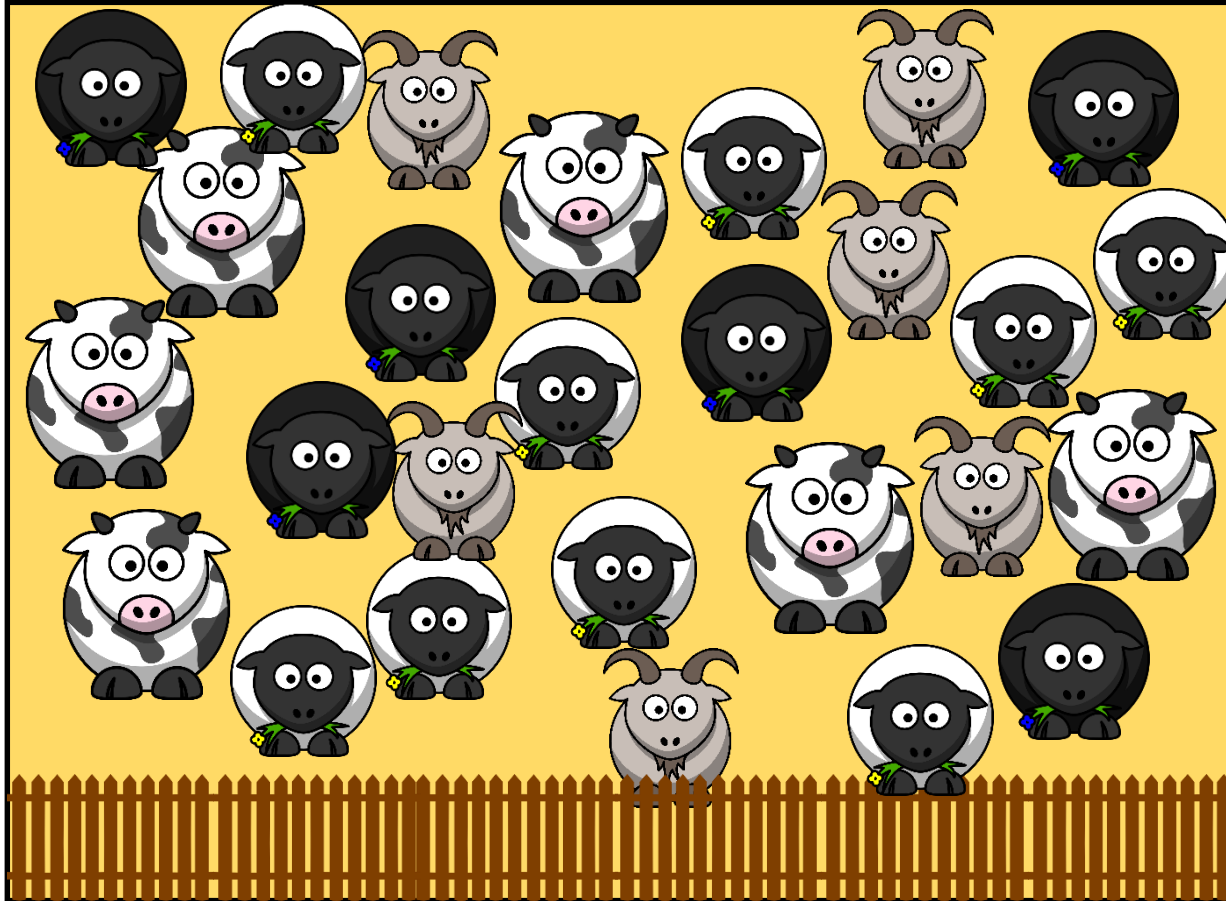
What is 'the commons'?

- 'The commons' is a term taken from Economics, and refers to any goods that are held communally
 - It takes its name from the practice of having 'common land' outside villages where all members of the community could graze animals

What makes the commons so tragic?



What makes the commons so tragic?



What could have been done to prevent this negative result?

- Rules
 - What if they had gotten together and decided that no one could graze more than 4 animals there?
 - What if they had put limits on how many days animals can be grazed on that particular Common before they had to be moved elsewhere to let the grass recover?
- Fees
 - What if they had decided that everyone had to pay a fee to use the Common, making it less profitable to take advantage?
 - What if that fee had been per animal grazing?
- Community Ties
 - What if the community was close-knit enough that Catrin, Dai, and Gareth were able to 'shame' Rhian into using only her fair share?
- Dividing the Commons into individual private plots
 - What if they had decided that, rather than having a Common, they wanted to divide it up into 4 individual fields, for each individual to use/maintain as he/she wished?
- Sharing management of the Commons to maintain it
 - What if they had agreed that each of them would take responsibility for a certain aspect of maintaining the Common, whether by moving everyone's animals to other pastures, re-seeding the grass, etc.?

- Can you think of an example that you have encountered in your life/community that demonstrates the principle of ‘the tragedy of the commons’?
 - What happened?
 - What could have prevented the negative result?

Common
grazing land

Free public
lidos

Community
Centres

Fish stocks

Beaches

Examples of 'commons' in our daily life?

'The Market'

Public parks

The air

Community
good will

Free public
toilets

Forests

Rivers

The Tragedy of the Commons: In your backyard

Farmers

Use water to care for livestock and grow crops

Anglers

Rely on the water to feed rivers and streams so fish can live and breed

Prince's Gate Water Co.

Drill boreholes into the aquifer to bottle and sell water, making money and providing jobs

Sinks new boreholes to increase production

Pembrokeshire Aquifer

Environmentalists

Want to ensure that fish are able to travel upstream to spawn
Want to maintain the local networks of rivers and streams
Want to preserve natural springs on which wildlife rely

How does the tragedy of the commons apply to sustainability?

- The economy, society, and the environment are all 'commons'
 - Everyone shares access, everyone relies on them
- The three pillars need to be taken care of in some way in order to remain accessible and useful to all people
 - Many attempts have been made at taking care of the three pillars as commons by individuals, communities, countries, and regional groups, **but...**
 - In the modern world, the pillars are global commons, and this makes it VERY difficult to agree on what to do with them

Reading for next time...

(links on Moodle)

- In preparation to talk about Sustainability Legislation, please explore the following:
 - UN Sustainable Development Goals website
 - Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act briefing document
 - OECD Better Life Index website
- In preparation to talk about values and their effect on action in the workplace, please read the following:
 - Stevens, B. (2008) 'Corporate Ethical Codes: Effective Instruments For Influencing Behaviour', *Journal of Business Ethics*, 78 (4), 601-609.
 - Marrewijk, Marcel van (2003) 'Multiple Levels of Corporate Sustainability', *Journal of Business Ethics*, 44(2/3), 107-120.
 - **Chapter 4** from Henderson, R., Gulati, R., Tushman, M. (2015), *Leading Sustainable Change: An Organisational Perspective*. Oxford University Press.

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