

Sharon Roderick: Forum discussions Weeks 1 - 5

Sustainable Communities - Week 1

Part or some of my submission work, requires me to reflect on each week's lectures, and to write into the forum my reflections on the subject we are covering that week. Our first week's lecture with Nicola Welton covered Climate Change and the effects this does on our daily living and for the future.

What is the meaning of Sustainability?

The definition of sustainability in the Oxford English Dictionary is "*The property of being environmentally sustainable; the degree to which a process or enterprise is able to be maintained or continued while avoiding the long-term depletion of natural resources*". (2019) Generally, it is a term that is used in order to meet our own needs without reflecting any damage to the future generations and the environment, to permit said future generations to also have the ability to match and maintain their rights to essential requirements to survive. Adding to this, to the natural, the social and the economic resources.

Examples of Sustainable development are:

- Green Space
- Crop Rotation
- Construction and design that are sustainable
- Water treatments
- Clean energy
- Minimising waste
- And using waste to be recycled into Energy.

Sustainability is crucial for our communities and for our whole world to be healthy. Our need for clean air, a non toxic environment to live in and natural resources are key to environmental qualities. My own thoughts and interests are to find ways in dealing with the complex issues that arise towards the major shift of our current behaviour, and what our motives will be to benefit towards a sustainable development. It is fundamental to acknowledge that climate change is a worrying subject. It is also believed that the choices of

societies and the widespread global institutions have a lot to consider to determine the future of climate change, to ease the hazards or eradicate the hazards of our future generation.

Countries and corporations are significant in making vital decisions, changes that can only be made if certain things that are unquestionably damaging, are controlled in order to protect our environment and ecosystem. It is a big problem to face when most of the decision makers and world leaders know that direct action is needed but are evidently very slow in doing this.

Global warming and its effect is a worry facing the world today. So much has been urged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to remove carbon from the air so that it becomes healthy once more. We all know that we possess the different technologies and knowledge to prevent rising temperatures and that this will protect our remaining forests that are beneficial and vital to soak up excess carbon.

As I see it from my own reflections and perceptions, this is something that we all face together, and it's at times like these the younger generations can be brought into creating a future we all demand. It will require the older generations and the younger generations to come together and work alongside for a change we all need in order to have a sustainable future. Although, this is worrying for our time, the younger generations seem to be very clued up to the reality of what's going on and what's going to happen, if changes are not made. They understand the reality of the solutions we need to put into place and what's needed to make this global problem a lesser task, which will eradicate the threat to us all. As Greta Thunberg stated "*The climate crisis has already been solved. We already have all the facts and solutions. All we have to do is to wake up and change*" (2018) With her bold manner, it inspired a "*global movement*" in school children that put the "*FridayForFuture*" in place which placed "*1.5 million young people and their allies to hit the streets*" (BBC)

It is unfair to put this burden on our younger generation, as its generations before that have been the beneficiaries to the devastation of global warming. But it is the younger generation that have the greatest inspiration and courage to reverse or halt the damage. So what can be done, when we all pull together and create actions the younger generation can fulfil? As the youth of today are the future of tomorrow, they can help stop climate change in their own purposeful ways. The examples are plentiful. The older generation can join them and participate.

Examples:

- Tree planting and go green activities, an opportunity to replace some trees that have been destroyed.
- Picking up litter, maybe organise fundraiser events and help clean up communities and the beaches and oceans of harmful litter.
- Instead of using cars and vehicles that pollute the air-maybe walk or use a bicycle for short journeys, r get into the habit of sharing a vehicle that cuts down on using fuelled vehicles and the amount of vehicles that are on our roads.
- Books or old used books that are not in use-could be donated to charities across the country or the world, recycled to save resources by putting them back into use.
- Sorting out rubbish by separating plastic, paper and cans recycled in appropriate bins.This will cut down on landfills filling and cut down on pollution.
- Saving on water by cutting down on baths and having shorter periods of showers, cutting down on usage of water.
- Buying sustainable products instead of plastic which is a huge contribution to soil and ocean pollution. It also endangers wildlife species.
- Buying eco friendly supplies/stationery for school.
- Only buy what we actually need. I for one realise that we have fallen into a routine of purchasing items we do not need - by buying less we can also reduce the amount of waste, which generates and causes pollution.
- Encourage family/friends to do the same.

Even the *“micro effects will have a macro effect on our planet, the survival of every being on Earth depends on how we handle our environment”* (Unicef.2019) For us to live sustainably, we need to live in harmony with nature. If we continue to ignore this issue we will be on the path of self destruction - destroying the planet and the very place that shelters us. It is very important we support the young generation to make it possible to find ways to continue to increase sustainability.

Sustainable Communities - Week 2 - Forum Discussion

The importance of restoring the damaged ecosystem is greater now than it ever has been, even though the knowledge of the effects of global warming has been made aware to us for twenty to thirty years, there is an urgent need to restore the damage already done. With a healthier ecosystem we have a healthier planet and of course healthier people, a damaged ecosystem causes climate change, extinction and poverty. However, there is a way to halt the damage and sustain a better future, but the way to succeed is if everyone plays a part.

The vast majority of communities around my locality are farmlands. Farmlands are our source for vital natural resources, supplying us with crops and a habitat for grazing livestock. The land plays a crucial part in order for our wildlife to thrive and a place for trees, wildflowers and plants to grow protected. However, these areas are becoming exhausted to the point where the farmlands are becoming harmful to the ecosystem, the natural landscape is being eradicated by over ploughing the soil and using too much fertilizer.

As declared on Restoration Nation [2020]

Yet the way we are using many of these lands, from huge monocultures to extensive rangelands, is exhausting their vitality. Ploughing, over-cropping and the removal of hedges and trees is letting rain and wind erode precious soil. Excess fertilizer is polluting waterways and lowering soil quality. Pesticides are harming wildlife including insects such as bees that pollinate many crops. Overgrazing is exposing grasslands to erosion and invasive species.

In response to this eradication, a complete turnaround in this way of life would be a great help to the ecosystem and many farmers are now adapting by reducing or altogether stopping the use of fertilizers and pesticides, in favour of the use of more natural sources. This along with growing more trees instead of cutting them down and rebuilding the organic carbon will assist to maintain all the natural fertility within the soils.

There is a policy in Wales titled *One planet Development* [2011] which encourages sustainable living. I myself think this is a great idea and opportunity. It allows people the possibility to build on and live off rural land. It gives a policy and grants planning permission to people that wish to build new smallholdings rurally. The *Town and Country Act* [1947] was put into place after the war, with growing tight restrictions this makes it harder to have planning rights, and rising prices on the housing market makes it very hard for a person

wanting to live and work in rural settings. As Cathryn Wyatt from One Planet Developer stated “*salaries in rural areas are much lower, it means that local people cannot live near their job*” [2018]. It also brings life back into the countryside, and gives an opportunity to people that want to leave urban life. As Erica Thomson, Climate Scientist for One planet Developer discusses “*Regenerating rural local communities, regenerating local economies, getting kids back into local schools, which are declining otherwise*” (2018). This is a great example to set as a lifestyle to our communities, it shows the attempt to reduce a society as a whole to the use of our planet's natural resources.

Maybe taking us back to a more simple way of living and to use what is naturally expected of us, and not to what we are made to think by big global capitalist consumerist companies.

The three key points in One planet Development are:

- The Ecological Footprint. This will entail the impact of human activity on the carbon footprint by being environmentally friendly in the means of conserving water in natural resources.
- The Eco House. The building of the eco house has to be zero carbon and materials used have to be all natural.
- The Business Plan. This has to meet your basic needs i.e. to pay bills and buy essentials, a land based enterprise, to cultivate one's own food.e.g have fruit orchards, grow one's own vegetables to sell and to consume for oneself, keep bees for honey and chickens for free range eggs.

Having a good diet that is good for our health and wellbeing and sustainably sourced, bought from locally based businesses, fresh locally produced vegetables e.g organically grown and produced is a good starting point for each community. The impact of this procedure would make a huge difference on the entire carbon footprint if most of the population of the world would adapt in this way of thinking and living. Getting our local communities involved in activities such as to purchase and consume only what we need, reducing waste would be greatly beneficial.

To encourage our communities and the younger generation to come together and share in growing their own vegetables, would make a sizable contribution in minimising the carbon footprint.

In the last lecture I was introduced to the *Green Theory* which I found to be interesting. There is right in what they suggest as they see that “*we should be targeting to respect all life forms and not only protect the current human society but also other forms of life which are crucial*”

to main the balance of biodiversity which in turn is essential to human life survival only"
[Barry, 1992]

In the most privileged countries around the world, where more could be done towards climate change and biodiversity, it is found that theses countries *"leave a larger carbon footprint"* [Goodwin, 1992] so as it seems as he states it should be ensured *"that fair share of the environment and resources are given to all the communities preventing the unfair distribution resources to lesser communities"* [Goodwin, 1992]

The solution to all this, is that globally the politicians need to make many concrete social changes, which is needed to sustain a global environmental destructive issue. Ecocentrism [ecology-centred thought] prioritizes healthy ecosystems, it is a major requirement for a sustainable future and to our overall well being, it has to be put into place for us all as humans. A quote that was made by Hugh Dyer addresses it very well, *"If this doesn't amount to a single clear vision, it certainly represents a longer-term view about humankind's common future"*. [Dyer, 2018]

Environmental Justice-Sustainable Communities: Week 3 Forum Discussion

With the climate change comes crisis, with destruction to many peoples lives, homes, food and the right to earn a living, due to our lands and oceans becoming polluted.

This threat is a disaster for many countries, placing them into poverty. These countries are in the world's poorest regions, climate change adds a devastating impact on the world's poorest people, making life even harder than what they are already experiencing. *"Warming and associated extreme weather will reach unprecedented levels in our childrens lifetimes and 40% of the world's poor, who have a minimal role in generating global pollution, are likely to suffer the most"* [The Pontifical Academy of Social Science 2014]

Examining such countries, the findings are *"of the 30 countries most vulnerable to change in weather patterns and hazards including climate change, 26 are among the world poorest-that is, least developed countries"* [CAFOD 2014]

Climate change will make life much worse for the people of such countries, these countries lack the resources to withstand or even recover from the very changeable weather patterns that they face in the present day.

It is sadly very unfair that such countries do not have the resources to pull themselves out of poverty, and the root of the cause is climate change. There is no support for the people to adapt to the effects, and because they live in poverty, they do not have a voice to enable them to benefit from social justice, therefore they are not heard.

There should be considerations on economic, social, political and mostly cultural inequalities in supporting countries. The support should be to build resilience on climate change and climate related poverty.

Governments of developed countries should be the first participants in reducing pollution, and be vigilant of the destruction climate change is doing to the world's poorest countries. To acknowledge the importance of cutting down on the pollution of fossil fuels, and taking on sustainable energy would benefit all globally, but more so for people that do not access modern energy systems.

World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim comments *"If we don't confront climate change, we won't end poverty"* [Kim 2013] With poverty a chain of events will occur, as IPCC states *"...simultaneous exposure to climate change and other stressors such as the spread of infectious diseases, rapid urbanization, and economic globalization, where climate change acts as a threat multiplier, further marginalizing vulnerable groups"* [IPCC 2014]

To the vulnerable and poorest people that live in poverty stricken countries, they are more at risk to susceptible natural hazards that ravage their countries with storms, floods and droughts. They are also susceptible to diseases that would occur without good sanitation, and without clean water and food the health of these people would be greatly affected. It is also unfortunate they cannot access medical provisions, with only basic commodities, thus resulting in high increases in rates of mortalities.

What well developed countries take for granted is the poorest countries' riches.

An example is Haiti, though the island is situated in the path of where hurricanes naturally occur, it is suggested that climate change is accelerating the effects of the hurricanes resulting in more intensified conditions, thus putting more pressure on an already poor country.

We live in a world of large corporations, it is unfortunate that they make money by producing climate unfriendly products, and as we the consumers, consume and purchase more than we need. It should also be taken into account that we all need to take part blame for climate change, but not all have access or not all of us have means to eradicate this problem. Our national governments could also make groundbreaking adjustments and changes by adopting and becoming more resilient, rather than thinking more on the growth of the economy, and making that a priority.

Here in Wales there is the Well-being of Future Generations [Wales] Act 2015 document. It is a document that was prepared by the Department for Natural Resources of the Welsh Government - it is a helpful communication tool. It is an Act about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. It is put in place to make sure that the public sector adheres to this. This is why we have a wide variety of activists in the present world, a variety of nongovernmental organisations acting and engaging in activism, being a voice for people all over the world and for the countries that do not have a voice. They want environmental justice. All over the world there are young people making a stand and demanding action on climate change, plastic pollution and deforestation, the protests are something these young people believe in strongly and passionately. It is an opportunity to give hope for change, Greta Thunberg is just one young activist, she is internationally well known for challenging the world leaders to take immediate action against the devastating effects of climate change. With so many young people now taking a stand the world seems to be listening more, but there is so much that still needs to be addressed. The impact that the young are having is greatly acknowledged, it in fact gives hope and puts into perspective

that standing up for your beliefs does work and comes as “*precedent for activism in all areas of policy which affects them*” [if.org.uk 2019]

In conclusion, climate change is affecting every country in the world. It needs to be addressed for the safety of our people and the safety of our economies. With growing concern the weather patterns are changing, at an alarming rate. The UN has placed seventeen sustainable development goals which are displayed in the table below.

1. No Poverty 2. Zero Hunger 3. Good Health and Wellbeing 4. Quality Education 5. Gender Equality 6. Clean Water and Sanitation 7. Affordable and Clean Energy 8. Decent Work and Economic Growth 9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	10. Reduced Inequalities 11. Sustainable Cities and Communities 12. Responsible Consumption and Production 13. Climate Action 14. Life below Water 15. Life on Land 16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions 17. Partnerships for the Goals
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According to Climate Change-United Nations, these goals are
‘the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all.’ (2020)

Policy and Practice-Sustainable Communities - Week 4

The Well-being of Future Generations [Wales] Act was passed in 2015 by the Welsh Assembly. It is the first act in the world to safeguard future generations and their well being. The potential of this act has been a ground breaker to the whole world - as other countries see how beneficial it is in safeguarding the interests of the future generations and getting communities to participate in taking a stance and a say in being part of something that is a great benefit to the future generations. *"What Wales is doing today, we hope the world will do tomorrow - action more than words is the hope for our future generations"* [Seth 2015].

This act is to improve social, economic and the environmental well being of people that live in Wales. It is for people that live now in the present and for the future generations of Wales. It is a good tool for the future generation, it will set their own well being as a priority and importance and it will give a good overview for improvements that need to be made.

The Well- being of Future Generations [Wales] Act has a future commissioner in place, Sophie Howe. Even Howe is in place, it does not give her the power to prevent things from happening and she cannot make things happen. Her priority was to meet with all forty four of the public bodies in Wales, and for them to understand challenges and opportunities that they faced to make improvements in Wales. Public events were arranged around Wales, and Howe would put across the opportunities that would shape the future. She set a foundation and a strategy that would give sight to the shaping of Wales for the better. She states *"We are on an exciting expedition to deliver the Wales we want- a journey we cannot undertake without the involvement of the third sector, the private sector and everyone that believes in a brighter future"* [Howe 2018].

The Act ensures a number of steps that the public bodies listed need to make, including the relevant procedures and what is asked of them. It will be the public body's duty to make a statement, for well being, that explains the goals and how they have been put into place for sustainable development. To annually report the progress they are achieving, showing they are meeting their objectives and also responding to the future generations commissioner. It will show that the recommendations expected of them are being completed. If any recommendations have not been followed, an explanation of why this is and what different action or response would be needed, will be noted.

The seven goals show the kind of Wales we want and want to see for our future generations, the goals are a list for public bodies to work at. They include:-

A prosperous Wales: The need of a low carbon society and to use resources efficiently and wisely, doing this has benefits for climate change.

A resilient Wales: Communities and the nation of Wales to maintain the benefits of a natural environment, with a healthier eco-system that will support the social, economic aspects and make it natural for Wales to adapt.

A healthier Wales: Communities and societies wellbeing being improved, physically and mentally, and that health is being understood, giving a better future for aforementioned health.

A more equal Wales: Making sure everyone is treated the same.

A Wales of Cohesive Communities: Making communities safe, clean and keeping them connected and happy.

A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language: Protection for Welsh culture and own heritage language. Encouragement for people to use the arts and sports etc.

A globally responsible Wales: Communities as a whole take into account when improving anything economically, socially, environmentally that it is a positive input to the whole global well-being.

The Well being of future Generations [Wales] Act is “*based on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals*” [Craik 2019] also known as Global Goals. The UN put these into place to end poverty and to protect us all globally. “*The 17 SDGs are integrated- that is, they recognise the action in one area will affect outcomes in others and that development must balance social, economic and environmental sustainability*” [Sustainable Development Goals 2015].

This requires the public bodies of Wales to be the same and recognise the long term impact any of their decisions will make, to benefit people and communities. Also to ‘*prevent persistent problems poverty, health inequalities and climate change*’ [Future Generations]

The public body would have to take into account how to fulfill the wellbeing duty, and that balancing short term needs and safeguarding long term needs, that short term needs do not

detriment long term effects. It will need to involve people that collaborate with each other, involving people in setting long term goals and also question what kind of Wales people want.

As Jeff Cuthbert stated *“we need to build a consensus around the goals which are the most important to all of us, including our children and grandchildren”* [Cuthbert 2013].

Getting communities to participate is very important, crucial in fact. It gives them a sense of responsibility to place an input into bettering Wales and also an input on our planet, a better place for now along with future generations. Getting young people on board, allowing them to help see that it is their future and their children's future. Allowing them informed choices and authorizing them the freedom to have their say. The biggest hurdle they face is climate change. Teach them ways to have an understanding and also teach them skills to face any adaptations they need to comprehend. Allow them to question things and not to just accept things.

In conclusion the decision making of today will make an impact on our future generations, the younger generation should be allowed to say what their future Wales should be like. The ambitious goals give the future generations a hope of a good and better standard of life. Everyone needs to take responsibility for the long term decisions that will impact the future generations. As Sophie Howe states,

“It is my job to be the advocate of the interests of future generations, to pull up a seat, so to speak, at the decision-making table for our younger generations and even those not yet born” [Howe 2018].

Role of the Youth Worker - Week 5

We as humans realise the impact of what's been done to our planet, we have now got to consider that a radical change has to happen, and that the planet cannot tolerate anymore of the damage that has been afflicted by past habits. The time has come for "conserving an ecological balance by avoiding depletion of natural resources" [Oxford Dictionary]

Luckily there are positive initiatives which can change and challenge the damage and provide the planet with a sustainable future. This initiative depends on us as individuals, our communities, our countries and all of us globally.

This is where the young people of today are significant for the change and development. Opportunities, guidance and experience is a duty so that they are able to develop in ways that would be personal, socially and academically for the benefit of their development.

When young people go through transitioning from childhood into young adulthood, it is during this time they go through changes, and their development into young people should be supported and empowered.

"Wales was the first country in the UK to appoint a children's commissioner and the first country to enshrine in law the need to consider, and work toward, the wellbeing of future generations. Our children and young Peoples National Participation Standards [2016] are there to ensure young people have their voice heard and participate in making decisions that affect them" [gov.wales]

With support the young people's voices and needs have been heard and met, and there is a strategic approach. "This approach has been directly informed by the young people and the sector, and supported by the efforts of the interim Youth Work Board. In this way what follows is a young people led vision and collaborative approach for strengthening youth work in Wales" [gov.wales]

The role of a Youthworker plays an important role and a big help to the young people transitioning into adulthood, it also is a big help in promoting their participation into society. It is defined as its a focus on young people, interacting that their personal development is met and responding to the needs of them and the interests.

More should be done and more can be done for Youth services in Wales. It has become apparent that the significant work Youth work has on the young people, the sector

recognises this and “ now seek to apply this learning and move forward as we begin writing a new, positive chapter for Youth Work in Wales” [gov.wales]

Educational for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship [ESDGC] is the knowledge that young people need in the 21st century to educate themselves. “It is an ethos that can be adopted, a value system and a way of life” [Welsh Assembly Government]

An explanation on what ESDGC is, simply that it's something that we can all adopt as a value system and make it a way of everyday life. It's all about linking us as humans and the environment, the negatives like unfairness and inequality. The positive side is that with the right attitude and behaviour from the population of the world, it is certified a better standard and a well balanced world. Critically evaluate one's own values and also one's own attitudes.

It also enables injustice to be challenged, prejudices and discrimination to be challenged, encouraging people to be more aware of caring for themselves and for others around them. Putting into perspective that caring for the community around them will generate a more pleasant place to live and a happier environment all around.

It will give the young people a better understanding to explore issues and a chance to make up their own minds, giving them a chance on how to act and address issues for themselves with positive results.

Creating and providing safe environments for young people is one of the core elements Youth Work stands for. It's important to provide a provision of safety and support, and allows the young person to develop in their own right, and that the young person's wellbeing is taken care of.

Youthwork is a voluntary relationship with each young person, but the opportunities of support and to educate fall into “The five pillars of Youth work Wales” Which are:

Expressive:

Encouraging young people to be expressive of their ideas and opinions.

Participative:

Enabling the young people in sharing responsibilities, opportunities and the decision making which would affect them and others around them.

Inclusive:

Develop their own knowledge and understanding on racial, social, cultural identity, diversity, heritage. Values of their own language and other different languages, citizenship and respect others opinions and choices.

Empowering:

Recognising all young people have a right

Supporting:

Encouraging them to take part or engage in political issues that affect them and their future.

Wales is one of the countries in the entire world that regulates Youth Workers, which came into effect on April 1st 2017. The profession is now registered on the EWC list of registered practitioners alongside Youth Support Workers and school and Further Education teachers. “Making the EWC the largest professional body in Wales with over 80,000 registrants” [Cwvys]

Youth work in Wales is recognised with local authority services and supporting the work Youth Workers do gives them and the young people they work with a strong voice.

“By bringing non-formal and in-work education in line with formal education, we are enhancing the status of the often overlooked profession of youth work and the important role that it plays in young people's well being and education” [Cwvys]

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