

GLOBAL ASPECTS ON SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION

- Voices and experiences from 7 countries -



A documentation of opinions and stories presented at an international seminar organized by the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation - SSNC and compiled by Fundaexpresión - Colombia



Swedish Society for Nature Conservation



Contents

Foreword	5
About this publication	6
Testimonies on Sustainable Consumption	8
A theoretical framework for Sustainable Consumption - <i>From cultures of consumerism to cultures of sustainability ...</i>	10
<i>Voices and experiences from 7 countries</i> - Political, economic and cultural challenges	16
Participatory Pedagogy and Culture in the Work for Change - <i>The Rural - Urban Dialogue Festival -</i>	18
<i>Voices and experiences from 7 countries</i> - Methodological and educational tools we use	20
<i>Voices and experiences from 7 countries</i> - Stake-holder and target groups	23
<i>Voices and experiences from 7 countries</i> - How do we perceive the effects and outcomes of our work?	25
Concluding remarks	27
<i>Annex : Organizations and Regional Partners</i> Brief interviews on issues of Sustainable Consumption	28

Credits:

Coordination of Sustainable Consumption:
Sara Nilsson and Eva Eiderström - SSNC

Report compilation:
Adam J. Rankin and Claudia Gimena Roa Fundaexpresión

Design and illustration of cover-page:
Angie Vanessita / www.acdesign.tk

Report design and layout:
Leonel Adrian Cárdenas

Photography:
supplied by partner organizations

For more information, please contact:
sara.nilsson@naturskyddsforeningen.se

Stockholm (Sweden) - Floridablanca (Colombia),
February, 2012

The Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC) is an environmental organization with power to bring about change.

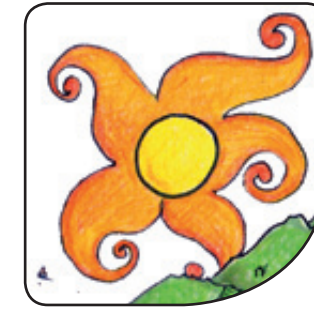
We spread knowledge, map environmental threats, create solutions, and influence politicians and public authorities, at both national and international levels. Moreover, we are behind one of the world's most challenging ecolabellings, "Bra Miljöval" (Good Environmental Choice). Climate, the oceans, forests, environmental toxins, and agriculture are our main areas of involvement.

SSNC is governed by its members. Each member has a voice in a local branch. The branches offer a variety of activities. Excursions and practical conservation work combine to boost the members' knowledge about, and love for, nature. Many branches also work to lobby decision makers on local or regional environmental issues, and take part in national campaigns.

Delegates at the SSNC Assembly adopt guidelines for the work of the national organization and elect a governing board. A national office coordinates activities and provides services for the members.



A documentation of opinions and stories presented at an international seminar organized by the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation - SSNC and compiled by Fundaexpresión - Colombia



"All of us are a consumer. Consume wisely and you contribute to sustainability, not as if the only day is today, tomorrow we are also here."

Samuel Ochieng, Consumer Information Network / Kenya

Foreword

The Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC) has engaged in international cooperation with environmental movements all around the world for more than 20 years. Recognising that unsustainable patterns of consumption is one of the main drivers of environmental degradation and unsustainable development, we gathered together representatives from ten environmental and consumer organisations, during a few days in August 2011, to exchange experiences, identify common patterns and discuss ways forward in our work for change. To work with consumer power, both nationally and globally, is also one of the key strategies of the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation.

In order to disseminate the outcomes of our discussions, we decided to publish a documentation of the seminar. The contents of this report do not necessarily represent the views of SSNC, but are based on the discussion groups and the presentations of the meeting participants. We hope that this report can contribute to more thoughts and actions on these fundamental issues. All those who have been involved in this report are drivers for change, each in their own way, and so is everyone else around the globe, who seek and persistently work for a better world.

Sara Nilsson and Eva Eiderström
Naturskyddsföreningen

About this publication



This publication brings together analysis, experiences and testimonies from community-based organizations, environmental NGOs and consumer groups working on sustainable consumption issues from seven countries and four continents of the globe. The source of inspiration for this publication was a meeting on Global Aspects on Sustainable Consumption held in Stockholm in August 2011, organized by the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation - SSNC, with partner organizations from Malaysia, South Africa, Tanzania, Kenya, Colombia, Ukraine and Sweden, as well as the participation of the global voice and network of Consumers International.

The publication seeks to inspire others by giving a genuine, fresh and practical look at the challenges, concepts and contexts to forging sustainable consumption and production patterns within our communities. We believe it is vital to connect our local efforts with the work going on in other parts of the world: to cultivate a global and many diverse movement which focuses on the transition from consumerism to a new paradigm of sustainable societies.

The stories highlighted in this publication show the beginnings of this path of change, based on real-life experiences of upholding cultural values and alternative community lifestyles; promoting popular education and rural - urban dialogue; implementing eco-friendly technologies and production practices; working with alternative and public media resources; and by advocating fundamental changes in public policies and political - economic structures for ecological - social justice.

A new language for Sustainable Consumption

- **Ubuntu** (South Africa) = Is an African ethic or humanist philosophy focusing on people's relations with each other - the essence of being human: *I am, because we are*. Ubuntu speaks particularly about the fact that you can't exist as a human being in isolation, it speaks about our interconnectedness.
- **Buen Vivir** (Ecuador, Bolivia, Colombia) = The term "buen vivir" or Sumak Kawsay, describes the right of the people to live in a healthy and ecologically balanced environment that ensures sustainability. In practice, the concept of "good living" implies knowing how to live in community by eliminating prejudice and exploitation between people, as well as respecting the rights of Mother Nature.
- **Ujamaa** (Tanzania) = Comes from the Swahili word for extended family or family-hood and is used to express the concept of people living and working together, it means unity in supporting one another, it also means the need to give back to those who support you.
- **Lagom** (Sweden) = Defined as "just right" or "enough", Lagom is also widely translated as "in moderation", "in balance" and "suitable", which carries the connotation of appropriateness or the right amount for use or consumption.
- **Minga** (Colombia) = Used by the indigenous and peasant people to describe the meeting of friends and neighbours to do some collective and free work for the purpose of social utility, for example to work together to harvest a crop, clear a rural road, fix a neighbours house. Minga, is also a popular concept that expresses solidarity and the ideals of community life.
- **Allemansrätt** (Sweden) = Described under Swedish common law as the right to free and public access to the countryside, for example to camp, walk or to harvest berries, whether it be private or common forest or farmland.

Testimonies on Sustainable Consumption

Samuel Ochieng, Consumer Information Network, Kenya *"We have to go back to our original dreams and start to define our actual and real needs. I am positive and believe that the growing social interactive networks will significantly help us, so that we can meet and interact on both local and global levels".*

Bernard Kihyo, Tanzania Consumer Advocacy Society, Tanzania *"Awareness creation on rights and responsibilities is a number one issue. The consumer is at the centre. We work to find a window, so that the consumer can realize that what we are talking about influences their daily life. The environment is everything. We try to convince the consumer that we need to be both careful and responsible, so that we can build a sustainable future. We need to use our recourses wisely..."*

Patrick Scott Rossi, Nature and Youth, Sweden *"Youth are becoming more aware of their lifestyles and the meaning of nature, by seeing how nature changes, by seeing how species have disappeared. Being out in nature means understanding, not only through reading papers or articles, but by looking, learning and doing within a natural surrounding".*

Michael Mungoma, Youth Education Network, Kenya *"The most important message for young people is that they can actually make a difference. People want immediate results. Therefore a great part of our work is dedicated to explain and support people in waiting and working for long term changes: change means taking responsibility for our future".*

Anna Tsvetkova, National Environmental Network MAMA-86, Ukraine *"I think the most important aspect to make a change is to gain a clear understanding what changes in society are really needed and how to make these changes possible ... and then to start to act, beginning from yourself at least. Every small or big success achieved by our colleagues and friends working for green consumption and nature conservation are sources of my hope and inspiration".*



Göran Nilsson, teacher at Ingesunds folk high school, Sweden *"No public education can continue without a living discussion about values, both amongst participants and leaders. This works like oil does in machinery. Curiosity is a necessity that pushes the process forward. We need participation and trust in the capacity of individuals to be responsible for their situation and lifestyles; this is the keystone to sustainable development".*

Pella Thiel, SSNC local branch of Värmdö, Sweden *"My message is that times are changing now and people will have to think about how they should live their lives based on principles of well-being, with a smaller use of resources. I think that changes are coming in many areas, and we have to change and adapt or we will just be swept away. The transition movement is mainly working on the issues of climate change and that the age of cheap energy is basically over. We have to think how we are going to restructure our economy and make it more resilient and that means making it more local, and that's a message that not many people are ready for.*

This means being more self-sustaining and for example growing our own food or eating less meat, as meat is more energy intensive. Fifty years ago in Sweden we didn't eat so much meat, we really didn't raise cattle for meat, maybe you had hens for eggs, maybe pigs to feed the scraps, or cattle for milk, but not cattle-raising for meat".

Mageswari Sangaralingam, Consumers Association of Penang, Malaysia *"When people know about their rights, they organize themselves. One key activity is to advocate for increased participation of local communities in decision-making regarding their local development and environment, through strategies of mobilisation, resistance, empowerment, strengthening and popular education".*

Claudia Gimena Roa, Fundaexpresión, Colombia *"One part of our work involves the community forest reserves, which have shown to be innovative scenarios for popular education and understanding between rural and urban people, particularly to raise awareness on the importance of protecting the natural systems that support our societies".*

Paul Crankshaw, National Consumer Forum, South Africa *"... as an NGO this is a priority for us, to work with people, to educate and raise awareness and to show them how they can enforce consumer rights in their own lives".*

Tom McGrath, Consumers International *"...generally speaking in a lot of our work in the North we are more concerned with issues of consumer choice, providing information on social - economic criteria, and issues of regulation and labelling; whereas perhaps in other parts of the world there is more of an issue of basic access to goods and services, giving a sustainable development type perspective".*



A theoretical framework for Sustainable Consumption

- From cultures of consumerism to cultures of sustainability ...

This chapter is a short analysis and theoretical background based on some selected publications on issues of consumption, sustainability and our common cause and responsibility for cultural change.

Cultivating Consumerism or Sustainability?

The Worldwatch Institute that dedicated its State of the World Report¹ for 2010 to critically assess the progress and different challenges towards achieving sustainability, has made the case for **transforming cultures**, calling for one of the greatest cultural shifts imaginable - from cultures of consumerism to cultures of sustainability. Christopher Flavin, president of Worldwatch Intitute, in the preface of the report highlights:

"that there can be no doubt that consumer cultures are behind what has been called the 'Great Collision' between a finite planet and the seemingly indefinite demands of human society ... despite a 30% increase in resource efficiency, global resource use has expanded 50% over the past three decades ...

Like a tsunami, consumerism has engulfed human cultures and Earth's ecosystems. Left unaddressed, we risk global disaster. But if we channel this wave, intentionally transforming our cultures to centre on sustainability, we will not only prevent catastrophe, but may usher in an era of sustainability - one that allows all people to thrive while protecting, even restoring, Earth.



The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment warns us that some 60% percent of ecosystem services (e.g., climate regulation, fresh water, waste treatment, fisheries) is being degraded or used unsustainably. The damage is the result of cultural systems that encourage people to define their happiness and success in terms of how much they consume ... The key to this transformation will lie in harnessing institutions that play a central role in shaping society - to instill this new cultural orientation".

Analysing the rise and fall of consumer culture, Erik Assadourian in the same report² defines the essential role of **cultural pioneers** for harnessing change, and states that:

"transforming cultures is of course no small task. It will require decades of effort in which cultural pioneers - those who can step out of their cultural realities enough to critically examine them - work tirelessly to redirect key culture-shaping institutions: education, business, government, and the media, as well as social movements and long-standing human traditions. Harnessing these drivers of cultural change will be critical if humanity is to survive..."

Consumerism has now so fully worked its way into human cultures that it is sometimes hard to even recognize it as a cultural construction ... Indeed, consumer' is now often used interchangeably with

Value assessment - participatory group exercise

- To give thanks to nature, is it necessary or foolish?
- What is most important, reduced consumption or fair consumption?
- Is the economic crisis a threat or an opportunity?
- Who holds the greatest responsibility to transform unsustainable development – the consumers, the companies or the politicians?
- What counts most – the thought or the action?
- What is most important, to change individual behavior or to build public opinion?
- Is it ok to express opinions that you yourself can not fulfill?
- Is it fact or feelings that make people change their patterns of behavior?
- When you transmit a message, what is most fruitful - a carrot or a whip?
- Is having a bad conscious a good driving force for change?
- What is most important – organizations or networks?
- Should we recover a park in the local neighborhood or defend the Amazon rainforest?

Tips! These questions can be used in a value assessment or participatory group exercise called *The Line*. The participants are asked to position themselves along an imaginary line according to the questions which are called out one by one. One end of the line is "I agree", the other end of the line is "I disagree", the rest of the line is a gradual scale.



'person' in the 10 most commonly used languages of the world, and most likely in many more ...

Considering the social and ecological costs that come with consumerism, it makes sense to intentionally shift to a cultural paradigm where the norms, symbols, values, and traditions encourage just enough consumption to satisfy human well-being, while directing more human energy toward practices that help to restore planetary well-being".

Our common cause

Friends of the Earth (FoE) and WWF partnered with other NGOs to write a report³ to explore the central importance of working with cultural values and makes the case that civil-society organisations can find **common cause** in working to activate and strengthen a set of helpful 'intrinsic' values, while working to diminish the importance of unhelpful

'extrinsic' values. The report highlights some of the ways in which communications, campaigns, and even government policy, inevitably serve to activate and strengthen some values rather than others:

"There is an irony at the heart of much campaigning on global challenges – including campaigning on humanitarian and environmental crises: as our awareness of the profound scale of these challenges and the difficulty of addressing them grows, we tend to rely ever more heavily upon a set of issue-specific tactics which may actually militate against the emergence of the systemic and durable solutions that are needed ...

The values that must be strengthened - values that are commonly held and which can be brought to the fore - include: empathy towards those who are facing the effects of humanitarian and environmental crises, concern for future generations, and recognition

¹ The Worldwatch Institute, State of the World Report 2010 - "Transforming Cultures from Consumerism to Sustainability", Erik Assadourian, Project Director, Linda Starke and Lisa Mastny (Editors), Washington, DC, 2010. Available at: <http://www.worldwatch.org/bookstore/publication/state-world-2010-transforming-cultures>

² Erik Assadourian "The Rise and Fall of Consumer Cultures"; The Worldwatch Institute, State of the World Report 2010, pp. 3 - 20.

³ Tom Crompton, "Common Cause : The Case for Working with our Cultural Values", report published in partnership by Climate Outreach and Information Network, Campaign to Protect Rural England, Friends of the Earth, Oxfam and WWF, September 2010. Available at: www.wwf.org.uk/change



Public education

- a theory of change

In times when many great changes are needed, more people need to get involved: young and old, in the cities and the countryside, and with diverse backgrounds and levels of education. When people have different needs for information, the challenge is not only to get the right information to the right person, but also to ensure that person can grasp the information and transform it into knowledge. Essentially, the results of development depend on what people do and conceive from it, based on the organic growth of understanding, skills and knowledge at the community level.

It's hard to find a word the same as the Swedish word "folkbildning". Since we refer to it as a concept, we decided to use the word "public education", instead of the more common translation of "adult education". Hence, for us public education takes place at three levels: 1. At a centralised level, through the folk high schools, 2. At a decentralised level, through study circles, and 3. At the individual level, through the media.

To educate a people, a civilisation, is a long and costly process that is difficult to manage. By making use of the capillary forces in society (formal and informal networks), all parts of society can be reached at a relatively low cost.

In order to achieve the necessary changes in society on crucial issues or patterns of behaviour, the process must start simultaneously everywhere and at all levels. Public education is the only concept through which this can be done. Fundamentally because public education is already taking place to some degree almost everywhere, for example people receive and process modern information on a daily basis.

Public education works in all environments and from the illiterate to the academic levels. In order to be responsible and meet the challenges of the future, we must use democratic forms of education, and build on the fact that everyone has something to contribute. Human equality and democratic leadership are the starting points for all public education. / **Göran Nilsson, Ingessunds folk high school**

that human prosperity resides in relationships - both with one another and with the natural world. Undoubtedly these are values that have been weakened - and often even derided - in modern culture ... they are values that must be championed if we are to uncover the collective will to deal with today's profound global challenges".

Challenges to sustainability

Nicola Bullard, senior associate with Focus on the Global South, has gone further to criticise our understanding of "development", in light of the **multiple crises** (financial, food, climate, energy...) that the planet currently faces. In a recent article⁴ she expressed her views on the challenges to sustainability:

"The biggest challenge we face is not how we understand sustainability, but how we really understand development. When we consider the state of the world and the systematic failure of "development" to provide food, housing, education and welfare for the marginalized majority, the word tends to lose all moral content and even practicality.

The lack of imagination is maybe our greatest obstacle: not the lack of imagination to design technocratic and complicated solutions to absorb greenhouse gases, to construct living organisms "made to specifications" or new financial instruments for carbon marketing. There is too much human imagination involved in wrongly "solving" problems. What is really needed is imagination to conceive how to live differently, how to dismantle the power structures which obstruct change, and how to rethink "development".

Firstly, our way of understanding "development" is fundamentally incorrect. It is not possible to

continue believing society as something independent from nature, neither the economy separated from the material base of life. Growth as we know it, is not possible. Secondly, the planet is far too degraded and fragile to talk of sustainability. We must start to talk of regeneration and restoration. And thirdly, the dominant international political and economic order is a rising barrier to the rights of the peoples and of Mother Earth, and it needs to be transformed".

What is all the knowledge for?

Manfred Max-Neef, Chilean economist and environmentalist, who won the Alternative Nobel Prize in 1983, and has gained international reputation for his work on **development alternatives**, expressed in a recent interview⁵:



"We have reached a point in our evolution in which we know a lot ... but we understand very little. Never in human history has there been such an accumulation of knowledge like in the last 100 years. Look how we are. What was that knowledge for? What did we do with it? And the point is that knowledge alone is not enough: what we lack is understanding.

Economists study and analyse poverty in their nice offices, have all the statistics, make all the models, and are convinced that they know everything that you can know about poverty. But they don't understand poverty. And that's the big problem. And that's why poverty is still there. And that changed my life as an economist completely. I invented a language that is coherent with those situations and conditions ... and that's the origin of the metaphor of barefoot economics ... The principles, of an economics which should be based in five postulates and one fundamental value principle:

⁴ Nicola Bullard, "It's too late for Sustainability. What we need is system change", published in Development "Challenges to Sustainability", Volume 54, No. 2, June 2011, <http://www.palgrave-journals.com/development/journal/v54/n2/index.html>

⁵ Interview with Manfred Max-Neef: "Experiences in Barefoot Economics", by Amy Goodman, Democracy Now, March 2011, http://www.democracynow.org/2010/11/26/chilean_economist_manfred_max_neef_on



- *The economy is to serve the people and not the people to serve the economy.*
- *Development is about people and not about objects.*
- *Growth is not the same as development, and development does not necessarily require growth. Growth is a quantitative accumulation; development is the liberation of creative possibilities.*
- *No economy is possible in the absence of ecosystem services.*
- *The economy is a subsystem of a larger finite system, the biosphere, hence permanent growth is impossible.*

And the fundamental value to sustain a new economy should be that no economic interest, under no circumstance, can be above the reverence of life. And I say life, not human beings, because, for me, the centre is the miracle of life in all its manifestations”.

This is echoed by recent political transformations in countries such as Bolivia and Ecuador, where social movements have claimed that the central problem is not to look for alternatives of development but alternatives to development, by constructing a new paradigm, the **paradigm of Buen Vivir**, as a possibility to recover harmonic relations within and between us and by recognising the rights of Mother Nature.

Earth democracy

Many other social and peasant movements in other parts of the hemisphere are working for **visionary solutions** for a sustainable future, such as the reclaimed Indian activist and women’s leader: Vandana Shiva⁶, who started her road to ecological sustainability with the Chipko movement in the 1970s when women in the region of the Himalayas protected forests by hugging trees:

“For me, ecology and feminism have been inseparable ... it is one expression of combining women’s rights and nature’s rights, celebrating our cultural diversity and biological diversity. The defence of nature’s rights and people’s rights have come together for me in Earth Democracy – the democracy of all life on earth, a living democracy which supports and is supported by living culture and living economies...”

⁶ Navdanya International - Vandana Shiva, web-page: www.vandanashiva.org



We need a new paradigm to respond to the fragmentation caused by various forms of fundamentalism. We need a new movement, which allows us to move from the dominant and pervasive culture of violence, destruction and death to a culture of non-violence, creative peace and life...

One hundred years after Gandhi wrote Hind Swaraj -defining the concept of using ‘soul force’ as a means to seek right livelihood, which is what a deeper freedom is all about-, his ideas are even more relevant as we seek creative ways to deal with climate change, corporate rule, food and water insecurity and the loss of citizens’ rights”.

Similarly, it is appropriate to relive the words and life experience of another great women’s leader: Wangari Maathai, a Kenyan environmental and political activist, who in the 1970’s founded the Green Belt Movement, focused on the planting of trees and environmental conservation, and who became the first African woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize for her contribution to sustainable development and democracy:

“I want them to know that despite the challenges and constraints they face, there is hope. I want to encourage them to serve the common good. My experiences have taught me that service to others has its own special rewards. I also have a lot of hope in the youth. Their minds do not have to be held back by old thinking about the environment. And you don’t have to be rich or give-up everything to become active

... We have tried to instill in them the idea that protecting the environment is not just a pleasure but also a duty.” Wangaari Maathai.





Voices and experiences from 7 countries

- Political, economic and cultural challenges

This is a brief compilation based on experience sharing and discussions about what are the political, economic and cultural challenges we face in our work:

Consumerism has engulfed our cultures. We are a part of a global market system which controls and influences our lives and consumerism has engulfed our cultures. Consumerism has led many people to relate high consumption levels with a sense of well-being and success, finding contentment through the consumption of goods and services. This is a growing challenge since advertising, marketing strategies, availability of credit cards and mass media are used to serve the goals of consumerism using strategies of social modelling.

Political and economic structures. Our efforts on a daily basis are countered by external political and economic structures and vested interests which are powerful and corporate-driven, and more than often go against the common good. The materialist culture of production and consumption, which is the essence of the prevailing market economy, has to be countered at all levels of society through a global movement which works for changes in lifestyles and cultural values.



Extractive industries. As many countries experience a financial and economic crisis, the rising price of minerals and commodities has resulted in a new boom in extractive industries in regions of the South (mono-crops, plantations, agrofuels, mining, oil); with drastic impacts for local communities and the environment. There is a need to prevent and regulate these mega-projects, giving particular attention to the collective rights of peasant, indigenous and afro-descendent people to their traditional lands, territories and livelihoods.

Government authorities. In general, governmental authorities do not give adequate attention to sustainable consumption - production issues and these initiatives are often sidelined or ignored in public policies. For example, institutional policies to increase food productivity typically involve technological packages, mono-cropping and the use of industrial fertilizers, pesticides and modified seeds; this goes against the principles of sustainable production and consumption, by undermining the basic principles of environmental protection and food sovereignty.

Inequality and impoverishment. The precarious economic situation of rural and urban communities is dominated by issues of historical inequality and

impoverishment. Many people strive just to survive and make ends meet on a daily basis, and sometimes their activities affect the natural environment (clearing of forests for farming, artesian mining, charcoal making, timber selling, building houses on marginal lands). We therefore have an overall goal to eliminate poverty and transform the political - economic structures that maintain these conditions of inequality.

Women's empowerment. In many of our countries and social contexts, women live in conditions of inequality in terms of employment, income, land rights, access to education, and it is still common place for men to be the final decision-makers' at household, community and within political bodies. Enabling environments for women's participation are needed to facilitate genuine forms of empowerment and involvement in alternative livelihood strategies and sustainable consumption initiatives.

Gender dimensions. It is also important to look at the gender dimensions of consumer desires as they influence the use of energy and natural resources. For example, advertising is highly gendered and notions of masculinity and femininity are strategically deployed to sustain a wasteful and consumer-orientated society.

Educational system. The lack of quality and appropriate educational schemes for children and youth have a significant impact on literacy, access to information and understanding of consumer and environmental issues. Many rural communities have limited information infrastructure (computers, internet, mainstream media), which also makes it difficult to reach marginalized households with educational material and training resources.

Tenure rights. An important challenge is how to secure and sustain equitable access and tenure rights to land, fisheries, forests and natural resources for indigenous peoples and small-scale producers, particularly women. These common-goods and natural resources are vital to sustainable livelihoods for traditional people.

Working in partnership. There are many obstacles to forging partnerships with governmental bodies which -while having a clear mandate to work in the interests of the people- also have short-term goals driven by political and economic interests. Governmental departments often prefer to work in isolation, regarding their field of operation as an 'empire'; and that the involvement of NGOs or local communities may be seen as a threat or a risk to their political mandate.

- Dilemma questions on Sustainable Consumption

- Is there no sustainable consumption without sustainable production?
- Are we merely self-orientated wealthy consumers or are we concerned citizens that are political actors in our daily lives?
- One globe and one market, what are the challenges and opportunities?
- How do we distinguish 'needs' from 'wants'?
- In times of financial crisis, is it possible to shift to a "no-growth" economy?
- Can we talk of sustainable consumption in a world with poverty and hunger?
- What are the driving forces for sustainable consumption in different social and cultural contexts?
- How do we delimit our work in the field of Sustainable Consumption?

Tips! If you are working with a group these reflections can be a good starting point for discussions. Alternatively, the participants can be asked to create their own dilemma issues.



Participatory Pedagogy and Culture in the Work for Change

- The Rural - Urban Dialogue Festival -

By Claudia Gimena Roa, Adam J. Rankin, Thomas Mc Donagh - Fundaexpresión

“Learning is not measured by the number of pages read in a night. Nor by the number of books read in a semester. To learn is not about consuming ideas; it is to create them and to re-create them.” Paulo Freire

In the spirit of Paulo Freire, the **Rural – Urban Dialogue Festival** (*Festival de Expresiones Rurales y Urbanas*) held consecutively during 2010 and 2011 in the city of Bucaramanga, Colombia has set out to share experiences, to retrieve values, to encourage solidarity and self-affirmation and to build collectively towards sustainable livelihood changes.

Rural culture as a legacy originates in locale, because it needs context in which to thrive: the context of people, agriculture, landscape, forests and the rivers that shape it. In this sense, cultural patrimony and natural patrimony are intertwined. Peasant, fisher-folk, afro-descendent and indigenous peoples are not only harvesters of basic foods, but when given the opportunity, rural people are bountiful in beauty, mythology and traditional wisdom.

Likewise, although formal education and mass media have isolated the cultural expression of **urban people**, many youth groups, artists, teachers and social movements are developing initiatives that defend cultural values and promote alternative livelihoods in urban areas that have been inflicted by violence, discrimination and malnutrition.

Hence our Festival seeks to **interconnect** rural and urban communities who embrace the principles of sustainable

societies. Moreover, with imposing development models that affect both populations (monocrops, agribusiness, mining industries, consumerism, climate change...), these scenarios for collective memory are vital for cultural understanding between rural and urban people.

The festival has been held in the **urban neighbourhood** of La Joya of Bucaramanga, and indeed this is one of the major achievements: the urban community has taken on a leading role as hosts of the different activities and the rural – urban dialogue process. The festival includes a diversity of events: theatre, music, dance, exhibitions; conferences, panel discussions, video forums; seed exhibit and traditional food banquet; popular food and craft market; as well as artistic events, parades and workshops for children.

The festival, more than a 3-day event, must be seen as part of an **ongoing process** which seeks to consolidate and build upon the foundations of dialogue. Indeed, many of the participating communities are involved in local marketing schemes, urban agriculture, women's movements, environmental campaigns and a peasant school of agroecology and community forest reserves.

The festival has demonstrated the potential of culture, diversity and participatory learning for change, as a **source of inspiration** so that individuals, institutions and communities can implement their proposals for more sustainable livelihoods based on the concept of 'Buen Vivir – Good Living' in urban and rural settings.

As the political, environmental and social conflicts in our country continue, and the Colombian government pursues an extractive model of development, a strengthened and informed civil society will be crucial in the defence of **natural and cultural heritage**. We are sure that the festival, and the many processes that feed in and out of it, demonstrates the importance of creating and re-creating, based on shared understanding and collective action.

Video-clip: <http://www.youtube.com/user/FUNDAEXPRESION#p/a/u/1/TEEcCEYZX8M>



Voices and experiences from 7 countries

- Methodological and educational tools we use

This is a summary based on experience sharing and discussions about what methodological and educational tools we use and are effective in our work:

Framework of Sustainable societies. The concept of sustainable societies is a framework for action, and central to this goal is the empowerment of individuals and communities based on raising awareness and by enhancing ethical values and behavioural changes. This involves strategies such as upholding alternative livelihoods, reliving the daily habits of resource-saving and promoting environmentally-friendly alternatives for food, agriculture, energy, housing and public transport.

Unsustainable consumption patterns. As a starting-point, it is vital to address unsustainable consumption patterns and lifestyles and to expose the direct links to both the social and environmental crisis. Many patterns of consumption actively undermine the well-being of people and communities, for example: certain foods and diets lead to ill-health, disease, and malnutrition; excessive

use of disposable-goods and packaging causes an overload of solid waste; the dependency on private cars is critical to air contamination in cities.

Research and information. To be able to strengthen our arguments and campaign messages it is crucial to have well-documented research and information, this also helps to dispel inappropriate government and corporate propaganda. Moreover, the use of public opinion pools and independent research bodies are useful media and educational tools to raise awareness and create objective thinking.

Public policies. Many of our organizations represent consumer interests on industry or government committees and boards. This includes advocacy for public policies to promote water conservation and energy efficiency, ensuring that tariff-schemes safeguard fundamental rights and basic access to water and energy. Additionally, we push for policies that regulate harmful advertising, eliminate harmful chemicals, minimize waste and product packaging, or which promote alternatives such as locally-produced organic foods.



Market-days and food-banquettes. Market-days have shown to be an excellent scenario to envision different strategies for ecological marketing schemes and social networking. This creates public awareness of traditional and organic foods as an integral part of healthy and sustainable lifestyles and by promoting local economies. Traditional food-banquettes are also an innovative way to bring together peasant and social organizations to share food and experiences around the same table.

Education and consumer advice. Environmental education and consumer advice programmes help to awaken and raise public awareness within social groups and local communities, outreaching to specific stakeholder groups through workshops, counselling groups and seminars. Fora and public debates help to shape community opinion and are also developed to conceive social mandates on issues of sustainable livelihoods.

Exhibitions and tours. Exhibitions and tours are held in strategic places where large numbers of people converge and include for example the demonstration of eco-technologies. Photographic exhibits and cine-forums are also a powerful visual tool to work on themes of sustainable consumption and production. These educational programmes are conducted with a participatory and interactive approach, giving attention to ensure direct dialogue with the participants.

Mainstream and community media. We use our reputation and contacts with reporters and communication officers to address environmental and consumer issues through both the mainstream media (press, radio, television) and different community channels (public address systems, wall-paintings, community radio, T-shirts, street banners,...).

Challenges we face to influence consumers to incorporate Sustainable Consumption in their daily lives

- Inadequate communication infrastructure to reach target groups
- Illiteracy and/or inappropriate educational material
- Staff lack communication skills and expertise
- Too much information overload
- Conflicting interests do not allow consumers to see the wider picture
- The language we use sounds like preaching or lecturing
- The culture of consumerism is overwhelming in society
- Our message is not endorsed by the right people
- Unethical practices by governments and business corporations
- Inefficient planning and monitoring of results



Voices and experiences from 7 countries

- Stake-holder and target groups

In this section we highlight experiences regarding the main stakeholders and target groups in our work:

Urban population. The urban population make-up one of the largest target groups for work on sustainable consumption, and our organizations have focused educational activities in places of public concentration, for example in shopping malls, market-places, banks, hospitals, public squares, supermarkets and churches. It is important to take into account that a great proportion of urban people are low-income families and with only basic education; their needs and priorities are not always the same as the urban-based middle classes.

Rural population. It is also crucial to prioritise work in the rural population, particularly with peasant associations and the small-farming sector, as there is a great potential to develop alternative food systems that are socially inclusive as well as environmentally sustainable, using agro-ecological principles. Exhibitions, tours and itinerant popular education schemes held in rural centres, family farms and local schools help to improve outreach to different rural localities.

Children and youth. Many children and youth, particularly in urban areas, have become global consumers with the advent of advertising, information technology and mass media. This has meant that the young have lost appreciation and understanding of their own culture, traditions and natural environment. However, children can also be important agents for change towards a sustainable society and can actively engage in the principles of environmental stewardship and sustainable consumption.

Teachers and students. Sustainable consumption and environmental education involving teachers,

trainees and students are designed to encourage ideas for action and activities that can be run at the school level and then be imparted to families and local communities. In general, the educational sector (universities, parent-teacher associations, student groups, teacher cooperatives, adult education) is a priority group.

Women's organizations. The multitude and resolve of women's organizations show that they are key actors and catalysts for change. Based on kinship and village alignments, women also have powerful community-based networks. Hence, a main challenge is to enhance the participation of women's groups and networks within sustainable consumption - production initiatives.

Public institutions. Another central target group are the public institutions involved in consumer - production cycles: environmental and park authorities, municipal governments, institutes of culture, health and recreation. The process of interaction with the public sector is often deficient, as governments and regional authorities are often reluctant to make real policy commitments. In general, advocacy will require time, effort and key contacts to establish genuine forms of cooperation and political will to mainstream the principles of sustainable consumption - production.

Other civil society organizations. Many of our organizations work on sustainable consumption initiatives with other civil society organizations, for example environmental and human rights NGOs, neighbourhood and parish boards, public service workers, communitarian mothers. We also link to national and international civil-society campaigns and networks, for example on issues of the right to water, climate justice, biodiversity, food sovereignty, access to clean energy.



Cultural events. Cultural activists have disseminated creative messages on the issues of sustainable consumption through activities such as street theatre, parades, public performances and concerts to celebrate the importance of environmental and cultural diversity.

Public rallies. Public rallies are important for social mobilization and to create public pressure, for example marches and demonstrations for the defence of water and forest ecosystems; these have shown to be powerful scenarios to bring together a broad alliance of organizations: environmentalists, public service workers, teachers, students, commercial sector, urban neighbourhoods.

Educational - action days. Organization of educational - action days (Earth Day, Water Day, Green Week, ...) signify important dates to raise broad public and media attention on the importance of sustainable livelihoods and the impacts of issues such as climate change or meat consumption.

Community workdays. Community voluntary workdays promote a sense of collective belonging and solidarity and include a wide-range of initiatives: urban agriculture, clothes swapping, cleaning of river banks, tree-planting, recycling, recovery of public parks.

Demonstration projects. Implementation of pilots - demonstration projects are an effective way to introduce and promote ecotechnologies and environmentally-friendly choices at individual, household and community levels (solar energy, organic farming, composting, eco-sanitation, alternative construction techniques ...).

Nature observation. Nature observation walks to forest reserves and natural areas are an excellent opportunity for learning, exchange and to cultivate a sense of love with nature. These guided tours can be organized with specific or mixed groups: university students, school children, urban neighbourhoods, church groups, indigenous people, peasant associations, etc.



A reflection on Sustainable Consumption from a poverty perspective

By Bernard Kihyo, executive director of Tanzania Consumer Advocacy society

"We need to work with an ethical mind, both if you are poor or rich. Regardless of our level of consumption, we have to understand what sustainability is and that it is crucial for a better future. Everyone has to take responsibility, even if we have little. Behaviours that were acceptable before, are not anymore. Now when climate change is affecting us, we have to take even more care of what we have. Climate Change means that we have to be even wiser."

No matter where you are from, whether it be a so called "developed" or "developing country", we have to start modelling our consumption pattern and lifestyle as the core drivers to mitigate the impacts of climate change. Lifestyle patterns entail forms of how individuals live -linking their social structure to attitudes, behaviour, preferences and how we interpret our lives in a social context-. However, sustainable consumption needs us to make more sense of our actions and frame them in a less personal interpretation (individualism and self-centered attitudes), and rather think of others and the wider environment, based on an outlook of healthy and sustainable societies around the world.

Hence, we need to change our current irresponsible conducts, as the severe environmental impacts will not be felt by most of us, but by our grand-sons and daughters. Therefore, what and how we consume today must be a cornerstone of the transition to an economy which puts human wellbeing and social equity at its heart.

With our current global population at 7 billion, we are consuming about 50% more resources than the Earth is regenerating at any given time; for example, in the past twelve months we have consumed the resources that it took the planet about eighteen months to produce. We are consuming our own resource base! It is also clear that many of the environmental pressures in the developing world are due to the adoption of Western or "modern" ways of life.

I do hope and believe that working in partnership between countries and peoples from the North and the South will help us to understand and find alternatives to avoid the worst scenarios and impacts of climate change.

In this sense, it is important to advocate for more Sustainable Consumption programmes that support country-led schemes to mainstream poverty-environment linkages into national planning. For example, governments which create public policy frameworks to support sustainable development and enhance the general wellbeing of world citizens and the natural environment.

"It's high time to create the conditions for individual and collective consumer action that can contribute to a sustainable future."

Voices and experiences from 7 countries

- How do we perceive the effects and outcomes of our work?

In this section, we have focused on how we perceive the effects and outcomes of our work on sustainable consumption:

Publications. Activities and research findings are publicised through popular media, websites and at exhibitions in public places. By registering telephone calls, e-mails and site visits it is possible to assess feedback and the level of interest of the individuals or parties involved such as people's requests, questions, opinions, needs and interests.

Collective learning and follow-up. Visits and courses organised around demonstration projects permit collective learning and practical experience in eco-technologies and sustainable practices such as organic farming, recycling corners, domestic compost units, eco-sanitation, school and community gardens. Changes in individual and communal behaviour can be seen through evaluation and follow-up with the programme participants.

Monitoring public opinion. By monitoring public opinion using questionnaires, opinion pools and media registers we can perceive the general context and behavioural changes on specific consumer and environmental issues at regional and national level.

Power of the consumer voice. The consumer voice has shown to be powerful in making governments and industry to respond to consumer demands. We have seen that some officials from the public sector (institutions of employment, recreation, education, social development) are starting to recognise the vital role of community-based organizations in sustainable development.

Consumer awareness. Change happens when people are motivated and empowered to act: consumer

awareness is one of the keys to the transition towards sustainable societies. For example, by consciously choosing to live a simpler way of life amidst material wealth, by supporting local marketing schemes or by choosing fair-trade products.

Community-to-community dialogue. Learning and dialogue between communities has permitted the sharing of life experiences, traditional knowledge and the definition of common priorities on sustainable livelihoods. Many times the economic constraints, have motivated civil-society groups to generate self-development schemes through social enterprises and voluntary work.

Focus on people's concerns. It is essential to work with issues that people care about e.g. health, basic needs, food safety, environment, transport. Many people have benefited from the educational side of our work, and we are able to add our voice to national issues such as rising electricity prices, food security, impacts of mining companies, climate change.

Public domain. We need to replace the practice of private consumption with goods and services in the public domain. For example availability and easy access to public transportation, bicycle paths, community shared gardens and composting projects. The general availability of sustainable solutions and good environmental practices shows a growing trend which needs to be pursued.

Empowering the poor. This involves activating, mobilizing and working together with marginalised communities to stand-up for their own basic rights, to decide their livelihood strategies, defend their territories and create their own plans for the future. This means that it is important to develop and strengthen cross-cutting issues such as gender,

capacity building and poverty alleviation within our campaigns for sustainable societies.

Proactive education. Although it is difficult to motivate people to act based on education alone, a process of proactive education can be linked to concrete actions, pilot projects and demonstrations, as well as some forms of economic support and motivation.

Communication tools. We need adequate communication tools to reach the different stakeholders and target groups. We have learnt that the message of sustainable consumption has to be meaningful and show “resonance” in the everyday lives of people.



SSNC : Shop and Act Green-Week

The **greening of consumerism** is one of the main objectives of the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation - SSNC and it is a framework for action for a sustainable environment. The main idea behind the “Shop and Act Green-Week” is to make people more aware that their consumption patterns have an impact on the environment and consequently that their consumer choices can make a difference. The aim is to demonstrate alternatives that individuals can choose in order to live in a more sustainable manner. This can be a question of choosing another product when shopping, reusing instead of buying a new product or changing a specific habit.

The central goal of the SSNC’s Green Week is to make a real change in people’s behaviour as consumers and to make the environmentally-friendly choice easier. Finally, the goal is to stimulate the business sector and the market to take these environmental issues into account. Examples of campaign themes over the years are clothing, food and climate, coffee, bananas, chlorine-bleached paper, organic food, fish and seafood.

SSNC’s main tool in the campaigning week is the national network ‘Shop and Act Green’, which started in the late 1980s as a small group of activists, today there are over 1000 members all over Sweden. The activists in the Green Consumerism network carryout all the activities during the week. In general, we have some basic lessons which have made these consumer orientated campaigns more successful:

- Relevance from the environmental point of view
- Issues that are easy to understand for everyone
- Something that is available in the shops/in daily life
- Something that you buy/do relatively often
- A better environmental option is readily available



“...creating scenarios for exchange is vital, since each organization has a particular lesson or significant experience to share on sustainable livelihoods”,

Claudia Gimena Roa - Fundaexpresión, Colombia

Concluding remarks

We believe that every human being should carry the same fundamental rights, regardless of where in the world he or she lives. There is a need to strengthen civil society, fight against poverty, inequality and vulnerability, and increase democratic participation. Even if the conditions and contexts where we live differ, we have much in common, we have a common cause.

Ensuring that our forms and practices of consumption are more sustainable will require collective action and collective approaches in every part of the world. By exchanging experiences with other organisations, we become part of a global movement. We can learn from our successes, as well as our failures. We need to “act locally, think globally and also - act globally”.

In Kenya, children and youth are brought-up to become responsible citizens: to know their rights and duties, and to understand that a better future is everybody’s responsibility. Strategies for sustainable consumption are also discussed in meetings with consumer groups and politicians. In Ukraine, solutions for energy efficiency and eco-sanitation are made available to small households. Consumers International works as an independent campaigning

voice for consumers across the continents of the globe. In Malaysia, books are sold on the streets on unsustainable and sustainable consumption practices related to food and nutrition– people want to know! Road shows on sustainable consumption attract large audiences in the local markets on the outskirts of Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania. In South Africa, three scenarios have been developed to show what retail markets could look like in 2025, when the country has passed from its “unsustainable past to a future sustainable society”. All across Sweden, year after year, thousands of volunteers are mobilised for the annual Green Consumption Week. And in Colombia, dialogue is at the centre: to understand the linkages of cultural and environmental patrimony, across cultural divides, between cities and the countryside, between producers and consumers.

We will continue these important discussions to share experiences, to weave new social ties and to understand the best ways of supporting each other and to move forward in our common cause for a better world, based on the principles of sustainability, *Ubuntu*, *Buen Vivir*, *Ujamaa* and *Lagom*.

“We are all being cooked together, if we don´t change. And the change starts with us”

Samuel Ocheing- Consumer Information Network, Kenya

- While they tell us to import, we say produce local food.
- While they tell us to forget, we relive our traditions and heritage.
- While they say everything is money, we are guardians of nature and life.
- While they are at war, we make music.
- While they discriminate, we mix together.

Fundaexpresión / Rural - Urban Dialogue Festival

Annex : Organizations and Regional Partners

Brief interviews on issues of Sustainable Consumption

Mageswari Sangaralingam - Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP), Malaysia

<http://www.consumer.org.my>

The Consumers' Association of Penang - CAP is a grass-roots based consumer organization established in 1970 with a difference; it strives for an ecologically sound and socially-just society, and as its mission states: "by giving a voice to the little people". One of its main concerns is ensuring the right of every consumer to basic needs such as food, housing, health care, sanitation facilities, public transport, education and a clean environment.

"Our scope has expanded from matters of daily-living to include more complex problems in terms of food and product safety, environmental work and also to champion the rights of consumers. For example, the government has just prepared a list of nutritious food that should be sold in school canteens. These enable schools to serve balanced, nutritious, quality food and encourage children into good eating habits. From April 2011, the government has also banned unhealthy food and drinks such as soft drinks and food with high sugar content from school canteens".

One key activity is to advocate for the increased participation of local communities in decision-making regarding their local development and environment, through strategies of mobilisation, resistance, empowerment, strengthening and popular education. For example, CAP reaches out to the public and local communities through production of educational and research material in four main languages (Malay, English, Mandarin and Tamil) on issues of sustainable consumption and lifestyle changes.

"The community garden project in schools and homes has become a particular success as people have started coming to ask for herbs for use as medicine or food. Some community members buy or take saplings or seeds to grow on their own. The community gardens also produce native vegetables which are then shared among the members. Those who have forgotten the use of herbs as home remedies, have their interest restored as they see the herbs being grown in the gardens. As there has been a demand from consumers regarding the virtues and how to use these herbs, CAP has just published a book entitled: Herbs in Daily Life".

Paul Crankshaw, National Consumer Forum (NCF), South Africa

<http://www.ncf.org.za/>

The National Consumer Forum - NCF is a civil society organisation, it focuses on consumer awareness of consumer rights, on main issues such as financial literacy, food safety and nutrition, and it is now particularly focusing on supermarkets, and what supermarkets are doing to promote sustainable consumption and local economic development.

"We must operate in a political environment in which funding for consumer organisations is not readily available from donors and the government; donors have tended to focus on issues such as HIV/AIDS and to ignore other important aspects of rebuilding post-apartheid South Africa"

The organization generates its own media resources for consumer education and Consumer Fair is a newspaper published six times a year (100,000 copies per edition) and distributed freely and country-wide, through an alliance with the bank sector. NCF also voices its own research and opinions regularly on TV and radio, as well as working with the print media.

"We recently had a National Consumer Protection Act passed in South Africa, probably one of the most advanced in the world, but we don't really have the State institutions to implement the act properly, so as an NGO this is a priority for us, to work with people, to educate and raise-awareness and to show them how they can enforce consumer rights in their own lives".

Samuel Ochieng, Consumer Information Network (CIN), Kenya

<http://consumerupdate.org/>

The Consumer Information Network - CIN is an independent national consumers' organisation founded in Kenya in 1994 and currently has over 8,000 members countrywide. By promoting consumer awareness, CIN has been empowering people and working through education and policy research on issues of health, financial services, trade and environment:

"We have just opened-up an advisory centre where we do financial counselling, and this is something we really want to use with the issues of sustainable consumption, because if we are talking about behavioural changes, then you have to more or less deal with people one on one, and not just spreading information through the mass-media".

CIN envisions a society that upholds consumer rights to basic needs and see its position as a leader in consumer movements; it has been the chair of Consumer International and a member of a number of civil-society coalitions. A major area of recent work, has been lobbying at both the grassroots and governmental level, pushing for national policies on sustainable consumption, in terms of procurement policies and other areas such as energy:

"A land-mark achievement for us was the recognition of consumer rights in the new constitution of Kenya, we also have much more stringent environmental protection laws now in the Constitution. The government has also just passed a new regulation which requires that all new buildings in municipalities must have solar systems for water heating".

Bernard Kihyo, Tanzania Consumer Advocacy Society (TCAS), Tanzania
<http://www.tcas-tz.org/>

Tanzania Consumer Advocacy Society - TCAS is a relatively young NGO, established in July 2007 as an independent consumers' association with the goal of promoting, protecting, disseminating, and advocating for consumers' rights and responsibilities in Tanzania.

Tanzania is a large country of 945,090 km², with a population of 44 million, characterised by poor road and communication infrastructure, which means that it is difficult to reach and spread consumer campaigns throughout the 27 regions of the country. TCAS is also working in changing social and political times, which signifies different challenges:

"Under socialism in Tanzania, the State was the provider of everything, the State was controlling supplies and fixing prices... since the liberalization of the Tanzanian economy in the late 1980s the issues of consumer protection have become acute, especially due to the poor linkage between producers and consumers. TCAS as an organization is needed now more than ever, to create the proper bridge between consumer and business in today's globalised world, upholding consumer rights and responsibilities".

TCAS is working on awareness-raising on issues of financial education, sustainable agriculture practices and the mitigation of the impacts of climate change, particularly through education with youth groups, teachers and students in secondary schools on topics of sustainable consumption, environmental conciseness and ethical-use of resources.

"We are facing the severe effects of climate change, we are currently facing power rationing for almost 16 hours a day, that creates many problems such as low production of industry and unemployment due to the periods of drought and low-rainfall, as our main source of power is from hydroelectric power. Another challenge is that there is a lot of deforestation in Tanzania, cutting-down of forests and bush burning, which has increased the impacts of climate change. It's high time to create the conditions for individual and collective consumer actions that can contribute to a sustainable future".

Tom McGrath, Consumers International
<http://www.consumersinternational.org/>

Consumers International - CI is an independent campaigning voice for consumers, founded in 1960 with its head-office in London, and now works with over 220 member organisations in 115 countries. Its mission is to build a powerful international consumer movement to help protect and empower consumers worldwide and as a global watchdog on the behaviour of international corporations.

"Due to the global nature of our work, and also the diverse nature of our membership, there are many different approaches and perspectives, and generally speaking in a lot of our work in the North we are more concerned with issues of consumer choice, providing information on social - economic criteria, and issues of regulation and labelling; whereas perhaps in other parts of the world there is more of an issue of basic access to goods and services, giving a sustainable development type perspective".

CI is giving priority to research and campaigning on a number of key issues such as financial services, climate change, energy, food and sustainable development, as well as cross-cutting aspects of consumer rights and responsibilities.

"Sustainable consumption is almost a cross-cutting theme for us, specifically in terms of sustainability we have been looking at three areas: housing, transport and food, these are the areas that our member organizations have identified as being important... The consumer dimension to environmentalism is very clear, and it is something that is increasingly becoming important for consumer organizations. Not least of which this is coming from consumers themselves, who are increasingly concerned about the impacts of their consumption choices and that is one of the main drivers for adopting more sustainable patterns of consumption".

Anna Tsvietkova, National Environmental Network - Mama-86, Ukraine
<http://www.mama-86.org.ua/>

Mama-86 is an environmental NGO which unites 17 branches in various regions of Ukraine. As an initiative of young mothers concerned about the post-Chernobyl accident and the impacts on children's health, a pro-active group was founded in the city of Kiev in 1990. The different activities of Mama-86 are aimed at creating conditions for the transition of Ukraine to sustainable development and an eco-democracy, with a focus on addressing its complex environmental challenges:

"Under the economical crisis and due to political difficulties with Russia we have been experiencing increasing costs of gas supplies, which has pushed the Government to review the Energy Strategy of Ukraine till 2030 and make steps forward to sustainable energy and urgent measures to upgrade all infrastructure, including urban areas (electricity, heating, water supply and sanitation)".

As an organization it is engaged in active educational processes with the general public, working particularly on the empowerment of women, children and youth,





through research, information collection and dissemination, as well as public and inter-sectoral debates.

“Lobbying for eco-policy development and decision-making for sustainable development, for example improvement of national legislation on chemical security, with one main issue is the problem of dangerous pesticides, in 2010 we completed an inventory of chemical storages in 2 regions of Ukraine and as a result we found 92 tons of absolute pesticides”.

It also works as a broad public platform for local sustainable development with alternatives and examples of affordable eco-technologies, particularly for the water and sanitation sector at household level and local community level.

Michael Mungoma Okumu, Youth Education Network (YEN), Kenya

<http://yenkenya.org/>

Youth Education Network - YEN seeks to empower the Kenyan youth through information, consumer education and vocational training, so that they can be active participants of their own community development, bridging the gap between education and the challenges that they face in real life.

YEN has developed a curriculum on ‘Sustainable Consumption as a means of tackling Climate Change’ in collaboration with the Kenya Institute of Education, Ministry of Education and the local administration. The curriculum was developed through several workshops with teachers and officials and is being piloted in two schools, establishing environment and consumer clubs in schools and other informal youth groups. YEN’s objective is to have this programme embedded in the national education curriculum.

“YEN has a group of mentors that have been trained to educate the pupils who are benefiting from the knowledge on sustainable lifestyles. Children stories on sustainable consumption habits in their homes and families have been written by them, printed and distributed to other schools as a way of sharing and building from experiences”.

Claudia Gimena Roa, Fundaexpresión, Colombia

<http://www.fundaexpresion.org/>

FUNDAEXPRESIÓN is a Colombian cultural and environmental NGO founded in 1999 to promote participatory educational and investigation work within local communities. The methodology of work invokes knowledge exchange, intercultural dialogue and territorial identity to safeguard the vitality and traditions of local people. For more than ten years, the organization has been consolidating a Campesino School of Agroecology, bringing together more than 50 peasant associations, women’s and youth groups.

The focus of work on sustainable livelihoods is based on forging a dynamic process of dialogue between rural and urban populations to enhance cooperation

and understanding. Local work has also been linked with civil-society campaigns on biodiversity, climate change, food sovereignty and water rights, giving more significance, institutional recognition and political support to the issues and problems being faced:

“The Rural - Urban Festival as well as being a scenario for dialogue between rural and urban populations, has also served as a source of inspiration and as a bridge for exchange for social organizations with diverse agendas from gender, culture and arts, human rights, rural development, environmentalism to architecture; as well as officials from the public sector. More than often, these organizations have been working alone or unknown to each other, so creating scenarios for exchange is vital, since each organization has a particular lesson or significant experience to share on sustainable livelihoods”.

It also aims to empower communities towards achieving improved living conditions and conservation of their cultural and environmental heritage. For example, a community-based forest reserve network, which is known as the Colectivo de Reservas Campesinas de Santander:

“The nature reserves have been endorsed by local families and community associations who have taken-on the role of custodians to protect the ecosystem, cultural identity and enhance agrobiodiversity. The forest reserves have shown to be innovative scenarios for popular education, particularly to raise-awareness on the importance of protecting the natural systems that support our societies”.

Carl-Martin Johborg, The Study Promotion Association (Studiefrämjandet), Sweden

<http://www.studieframjandet.se>

Studiefrämjandet is one of the largest study associations for adult education throughout Sweden, which works mainly in the field of non-formal education, and has been part of the tradition of life-long learning since its foundation in 1959. As a non-political and non-religious organisation with 19 member organisations, amongst these are The Swedish Society for Nature Conservation - SSNC.

Swedish non-formal adult education has a long history; it started in the late 19th century when different educational movements developed alongside and in co-operation with new popular movements such as trade unions, farmers’ associations, political organisations and churches. The overall goal of Studiefrämjandet is to give people the opportunity to increase their participation in society with tools for self-development and life-long learning in order to maintain a high educational standard and to strengthen a democratic society.

It organises study circles, cultural events and seminars in a wide range of subjects such as culture, nature and environmental issues as well as parenthood, arts, crafts and outdoor education. The core of its pedagogy focus is the study circle, which it describes as an:

“effective pedagogical method particularly suitable for adults since it puts the participants’ own experience in a central position. The method fosters interaction, enabling all participants to contribute with their different skills and talents. People attend study circles to acquire further professional skills or for personal development”.

Patrick Scott Rossi, Fältbiologerna (Nature and Youth Sweden)

<http://www.faltbiologerna.se>

Nature and Youth is Sweden’s largest organization for children and young people interested in nature and environmental issues. It was founded in 1947 with a focus on nature studies, known as field biology. When environmental problems became more and more present in Sweden, Nature & Youth took a place as one of the more radical voices on these issues being faced by society.

What is unique about Nature & Youth is that it is young people, mostly between 6 and 25 years old – who run the entire organization, and as it describes itself, it is an organization run by the young, for the young. It brings together members from all over Sweden who want to engage in a particular field, such as forests, oceans, climate, agriculture, international affairs and outdoor education.

As Patrick Scott expresses, it is the outdoor life and the struggle for a sustainable environment the driving-force of our members:

“The youth become more aware of their lifestyles and the meaning of nature, by seeing how nature changes, by seeing how species disappear, being out in nature means understanding not only through reading papers or articles, but looking and learning by doing. It is very important now today, when we are perhaps two generations ahead of the people that moved to the towns and cities, in that time people knew how it was to live with nature, now if you speak to the youth in Stockholm, they don’t know where food is being cultivated”.

GLOBAL ASPECTS ON SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION

- Voices and experiences from 7 countries -





GLOBAL ASPECTS ON SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION

- Voices and experiences from 7 countries -



Swedish Society for Nature Conservation