



ASPEN, *Populus tremuloides*

Sustainability Consortium news

Nº 07

Fall 2005

SoL-Related Meetings:

October 10-12, 2005 Waterbury, Vermont

SoL Sustainability Consortium Fall Member's Meeting

Hosted by Green Mountain Coffee Roasters

Contact: Joe Laur – joe.laur@seedsys.com

Sara Schley – SeedSara@aol.com

October 18-20, 2005 Boston area
(Hyatt Regency, Cambridge, MA)

Foundations for Leadership Initiating and Sustaining Profound Change

Facilitators, Beth Jandernoa and Peter Senge

[http://www.solonline.org/announcements/
item?item_id=8833325](http://www.solonline.org/announcements/item?item_id=8833325)

Contact: Stacy Bougie – stacy@solonline.org
1-617-300-9560

December 12-16, 2005 Boston area
(Warren Conference Center, Ashland, MA)

Presencing: Collective Leadership for Profound Innovation and Change

Facilitators: C. Otto Scharmer, Beth Jandernoa
and Arawana Hayashi with guest faculty
Joseph Jaworski, Peter Senge and Adam Kahane

[http://www.solonline.org/announcements/
item?item_id=8811291](http://www.solonline.org/announcements/item?item_id=8811291)

Contact: Stacy Bougie – stacy@solonline.org
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Membership News:

The SoL Sustainability Consortium extends a warm "Welcome Back" to DT Energy and Pioneer Valley Photovoltaics.

Californian Donella Meadows Fellows Lead Electric Utility Sustainability and Teen Pregnancy Initiatives

by Edie Farwell, program director of the Donella Meadows Leadership Fellows Program (<http://www.sustainer.org/fellows/index.html>) at the Sustainability Institute in Hartland, Vermont.

The Donella Meadows Leadership Fellows Program at the Sustainability Institute hosts 2-year Fellowships to enhance the effectiveness of leaders working for sustainability. Skill development focuses on systems thinking, vision, and reflective conversation. Fellows improve their capacity to learn and act in complex systems.

Californians Terrie Lind, a current Fellow of the class of 2005-2006, and Ellen Wolfe from the class of 2003-2004, are learning partners. They cross-fertilize between the two classes of Fellows and coach each other on refining their causal loops and applying what they learned to their current work. Though their issue areas are quite different, the experience and teachings of the Fellows Program allow them to collaboratively learn as they increase their leadership in the incongruous electric utility and teen pregnancy prevention sectors.

Ellen strives to transform California's electric utility industry. She credits the Fellows Program with "providing new 'fire in my belly' for fulfilling a commitment to make energy policy work meaningful from a sustainability perspective." She shares: "If leaders can get clarity about what they believe in they will find their connection to environmental issues. Faced with significant uncertainty and seemingly-constant negative events, electric industry leaders are in great need of being able to connect with what they believe is most critical. It is my hope that leadership seminars can foster a renewed and shared vision of the future industry; a vision that is consistent with the human values of the people that lead the industry."

Nearby to Ellen, Terrie manages a teen pregnancy prevention program. At the first workshop in May 2005, Terrie reported feeling as if the other

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Fellows were speaking a different language that had to do with fisheries, refuse, fair trade coffee and other more familiar sustainability issues. Over time, the issue of teen pregnancy prevention and its relevance to sustainable lives for the younger generation, and population, took shape. Terrie says, “Disciplining myself to follow the lessons, I began to draw simple reinforcing loops. One led to another and then a balancing loop and another reinforcing loop as the issue of pregnancy prevention began to emerge. Within a short time, the entire intervention goal involving education appeared before me. How cool was this!! I began to see how this diagram could explain the complex intervention with a clarity that had been lacking before now.”

“With some hesitancy, I faxed my loops to my SI coach, and nervously awaited her feedback. To my amazement, she was able to ‘follow’ my diagram of my intervention with a minimum of questions. Encouraged, I drew the loops again and presented it to my partner – an attorney – who thrives on clarity and sequential data in order to embrace a concept. He also followed the diagram and gave praise for the clarity of the presentation. I knew I was on to something here! Since that time, I have added loop diagrams for each of the four intervention goals pursued by my program.”

In the Fellows Program, we are learning that there are many disparate paths to sustainability, that all are needed, and that common perspectives and tools can build learning partnerships across diverse issue areas.

WORKGROUP UPDATES

Sustainable Justice Initiative

Alan Mobley, Northwest Center for Juvenile and Criminal Justice – amobley@mail.com

The summer has been, appropriately, a time of change and regeneration. Among the relatively minor shifts, Alan Mobley joined the faculty of Public Administration and Urban Studies at San Diego State University. The borderlands are an ideal venue for Alan to continue his transnational justice administration studies, as well as deepen his action inquiry projects relating to regenerative and sustainable communities. Lest we forget, along with being a veritable paradise, San Diego is also California’s second most popular destination for returning prisoners (after Los Angeles).

We are pleased to announce the success of our grant application to the Open Society Institute (Soros Foundation). The award will fund a project that we are calling “Just Business,” an effort that will produce a tangible vision of sustainable justice by integrating SoL’s Regenerative Business Initiative into one or more communities beset by high rates of prisoner return and collateral justice system involvement.

Finally, I leave you with these words from philosopher Jacob Needleman: “If we are to live the American Dream we must first awaken from our dream of America.” As devastating and terrible as Hurricane Katrina was, it may have done much to wake us from our apparent slumber. Inequitable social relations mar American society both North and South, and require all of our collective talents to rectify. The “Just Business” project promises to be one of many attempts to bring progressive, inclusive forms of organization to areas too long abandoned. It is good work and we are indeed privileged to be engaged in it.

Youth and Education workgroup

By Douglas Cohen, Co-Chair – Youth Team – US Partnership for the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development www.uspartnership.org

We have initiated a discussion with Energy Action – the national Climate Action Campaign and requested that they take a lead role in the Energy Working Group. We have also made the same request with Capital Missions regarding the Capital Markets/Financing Sustainability Working Group and the US Green Building Council and their Emerging Green Builders young professional group to take a lead on the Green Building Working Group.

Additionally, in the area of youth leadership for sustainability, Doug Cohen attended a White House conference on Cooperative Conservation in August in St. Louis, Missouri and connected with US Dept of Agriculture/Forest Service and other Federal agencies that sent youth future leaders to the conference. These agencies will be invited to participate in the Youth Leadership efforts of the Partnership going forward.

Materials Pooling Project: Aveda, a division of Estee Lauder, has become a member of this project.

CONSORTIUM MEMBER FIELD NEWS *Submitted by Brigitte Tantawy-Monsou – brigitte.tantawy-monsou@unilever.com*

Unilever and international anti-poverty campaign organization Oxfam* have published a timely report on the links between business wealth creation and reducing poverty.

The report responds to calls from the UN to business, governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), such as Oxfam, to work together to develop solutions to reduce poverty – the first Millennium Goals. Unilever joined forces with Oxfam to research how business can

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help reduce poverty. This is the first time Oxfam has worked with a major multinational company on such a project.

The independently written report looks at how, and to what extent, Unilever Indonesia has an impact on poverty through its value chain, from small-scale producers in the supply chain to its impacts on retailers and low-income consumers. The company was chosen for this project because it is well established in Indonesia and because Indonesia is a developing country with over half the population living on an income of US\$2 or less a day.

This data-rich study shows that Unilever Indonesia has a considerable impact on local employment and wealth creation; that more people are employed and more value is generated on the distribution side of UT's value chain than on the supply side; and that, of the total value generated, two-thirds goes to people and organizations in Indonesia other than Unilever.

While this report doesn't have all the answers, it does provide interesting insights into the links between business and poor people. Now that over a third of Unilever's business is in developing and emerging markets and this is one of the fastest-growing areas of our business, the report will be useful in helping us to gain a better understanding of our social and economic impacts in countries with high levels of poverty.

** Oxfam is involved through Oxfam GB and Novib (Oxfam Netherlands).*

Other Unilever news:

- The results of the Annual Review of the Dow Jones Sustainability World Indexes (DJSI World) and Dow Jones STOXX Sustainability Indexes (DJSI STOXX) were published the 7th of September. Unilever has been selected again as an index component for both indexes this year.
- Unilever has maintained its leadership of the food & beverage market sector for the seventh year running.
- Unilever was especially recognized as best company for "Strategy for Emerging Markets" and SAM highlights "Unilever has developed a framework to measure the product prices as a percentage of the local minimum daily wage."

RECENT PUBLICATIONS AND RESOURCES

Growth on a Finite Planet, a One on One video with Dennis Meadows

More than 30 years ago Dennis Meadows began research on the consequences of growth on a finite planet. Backed by an understanding of complex systems, sophisticated computer modeling, and timely data, he and his team created a range of scenarios of the future. Their projections were sobering: given the world's ever-increasing appetites, the same pattern of growth that had brought a century of progress could eventually lead to a period of dramatic reversal.

Now, already stressed by resource demands 20 percent beyond what it can sustainably support, the planet is approaching a dangerous, pivotal period. Food production, environmental quality, climate stability, and availability of key resources may soon encounter "tipping points," when they will race downward at alarming rates.

This video offers a powerful way for businesses to alert their workforces to both the potentially dramatic changes ahead in the business environment and to the need for long range planning informed by a greater understanding of complex systems. The clear explanations of the dynamics of growth and sustainable development make the video a unique resource for classrooms and for non-profit organizations with a focus on sustainability.

DVD Video, NTSC, 47 minutes, color. Available from Pegasus Communications <http://www.pegasus.com/planet.html>

Beyond New and Improved: New Frontiers of Design Innovation *By Jacquelyn A. Ottman*

Jacquelyn A. Ottman is president, J. Ottman Consulting, Inc., a New York City based marketing and new products consultancy and author of Green Marketing: Opportunity for Innovation, www.greenmarketing.com and www.designgreen.org. Published in Green@Work magazine March-April 2005

Ten years ago as the U.S. economy headed into the thick of global competition, differentiation became the competitive watchword. I warned then that "new and improved" wouldn't do. That's even truer today.

As I write, European and Japanese environmental policy initiatives with names like WEEE, REACH and HARM are upping the competitive ante. What may change the game even more, China is positioning itself to become a product development powerhouse. Given the country's newfound interest in developing sustainably—they literally don't have a choice—we can expect China's product designs to integrate ecological benefits before long.

From making stuff to designing services.

It was nearly 20 years ago that we saw daily TV updates of overflowing landfills and loaded trash barges roaming the Atlantic in search of a home. The days are long past for debating the merits of plastic versus paper, or boasting about the percent of recycled content in products and packaging.

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Design innovators have caught up with the notion of services as “dematerialized products.”

The iPod, arguably the hottest product on the market today, makes a poignant (if unintentional) ecologically correct statement: Why struggle to light-weight a jewel box further when an iPod can access and store 1,000 CDs worth of music with no packaging—indeed, no CD at all?

From changing products to changing behavior.

Thanks to Energy Star (a client of mine), computers, fax machines and photocopiers now sleep when they are not in use, and most conference rooms have motion detectors that turn lights off automatically when people leave the room. Not every product can be designed to offer such carefree efficiency, but we can start to make products that encourage more sustainable behaviors by making them fun. The dashboard on Toyota’s hybrid Prius is a great start—providing game-like feedback that helps drivers squeeze every possible mile from a tank of gas.

According to the U.S. EPA, the average home pollutes the air with more greenhouse gases than the average car. Over the next ten years, I think we’ll harness the power of design innovation to make significant strides in reducing home energy use—while making our homes safer and more comfortable. Let’s start with the meter. Today’s electricity meters seem to be designed to conceal information from those who actually use the juice. Researchers are developing ways to turn our meters into home energy dashboards, allowing us to spot power-hogging appliances or the lights your teenage kids left on upstairs.

From save a watt to save a drop.

Twenty years from now, two-thirds of the world’s people will live in a water-starved area. Beyond water purification and desalination technologies, this looming crisis means there will soon be an acute need for dishwashers, clothes washers, and personal hygiene products, like shampoos and soaps, that conserve water.

Nanotech fibers represent the potential for as much in the apparel industry, making self-cleaning fabrics possible. Such technologies demonstrate the potential for holism in design, naturally conserving precious resources while providing other consumer benefits as well.

What won’t change.

Regardless of the product or issue, consumers will always try to make the most of their purchasing dollar. They will reach first for those products that deliver superior primary benefits such as performance, good taste, health or aesthetics over saving the earth or even giving workers a fair shake.

Making things even more challenging, “green” products carry a heavy burden of misperception. Over 40 percent of consumers still equate environmentally responsible shopping with laundry detergents that leave clothes dingy or clunky compact fluorescent light bulbs that cast a green hue. This is where designers come in.

What will change.

Most product designers won’t invent a new water- or energy-saving technology, but they can design products with a lighter environmental footprint that consumers want to use and be seen with—maybe even pay a premium for. Doing so is good for business, can distinguish one’s career and can garner recognition within the design community. Consider the IDEA-award winning Prius and Whirlpool Duet washers for starters.

The good news for the planet in 2005 is that many critical technologies have already been developed. We already know how to save water and energy, extend product life and manufacture products with low toxicity. Successes like the iPod prove that lower impact designs can even revolutionize mature industries.

The better news for designers is that opportunities abound to use their talents to make environmentally sound technologies appealing and accessible to the mainstream, and give consumers the opportunity to put their money where their heart is.

Now that’s a new and improved idea.

Sustainability Consortium news

The Sustainability Consortium is a project of the Society for Organizational Learning

Distributed free of charge to Consortium members. Feel free to distribute to interested colleagues and stakeholders.

Submit news or articles of interest for future issues to: sustainabilitynewsletter@solonline.org.

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