

This is an opportunity for the organisation to introduce the idea of sustainable development to volunteers and to help them to understand how the CommunityCheck project relates to sustainable development.

- Brainstorm with volunteers what they think sustainability and sustainable development mean.
- Chart the progress of the discussion using a whiteboard/flipchart.
- Guide the discussion towards the “three pillars” of sustainable development: of Social (people), Economic (money), and Environment (‘Green’).
- Identify areas of the CommunityCheck project – Eco and Local – and how they fit in with Sustainability and which of the areas they correlate to. Point out that the social side is working with them, the volunteers.

Below are guidance notes taken from a sustainable lifestyles workshop developed by StudentForce for the YouthCheck project from which you may choose to borrow ideas to aid your discussion.

1. Happiness, Wellbeing and Quality of Life (25 minutes)

This section is designed to get participants thinking about the priorities in their lives and the priorities of their communities.

The central theme is the relationship between material wealth and happiness & wellbeing.

This section invites participants to speak about the things which they find important and which contribute to their happiness and wellbeing. Participants are encouraged by the workshop leader to compare these ideas which they have identified with the priorities of their wider communities.

This is a good starting point for the workshop as it allows participants to reflect and discuss their personal experiences and to see how these compare with their peers as well as how they are relevant to the wider community.

Preparation for Workshop Leader

<http://www.happyplanetindex.org/> The HPI shows that around the world, high levels of resource consumption do not reliably produce high levels of well-being (life-satisfaction), and that it is possible to produce high levels of well-being without excessive consumption of the Earth’s resources.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/happiness_formula/4809828.stm Provides a good grounding of the issues relevant to this section for the workshop leader – highlights main issues (particularly ideas about the relationship between material wealth and happiness) and linkages to sustainable development in general.

<http://www.developments.org.uk/articles/bhutan-where-happiness-outranks-wealth/> Bhutan’s alternative approach to development.

Procedure

- This part of the workshop focuses on having participants reflect on what influences their well-being. As individuals and communities, well-being is one of our most important requirements.
- Display the two photos on a digital projector or print copies for participants to view.
- Brainstorm with participants their ideas on what makes them happy. Record their answers using a whiteboard or on a flipchart.
- Discuss answers with participants.

- Some may think that having more money or goods, such as new clothes or computers adds to happiness. But despite being better off in the UK than ever before, research shows that we are not any happier as a result. Data shows whilst economic output in the UK has doubled in the last 30 years, happiness levels have not changed. Ask for participants for suggestions about why this might be. Research has suggested the reason is that we often compare ourselves with people who are richer than we are.
- This could lead to a discussion on the impact that advertising has on happiness. The science of happiness suggests advertising is a major cause of unhappiness because it makes people feel less well-off. Advertising can make us want things we can't afford to buy or do.
- Other suggestions by participants on what makes them happy could include friends and family. It appears that our happiness is closely linked to all our connections and trust in other people, our personal family and our friends. Having supportive relatives and friends is very important for our well-being.
- According to scientists travelling long distances to and from work or school is really bad news for happiness. Not only is the journey often an unhappy experience, the time we spend travelling means we have less time to spend with our family, friends and at leisure.
- If health is not suggested by participants ask how important they think health is to happiness. Research suggests there is a close link between happiness and health. If people are happy they are more likely to be healthy. One dramatic finding is that 'happy' people live up to seven years longer than 'unhappy' people.
- Introduce participants to Bhutan (see link above). Unlike governments of other countries, which are seeking to increase their economic wealth, measured by their countries' Gross National Product, Bhutan's government aims to increase the nation's Gross National Happiness. This policy is rooted in the country's religion of Buddhism. Buddhists believe that the ultimate purpose of life is inner happiness. Ask participants what they think of this. The reference to Bhutan/Gross National Happiness could be omitted for primary participants.
- Older secondary participants could consider the nine pilot indicators of Gross National Happiness being used in Bhutan: living standard; health; education; ecosystem diversity and resilience; cultural vitality and diversity; time use and balance; good governance; community vitality and psychological well-being.

Reflection

- Using an interactive whiteboard or flip chart summarise what research suggests makes us happy: valuing our family ties, friends and acquaintances, living and working close to them and keeping healthy. Contrast this with the goals of making more money, acquiring material goods and going on expensive holidays. The important point to get over to participants is that what makes us happy also means having a more sustainable lifestyle.

2. Energy and Sustainability (30 minutes)

This section builds on the previous section by showing how the kinds of lifestyles that people in the UK are accustomed to are heavily dependent on our use of energy.

It also addresses the impacts of our use of certain fuels for energy on the climate.

Preparation for Workshop Leader

<http://www.unitedutilities.com/teachers/default.htm> The Sustainable Energy Website for Teachers provides background information and participant activities, together with curriculum and web links covering: Climate Change, Energy Efficiency, Renewable Energy, Descriptive lists of selected energy web links.

<http://www.cse.org.uk/cgi-bin/whatwedo.cgi> CSE seeks sustainable energy solutions that engage people and communities to meet real needs for both environmentally sound and affordable energy services. We

work with individuals and organisations from public, private and voluntary sectors on a wide range of initiatives at local, regional and national level.

http://www.create.org.uk/schools/teachers_resources.asp#downloadables provides links to many resources concerning energy use as well as resources for teachers.

Procedure

- Deliver 5 minute presentation (see slides) to bring to the fore the main issues associated with energy consumption – Namely that our heavy reliance on fossil fuels supports our lifestyles but cause harm to the environment. Make direct linkages to previous section.
- **Optional Activity 1:** Read the following statements to the group
 - I can't get worked up. World energy problems are too big for me, so why should I worry?
 - I am really concerned about the environment. We should all do our bit to save the planet.
 - I don't fancy giving things up. We need to use a lot of energy if our lives are going to be exciting.
 - I do my bit. I always try to save energy at home.

 - Ask participants to choose which statement is closest to what they believe. Group persons according to those who have a more positive view and those who are more negative.
 - Inform each group to come up with a list of reasons why they share those views.
 - Have each group present their reasons.
- **Optional Activity 2:** This will require access to a building where the checklist can be applied.
 - Provide participants with the checklist and explain its purpose and use.
 - Assign 15 minutes for participants to check as many of the items as possible.
 - Choose from the checklist several items for discussion.
 - Brainstorm with participants their ideas on how energy can be used efficiently.
- During the group presentation or brainstorming sessions the workshop leader should be able to steer the discussion towards:

The four general ways to use energy more wisely; i.e.

 - Greater efficiency can be achieved by adopting improved technological solutions, (i.e. gaining the same benefits but using less energy).
 - Further improvements in energy efficiency may be achieved by changing the way that equipment and appliances are used, (i.e. using equipment in ways that require least energy).
 - Reducing the amount of energy that is unnecessarily wasted, (e.g. not leaving equipment switched on through forgetting to switch it off).
 - Further reductions can be obtained by adopting less energy-demanding recreational and social activities, (e.g. changing lifestyles).
- The technological options include:-
 - Energy efficient lighting
 - Lighting controls
 - Energy efficient heating
 - Heating controls
 - Insulation of roofs, walls and floors

- Double glazing
- Draught-proofing (though still allowing proper ventilation)
- Equipment that goes into 'snooze mode' if not used frequently
- They are not equally cost-effective or appropriate in all situations.
- Common ways in which energy is wasted include:-
 - Leaving doors and windows open during cold weather
 - Over-heating rooms
 - Opening windows as a way of cooling an over-heated room
 - Heating rooms that are not in use
 - Leaving TV sets and other appliances on stand-by rather than switching them off
 - Using washing machines for only a few items
 - Using large ovens to cook small amounts of food
- These are things that everybody can deal with.
- Discuss whether participants find the following activities (several may be chosen if pressed for time) to be a waste of energy. This can be used to advance the discussion concerning our lifestyles, what we value, what makes us happy and what we need.
 - Computer games
 - Pubbing and clubbing
 - Using a car for short distances (instead of walking or cycling)
 - Using a car for commuting (rather than taking public transport)
 - Long-distance travel by air (rather than by train or ship)
 - Buying things that will have little use
 - Preparing / serving more food than is actually eaten
 - Eating more food than is required to keep healthy
 - Buying imported foods (rather than locally-grown produce)

Fair Trade and the Wider World (20 minutes)

Expanding on the theme of the kinds of lifestyles many in the UK might expect to have, this section shows another way in which these lifestyles are supported (so can complement the discussion of how energy supports our lifestyles).

It is meant to provide participants with an alternative perspective on the commodities that are often taken for granted. It does this by shedding light on the sources of many of these items and provides a look into the conditions of the producers involved as well as the conditions in developing countries more in general.

There is also a discussion about the action young people can take in response to these conditions.

Preparation for Workshop Leader

<http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/> Website of the fair-trade foundation. Provides background information on fair-trade labelling including information on the benefits to producers and other stakeholders.

<http://www.ethicaltrade.org/index.shtml> The Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) is an alliance of companies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and trade union organisations. We exist to promote and improve the implementation of corporate codes of practice which cover supply chain working conditions. Their ultimate goal is to ensure that the working conditions of workers producing for the UK market meet or exceed international labour standards.

<http://www.labourbehindthelabel.org/> Labour Behind the Label supports garment workers' efforts worldwide to defend their rights. They educate consumers, lobby companies and government, raise awareness, and encourage international solidarity with workers. They coordinate the UK platform of the international [Clean Clothes Campaign](#).

Procedure

Examine with participants their thought process when buying things. See how much emphasis they place on cost in comparison to other criteria.

Ask them to think about where they're things are made (for example, where they're clothes are made, where they get their fruit from).

Using the photos (see slides) as a prompt, the workshop leader should encourage participants to compare their perceptions of the lifestyles of those producing the items and their own lifestyles.

Look for similarities and differences.

Make linkages to preceding sections particularly section 1. Happiness, wellbeing and quality of life.

Introduce the idea of Fair Trade.

Ask participants what they think Fair Trade means and write responses on whiteboard or flipchart.

Discuss the guarantees of the FAIRTRADE quality mark.

Engage participants on the idea of fair trade, see if they think it is a good idea or not.