



June 2010 Newsletter

Dear SCORAI,

Greetings from SCORAI!

Thank you to all who submitted newsworthy items this month. As you'll see, our second eNewsletter contains numerous examples of our network of academics and practitioners forging connections and working together to address challenges at the interface of material consumption, human fulfillment, lifestyle satisfaction, and macroeconomic and technological change. On the top right of the eNewsletter, you will find a menu, "In This Issue", that serves as a Table of Contents to help you navigate through the eNewsletter.

If you have newsworthy items that you would like to appear in the July issue, please send them to me no later than June 25 ([LStanik@rutgers.edu](mailto:LStanik@rutgers.edu)). Please note that the deadline to submit items for future eNewsletters will be the 25th of each month.

Warmly,  
Laura Stanik  
SCORAI Communications Coordinator

## Sustainable Consumption Takes Root in Ireland

A four-year collaborative research project underway in Ireland is examining household consumption and some of its negative impacts in Northern Ireland and the Republic.

Funded by the Science, Technology, Research and Innovation for the Environment (STRIVE) Programme 2007-2013, Consensus: A Cross-Border Household Analysis of Consumption, Environment and Sustainability in Ireland is being administered on behalf of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Concerned with issues of sustainable consumption and production policies, the project aims to provide international best practices, national design recommendations for Ireland, procedural recommendations, and techniques for advancing sustainability at the local level. One of the project's main outcomes is the development of a Sustainable Consumption Research Network (SCRN). Those interested in joining the Sustainable Consumption Research Network should send an email to: [consensus@nuigalway.ie](mailto:consensus@nuigalway.ie).

More information about the project is available online at: <http://consensus.ie>.

## Picnic 4 degrowth!

June 6, 2010 is a day of picnics for degrowth!

Add or join a picnic in your city on the interactive map and spread the word through your email lists! See <http://picnic4degrowth.net>.

Change always starts with a nice chat around a good dinner! The global picnic for degrowth idea was conceived at the Second Conference on Degrowth and Social Justice held in Barcelona in March 2010. Join a picnic to create or strengthen a degrowth group at the local level. The aim of the website is to show that there are already many degrowth groups around the world!

How to create a picnic in your town? Check the map. If no picnic is already scheduled in your community, you can create one with the button beneath the map and become the coordinator

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### Quick Links

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community, you can create one with the button beneath the map and become the coordinator (the person pushing for it needs to be on the ground and not just on the Internet). If there is already a picnic scheduled in your area, just join and get in touch with the coordinator.

 Forward to a Friend

Concept? Everyone brings a dish to share with their neighbors, a plate, fork and enjoy! Knowing our neighbors is the first step toward degrowth at local level. Logistics? Very little. Everyone will bring something...Please see the toolkit with advice on how to organize your event

When? June 6, 2010

Where? Everywhere!

## **Hungary in Search of its Future**

Reported by Halina Brown and Philip Vergragt from a sabbatical stay in Budapest

The National Council for Sustainable Development in Hungary issued in November 2009 a report entitled *In Search of the Future*. The Council is an independent advisory body to the Hungarian Parliament and its membership comprises politicians, representatives of the economic and scientific research sectors, and religious, labor, and civil society organizations. Erzsebet Schmuck, a leading figure of the Hungarian environmental movement for the past three decades, serves as its Secretary General. Drawing on Tim Jackson's book/report *Prosperity Without Growth* and the so-called *Stiglitz Report* commissioned by French President Sarkozy, *In Search of the Future* questions the economic growth paradigm as well as hyper-individualism, materialism, and competition as key societal organizing principles. The report notes, "We must realize that the society which restricts its values to material welfare, and subordinates its institutions, human and natural values to competition necessary for acquisition, shall lose its solidarity toward others and the community...[T]he conceptions residing in good morals must be re-evaluated, and we must recognize that neither individual nor social wealth exists without the constructive forces of human and natural values that are neglected due to material interest."

Hungary has been slow to develop a strong economic base in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet system. It has also been hit very hard by the present economic crisis. The recent election of a right-wing coalition more reflects widely shared frustration with the past leadership than the dominant political ideology. Hungary is, literally and metaphorically, in search of its future. In that context, the emphasis of report by the National Council for Sustainable Development is especially striking.

## **Report from the Field: Vision 2050**

World Business Council for Sustainable Development. 2010. *Vision 2050: Glass Half Full or Half Empty?* Geneva: WBCSD. Available at [http://www.wbcسد.org/DocRoot/wQX8Z6C3fEwwqkvw3Alt/Vision\\_2050\\_FullReport\\_040210.pdf](http://www.wbcسد.org/DocRoot/wQX8Z6C3fEwwqkvw3Alt/Vision_2050_FullReport_040210.pdf).

*Vision 2050* was developed to address three questions: What does a sustainable world look like? How can we realize it? What is the role of business in ensuring more rapid progress toward that world?

Accepting climate change, a 30% increase in population, and the "best efforts of business, government and society" WBCSD members defined a sustainable world in 2050 as "9 billion people, all living well--within the limits of the planet." Through backcasting, a pathway was mapped with nine action areas--people's values, human development, economy, agriculture, forests, energy and power, buildings, mobility and materials.

### What is Hopeful about *Vision 2050*

*Vision 2050* states that "business-as-usual cannot get us to sustainability or secure economic and social prosperity...only radical change can, starting now." The endpoints include "meeting the basic needs of all" and "incorporating the cost of externalities starting with carbon, ecosystem services, and water." The "dominance of mainstream economic assumptions" is identified as a major risk.

### What is Disappointing about *Vision 2050*

*Vision 2050* makes no mention of toxic/hazardous chemicals--how shall we manage electronic waste, hormone disruptors, or nanomaterials? The discussion on "zero waste economies," and "not a particle of waste" as a vision ignores the laws of thermodynamics.

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The loudest silence, however, is on the need for business to reflect on what its products are for, and for the advertising industry to redefine its raison d'être. *Vision 2050* calls only for changes in design and production processes so that "customers no longer have to choose." The WBCSD estimates that the current middle class (read consumer) population of 1.8 billion people will double by 2025. How can "9 billion people, all living well--within the limits of the planet" thrive without a drastic reduction in superfluous consumption?

Submitted by Nonita Yap, Guelph University (Canada)

## **Sustainability at the National Academies of Science**

Sustainability at the National Academies is a monthly update highlighting activities related to sustainable development from throughout the National Academies. Information is available at <http://sites.nationalacademies.org/pga/sustainability>.

In addition, the Roundtable on Science and Technology for Sustainability provides a unique forum for sharing views, information, and analyses related to sustainability. The goal for the Roundtable is to mobilize, encourage, and use scientific knowledge and technology to help achieve sustainability goals and to support the implementation of sustainability practices. Through its activities, the Roundtable identifies new ways in which science and technology can contribute to sustainability.

## **New Research Project in the UK**

Community Innovation in Sustainable Energy

Key Contacts

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Duration: October 2010 until September 2013

Website: <http://ww.grassrootsinnovations.org>

Funder: EPSRC-ECLEER

Recent years have seen a surge of interest and activity in small-scale, sustainable energy projects led by local communities. Examples include solar water heating clubs and insulation clubs, that provide mutual support for system installation; energy awareness and behavior networks that provide guidance and reassurance to neighbors on energy matters relevant to them; and cooperatively-owned small-scale renewable energy systems such as micro-hydro and wind energy. This research project studies the diffusion of community-energy projects in the UK. It explores the extent of networking between projects and whether this is assisting in the innovation of community energy. We also assess the performance of projects and provide independent advice to policy makers and energy businesses about the merits and processes for supporting community energy. We draw upon the findings of our research to develop with practitioners a number of foresight scenarios for community energy in the UK.

## **You, Me & The Bourgeoisie**

Song by the Submarines

Here I am with all the pleasures of the first world  
Laid out before me, who am I to breakdown?

Everyday I wake up, I choose love, I choose light  
And I try, it's too easy just to fall apart

Oh, my baby don't be so distressed  
We're done with politesse  
It's time to be so brutally honest about  
The way we know we long for something fine  
When we pine for higher ceilings  
And bourgeois happy feelings

And here we are in the center of the first world

It's laid out before us, who are we to break down?

Everyday we wake up, we choose love, we choose light  
And we try, it's too easy just to fall apart

Plastic bottles, imported water  
Cars we drive wherever we want to  
Clothes we buy, it's sweatshop labor  
Drugs from corporate enablers  
We're not living the good life  
Unless we're fighting the good fight  
You and me just trying to get it right

In the center of the first world  
It's laid out before us, who are we to break down?

Everyday we wake up, we choose love, we choose light  
And we try, it's too easy just to fall apart

Love can free us from all excess  
From our deepest debt  
'Cause when our hearts are full we need much less

Yeah, I know we long for something fine  
When we pine for higher ceilings  
And bourgeois happy feelings

But here we are, in the center of the first world  
It's laid out before us, who are we to break down?

Here we are, in the center of the first world  
It's laid out before us, who are we to break down?

Everyday we wake up, we choose love, we choose light  
And we try, it's too easy just to fall a-

Everyday we wake up, we choose love, we choose light  
And we try, it's too easy just to fall apart

Watch the YouTube video:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bYvt0boSRXQ>

Submitted by Nonita Yap, Guelph University (Canada)

## **Hot Off the Presses: New Publications by SCORAI Members and Friends**

### **Books**

- Goodall, Chris. 2010. *How to Live a Low Carbon Life*. London: Earthscan.
- Newell, Peter and Matthew Paterson. 2010. *Climate Capitalism: Global Warming and the Transformation of the Global Economy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Pauli, Gunter. 2010. *The Blue Economy*. Taos, NM: Redwing Book Company.
- Schor, Juliet. 2010. *Plenitude: The New Economics of True Wealth*. New York: Penguin Press.

### **Book Chapters**

Cohen, Maurie J., Aaron Comrov, and Brian Hoffner. 2010. "The New Politics of Consumption: Promoting Sustainability in the American Market Place." *The Bottom Line or Public Health: Tactics Corporations Use to Influence Health and Health Policy, and What We Can Do to Counter Them*. New York: Oxford University Press (republication of article that originally appeared in *Sustainability: Science, Practice, and Policy*).

### **Journal Articles**

Middlemiss, Lucie. 2010. Reframing Individual Responsibility for Sustainable Consumption: Lessons from Environmental Justice and Ecological Citizenship. *Environmental Values* 19:147-167.

Røpke, Inge, Toke Haunstrup Christensen, and Jesper Ole Jensen. 2010. Information and Communication Technologies: A New Round of Household Electrification. *Energy Policy* 38: 1764-1773.

## Reports

Barber, Jeffrey. 2010. *Still Waiting for Delivery: A Review of Progress and Programs in the 10-Year Framework*. Rockville, MD: Integrative Strategies Forum and International Coalition for Sustainable Production and Consumption. (Copies available from Jeffrey Barber at [jeffreyhbarber@gmail.com](mailto:jeffreyhbarber@gmail.com).)

Rosen, Richard A., Christi Electric, and Paul D. Raskin. 2010. *Global Scenarios for the Century Ahead: Searching for Sustainability*. Boston, MA: Tellus Institute.

## Other New Publications of Interest

Schmitz, Oswald J. and Thomas E. Graedel. 2010. The Consumption Conundrum: Driving the Destruction Abroad. *Yale e360*. <http://e360.yale.edu/content/feature.msp?id=2266>

## New Videos and Films

Consuming Kids: The Commercialization of Childhood (Media Education Foundation)  
<http://www.mediaed.org/cgi-bin/commerce.cgi?preadd=action&key=134>  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JCT7h-jwCWA>

Reinventing Fire (Rocky Mountain Institute)  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vshQICKCacQ>

What's the Economy For Anyway? (Bullfrog Films)  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gqiu7rzxkIE>

Planetary Boundaries: A Safe Operating Space for Humanity (University of Minnesota)  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QkkKZgKmdP4>

## Upcoming Workshops and Conferences

Corporate Citizenship and Sustainability  
New York, NY  
June 17-18, 2010  
<http://www.conference-board.org/conferences/conference.cfm?id=2063&view=speakers&event=2058>  
\*To qualify for a 50% discount on the registration fee, use the promotional code: DA1.

The Steady State Economy Conference: Working Towards an Alternative to Economic Growth  
Leeds Metropolitan University  
Leeds, UK  
June 19, 2010  
Sponsored by Economic Justice for All and The Center for the Advancement of the Steady State Economy  
<http://steadystate.org/leeds2010>

Gordon Research Conference  
Industrial Ecology: From Analysis to Design  
Colby-Sawyer College  
New London, NH  
July 11-16, 2010  
<http://grc.org/programs.aspx/?year=2010&program=industeco>  
\*plus the Gordon-Kenan Research Seminar, for post-docs and graduate students, July 10-11, 2010

Consumer Culture: Between Aesthetics, Social Distinction and Ecological Activism  
Art Centre of Palacký University  
Olomouc, Czech Republic  
October 7-9, 2010

<http://oltk.upol.cz/consumerculture/>

International Symposium on Sustainability Science: The Emerging Paradigm and the Urban Environment

Montclair State University

October 25-27, 2010

<http://csam.montclair.edu/sustainabilitystudies/conferences/>

MILEN International Conference 2010

Visions and Strategies to Address Sustainable Energy and Climate Change

University of Oslo

November 25-26, 2010

<http://www.milen.uio.no>

## **Call for Papers: International Journal of Consumer Studies**

The *International Journal of Consumer Studies* is soliciting papers for a special issue on the theme of "Household Technology and Sustainability" that is due to appear in March 2011. Expressions of interest and an outline of the proposed paper should be submitted by June 30, 2010. Complete papers are due by September 15, 2010. The guest editors of this special issue are Rebecca Lovingood, Rainer Stamminger and Christiane Pakula. Questions should be directed to [cpakula@uni-bonn.de](mailto:cpakula@uni-bonn.de)

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