

INTRODUCTION

Young people have important environmental concerns and responsibilities. Because of their longer life expectancy, they will have to live for quite some time with the consequences of a deteriorating environment left to them by their parents. Fortunately, youth have a special talent for invention and the development of new forms of action and activism and can generate more effective responses to environmental issues. Addressing the concerns of future generations is difficult in the context of present policy-making; ultimately, however, it is enough to expand time horizons not necessarily many years into the future, but simply beyond the generally short-term focus of current decision-making.

Through their participation in the World Summit on Sustainable Development, young people recently demonstrated that they could inject social values and notions of equity into debate. Young people understand perhaps better than most that humankind is not living in a zero-sum, environment-versus-economy world. One way to equip young people to deal with environmental concerns is through more effective environmental education. Much of the information young people receive about environmental issues comes from the media. Therefore, environmental educators and the media should make greater and more concerted efforts to promote a larger process of social learning for sustainable development.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of collecting all important data and information required to be processed for establishment of this report content, secondary data collection is chosen to gather all available information regarding environmental issues surrounding around the world. Different sources from different web sites used to extract and gather all factual information regarding environmental issues globally. A similar method used to gather all responses from the various stake holders towards the issues. The sources are carefully chosen in order to ensure quality of the content, relevance, and ease of comprehension. Reason of choosing secondary data collection is based on a fact that varieties of sources are largely available in electronic network.

LITERATURE AND FACTUAL REVIEW

IMPORTANT GLOBAL FACTS

- ✚ In 1995 over 200 of the world landfills were full.
- ✚ Each person throws away approximately 4 pounds of garbage per day.
- ✚ Approximately 5 million tons of oil produced in the world each year ends up in the ocean.
- ✚ The energy we save when we recycle one glass bottle is enough to light a traditional light bulb for four hours
- ✚ 14 billion pounds of trash is dumped into the ocean every year
- ✚ 9. 84% of all household waste can be recycled
- ✚ More than 1/3 of all energy is used by people at home
- ✚ Most families throw away about 88 pounds of plastic every year
- ✚ Every day in the United States, we produce enough trash to equal the weight of the Empire State Building
- ✚ The Great Pacific Garbage Patch is a swirling vortex of waste and debris in the Pacific Ocean. This area is twice the size of the continental US and is believed to hold almost 100 million tons of garbage.
- ✚ The human population has grown more in the last 50 years than it did in the previous 4 million years
- ✚ One in four mammals is at risk of extinction – 78% of marine mammals are threatened by accidental deaths such as getting caught in fishing nets intended for other species.
- ✚ At least 50 million acres of rainforest are lost every year, totalling an area the size of England, Wales and Scotland combined.
- ✚ Average temperatures will increase by as much as 12 degrees Fahrenheit by the end of the 21st century if greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise at the current pace.
- ✚ If the entire world lived like the average American, we'd need 5 planets to provide enough resources.
- ✚ A world record was set in 1990 when a solar powered aircraft flew 4060km across the USA, using no fuel.
- ✚ In one hour more sunlight falls on the earth than what is used by the entire population in one year.

RESPONSES FROM VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES

Most developing countries have long since established laws and formal governmental structures to address their serious environmental problems, but few have been successful in alleviating those problems. The development banks, which control resources desperately needed by the developing countries, are promoting the use of economic incentives and other market-based strategies as the key to more effective environmental protection. However, the donors have rarely asked whether the approaches they are urging, which have recently had some success in Europe and the United States, can be implemented effectively in developing countries with limited resources and little experience with market-based policies of any kind.

We worry that these highly sophisticated instruments have been pushed too hard and too fast, and that those who promote them say little about the context and conditions in which they thrive. The targets of this advice should be better informed about everything they would need to do to make market-based instruments work. Otherwise, the cause of environmental protection itself may be dealt a blow when ill-conceived policies divert a country's energies without producing the desired result. Developing-world regulators, already marginalized in their own countries, will have little to show for their efforts in terms of a cleaner environment.

Many countries that have been the target of development assistance have one or more versions of market-based instruments on their books, and most of the communist bloc countries, as noted earlier, used pollution charges as a primary tool of environmental protection. We have not seen any convincing evidence that these policies have changed behaviour or achieved their environmental goals.

A number of country- or region-specific reports claim to portray "ground truth," but they rarely grapple seriously with the institutional issues surrounding the introduction of market-based instruments or discuss results and impediments. At best, there are brief allusions to "difficult" enforcement problems, as in many of the Environment Discussion Papers that

came out of Harvard Institute for International Development's Agency for International Development-funded Newly Independent States Environmental Economics and Policy Project.

In sum, it is almost impossible to evaluate the actual experience of developing countries with market-based environmental policy instruments. These gaps in understanding are, unfortunately, not unusual. There are, similarly, only limited reports on the success or failure of other environmental development efforts, such as the promotion of National Environmental Action Plans, basic environmental law drafting, and various efforts to introduce technology.

There is no universally right choice of instrument for managing a nation's environment. All policy instruments require monitoring capability, enforcement resolve, and control of corruption. Unfortunately, no single instrument provides a magic way around these concerns. More fundamentally, even the cheapest way of meeting some targets may be too big a commitment for some countries. Reaching environmental targets requires a politically tough collective decision to impose costs on the influential few for the benefit of the faceless many and to stick with the decision for a sustained period. It is therefore not surprising to see uneven implementation and slippage from time to time.

GOVERNMENTS RESPONSES

- ✚ SET LEGALLY BINDING, ANNUAL CO₂ REDUCTION TARGETS - Current atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide and methane are higher now than at any time in the past 650,000 years, while sea levels may be rising twice as fast as in previous centuries. New laws committing governments to reducing CO₂ every year by a fixed amount are essential.
- ✚ COMMIT TO PUBLIC INFORMATION CAMPAIGNS - Governments fear discussing the impact of climate change for fear of upsetting the economy. But campaigns of the kind used in the UK to tackle health issues like smoking are needed to shock the public out of a naivety that ranks climate change as less important than terrorism, Third World debt and Aids.
- ✚ TACKLE THE GAS GUZZLERS - Raise vehicle excise duty on fuel-heavy cars; make it more than £1,000 in the UK with further planned rises. Insist on a health warning on the side, similar to packets of cigarettes: "This Vehicle Damages The Environment, Your Health And Your Future."
- ✚ OBLIGE OIL COMPANIES TO BLEND BIOFUELS INTO FORECOURT PETROL AND DIESEL - Biofuels, which are made from crops do not add to the emissions of CO₂. They are "carbon neutral" because the CO₂ they produce when burnt was absorbed from the atmosphere by the crops used to make them. Governments of industrialised nations should draw up biofuel obligations requiring oil companies to blend a fixed proportion of biofuels with all the fuel that they sell in garages.
- ✚ SLASH THE GROWTH OF CHEAP FLIGHTS - Raise air passenger duty to end flights cheap on the pocket and pricey to the stratosphere (CO₂ emissions from aircraft are rising faster than any other source). End the loopholes which allow most airlines to escape paying fuel duty.
- ✚ SIGN UP DEVELOPING NATIONS TO ENVIRONMENTAL TARGETS - Rapidly expanding industrial economies such as China and India must be bound to meeting environmental targets, in the same way that the Kyoto protocol legally binds 141 countries to cutting pollutant greenhouse gases.
- ✚ CONVINCING THE US TO TAKE CLIMATE CHANGE SERIOUSLY - The world leaders concerned about global warming need to bend the ear of America's leader - who in turn

needs to placate the oil lobby. Without the United States, the fight against climate change lacks conviction or global reach.

- ✚ **DECENTRALISE ENERGY SUPPLY SYSTEMS** - Legislate that new buildings in industrial nations should be CO₂-free, with a power station in the basement. Features should include solar panel roofs, and mini-wind turbines to soap up wasted heat. Governments should have targets, audited by an independent body with sanctioning powers.
- ✚ **BOOST NEGLECTED RENEWABLE ENERGIES; SOLAR, WAVE AND TIDAL POWER** - Properly fund and support renewable energies other than wind. These have vast potential to supply CO₂-free electricity but are underdeveloped. Oblige electricity supply companies to provide an increasing amount of their power from renewable sources.
- ✚ **OFF-SHORE WIND** - Renew the impetus behind off-shore wind farms through government development subsidies. Few coastal nations are making any progress. The UK made a good start but stalled after technical and financial difficulties.

PRIVATE SECTOR RESPONSES

Despite the focus on the private sector, good governance is again found to be central. City governments are increasingly turning to the private sector to help provide water, sewerage and waste management, and the hope is that the resulting public-private partnerships can help improve access to environmental services even among low-income residents. Private-public partnerships in environmental service provision are also being promoted internationally, often by donors whose mandate is to reduce poverty. They are frequently portrayed as a means of combining the strengths of both public and private sectors, and thereby providing services both equitably and efficiently. In practice, the outcome clearly depends upon the qualities of both the partners and the partnership.

Private sector involvement has been increasing rapidly, even in low-income countries. Several reasons are given:

- To restructure a failing public utility.
- To attract capital investment.
- To improve technical and managerial efficiency.

However, there is recognition that unregulated private companies are prone to:

- Engage in monopolistic behaviour
- Ignore public benefits consumers are unwilling to pay for
- Ignore quality deficiencies consumers cannot perceive
- Ignore the environmental costs of their own activities that they do not have to pay for

While providing better living environments for the poor has not been one of the principal objectives of most public-private partnerships, there is much potential to improve service delivery. However, this requires special measures, and there may be difficulties with:

- Insecure tenure
- Physical obstacles
- Lack of household funds for down-payments
- Low levels of trust and poor communication

- Conflicts between formal and informal systems
- Collective service use and special needs

To-date, public-private partnerships only account for a small share of environmental service provision. Ultimately, success with partnerships depends not just on the willingness of private companies, but the capacity of local governments and regulatory bodies to negotiate effectively, encourage competition, engage with other stakeholders, and form partnerships that serve the public interest.

NGO RESPONSES

The emergence of NGOs represents an organised response by civil society especially in those areas in which the state has either failed to reach or done so inadequately. The importance of public awareness and NGOs involvement in environmental protection is acknowledged worldwide. NGOs have been taking a number of steps to promote discussion and debate about environmental issues, outside the broad spheres of popular media and the educational system. Advocacy and awareness is especially crucial in promoting concepts such as sustainable development, natural resource conservation and the restoration of ecosystems. NGOs can sensitize policy makers about the local needs and priorities.

They can often intimate the policy makers about the interests of both the poor and the ecosystem as a whole. In providing training facilities, both at community and government levels, NGOs can play a significant role. They can also contribute significantly by undertaking research and publication on environment and development related issues. It is necessary to support and encourage genuine, small, local level NGOs in different parts of the country which can provide much needed institutional support specific to the local needs. NGOs can make the following Contributions:

- Conducting education and citizen awareness programmes in the field of environment
- Fact – finding and analysis
- Filing public interest litigations
- Innovation and experimenting in areas which are difficult for government agencies to make changes in
- Providing expertise and policy analysis
- Providing factual and reliable information with a network of professional expert staff
- Remaining independent while passing relevant information to the public and governmental bodies
- Solidarity and support to environmental defenders
- Working in collaboration with the government for capacity building and promotion of community participation in environmental awareness and protection and
- Working out at the grassroots level and reaching far – flung areas with or without the government invitation.

MEDIA RESPONSES

Much of the environmentally relevant information young people receive comes not from formal education but from the media. In principle, environmental education and the media could join in a larger process of social learning, though the fact that the media are generally driven by concerns that are not educative can get in the way of such a synthesis. The media can be a powerful tool for education. Good-quality environmental journalism is sometimes found in newspapers and magazines, especially those that have an environmental correspondent. Over time, this field has become increasingly professionalized. Planeta's Latin American journalism handbook has a substantial section on environmental journalism, pointing to a sophistication in Latin American coverage of environmental issues that often surpasses that in North America. The Society of Environmental Journalists, established in 1990 and based in the United States, has over 1,000 members and declares its mission to be that of "improving the quality, accuracy, and visibility of environmental reporting".

The Society sponsors conferences and a news service and conducts a mentoring programme for younger journalists. For the electronic media, there is the Environmental Journalism Centre sponsored by the Radio-Television News Directors Association and Foundation. Such professionalism may come at a cost, as it tends to dampen the radical fire that Michael Frome believes should be the essence of green journalism. Frome contends that environmental journalism is about teaching, not just reporting, and that it has to involve much more than relaying corporate or environmental group press releases, none of which can be taken at face value.

YOUTH RESPONSES

Youth have both special concerns and special responsibilities in relation to the environment. A number of environmental risks and hazards disproportionately affect young people, who have to live for an extended period with the deteriorating environment bequeathed to them by earlier generations. Young people will be compelled to engage in new forms of action and activism that will generate effective responses to ecological challenges. Young people constitute a large part of the world's population. Many, especially young children, are particularly vulnerable to environmental risks associated with, for example, access to clean and safe drinking water. In addition, young people will have to live longer with the consequences of current environmental decisions than will their elders.

Future generations will also be affected by these decisions and the extent to which they have addressed concerns such as the depletion of resources, the loss of biodiversity, and long-lived radioactive wastes. Representing the concerns of future generations is difficult in the context of policy-making in the present. However, the objective is not to expand time horizons many years into the future; moving beyond the current very-short-term focus of much decision-making would be sufficient. In markets, the focus is often on short-term profits; discount rates in capital markets mean that the longer into the future an effect occurs, the more it will be down weighted. Politicians in liberal democratic political systems rarely look much further than the next election. Authoritarian leaders (even if they do have concerns beyond their own enrichment and aggrandizement) often have even shorter time horizons, because they must worry continuously about being overthrown. In politics, youth can help by making their influence felt as a constituency for the long term, calling political leaders to account for the long-range environmental consequences of their decisions.

CONCLUSION

Environmental issues present some of the most profound and complex challenges requiring attention today and in the coming decades. One foundation-building step in enhancing local, regional, national and global capacities to respond to those challenges is increasing environmental awareness. Here the role of youth is central, for it is in the rising generations that heightened awareness can most easily be achieved. As this chapter indicates, there is much work to be done in terms of reforming and extending both formal and informal environmental education and inducing the media to play a more effective role in facilitating social learning about the environment. Political activism on environmental issues is also crucial; again, youth are well-placed to develop new forms of activism and bring new energies and perspectives to environmental affairs.

Recommendation

Responses of World Assembly of Youth

In the third Millennium Plan of Action “The Catalyst for Change and Improvement” WAY has set three goals to ensure environmental sustainability:

- ✚ Create public awareness on the importance of the sustainable development and its effect on the young people.
- ✚ Reduce by 2% the effect of environmental degradation globally by 2014.
- ✚ Maintain environmental integrity among members by increasing responsibility towards achieving sustainable access to safe drinking water.

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