



MSLS Class of 2008 Graduates in Style

-By Tim Nichols

On June 10 2008, the fourth graduating class of the Master's in Strategic Leadership towards Sustainability celebrated the successful completion of their studies.

During the day, the Blekinge Tekniska Högskola recognized the graduates from the School of Engineering in a formal commencement ceremony held at Sparrehallen, on Trossö.

Later that evening, the class, with family and friends in tow, let their funnel flag fly, holding another, more personal commencement ceremony followed by combination of dinner and entertainment. In an atmosphere of nostalgia, relief, excitement, joy and sadness, the MSLS '08 class concluded their Karlskrona days.



MSLS graduation ceremony: Awaiting their walk on stage

Ryan Richardson, the husband of graduate Erin Romanchuk, played master of ceremonies for the commencement. Pong Leung, Programme Manager, offered an introduction with a congratulatory speech which praised the class and the programme team for a great year. Pong will be turning over the programme director responsibilities to Sophie

(Continued on page 6)

Inside this issue:

Message from the Programme Team	2
Sustainability fun in local highschool	4
Karlskrona Dialogues	7
BTH—TNS networking event	8
Karlskrona Blossoms event a huge success	9
Alumni Reunion planning underway	12

Sophie Hallstedt successfully defends her PhD

-By Karl-Henrik Robèrt

World Environment Day was a fitting date for PhD student Sophie Hallstedt to successfully defend her thesis, thus becoming *Dr. Hallstedt*. Sophie wrote her thesis on how to inform a traditional product-service cycle using the Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development. She has been supervised by Göran Broman and Karl-Henrik Robèrt, who were both on hand to watch her excellent presentation and defence in Karlskrona, Sweden. A unanimous reference team of professors from different universities in Sweden ranked Sophie's thesis very high, and declared it to be, "the first thesis on product development from a full sustainability perspective ever produced in Sweden, probably in the world, (...) unusually well structured and pedagogical, and (...) impressive with such a high number of peer-reviewed articles accepted in highly credible journals." Sophie celebrated this event with family, friends, colleagues and students of the MSLS class. Congratulations, Sophie!



Message from the Programme Team



Greetings to everyone from beautiful, sunny Karlskrona, where we have just celebrated ‘midsommar’ by eating as much herring, sour cream and boiled baby potatoes as possible, dancing around a decorated pole, and feasting on fresh strawberries.

Most of the students have now departed, leaving us with a strange mixture of both sadness and excitement – sadness that they are no longer around to share the laughs, but also excitement as we watch them (and they all watch each other) embark on a new journey. The year has been truly an amazing one, and we wish each and every member of the Class of 2008 the absolute best. We hope to see many of you again, whether that be in Karlskrona, Australia, or online.

During the past few months, the students have been working hard to complete their thesis projects, presenting them in late May. Despite this all-encompassing task, many of them were still out and about in the community, stirring it up by organizing workshops, discussion forums, art fairs, and other fun. Please take a read through this latest edition of the Trunk & Branches to see some of what this group has been up to.

Within the staff of the MSLS Programme Team, our time now comes to bid farewell to the highly talented Pong Leung, who has served as Programme Manager for the past two years. Pong, we thank you for all that you have given us and wish you the best of luck in your new endeavors! We look forward to keeping in close contact with you.

Pong’s duties will be taken over by both Sophie Hallstedt (Programme Director) and Tamara Connell (Programme Coordinator). We have recently welcomed MSLS 2008 grad Karen Miller to the team to serve as Programme Assistant for the coming year. After many years with the Programme, Richard Blume will move offices as he transitions his work to The Natural Step International in Stockholm.

Continuing on with us for the fall term will be Fiona Wright, who will also be coordinating some related sustainability courses at BTH. Both Merlina Missimer and Tony Thompson continue their research and PhD studies while supporting the programme by leading courses in Period 2. Henrik Ny, Göran Broman, and Karl-Henrik Robèrt will continue to support and guide us in their characteristic ways. PhD students Pia Lindahl and Cecilia Bratt will provide some additional lecture support for the coming year. The Mechanical Engineering (AMT) department also recently hired two additional MSLS grads, César Levy and Heleen Podsedkowska, working on research and outreach projects, respectively. With such a great crew in place for next year, we look forward to welcoming the new class with wide open arms! (but not before our vacations...)

So, on that note, we will pass your attention to the enclosed articles in this summer edition of the Trunk & Branches while we duck out for some much needed rest. We hope that you enjoy it, and that you can consider supporting us in any way possible. For more information on how to make a financial contribution to our programme, please see www.stratleade.org or drop us a line at sustainabilitymasters@bth.se.

Until next time, enjoy your summer (or winter if you are in the south)!

The MSLS Programme Team

Human Needs and Social Entrepreneurship

-By Andrew Outhwaite

Satisfying needs within planetary constraints

Our grandparents used to bump into each other and say hello while wandering through the village square and chat over a tea, while many of us now 'bump' into each other online and chat via instant messaging. However the fundamental needs that drive the desire to connect and be part of a community remain the same: like the needs for belonging, and participation. Through time and across cultures, these same underlying motivation have driven our actions. What has varied is how we satisfy them.

Manfred Max-Neef's model (below) describes these specific ten motivators as fundamental human needs. Needs are relevant to sustainability, because many of our current modes of satisfying those needs are dependent on large-scale consumption of material goods made from non-renewable resources. As an example, one way to satisfy



the need for idleness (relaxation) may be to buy a cheap flight from London to a Greek Island, lie on the beach, and drink expensive champagne after a frantic week at work. A substitute may be to cycle to a nearby village with your friends, paddle in the river for the day, and sample some locally-brewed cider.

For social entrepreneurs

I think this model is powerful, and that there would be many personal, organisational and societal benefits from its wider application. It seems especially relevant to the growing numbers of social businesses and social entrepreneurs. For these people, providing more sustainable and satisfying means for individuals and communities to meet their most fundamental needs is already the primary aim of their work. My thought has been that if this model and its practical implications were clear, it might help them build even better businesses.

SHINE

An opportunity to test how clear and practical needs could become in the form of SHINE. SHINE was the inaugural 'unconference' for social entrepreneurs in London. Conversations with collaborators from arts, business and civil society organisations (CSOs) resulted in creation of the following features within an 'installation':

Introductory posters and presentations to frame needs as they arrived in the space.

Two rooms filled with the following elements on walls, floors and hanging from the roof:

- Images (printed and projected) of different 'satisfiers' of needs e.g. guns, planes.
- First-person narratives to complement the images.
- Booklets for participants to note thoughts on whether the images really satisfied needs.
- A library of needs for writing down what participants needed and what they could offer.

Three workshops with:

- IPPR on trends in the need for identity and 'belonging',
- WWF on transforming business towards more sustainable consumption, and
- Biz Fizz/NEF on their appropriate and successful way to support entrepreneurs.

You can see more images and download a report from the event here: <http://wearearising.org/2008/05/21/sustainability-entrepreneurship-and-art-at-shine/>

(Continued on page 8)

Wämöskola Sustainability Workshop

-By Alaya Boisvert

An exciting new initiative started this year with Wämöskola highschool and MSLS. The partnership ensued after the first official Green Drinks was held on December 12th in Karlskrona. There, a local high school teacher, Ann-Kristin Wiberg, expressed interest in having MSLS students talk with her pupils about current sustainability issues in Sweden and around the world.

Five MSLS students – Alaya Boisvert, Liane Fredericks, Tim Nash, Heleen Podsedkowska and Karen Stroebel – took up the challenge and co-created a two-day curriculum that incorporated multi-media presentations and interactive activities to illuminate both the ecological and social issues facing society today. Delivered in April 2008, the overall learning objectives of the workshop were to ensure the participants would:

Continued on next page...

We're here for a good time, not a long time...

-By Fiona Wright

Moving on is always bittersweet. There is so much excitement to share as we welcome another group of firesouls to the buzzing activity of the alumni network: working to overcome one of the greatest challenge yet known to the world – sustainable development. Yet there is also a natural sadness that we've all experienced at the reality of impermanence as we part from our 'bubble' of safety and support here in Karlskrona. We take courage knowing that rather than bursting to nothingness, the bubble that was full of seeds of hope is now being carried by the winds of change, seeking fertile soils all over the world to replant and grow, spreading colour, caring and inspiration. This is what real change is. Regrowing our stories, understandings and abilities to mobilize our communities in a common direction. True leaders cannot be absent from the action; we cannot influence the world without leaving the nest. We all have drive, competence and a solid toolbox; a wining combination for an effective change agent. As Jonathon Porritt said at the Sustainability Leadership Challenge in Stockholm, working strategically for sustainability, with a systems-perspective of science, does not invalidate the need for anger and passion. We are all still connected to each other with a common language, understanding, passion. We all have a responsibility to support each other, and in turn receive support. The network of MSLS Alumni is growing ever stronger; we are now 187 people, with links on every habitable continent. This is an incredible network! We have a vision, a common purpose, a shared language, and a common experience. It is a good place to turn to when you need reminding that you are not crazy, and you are not alone. Together we are stronger. As Rudyard Kipling so eloquently stated years ago, "the strength of the wolf is the pack, and the strength of the pack is the wolf".



Wämöskola Sustainability Workshop (continued)

(Continued from previous page)

- Have an understanding of systems thinking, specifically of natural systems and the anthropogenic impacts on these flows;
- Have an understanding of how their school currently contributes to unsustainability and the actions they could support in moving the school toward sustainability;
- See the value of intercultural exchanges;
- Recognize how learning about sustainability can be fun.



Creative Problem Solving – participants untie themselves from a human knot.

At an early start of 08:00, the room was filled with 20 curious 16-year olds, surprised by the odd shaped semi-circle seating, patiently awaiting further instructions. The MSLS facilitators sat amongst the students and took a deep breath before leaping into the workshop. While there were initial insecurities on both sides about the language barriers, these concerns were quickly overcome and a vibrant discussion flourished. Icebreakers, visioning exercises, theatrical skits and teambuilding games were all elements that contributed to a lively, humorous and meaningful experience.

The participatory design of the workshop was well received by both students and staff as a welcome change from the traditional style of teaching. One student commented, “If you guys were teachers and you could grade your teachers, I would certainly give you an A+.” Ann-Kristin, an endless source of support throughout the workshop, also encouraged the diverse pedagogical approach saying, “During the discussions you made them believe in themselves and together they make great progress.”



Visioning Boards – students share their visions of the future for their high school.

At the end of the session, the participating students were invited to sign a commitment statement to take what they had learned about sustainable development out into the world. Before the room emptied, the facilitators were delighted to discover there were 25 signatures beneath the following declaration... We commit to being positive agents of change by implementing sustainable actions in our personal lives and in our communities.

Reflecting upon the experience, the organizers agreed that it was energizing to work with young people and creatively share some of the knowledge gained through their studies at BTH. Decidedly a great opportunity to connect with the community, everyone involved felt this type of youth engagement should be built upon in future years.

MSLS 2008 Graduation (continued...)

Hallstedt at the end of this year as he concludes two years as head of the programme.

The floor was then handed to Ryan. He called each magister to the front where they were handed a flower by Pong while Ryan provided a brief personal description comprised of accolades and/or heckles written by a variety of class members.

Additional highlights of the ceremony included Freek Van der Pluijm, Karen Miller, and Augusto Cuginotti giving an *a capella* version of their thesis theme song, and Lu Lei and Fiona Wright demonstrating the Cha Cha.

The party was then herded into the restaurant for a scrumptious meal peppered with more speeches and entertainment. Göran Broman, head of research for the mechanical engineering department, gave a poignant and conclusive speech which offered food for thought regarding the new position of the class in the world. Alaya Boisvert, class valedictorian, toasted the class, the programme staff, and all in the room, thanking and praising them for their contributions. Meanwhile, Frank Standard and Tall Neil, two of the class alibis, conducted a mock award ceremony which both congratulated and lightly jeered the individual thesis groups for their work.

The evening concluded with a pleasant musical performance from Sarah Cheevers and Rob Mallette, followed by a group comprised of Karen Miller, Julia Ribiero, Maura Dilley, Shawn Westcott, and Freek Van der Pluijm; then a final song by Marco Valente wrapped up the night.

The ceremony was the paragon of closure, as the class said goodbye with the humor, camaraderie, and spirit which had sustained them throughout the year. Their watering eyes on the future, MSLS '08 will be bringing the world the result of their time together as they venture out of the Karlskrona bubble to do their part for sustainability.



Above: MC Ryan Richardson



Above: Theo, Tim, Tim, and Freek share a laugh.



Above: Geoff and Molly during the MSLS graduation dinner



Above: Rob and Sarah perform some songs for the crowd at the MSLS graduation.



Left: Heleen and Anna prepare a song/speech for the outgoing TEK students.

The Karlskrona Dialogues continue in 2008

-By Fiona Wright

As part of a pre-summer sustainability-related series of events that included World Environment Day, Karlskrona Blossoms, and Green Drinks, the MSLS programme hosted 2 successful Karlskrona Dialogues. We stepped slightly out on a limb and piloted 2 new formats for the event. On May 28th, we formed a panel of international speakers to explore the subject of 'Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Sustainable Development' with an introductory presentation by Dr. Göran Broman, and a moderated Q&A session with Dr. Markus Fiedler. The panelists included 2 guests from India - Dr. Timothy Gonsalves (IIT-Madras) and Vanita Kommineni (Business Incubator). Matilda Gustafsson (Sustainable Development Manager at Ericsson) joined us via teleconference, thus saving some carbon emissions and demonstrating one of the big areas that ICT can help with. Rounding out the panel was Per-Ola Carlsson from a local SME, Wireless Internet Provider. This event was held in conjunction with Green Drinks (www.greendrinks.org) and was attended by about 80 people. It was the kick-off to further cooperation between departments at BTH (Mechanical Engineering (AMT) and Telecommunications (ATS)) which supports the aim of BTH to explore its three pillars of IT, Innovation, and Sustainable Development in an integral way.

On June 2nd, we opened up a World Café to the Karlskrona community to come and engage in a dialogue about climate change. Tony Thompson, MSLS 2007 graduate and current PhD student at BTH, shared some information he learned from Al Gore during 'The Climate Project' training. This visually and acoustically stunning location of the German Church in Stortorget was a refreshing environment to host a presentation about the science behind climate change and how it affects our lives here in Sweden. It was followed by a dialogue café of rotating small group discussions over fika (coffee and snacks). This format provided participants both with the opportunity to learn more from a presenter versed in the field, and from peers in the community, simultaneously connecting with other like-minded folks. This evening was a great success and we are looking forward to organizing it again in the future. Thanks to Augusto Cuginotti and Lu Lei (from the MSLS 2008 class) for all their hard work organizing, as well as to BTH and Landstinget Blekinge for their support! For more information, see <http://www.bth.se/dialog>.

THE KARLSKRONA DIALOGUES

BUSINESS, SOCIETY AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE 21ST CENTURY

EN OFFENTLIG FÖRELÄSNINGSERIE OM HÅLLBARHET A PUBLIC LECTURE SERIES ABOUT SUSTAINABILITY

2008 DIALOGUE SERIES


HOW DOES 'ICT' RELATE TO 'SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT'?

Applying Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in a sustainable way can enhance creativity and innovation to solve our problems, build communities, give more people access to goods and services and use precious resources much more efficiently. What are some of the current opportunities and challenges in this field from a sustainability perspective?

HOSTED BY
Dr. Göran Broman, Head of Research, Dept of Mechanical Engineering at BTH
Dr. Markus Fiedler, Associate Professor in the Dept. of Telecommunication Systems (ATS) at BTH

PANELISTS
Per-Ola Carlsson, founder and CEO of the SME Wireless Independent Provider (WIP)
Dr. Timothy A. Gonsalves, Professor & Head, Dept of Computer Science and Engineering, IIT Madras, India
Vineta Kommineni, Project Manager, Rural Technology Business Incubator (RTBI), IIT Madras, India
Matilda Gustafsson, Ericsson, Stockholm, Sweden

TIME & VENUE
 Onsdagen den 28 maj 2008
 19:00 - 20:30
 Wämo Center, Bättringsvägen, Karlskrona.



The Karlskrona Dialogues, det offentliga, utåtriktade programmet som magisterprogrammet strategiskt ledarskap för hållbar utveckling på Blekinge Tekniska Högskola är glad att få presentera:

Att tillämpa IT på ett hållbart sätt kan höja kreativiteten och innovationen för att lösa problem, bygga samhällen, ge fler människor tillgång till varor och tjänster och använda dyrbara resurser mycket mer effektivt.

Vad är några nuvarande möjligheter och utmaningar inom detta område utifrån ett hållbarhetsperspektiv?

ANDRA FÖRELÄSNINGAR I DENNA SERIE



FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBPAGE OR CALL 0455-385000

PROCEED SPONSORED BY: LANDSTINGET BLEKINGE, KARLSKRONA ROMMUN, LÄNSSTYRELSEN BLEKINGE LÄN, BLEKINGE

FÖR MER INFORMATION BESÖK VÅR HEMSIDA ELLER RING 0455-385000
www.bth.se/dialog

THE KARLSKRONA DIALOGUES

BUSINESS, SOCIETY AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE 21ST CENTURY

EN OFFENTLIG FÖRELÄSNINGSERIE OM HÅLLBARHET A PUBLIC LECTURE & DISCUSSION SERIES ABOUT SUSTAINABILITY


MONDAY JUNE 2ND, 2008

VÄRLDEN FIKA GLOBAL UPPVÄRMNING

How can global warming and climate change impact my life?
 In which ways we contribute to global warming, positively and negatively?
 How is Karlskrona and Sweden in relationship to the world on this issue?

Come to hear a presentation based on the teachings of Nobel-prize laureate Al Gore and join a conversation café in Swedish with the Karlskrona community about this topic.


Världen Fika is a conversation to discover new insights into the questions or issues that are most important in their life, work, or community. It evokes and makes visible the collective intelligence of a group, thus increasing people's capacity for effective action in pursuit of common aims. Come and join us!



The Karlskrona Dialogues will welcome Tony Thompson, PhD student at BTH bringing lessons from Al Gore. We will then engage in a conversation on how this affects our day-to-day lives. Visit the café conversations on other places at <http://conversationsthatmatter.typepad.com/climatechange/>

TIME & VENUE
 Monday, June 2nd
 Café begins 19:00.
 Tyska Kyrkan, Södra Kungsgatan, Karlskrona.

ANDRA FÖRELÄSNINGAR I DENNA SERIE



FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBPAGE OR CALL 0455-385000

PROCEED SPONSORED BY: LANDSTINGET BLEKINGE, KARLSKRONA ROMMUN, LÄNSSTYRELSEN BLEKINGE LÄN, BLEKINGE

FÖR MER INFORMATION BESÖK VÅR HEMSIDA ELLER RING 0455-385000
www.bth.se/dialog

BTH—TNS Networking Weekend in Stockholm

-By Shawn Westcott

Nearly 20 of us from the programme traveled to Stockholm in May to take part in activities related to The Natural Step's Annual General Meeting. Having just finished the final draft of our theses, we were exhausted from many late nights, which made us more than ready to get out of Karlskrona. It was great timing, too, as it proved to be the nicest weekend of the year in Stockholm!

On Friday, we attended the TNS Leaders dinner to mix and mingle with members of the global TNS community. This allowed us to practice our "30 second pitch" and meet some really fantastic people, as well as MSLS alumni from all four years of the programme.

On Saturday, following the AGM, MSLS hosted a networking event and thesis presentation at TNS headquarters. We presented our work through brief



Networking event in Stockholm, with TNS practitioners, MSLS current students and alumni, and other friends/partners.

presentations, as well as with more detailed posters. The feedback was tremendous, and the overall support of the TNS community was greatly appreciated after a long semester of work.

Human Needs and Social Entrepreneurship (continued)...

(Continued from page 3)

The Impact

The conference organisers and collaborators were very inspired by the concept, and expressed interest in doing more work around it. There were about 400 participants at SHINE but I doubt that all wandered through the whole installation. Those that I spoke to enjoyed the inquiring tone, interactive elements and visual representations, but I am not sure if any went and applied it.

Pulling all of this together required a lot of time and effort, but it was a good investment. Just talking to so many people about needs was an enlightening process, and the best kind of research. The artists involved were very inspired, and I learned a lot from working hands-on with people with very different skills and experience.

Next Steps in the Inquiry

There is a real lack of any other coherent alternative model for defining the needs that a business or project

meets. This means Max-Neef's needs theory has a good chance of becoming widespread if there was an organisation or community that really wanted to push it forward.

For me as a sustainability practitioner, that brings me to perhaps the most interesting inquiries: If I let go of any attachment to this model, and really listen to entrepreneurs, organisations, and advisors...what are the things that are really limiting their success and positive social impact? How important is this model, and a clear vision of the needs they are satisfying, relative to their need for start-up funding, or a new business partner? Then the question becomes: Is there a way to create a personally and financially sustainable means (e.g. workshops, consultancy, website) of giving entrepreneurs the support they need, to have a greater social and ecological impact, using this model of needs?

Any thoughts?

Contact me at: Andrew [at] wearearising [dot] org

Karlskrona Blossoms Event—A Huge Success!

-By Shawn Westcott

On one cold winter morning in February, my roommates and I were sitting around, lamenting that there wasn't anywhere to go to see live music or artwork. So I half joked, "Why don't we start our own arts and music event in town?" Well, after discussion and brainstorming, the hard work of eight classmates and members of the community, and support from the local municipality, "Karlskrona Blossoms" was born.

Held on June 6 -- also the new Swedish National Day -- this community arts and music event brought the talents of artists and musicians from around Sweden and the world to the newly renovated Karlskrona Konsthallen. Organized by a core team of MSLS students that included Alaya Boisvert, Kim Edwards, Liane Fredericks, Ben Kneppers, Julia Pereira, Heleen Podsedkowska, and honorary MSLS grad Ryan Richardson, this group brought together a vast array of BTH and community partners to co-create a wonderful event.

In the afternoon, the Konsthallen was host to an elaborate art gallery showing put together by Liane and Raisa Uotila, a local artist, with work from over one hundred artists, including a student art contest from a local school. Pieces included work from nearly every medium, and artists were able to sell their work at the event. In addition, a local men's choir entertained the crowd, and fika was provided for guests.

In the evening, the venue was transformed into a concert with a range of music, including two Swedish bands, as well as a band made up of MSLS students called the Swedish Funnel Project. DJ Tall Neil, another MSLS student, served as DJ in between the bands and moved the crowd in a late night party that won't soon be forgotten.

Overall, the event was a huge success, and the local municipality has already expressed a strong desire to make this an annual event, as it proved a great way to bring the BTH and local communities closer together.



Above three pictures: Karlskrona Blossoms event. For alumni, you may be interested to know that this venue is the former Kino nightclub. (What an amazing improvement!)

Graduation Poem

-By Kimberly Edwards

As you read this, as is the intention, picture yourself.
Mute the sounds of the evening for a minute.
Find the beat of your heart.
Find the heart of your daughter, spouse, friend, grad.

Listen.

She'll speak.

Words so clear you swear her heart makes sound,
With hope so grand, yet humble and bare.
Questions best unanswered have deepened and multiplied,
And lands never touched have been danced upon with
delicacy and honour.

You may feel pride, as I hope you do,
For our pride is so strong tears trickle.
Tonight we celebrate our journeys together – yours too.
Sixty-five experiences of challenge, triumph, collaboration,
growth.
Each accompanied by 64.
No fixed address, “home” a relative term and change a
basic human need.

United by a quest for something more,
An itch, a need, a curiosity, a passion.
Perspectives have transformed, understandings unravelled,
mental models questioned and hope anew.

In this paradigm our hearts beat and bleed.
Excited to heal, energized to push, forever beating.
Learning rests beyond slides and notes,
Burrowed in our minds, exposed in actions and truths.
Pulses have strengthened and screamed for attention...
patience and persistence have soothed.
Listen – you'll see.

We're ready to share,
Ready to diffuse,
...like nodes in networks...
we connect.
Webs from node to node,
S T R E T C H I N G
Across oceans, between mountains, and through time.

In a disconnected, wireless world,
We find connection.
Through pain and suffering,
We seek inspiration.
And in a world of routine,
We, ourselves, change.
This is no finish; there is no end,
Just another...
Hop, skip, or jump...
Into the unknown.



Reflections on working in Sustainable Development: “Never underestimate the power of a good question”

-By Fiona Wright

I like to think that when someone says ‘what are YOU doing to help the planet?’ I can respond that I am devoting my life to finding constructive ways to help grow the system that underpins the functioning of society into a sustainable one.

But there are many questions I don’t have answers to. Like ‘Is what I’m doing actually meaningful? Am I making a difference for the better? Where are the real leverage points? Am I actually addressing the big ones or just choosing the most comfortable work for my life? Are enough people engaged? Do the ends justify the means? Is working for sustainability a responsibility or a privilege?’

I was struck this year by a story of hope that was shared with me by one of the thesis groups. During a conversation with a woman living in Sweden as an immigrant & refugee, the subject of hope for the future came up. She said ‘I hope to pay taxes’. At first, this seems almost comical to those of us who cringe at kissing a third of our paycheck ‘goodbye’, taking for granted the common infrastructure and social services that support our daily quality of life. But I cannot stop thinking more deeply about what it means.

There are many MANY people in the world who have good hearts, big ideas, and the desire to work for change. But ideas without resources remain dreams. I attended a student rally a couple of years ago in Freetown, Sierra Leone. The invitation said: “The future will have no pity for people in a position of privilege to speak words of truth to the oppressors, who engage in acts of mute indifference and sometimes even of cold complicity” ~Franz Fanon. I won’t take up space outlining here the conditions in which people are living in the country ranked last (177/177) on the UN Human Development Index. The fact that they are in school is enough to be considered in a position of privilege to speak out. The opportunity to complete high school, let alone a bachelors degree, is available to only a few. To complete a masters degree, is an opportunity many would give up everything for. I feel a deep frustration when people spend a lot of energy worrying and complaining about the quality of the coffee or the exact shape of opportunities they are offered, because

it’s important to me to recognize and be thankful for what we have from a big-picture perspective. To accept what we need from what is offered, and then to go seek the rest of what we want with joy. I take this opportunity to recognize and be thankful for all of the opportunities I’ve had for education, health, meaningful work, love, travel, security and leisure, and the position I’m now in because of them. And I would like to recognize the responsibility that I think comes with having access to both opportunities and resources.

Let us be neither complacent in our lives, thinking that writing an article and changing our lightbulbs is enough, nor walk over each other trying to get ahead. We are all in this together, as a global community, and we must move forward together. To do this in a good way, there is care that must be taken as to *how* we go about working together. As Aboriginal activist Lilla Watson said, “if you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. If you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, let us work together”. At the recent Eco-municipalities Conference in Helsingborg, Sweden, Margaret Jobita of the Association of Local Government Authorities of Kenya (ALGAK) pointed out “some people are running ahead with the ideas and doing things. Maybe they will find when they get there that they needed all the people they left behind”. I think this is a good reminder that good, inclusive work takes time. Do we have that time? Should we be slowing down to hurry up? How can I resolve the burning desire to ‘get on with it’, with the necessity of having everyone (or almost everyone) on board?

I don’t know the answers, and I think it’s really important to keep asking questions – to remind myself how much I don’t know. It resonated with me when I heard Joe Laur of the Society for Organizational Learning say that ‘Inquiry’ was the most powerful tool for sustainable development, and when Göran Carstedt said that “at the heart of every learning is a question – to be able to stay with the question, and not just answer it right away – that is real learning”. I hold the vision that we all find it within ourselves to live up to the responsibility that comes with having opportunities and resources, to find good ways to work together (in all its deepest meanings), and to keep asking questions.

Strategic Leadership towards Sustainability



Campus Gräsvik
Blekinge Institute of Technology
371 79 Karlskrona, SWEDEN

Phone: +46 (0)455 385526
Fax: +46 (0)455 385507
sustainabilitymasters@bth.se
www.bth.se/msls



Calling all Alumni - We're heading Down Under

-By Richard Blume

As the number of sustainability leaders within the MSLS alumni network approaches 200 (and the MSLS programme enters its fifth year), the time has come to more formally consider and evolve the future potential of the network and the role its members can collectively play in the sustainability movement.

So we invite you to Australia to share your stories, experiences, wisdom and resources with other alumni members. We invite you to be inspired by the leaders, projects and technologies emerging from Down Under.

This inaugural MSLS Alumni reunion is set for February 2009, and promises to be a journey to remember. Over 9 days, the conference will move between Sydney, Canberra, the Snowy Mountains and Melbourne, visiting key sites and meeting with leaders and practitioners along the way.

In true 'MSLS-style' the event will be co-created by and for network members. Alumni will have the opportunity to: reconnect with old friends and make new ones; share their latest work; identify opportunities for collaboration; reflect on the MSLS programme's contribution to the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development; discuss trends and issues in the sustainability field; participate in some real innovation labs with local organisations; plan the future of the MSLS network; and contribute to a legacy project.

On top of that, the event provides the chance to learn about local challenges and solutions to sustainability while taking in some of Australia's unique landscape, biodiversity and climate.

A journey to Australia is a significant commitment for busy, carbon-conscious change agents, with obvious costs. Therefore, as we backcast from a sustainable future, this event aims to be a strategic investment that maximises value while minimising impact. And while there is no substitute to personal interaction, web platforms (e.g. skype, wikis, blogs, podcasts) will ensure that those who can't attend can still contribute.

Please visit the event portal at www.hallbarhet.org.

This event is being organised by members of the MSLS alumni network. BTH is pleased to support the event as evidence of our contribution to a growing network and field of knowledge related to strategic sustainable development.

