



# CHALLENGING CONSUMERISM: TOWARD LIVING WELL SUSTAINABLY

**3<sup>rd</sup> Sustainable Consumption Research  
and Action Initiative (SCORAI) Workshop**

University of British Columbia (March 8-10, 2012)  
Vancouver, Canada

<http://scorai2012.wordpress.com>



## WORKSHOP REPORT

25 April 2012

Author: Emmanuel Prinet, One Earth Initiative Society  
with contributions from SCORAI members

## Table of contents

<b>Summary of some key points .....</b>	<b>3</b>
Insights from the conference .....	3
Insights around SCORAI and those involved in the network .....	4
<b>Acknowledgements.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>About SCORAI .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1. Conference themes, goals and objectives .....</b>	<b>7</b>
1.1 Introduction .....	7
1.2 Context for the conference theme .....	7
1.3 General overview of the workshop.....	8
<b>2. Summary of Day 1 .....</b>	<b>11</b>
2.1 Keynote presentation.....	11
2.2 Discussion Session A: Societal Dimensions of Subjective Well-being and Mindfulness .....	11
2.3 Discussion Session B: The Role of Empirical Research in Studying Sustainable Consumption .....	12
2.4 Discussion Session C: Politics of Sacrifice and Sufficiency in a No-Growth Economy.....	13
2.5 Discussion Session D: Sustainable Consumption and Communities of Practice.....	13
2.6 Outcomes of Day 1.....	14
<b>3. Summary of Day 2 .....</b>	<b>15</b>
3.1 Points of tension that emerged in the discussions and questions that need further exploring .....	15
3.2 Keynote presentation.....	15
3.3 Interactive session on sustainable consumption .....	17
3.4 Afternoon open space.....	18
3.5 Burning issues and areas that need to be explored further .....	18
<b>4. Conference follow-up &amp; next steps.....</b>	<b>19</b>
4.1 Needs .....	19
4.2 Offers.....	20
4.3 Next steps for SCORAI .....	20
4.4 SCORAI updates since March 2012 .....	21
<b>ANNEX 1: Agenda .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>ANNEX 2: Participant list .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>ANNEX 3: Resources .....</b>	<b>29</b>

## Summary of some key points

### *Insights from the conference*

- Sustainable consumption is a *political* issue. Is it appropriate / useful as a term?
- *Sustainable consumption and production are one system* – they cannot be disconnected.
- *Norms, emotions and structures* (e.g., trust, social context, social practices and identities, policies, choice architecture, land use & transportation planning, macroeconomic and development paradigms, business models) are critically important in determining individual behaviour.
- Individuals are *citizens* not just consumers. We need to support building citizenship.
- Individual actions become deeper changes when an individual is *embedded within a group* that reinforces virtuous behaviour.
- *Collaboration and sharing* are key approaches to shifting production and consumption systems – these are encouraged by, for example, creating the culture and architecture for sharing.
- *Institutional* consumers are powerful in shifting demand and influencing supply chains, for example, through their procurement / purchasing policies.
- *Transparency along the supply chain* is important.
- We need to move towards *building a movement* beyond our silos to identify strategic leverage points for interventions, to scale up our efforts, and to achieve big-picture systemic change.
- A balance between *organic / emergent approaches* and *strategic approaches* is necessary.
- It is important to look for *unexpected allies* in building a movement / creating a coalition of the unexpected (marketers, multicultural).
- *There is no strong evidence* that initiatives / projects in alternative lifestyles and systems of provisioning significantly reduce material consumption and ecological footprints; however, some emergent evidence supports the idea that *such projects have other important effects* that would be relevant to a transition toward a post-consumer sustainable society.
- Some ways to increase the power of grassroots and other local initiatives is for activists to *break down the sectors and project silos and to engage in hybrid projects* that include multiple activist organizations, local businesses, policy makers, politicians and others.
- *Food* is a powerful entry point for engaging people on sustainable consumption & production.
- *A positive approach and vision* is necessary for motivating and spurring social change (regenerative vs. limits, ‘more of what matters’, mindfulness, satiability, value). This requires proper *framing, new narratives, stories* and making a *business case* for change – how can we support the transition to sustainable consumption? What frames and messages work?
- Empirical evidence shows that we, in affluent countries and at the global scale, are *overconsuming*; there are US survey results that support our work in shifting from overconsumption – a majority of US survey respondents agree that the country would be better off if they consumed less.
- Keeping in mind that *profound social changes have long latency periods*, it would seem that *relatively little has been accomplished in North America over the past decade* in terms of reducing personal consumption, lifestyles changes, and institutional and political shifts.
- We need to focus on the *quantity* of how much we consume (monitoring for absolute reductions in footprints) to complement the current focus on quality (eco-labelling, certification).

### ***Insights around SCORAI and those involved in the network***

- The experiment of organizing a joint workshop with researchers and practitioners worked and there is enthusiasm for further researcher-practitioner engagement and meetings.
- SCORAI Listserv membership is growing with both practitioners and researchers joining.
- A SCORAI Practitioner Working Group was established as a result of the workshop.
- There is interest from practitioners in engaging with SCORAI, and interest from researchers in engaging with practitioners.
- A lot of people bridge across practice and research / academia – “pracademics”

## Acknowledgements

Funding support is gratefully acknowledged from **The Garfield Foundation**. These funds helped offset travel and accommodation costs associated with the workshop.

The **Tellus Institute, Vancity Community Foundation, Mountain Equipment Coop, New Jersey Institute of Technology, Strathcona Business Improvement Association, Recycling Alternative** and the **UBC Liu Institute for Global Issues** have generously provided support for conference coordination, some travel and accommodation, venue, meals, materials and logistics, and we thank them for their contributions. Other support was provided by **Integrative Strategies Forum, Clark University, the City of Vancouver, the UBC Centre for Interactive Research on Sustainability (CIRS), Sustainability: Science, Practice, and Policy, UBC Green College, One Planet Catering, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (BC Office), Robert Safrata and Jacqueline Koerner, One Earth** and the **Port Capital Group**.

A conference dinner was generously sponsored by the **British Columbia Institute of Technology** whose commitment to sustainability encompasses everything from advancing the state of practice through education and research, to improving the efficiency of campus operations through green building design and employee stewardship programs. Buses to transport participants from UBC to the dinner were sponsored by **West Coast Sightseeing**.

The SCORAI Executive Committee and the SCORAI-Vancouver Workshop Organizing Committee include: **Jeffrey Barber**, Integrative Strategies Forum; **Halina Brown**, Clark University; **Maurie J. Cohen**, New Jersey Institute of Technology; **Eleni Sotos**, Funders Working Group on Sustainable Consumption and Production; **John Stutz**, Tellus Institute; **Vanessa Timmer**, One Earth Initiative Society; and **Philip Vergragt**, Tellus Institute and Clark University.

The SCORAI conference was organized with support from the **One Earth** team led by **Vanessa Timmer, Dagmar Timmer, Emmanuel Prinnet**, with conference design advice by **Nicole Anne Boyer**. We are grateful to the One Earth Associates and volunteers who were engaged in the SCORAI conference:

- Joyce Shen
- Ruth Legg
- Julia Meyer-MacLeod
- Justin Ritchie
- Yaheli Klein
- Thomas Moore
- Arsalan Hassan
- Sara Brown
- Noelani Dubeta
- Jorge Amigo
- Kyle Rosetta
- Tobi Reyes

## Contact information

### One Earth Initiative Society

1205 – 1255 Main Street  
Vancouver, BC  
V6A 4G5 Canada  
Tel.: +1 604.669.5143  
E-mail: [info@OneEarthWeb.org](mailto:info@OneEarthWeb.org)  
Web: [OneEarthWeb.org](http://OneEarthWeb.org)

## About SCORAI

SCORAI website: <http://scorai.org/>

The Sustainable Consumption Research and Action Initiative (SCORAI) is an international network of academics and practitioners working to address challenges at the interface of material consumption, human fulfillment, lifestyle satisfaction, and technological change. Network members are seeking to facilitate the design of a coherent research program that forges connections between scholars and communities of practice and contributes to an ongoing policy dialogue on these interrelated issues. The SCORAI Network also aims to engage with various policy programs including the Marrakech Process led by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), the North American Regional Consultation on Sustainable Consumption and Production, and other national and local efforts. Creation of this initiative is partly inspired by the Sustainable Consumption Research Exchanges (SCORE), a project funded by the European Union under its Sixth Framework Programme.

# 1. Conference themes, goals and objectives

## 1.1 Introduction

The 3rd Sustainable Consumption Research and Action Initiative (SCORAI) workshop took place from March 8-10, 2012 at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. This gathering brought together leading, innovative researchers from universities and policy think tanks with a diverse group of North American policy makers, practitioners and representatives from NGOs, business and industry associations, financial institutions and advocacy organizations. It builds on SCORAI's October 2009 inaugural workshop held at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts, and SCORAI's second workshop in Mountains Lake House, Princeton, New Jersey, in April 2011.

This workshop had three objectives:

- (1) To deepen the knowledge base of how systemic changes toward a more sustainable society can take place;
- (2) To assemble the empirical findings from local practices in sustainable well-being that are being demonstrated in localities across North America and internationally;
- (3) To examine the above findings through the lenses of critical theory, policy making, business strategy, technology assessment, sustainability education, and others, with an eye toward identifying those that have potential for mainstreaming and promoting systemic change.

Expected results included:

- Enhanced understanding of research and practical outcomes necessary in the field of consumption, improving the identification of cutting-edge knowledge and strategies; and
- Enhanced community on consumption issues across research and practice in North America, including top researchers and practitioners to develop specific actions and projects moving forward to advance sustainability.

This report presents a summary of the key themes, ideas, questions, and next steps identified by the participants during the conference.

## 1.2 Context for the conference theme

The intertwined environmental, economic, and financial crises have over the last few years exposed the flaws in the material and energy-intensive lifestyles that are prevalent throughout the global North and that are growing rapidly in parts of the global South. In some quarters, alternatives are being debated to move beyond consumerism and toward more sustainable human and ecological well-being. On a global level, the work of the Commission on the Measurement of Economic and Social Progress has unleashed numerous initiatives to transcend customary economic metrics of prosperity, right livelihood, and ecological balance. The lead-up to the Rio+20 Conference has additionally prompted a steady stream of policy documents framing the challenge of the “green economy.” At the grassroots level, alternative local economies and lifestyles are being tested in many places and reformist economists are creating new models for public policies to reconcile human and ecological needs. But it is not clear if these initiatives—from micro to macro—will by themselves (or even in aggregate) lead to the required systemic changes.

This workshop aimed to assemble concepts and practices on sustainable well-being that are being trialed in localities across North America and internationally. The workshop set out to identify projects that are reducing human impact on the planet and are positioned for wider diffusion. Theories about social movements, social practices, socio-technical transitions, cultural change, and new economics have

suggested that less impactful substitutes for prevailing lifestyles are possible. For instance, campaigns to “slow” the pace of contemporary life (e.g., slow food, slow housing, slow cities, slow money) are gaining stature in some parts of the world and could help shift public sensibilities to a focus on “being” rather than “having.” Other nascent innovations centered on transition towns, eco-villages, eco-housing, localist economies, local energy projects, and work-time reduction seek to encourage more autonomous modes of self-provisioning. Conceptual and pragmatic connections among sustainable livelihoods, full employment, living wages, and universal benefits are emerging as well. Commendable though these efforts may be, is there demonstrable evidence that such alternatives reduce material and energy throughputs and foster progress toward per capita fair “Earthshares”? What has been accomplished thus far in terms of reduced material and energy consumption, lifestyle changes and political shifts? If not much, why not? If a lot, why have they not yet attracted wider attention? What are the barriers and opportunities to build on these initiatives, create synergies, and scale up to mainstream practices, policies, and institutions? What new understandings can be garnered from the accumulating experience? These were some of the questions raised over the two-day workshop.

Some researchers are formulating critiques of the dominant economic and political system and contributing to the growing body of work attesting that increasing income inequality is counterproductive to the goals of sustainability and that economic growth is a false answer to the societal equity problem. Other scholars are focusing on future visions of a more sustainable society and on the design of scenarios depicting how such ideas could be achieved. These new developments are however confronting powerful forces—rooted in the growth imperative of neoclassical economics—that push in a very different direction, driven by incumbent political and economic interests and fuelled by technologies that take us in potentially perilous directions. On an individual level, people are for the most part locked into unsustainable lifestyles and social practices, while incremental and ambivalent policies fail to impart the necessary structural changes.

This workshop was an opportunity to explore the above trends through the lenses of empirical findings from local experiments, critical theory, scenario building, technology assessment, sustainability education, and others. The organizers aimed to bring together innovative practices and thinkers and to critically reflect on the expanding body of data from small-scale initiatives, to examine their accomplishments and setbacks, to investigate the appropriateness of their underlying assumptions about human and institutional behaviours, and to assess their capacity for moving into the mainstream. The workshop sought to explore these findings in the context of large-scale economic, political and theoretical constraints, and to deliberate on the barriers and opportunities.

### ***1.3 General overview of the workshop***

The SCORAI workshop was organized over two days, and included pre- and post-workshop activities such as:

- Conference calls with small groups of participants before the workshop to solicit input on the workshop theme and questions.
- Researchers’ papers distributed to participants prior to the conference, and available on the conference website.
- An online forum established to support pre-workshop interaction.
- Receptions and dinners which foster informal dialogue and learning outside the workshop context. These include presentations from Metro Vancouver leaders including the City of Vancouver, Vancity Credit Union, and the BC Institute of Technology.
- Field visits to the University of British Columbia Centre for Interactive Research on Sustainability (CIRS) building to explore the campus as a living laboratory and to City Studio to learn about Vancouver’s city-campus collaboration.

- Participation in Metro Vancouver Sustainability Dialogue and Sustainability Breakfast series, with some participants serving as speakers at the lunch and breakfast dialogues in the week preceding the workshop, attended by hundreds of regional participants from across sectors and filmed for wider distribution online on Metro Vancouver’s website.
- Filling out of Individual Reflection Worksheets on which participants noted their insights from the conference, what they found surprising, who they wished to connect with, and what actions they would take, including how they foresaw contributing to the SCORAI network.

The **first day** offered an opportunity for academics and researchers to present, through short papers written for the conference, their latest research and thinking on sustainable consumption to peers and colleagues, as well as to the practitioner community. The **objectives of the first day** were:

- To provide an opportunity for the research community and practitioners engaged in research to have an in-depth exchange about the sustainable consumption field of inquiry;
- To build on, critique and fine-tune the research papers presented; and
- To identify and list areas for further inquiry, research and action.

The day included a **keynote presentation** by James Meadowcroft, Carleton University, followed by four **discussion sessions** in which four or five researchers clustered in thematic groups presented their papers. Each session’s speakers were followed by comments by a **discussant**, before the floor was opened to comments and questions from the room.

The **second day** focused on bridging research and practice and was organized as a dialogue in which participants identified priority areas of concern and approaches that support research-practice collaboration. Practitioners posed questions including: What patterns are you seeing that can help shape research? What questions and issues would benefit from research-practice alliances to support greater impact and scaling up? How can researchers better support your work? The morning session included a **keynote address** by Annie Leonard, The Story of Stuff Project, which was followed by **paired research-practitioner dialogues**, an **interactive session on sustainable consumption**, a **dialogue on key sustainable consumption issues, ideas and questions**, an afternoon **plenary dialogue**, and **next steps and closing session**.

**Questions addressed at the workshop over the two days included:**

- Is there evidence that long-lived examples of alternatives actually reduce material throughput per capita?
- What has been accomplished so far in terms of consumption, lifestyles changes and institutional and political shifts? If not much, why not? If a lot, why are they not going viral?
- What are the barriers and opportunities to build on these initiatives, create synergies, and diffuse to mainstream practices, policies and institutions?
- What new conceptual understandings are emerging from the accumulating experience?
- How can these emerging understandings inform theory development, policy debate and foster systemic change?

**The points below<sup>1</sup> broadly respond to these questions:**

- There is no strong evidence that projects in alternative lifestyles and systems of provisioning significantly reduce material consumption and ecological footprints. This finding may be partly a reflection of the actual absence of such impact. However, it must be acknowledged that gathering

---

<sup>1</sup> Thanks to the SCORAI Executive Committee for developing these points.

this type of evidence is extremely difficult, both from a design and implementation perspective and a resource perspective.

- There is, though, emergent evidence that such projects have other important effects that would be relevant to a transition toward a post-consumer sustainable society. These implications include building stronger and more cohesive communities, creating social capital for mobilization of civil society toward a new vision, empowerment of new leaders on a local level with a broad vision of social change, and overall contribution to the facilitation of a new narrative for a society where the values of sufficiency and well-being are prominent. There is an opportunity here for the research community to study these multiple effects of civil action and practitioner projects.
- Other ways to nurture these nascent developments and to increase the power of grassroots and other local initiatives is for activists to break down the sectors and project silos and to engage in hybrid projects that include multiple activist organizations, local businesses, policy makers, politicians and others. For the research community there is an opportunity—and an imperative—to likewise emerge from their disciplinary silos and also to engage in action research and practice that has social change as its long-term goal. Several such members of the research community participated in the Vancouver workshop. The term “pracademic” was proposed in one of the discussions to characterize this emergent kind of actor. The SCORAI network is a promising place to nurture these links and new approaches.
- In response to one of the questions posed for the Vancouver workshop, we conclude that relatively little has been accomplished in North America over the past decade in terms of reducing personal consumption, lifestyles changes, and institutional and political shifts. At the same time, we recognize that such profound social changes have long latency periods. And moreover there are strong structural barriers to such changes, such as the existing power relations, the nature of the labor market, the prevalent economic paradigm, the sunk costs in physical infrastructure, and others. In contrast, there are signs of positive change in people’s attitudes toward material consumption: the surveys consistently show that the majority of American citizens believe that we consume too much and that material consumption beyond a certain level does not improve quality of life. Moreover, among members of the public there appears to be growing interest in the quality over the quantity of consumption. These developments should be studied and popularized in the media, as they can have an impact on the evolution of public opinion regarding consumption and a search for enhanced well-being. This is a challenge for both researchers and practitioners.
- Policy interventions are necessary to break the structural barriers to a transition to a post-consumer society. Some (mostly local and state) government agencies recognize it and are supporting projects to develop new configurations of provisioning focused on, for example, alternative mobility and agro-food systems. In some cases, these initiatives are implemented by government while in others the driving force is provided by civil society organizations. In view of the earlier observation that these types of projects have multiple effects that go beyond the immediate objectives at hand, there is a need to re-examine the concepts of *outputs* and *outcomes* as well as the definitions of success. What is the meaning of scaling up and “going viral”? How do we compare the value of creating stronger communities versus producing fresh local foods? These and related questions should be addressed jointly by practitioners and researchers, and SCORAI is a conducive platform for doing so.
- Politics is at the center of a transition to a post-consumer society. And the politics of limits is going to come, sooner or later, though its form may not be known. This observation raises the question of how practitioners and researchers can contribute to the emergence of a political force for a change toward a vision shared by members of the SCORAI network. We need to create a politically relevant language to talk about sustainable consumption, well-being, and alternative

future visions. Appropriate framings will be crucial for setting the political agenda. SCORAI may be a useful platform for facilitating the evolution and crystallization of such a way forward.

## 2. Summary of Day 1

### 2.1 Keynote presentation

Presentation: **James Meadowcroft** (Carleton University) – “Pushing the Boundaries: Governance for Sustainable Development and a Politics of Limits”

- There are four basic understandings of “limits:
  - Limits as ecological constraints
  - Limits of human capacity to control nature (complexity; cognitive limits; etc.)
  - Limits of existing development model to meet human needs
  - Limits as self restraint
- In the last 10 years, there has been an upsurge of interest in limits
- Why? Because of: climate change; peak oil; 40 years of environmental policy; the emergence of rapidly developing countries; the perceived interrelations of global problems
- The paradox of the present conjuncture: more growth is seen as the solution to the 2008 financial crisis
- There are two responses:
  - Calling for *more* growth
  - Calling for the *end of growth*
- The way forward: the politics of environmental limits – where the economy develops within ecological limits
- Observations of such politics:
  - Defining a place for each of the four sorts of limits
  - A politics of opportunities and realization
  - A politics of social transformation
  - A non-exclusionary politics
- Conclusion: “We are going to have a politics of environmental limits sooner or later, but the timing and character are in doubt”

Comments and questions on the keynote presentation:

- Not sure why we’re talking about the “politics” rather than the “economics”
- The politics in the 1980s may not have been so much about limits, but about rights. It makes a big difference how this is framed: if we frame these questions as rights issues, do we open up a space for dialogue?
- The notion of politics can be used as a political tool
- When one talks about “growth”, one should add “material” or “economic” in front

### 2.2 Discussion Session A: Societal Dimensions of Subjective Well-being and Mindfulness

- Wellbeing is the backdoor to sustainability
- It has taken a long time to link happiness to sustainable development
- We need to get past the ‘in group’ and ‘out group’ structure; people are not like this—they are inherently pro-social
- Our well-being is not just affected by our own consumption, but also others’ consumption
- Scale of effects: To whom are we comparing ourselves to? The person next door? Within the nation? Internationally?

- If everyone is doing the right thing for themselves (environmentally speaking), you still have a problem (as with greenhouse gas emissions)
- What's missing in the literature: Where do people find the emotional energy to adopt new sustainable social practices?
- We need to know more about the rituals that people go through that make them re-evaluate and change their life
- Trends for creating mindfulness. How is thoughtful, ethical consumption fostered in society?
  - Body movement and exercise
  - Time in nature (green exercise)
  - Provisioning (community organizing)
- These three items are often associated with mindfulness, awareness of own identities; people are happier and more in control of their lives; people more happier about their community; feel politically capable
- If you think you can buy yourself into happiness, you are wrong; we may have been looking at how income enters the discussion in the wrong way
- Framing the discussion: The 'limits' discourse is the wrong way to think about the narrative and discourse of consumption
- How do we create a global positive externality? We need to talk about the positive: it is a discourse of fulfillment, regenerative sustainability; it is about improvement

### ***2.3 Discussion Session B: The Role of Empirical Research in Studying Sustainable Consumption***

- The term 'pracademic' is useful
- The term 'consumption' is a problem; 'sustainable use' may be a better word
- There are always discussions around data and measurements; engineers believe if you cannot measure it then you cannot fix it – yet Einstein says: not everything that is measured counts and not everything that counts is measured
- "Our country would be a better place if we consumed less", and survey data/research seems to back this up
- Consumption is a component for cultural dialogue that we can get traction on across the political spectrum, while we cannot get the same traction with climate change – people can relate to consumption; they cannot relate to climate change
- Research on household-level sustainable purchasing suggests that consumers (in Canada) do not consume sustainable products; consumers were very confused about identifying products that were or weren't sustainable
- Do people need more information? How much information can they retain? And what is over-consumption at the household level?
- We are seeing a wide range of initiatives, activities, projects taking place around the world to help people adopt sustainable lifestyles, but are these actually making a difference? Are such initiatives resulting in per capita decreases of resource and material throughput?
- A monitoring protocol to evaluate projects would be a useful tool
- Few of the projects we looked at (Transition Towns, City of Vancouver, Eco-Village Network, No Impact Man...) use the ecological footprint model or monitor absolute reductions in material and energy throughput
- Measuring absolute reductions is not as common as hoped: groups do not consistently measure and monitor their reductions
- Elements that could inform a protocol for monitoring absolute reductions: indicators that flow from objectives, impacts, baseline assessment, involving different stakeholders and audiences, developing a communications strategy
- Challenges need to be overcome for a protocol: data gaps and uncertainties; difficulty to gather consistent data; measuring causality; etc.

## **2.4 Discussion Session C: Politics of Sacrifice and Sufficiency in a No-Growth Economy**

- We need to make a distinction: we have language that is useful for analysis, and we have language that is useful for communicating; sometimes they are not the same thing
- The term “sustainable consumption” should continue to be debated and redefined; it is not a variable or an outcome, but rather a window into dealing with social justice and environmental issues
- 3 key premises:
  - The fundamental transition is, and will be, occurring worldwide; the pillars of consumerism are cracking and falling
  - There is a deep urgency: cause effect relationships, synergistic effects, etc., mean that we do not know when this transition will occur
  - The current system is illegitimate; it does not work for what will soon be 7-9 billion people
- We need a psychology of ‘satiability’; we have one for eating, sleeping—so what about consuming? Is self-restraint bad?
- How do we get people to consume less? We need to bring in those in the imaginative arts, as well as scientists to find a way forward
- Eco-Villages exist across the world, and are examples of integrative solutions – sharing is key (land; ownership; ideas; strategies; etc.)
- These communities are not enclaves; they are about creating a ripple effect and inspiring other people to live like this
- How do we create a transition towards energy sustainability in the city? There is a huge need to substantially upgrade the homes to become more sustainable
- Green energy, or green tech, clusters: can serve to attract innovative firms, which then can learn from each other and collaborate

## **2.5 Discussion Session D: Sustainable Consumption and Communities of Practice**

- There are two levels of change: individual and collective; both require a level of community engagement
- Two ways to pursue this engagement:
  - Persuasive communication/education: the idea is to replace wrong story with right story; the focus is on individual change; the premise is that people are resistant to change; the purpose of dialogue is to use our best knowledge about narrative dialogue processes, communications theory, etc., to figure out how to convey the new story in ways that quickly change behaviour
  - Emergent dialogue: we don’t know the story – we need to collectively co-create it through dialogue (based on principles of mutual respect and possibility/opportunity, and not on crisis); the focus is on cultural change; the premise is that people are surrounded by change, and they are struggling to maintain their identity
- Information Deficit Model: assumes that information will lead to value changes, which will lead to attitude changes, which will lead to behaviour change – so information, in this model, is the key variable – but practice and research show that it is the other way around. Social practice is the contextual determinant of individual behaviour change
- The “persuasive education” approach does not work
- The concept of regenerative sustainability: not doing “less bad”, but “more good”
- “Mapping the Movement” project: starting in 2003, looking at sustainable production and consumption initiatives in North America (including Mexico)
- Useful way to study and talk about groups working on production and consumption: concept of “communities of practice”: sharing concepts and principles, literature (key books; papers), skills, training, education, terminology and jargon, etc.

- Key questions that need further exploring: Which communities of practice would most benefit from connecting with each other? Which connections are essential for the transition to a sustainable economy? What are the main obstacles? What tools and strategies are needed?
- The political dimension of sustainable consumption: raises the issue of scale and cohesion
- There's a need for global citizens' movement (The Widening Circle initiative is trying to foster this); this requires a shared positive vision of the future, and connecting regional nodes to international ones for coherence and to respect different cultures

## 2.6 Outcomes of Day 1

### Narratives/framing:

- The dominant paradigm has been the ruling media narrative for so long
- Instead of talking about "less", we can talk about "enough", "sufficiency", even "more fun, less stuff" – different words are to be used with different target audiences
- The phrase "(sustainable) consumption" has limits; people don't consume, they behave
- People want stories – and do good stories lead to mindfulness?
- Language is important: on the framing issue:
  - "Tar sands" versus "oil sands"? Research shows that oil sands is bad because people do not like oil; tar is something that people like
  - "No growth" is a bad branding: if your kids do not grow, that is a bad thing; if your plants do not grow, that is a bad thing – so we should talk about a mature economy rather than a no-growth economy

### Happiness & wellbeing

- Mindfulness
- An issue not addressed enough is work/life balance; when we look at consumption, the reduction in work hours to European levels would reduce GHG emissions, and would deal with unemployment
- Trust is a key element of happiness; the kind of trust we need now needs to transcend boundaries

### Attitudes and behaviour change

- Does consciousness have any impact on behaviour change?
- High education is correlated with high incomes, and thus high rates of consumption; the category of green consumption is fraught with problems
- Consumerism is a traumatic dislocation from culture – read the book *The Roots of Addiction*
- How do we find a balance between the individual and the collective? Is it a false dichotomy?
- Changing behaviours requires changing collective decisions that constrain individual behaviour: What are the structural issues that constrain individual behaviour? i.e redesigning our suburbs so they foster sustainable behaviour (walking, cycling)
- We need choice editing by retailers to take unsustainable products off the shelf
- Individuals want to do the right thing, but need the low entry points; same with businesses – as once they find those low level entry points, they are more willing to go farther
- Our brains are wired against change: recent research shows that our brains are wired to conserve energy
- A "Club Med" Eco-Village where millions of people could experience would have a positive impact: it could show what could be and inspire
- We need to embrace/be mindful of differences: We assume capitalism is the same everywhere; some people think that using bike lanes are great; however, for immigrants from other countries, bikes mean you are going to be killed or you are lower class
- Food is a good entry point: people come together around food

- From the Transition Movement: 'If we leave it to government, it will take too long, if we do it ourselves, it will take too long – but if we do it together, it might be just in time'

### Measurements/metrics

- Radical transparency: putting a human face on the commodity chain
- The sustainable lifestyle and sustainable consumerism experiments have not gone forward with metrics, but rather “with their fingers crossed”
- Not always about metrics, but of showing the value of doing something (i.e. Vancity’s Demonstrating Value Program)
- BC Association of Farmers’ Markets: the markets that have been the most successful to incubate and launch new businesses are those that have been the most transparent and setting rules around clear definitions around what constitutes “local”

### Collaboration

- Can the variety of different initiatives lead to some bigger movement if connected together?
- Specific actions have the capacity to give people deeper connections: doing things together

## 3. Summary of Day 2

### *3.1 Points of tension that emerged in the discussions and questions that need further exploring*

- The need to find a practitioner-academic balance (the term “pracademic” was brought forward to describe those who aren’t in one camp or the other, but are bit of both)
- Individuals versus institutions and structures: which one is more important/effective? Is it a both/and?
- How do we strike a balance between Individual versus collective identity?
- (Green) economic growth: not the way forward?
- Pace of change: do we act on the urgency, or do we let things unfold?
- How do we use framing as a way of engaging and reaching out to various audiences and stakeholders?
- Theories of change: what are they, and which are the effective ones?
- The brain has (cognitive) limits, and thoughts are structured along patterns
- The politics of opportunity
- Is there support for ‘consuming less’?
- How do we span different high-impact sectors like food, housing and transportation?
- How do we refurbish suburbia?
- How do we bring forward and support new forms of business?

### *3.2 Keynote presentation*

Presentation: **Annie Leonard** (The Story of Stuff)

Four specific observations:

#### **1) In the activist world, there is more and more effective work on the quality of what we consume, than on the quantity**

- We’re encouraged to buy FSC (i.e. green consumerism), but not actually to reduce our consumption
- There is a lot more enthusiasm to talk about the quality of what we consume; even the Environmental Paper Network don’t talk about reducing consumption, as the short-term ‘wins’ seem to be on the ‘quality’ side – but we’re not talking about quantity
- It is easier to appeal to consumer self-interest

- We lack a politically and relevant language in terms of talking about reducing our consumption
- Discussions around sustainable consumption can become super technical, or even preachy and scolding

**2) A lot of incredible work is being done on these issues, but we need to move towards a collective of the great work to create a movement**

- We need to break down silos and stretch to edge of our comfort zone
- We need to consider the infrastructure of a movement – to make the connections and invest in the infrastructure between the projects
- One of the difficulties is that this type of thing is harder to measure, and there may be fewer (directly measurable) results – this meeting is an example of that
- If we can break down the silos, we'll see that we have so many natural allies, even though it might have seemed like they were not allies
- I've worked on garbage, and to solve garbage, we need to look at job creation and community infrastructure – there need to be changes at the level of cultural norms, and we need to get rid of the growth-based economy

**3) I worry that we are forgetting how to make change; the consumer self is overdeveloped and the citizen self is atrophying**

- I've gone all over the US to give talks at colleges, churches and universities
- People have watched The Story of Stuff – broad systemic critique – and then they ask: “ok, then, what should I buy?”
- I started asking: “What do you think you can do?”
- Responses: “I” can do this or that -- “I can recycle, bike, carry my own bag” – and all of those are great places to start, but don't stop there; all of these things are great gateways for engagement
- We're so good at being consumers – this behaviour is so familiar and validated
- But we're misunderstanding the taste of familiarity – mistaking that (green consumerism) for being power; the main entry is not composting, it's working together
- We need to work together in an engaged democracy and struggle collectively for social change
- We need to re-inspire people to live like citizens, and be more responsive and thank the engaged citizens who are wrestling back control from the state and corporations

**4) There is increasing recognition that what is needed is big-picture, systemic change**

- There are ripe opportunities to raise issues in the urban development
- We need to jump on culturally and politically relevant conversations
- Because there are so many problems, we really need to seize short-term opportunities
- We need to raise volume on this discourse – learn to be citizens
- The change needed is gigantic – so we can seize little wins along the way

Four areas for researchers:

**1) Identifying strategic leverage points for change**

- Is it better consumer labelling? National health care? Eliminating toxic chemical?
- As Peter Senge notes, the best way to change a system is to try to change something in it
- Know where the power is – find more strategic leverage points
- Work smarter rather than harder

**2) Are all of our little acts (composting; recycling; etc.) an onramp to further engagement or a dead end?**

- We need to engage with individuals in a way that brings them on a journey
- How are we framing things? Are there proximate solutions?

- What is it that makes a difference?
- When people ask “what can I do?”, it needs to be “bring your bag to the store” and also “help transform the global economy to be just”

### 3) Identifying the non-informational barriers to change

- We are stuck in a myth that “truth sets us free”
- We use charts and graphs – we think showing data will lead to change, but it is not working
- What are the non-informational barriers to change?
- We need a combination of academic research and on-the-ground practice

### 4) We need to test frames and messages

- We can harness the power of social media for this
- We can see how many open a message – who clicks on what
- Instant feedback from people is possible

### 3.3 Interactive session on sustainable consumption

Participants were asked to explore and answer the following four leading questions:

**1) Identifying our theories of change:** How does social change happen? How do we bring innovations to scale? What are the leverage points?

**2) Framing / communication:** How do we communicate sustainable consumption? What framings should we use to engage? Who are the target audiences?

**3) Innovative business models:** What are the innovative business models for sustainable consumption? How do we reframe the business case?

**4) Practical cases / citizen movement activities:** Identify the most compelling examples of sustainable consumption best practice? And why are they best practice? Are they hitting mainstream? What are major barriers?

#### Theory of Change:

- Elements of social change: disruption or challenge of legitimacy of current power structure, failure of conventional explanation, alternative story waiting to replace the conventional story, innovations, social norms/context and existing network of system change agents
- Ideas tend to spread in existing trusted lines of communication between individuals and institutions
- There is great value in thinking about unexpected alliances and sympathizers who are willing to publicly and politically support change, and incorporating art, music and humour

#### Communication and framing:

- Three framing examples in the form of haikus
- Frame of inspiring visions point to what is emerging now and positive actions: “the social margins are seeds of innovation, green planet rising”, “positive visions: spark, community action, what is emerging?”, “life is really good, yeah, tell the world good stories, positivity”
- Frame of local stories: “picture within a picture, real needs, find the voice”, “local relevance, links to the bigger picture, and conveys real needs”, “real or vision: build story by example, share the solution”
- Frame of social justice (we are not alone, we are the 99%): “who should really consume less? I'm one of the many”, “a living planet can only be sustained when people are equal”, “You know what to do: slow down, plant seeds, share your dreams. You are not alone”, “Social justice now. Social justice for us all.”

- Instead of using the frame sustainable consumption, focusing on positive messaging related to everyday life, adopt language such as new dream, quality of life, quality rather than quantity, more of what matters, the good life, and invest in yourself, not stuff
- Using advertising and marketing tools to present these values and vision
- Finding common framing among different movements (e.g. shortened work week, income inequality) and craft messages that can be used in the political realm, such as “our children have a right to a better quality of life”

**Innovative business models:**

- Co-operatives/employee-owned businesses: making profit is a means to create more environmental and social well-being, flexible work schedules, shortened work weeks, work sharing
- Collaborative consumption models: peer-to-peer lending businesses
- Product leasing vs. selling model: Interface carpet tile leasing, Zip Car
- Product durability: closed-loop design, design to last vs. design for obsolescence
- Changing the rules and regulations and create the networks to create the conditions that these new models can operate

**Citizenship movement:**

- Building the infrastructure (physical, rules and policies) and culture for sharing.
- Using choice architecture to remove bad options and influence behaviour
- Setting up the social movement infrastructure for engagement
- Demonstrating models/case studies in various sectors and scales

**3.4 Afternoon open space**

**What are the features of a sustainable vision for +30 years that we want to engineer?**

- This should be a shared vision that enables collective action, and it needs to address existing power which has a vested interest in maintaining the status quo. To facilitate the transitions, we need to build pathways and agencies both socially and politically, identify opportunities to translate broad vision into local context, engage groups across disciplines and practice that are beyond environmental interests, and use powerful stories, system mapping and visual tools, such as the Future We Want Campaign, to catalyze actions.

**What are the best practices to foster academic/practitioner collaboration?**

- SCORAI could facilitate this bridge by setting up an online interface organized by topics, posting questions on SCORAI list serve and creating a task force to work on facilitating connections between researchers/practitioners.

**How do we create a movement with respect to sustainable consumption that is also equitable?**

- In order to create bigger, more expansive social movement, we need language that is more comprehensible than "sustainable consumption". Perhaps a simple, tangible, takeaway message like "the Good, the Green and the Glad" that brings together the occupy agenda and sustainable consumption agenda.

**3.5 Burning issues and areas that need to be explored further**

- What does this emergent economy represent in terms of jobs, investment dollars and actual money flows in economy?
- One of the big fights is against the dismantling of all regulations (carbon; chemicals; etc.). We need business-case documents: what are the benefits to business to support regulations?

- How do you mandate incentives for reduced workweeks? Practitioners need to link up with researchers on this question.
- Foodscraps (in Metro Vancouver) are measured at 400 tonnes/year, so why are we dealing with plastic shopping bags?
- We focus on waste because it's what we touch, but the embodied energy and materials is 97% of the footprint. So, we need to "rethink, reduce, reuse" upstream (at the level of production).
- Oregon is doing that kind of research (mentioned above). Recycling—even done really well—reduced environmental impacts very little. How do we promote recycling, but in a way that leverages people to do a lot more/act?
- Let's raise our game to a whole new level. We need to create a big stink campaign! We can create a declaration of wellbeing that's signed by a whole bunch of people/leaders? Also, we need to identify the leverage points that we, as a group, can act on, as well as others.
- We need to find ways to engage further: people think they've dealt with "the problem" when they recycle or have industrial ecology, but it's not enough.
- Recycling is just a band-aid; we need to go up the stream of waste – from the tip of the iceberg back upstream.
- One of the challenges to overcome is that industry sells recycling services, but there's no industry that sells source reduction.
- We need to avoid initiatives like the Recycle Bank: you get coins for the stuff you recycle to then buy more stuff. We need to stop the incinerator planned for Metro Vancouver.
- There needs to be monitoring of the aggregate impact on the planet by business (who claim they are contributing to dematerialization).
- Addressing supply chains: if we support the local economy, what does that do to the global economy/to those countries that depend on our purchases? How do we put an alternative vision in context?
- A lot of what is being said is around individual consumption but city structures affect behaviour change. What are the biggest barriers to dense living?
- There needs to be more research around the question of social inequities.
- Who has come up with an accounting sheet with the dollar value of all that went into a product?
- How are people who are impacted by our consumption (in, say, low-income countries) framing the discussion? What language should we be using to communicate with them?
- What is this "we" we (here in the group) keep referring to? We need to look at, and identify, different actors, along with the barriers and opportunities for collaboration.

## 4. Conference follow-up & next steps

The conference ended with some time devoted to participants being able to express needs they may have (in terms of research, collaboration, etc.), and what they can offer to the group.

### 4.1 Needs

- A SCORAI Task Force to help bridge the research-practice gap (Halina Brown: [hbrown@clarku.edu](mailto:hbrown@clarku.edu) and Vanessa Timmer: [vanessa@oneearthweb.org](mailto:vanessa@oneearthweb.org) agreed to lead the formation of this task force)
- A SCORAI website with enhanced function and capacity (Maurie Cohen: [mcohen@adm.njit.edu](mailto:mcohen@adm.njit.edu) and Laura Stanik: [lstanik@rutgers.edu](mailto:lstanik@rutgers.edu) have agreed to lead this work)
- Business model advice around marketing and services, particularly in the realm of the fair trade work (asked by Sasha Caldera: [sasha@fairtradevancouver.ca](mailto:sasha@fairtradevancouver.ca))
- The names and e-mail addresses of all participants (asked by Betsy Taylor – this was sent)
- Feedback on the 'actor map' idea and diagram (asked by Jeffrey Barber: [jeffreyhbarber@gmail.com](mailto:jeffreyhbarber@gmail.com))

- Further identifying communities of practice to be included in the actor map (asked by Jeffrey Barber: [jeffreyhbarber@gmail.com](mailto:jeffreyhbarber@gmail.com))
- Pictures of what a sustainable household looks like (asked by Vicky Salazar: [salazar.vicky@epamail.epa.gov](mailto:salazar.vicky@epamail.epa.gov))
- Connections to behavioural economists around the question of discounting the future (asked by Tom Bowerman: [tom@policyinteractive.org](mailto:tom@policyinteractive.org))
- Local government examples of adopting practices and policies around sustainable-consumption issues (asked by Rosemary Cooper: [rosie.c@telus.net](mailto:rosie.c@telus.net))
- Attractive visions (images, videos, stories...) of sustainable futures (asked by Emmanuel Prinet: [emmanuel@oneearthweb.org](mailto:emmanuel@oneearthweb.org))

#### 4.2 Offers

- Research information and data in raw form, especially US public opinion surveys (Tom Bowerman – just send him your research question(s): [tom@policyinteractive.org](mailto:tom@policyinteractive.org))
- Thoughts on developing an online (collaborative) platform for SCORAI (Garth Yule: [garth\\_yule@vancity.com](mailto:garth_yule@vancity.com))
- Joining the SCORAI listserv and receiving the SCORAI newsletter (contact Maurie Cohen: [mcohen@adm.njit.edu](mailto:mcohen@adm.njit.edu))
- Connections with food-service providers in North America (contact Sasha Caldera: [sasha@fairtradevancouver.ca](mailto:sasha@fairtradevancouver.ca))
- Participating in the Boston College Summer Institute in New Economics -- <http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/schools/cas/sociology/neweconomics.html> (Shared with the group by Juliet Schor)
- Review dissertation proposals linked to sustainable consumption (contact Juliet Schor: [juliet.schor@bc.edu](mailto:juliet.schor@bc.edu))
- Host a call showcasing examples of SPC research-practitioner partnerships and identifying paths to partnership (contact Eleni Sotos: [elenisotos@gmail.com](mailto:elenisotos@gmail.com) and Vicky Salazar: [salazar.vicky@epamail.epa.gov](mailto:salazar.vicky@epamail.epa.gov))
- Sharing the experience of the American Sustainable Business Council (contact David Levine, Co-Founder and Executive Director of the ASBC: [dlevine@asbcouncil.org](mailto:dlevine@asbcouncil.org))

#### 4.3 Next steps for SCORAI

In addition to some of the items listed above, one of SCORAI's next steps has been the creation of a **Practitioners' Taskforce**, whose purpose is to explore ways to establish and maintain links with practitioners – individuals and informal groups, government agencies, civil society organizations and other NGOs – who are interested in engaging with the SCORAI network or its Executive Committee. The Taskforce members are the initial point of contact for those external to SCORAI. They will discuss ideas and proposals as they arise from discussion within the group or from external sources. They will consider their appropriateness for the SCORAI network, reframe them when that appears necessary, and make recommendations to the SCORAI Executive Committee regarding follow up action. Its founding members are: **Halina Brown** (co-chair and liaison with SCORAI Executive Committee), **Vanessa Timmer** (One Earth), **Eleni Sotos** (co-chair and Director of the Founders Workgroup on Sustainable Production and Consumption), and **Vicky Salazar** (EPA Region 10), with the contributions of **John Stutz** (Tellus Institute) at the outset. Since the creation of the taskforce, other individuals have participated in several conference calls in an advisory capacity. The structure of the Taskforce and its exact modus operandi in relation to the Executive Committee is currently being finalized.

The Taskforce has thus far discussed the following range of activities:

1. Encourage practitioners to join the **SCORAI listserv** and to attend the **SCOARI conference** in June 2013.
2. Create a **virtual bulletin board** on the SCORAI website. The bulletin board would serve to: facilitate answers to specific questions and inquires; provide opportunities to post and respond to information requests (as well as solicitations for limited assistance); to disseminate information about resources and new developments in the field; and to publicize opportunities for collaboration among researchers and practitioners (initiating or joining short-term projects, assessing or evaluating existing projects, participating in longer-term projects). The discussion on how to best achieve these objectives within the very constrained resources of SCORAI is ongoing.
3. Add a new category, **“Notes from the Field”**, to the SCORAI newsletter, a 250-word article by practitioners in the field of sustainable consumption that highlights their work. Special emphasis would be given to activities at the interface of research and practice, and practitioners would provide a snapshot of a project or activity they are engaged in or an observation they have made in the area of sustainable consumption. The article would also provide the name and contact information of the practitioner to allow for follow-up inquiries. Practitioners would be invited to submit in the same way as the current newsletter articles are requested and submitted.
4. Organize and host a **series of webinars or conference calls** that would be open to funders, practitioners, and SCORAI colleagues on models of researcher/practitioner partnerships that exemplify possibilities and inspire more creative thinking. The forums would seek to showcase work that bridges research and practice.
5. Serve as an **initial point of contact for practitioners external to SCORAI** who would like to recommend some activity to the SCORAI network as a whole (e.g., a workshop, participation in an event, or some other initiative). The Taskforce would consider the proposal and its appropriateness for the SCORAI network as a whole (or a subgroup of it), reframe the initial idea if appropriate, and make a recommendation to the SCORAI Executive Committee regarding follow-up action.

#### **4.4 SCORAI updates since March 2012**

Other follow-up activities with relevance to the Vancouver workshop have included the following:

- Philip Vergragt presented the results of the Vancouver workshop at a **conference in Berlin (March 19-20, 2012)** sponsored by the Partnership for Education and Research about Responsible Living (PERL). The presentation was entitled “Challenging Consumerism: Major Outcomes of the 2012 SCORAI Workshop” (available as PowerPoint presentation upon request: [pvergragt@tellus.org](mailto:pvergragt@tellus.org)).
- During the four months since the workshop, SCORAI has solidified arrangements to expand the scope of its operations to Europe and globally. In Europe, **SCORAI-Europe was formally established on May 2, 2012**, after a successful trans-Atlantic workshop held in Bregenz (Austria). This event was co-organized by a European team and members of the SCORAI Executive Board and drew heavily on experience and insights derived from the Vancouver workshop.
- In addition, the **Global Research Forum on Sustainable Production and Consumption (GRF-SPC)** was launched in Rio de Janeiro on June 13–15 with a very successful workshop comprising 85 international participants: <http://grfscp.wordpress.com/>. This event was sponsored by SCORAI and facilitated by the One Earth team. This GRF-SPC event forged linkages with the United Nations Environment Program, the International Council of Scientific Unions, the International Council for Science, and will contribute to the **Rio+20 Ten-Year Framework of Programs on Sustainable Consumption and Production (10YFP), which was adopted at the United Nations Conference on**

**Sustainable Development.** To read the adopted 10YFP document at Rio+20, see <http://bit.ly/R5mVHn>.

- Members of the SCORAI Executive Board attended the **conference of the New Economics Foundation in June 2012** at Bard College with the aim of fostering closer connections with academics and practitioners working on areas closely connected to sustainable consumption.
- SCORAI recently announced plans to **convene a large conference (approximately 200 participants) in June 2013** at Clark University in Worcester, MA, under the provisional title “The Future of Consumerism and Well-being in a World of Ecological Constraints.” This event will bring together both academics and practitioners and is expected to revisit many of the themes of the Vancouver workshop. Through smaller breakout groups and focused meetings, we expect to make considerable progress on a range of issues.
- The Vancouver workshop provided an opportunity for academics and practitioners to discuss and reflect on how to continue to build the movement around sustainable production and consumption, and to consider ways to influence policy at all levels, take action on strategic leverage points, reduce the duplication of efforts and build complementary linkages among actors. Specific activities that are unfolding from these interactions include **continuing to build the movement, further map sustainable consumption and production actors and their activities, and to analyze the language / concepts that SCP actors / communities use to convey and frame ideas relevant in their field.**

## ANNEX 1: Agenda

Workshop website: <http://scorai2012.wordpress.com>

### Thursday, March 8

6pm – 8:00 pm – **Reception at the UBC Liu Institute for Global Issues**

Welcome / Opening Remarks:

SCORAI, One Earth and Peter Dauvergne (UBC Liu Institute for Global Issues)

### DAY 1

#### Friday, March 9

Objectives:

- Provide an opportunity for the research community and practitioners engaged in research to have an in-depth exchange about the sustainable consumption field of inquiry
- Build on, critique and fine-tune the research papers presented
- Identify and list areas for further inquiry, research and action

8:00–8:30am – Registration

8:30 – 10:00am – **Opening Plenary**

Welcome / Opening Remarks: SCORAI

Chair: **Maurie Cohen** (New Jersey Institute of Technology)

Facilitator: **Vanessa Timmer** (One Earth & Harvard University)

**Keynote Presentation: James Meadowcroft** (Carleton University), *Pushing the Boundaries: Governance for Sustainable Development and a Politics of Limits*

Discussant: **John Stutz**, Tellus Institute

**Dialogue**

10:00 – 10:30am – Break – (catering provided by: One Planet Catering)

10:30 – 11:45am – Discussion Session A:

**Societal Dimensions of Subjective Well-Being and Mindfulness**

Chair: **Erik Assadourian** (Worldwatch Institute)

**John Helliwell** (University of British Columbia), *Social Norms, Happiness, and the Environment: Closing the Circle*

**Chris Barrington-Leigh** (McGill University), *Relative Income and Happiness: A Global Study*

**Naomi Krogman** (University of Alberta) & **Emily Huddart Kennedy**, *Examining Sources of Emotional Energy that Lead to Mindfulness and Linking Them to the Potential for Sustainable Consumption Practices*

Discussant: **John Stutz** (Tellus Institute)

Followed by **Dialogue**

11:45am – 1pm – Discussion Session B:

**The Role of Empirical Research in Studying Sustainable Consumption**

Chair: **Jack Luskin** (University of Massachusetts – Lowell)

**Tom Bowerman** (PolicyInteractive), *How much is too much? A Public Opinion Perspective*

**Paulette Padanyi** (University of Guelph) & **Tania Del Matto** (My Sustainable Canada), *Canadian Consumers Struggle to Make Sustainable Choices*

**Vanessa Timmer** (One Earth & Harvard University), **William E. Rees** (University of British Columbia & One Earth), **Emmanuel Prinnet** (One Earth), **Dagmar Timmer** (One Earth), & **Alastair Moore** (One Earth), *Do Sustainable Lifestyle Experiments Actually Reduce Footprints? Defining Elements of a Monitoring Protocol*

Discussant: **Maurie Cohen** (New Jersey Institute of Technology)  
Followed by **Dialogue**

1pm – 2pm – Lunch

2pm – 3:15pm – Discussion Session C:  
**Politics of Sacrifice and Sufficiency in a No-Growth Economy**

Chair: **Peter Victor** (York University)  
**Thomas Princen** (University of Michigan), *Sustainable Consumption: The Psychology, Ecology and Politics in Research and Action*  
**Karen Litfin** (University of Washington), *Gleanings from the Harvest: Learning from Ecovillage Experiments around the World*  
**Stephen McCauley** (Clark University), *Hidden in Plain Sight: The Promising but Impeded Vision of Community-based Green Regional Development*

Discussant: **Philip Vergragt** (Tellus Institute & Clark University)  
Followed by **Dialogue**

3:15pm – 3:45pm – Break

3:45pm – 5:00pm – Discussion Session D:  
**Sustainable Consumption and Communities of Practice**

Chair: **Betsy Taylor** (Breakthrough Strategies & Solutions)  
**John Robinson** (University of British Columbia), **Tom Berkhout** (UBC), **Alberto Cayuela** (UBC), & **Ann Campbell** (UBC), *Next Generation Sustainability at the University of British Columbia: The University as a Societal Test-bed for Sustainability*  
**Jeffrey Barber** (Integrated Strategies Forum) & **Jack Luskin** (University of Massachusetts-Lowell), *Connecting Communities of Practice in the Movement toward Sustainable Production and Consumption*  
**James Goldstein** (Tellus Institute), *An Emergent Campaign for a Global Citizens Movement*

Discussant: **Halina Brown** (Clark University)  
Followed by **Dialogue**

5pm – 5:45pm – **Reflections and Dialogue on Sustainable Consumption**

6pm – 9:30pm — **Workshop Dinner – Green College, UBC**  
Venue rental and A/V generously sponsored by Green College  
Presentations:

**Sadhu Johnson**, Deputy City Manager, City of Vancouver  
**Maureen Cureton**, Green Business Manager, Vancity Credit Union

Performance:  
“**Do you want what I have got? A Craigslist Cantata**”

Written by: Bill Richardson, Veda Hille  
Performers: Veda Hille, Barry Mirochnick

## **DAY 2**

**Saturday, March 10**

Objective:

- To build bridges among research and practice communities

8:30–9:00am – Coffee

9am–9:30am—**Opening reflections**

Summary of the sustainable consumption dialogue from Day One of the conference and from key ideas and questions discussed prior to the workshop.

Presentation: **Annie Leonard** (The Story of Stuff)

Introduced by: **Eleni Sotos** (Fundlers Work Group for Sustainable Production and Consumption)

#### 9:30am–10:00am– **Paired Researcher – Practitioner Dialogue**

- Sharing impressions: What are you most passionate about in terms of sustainable consumption?
- Option: review the bio posters on the wall with your partner: what strikes you? How does this relate to what you are most passionate about in terms of sustainable consumption?

10:00–10:30am – Break

#### 10:30am –12:30pm – **Interactive session on sustainable consumption**

Dialogue on key sustainable consumption issues, ideas and questions:

1. **Identifying our theories of change:** How does social change happen? How do we bring innovations to scale? What are the leverage points?
2. **Framing / communication:** How do we communicate sustainable consumption? What framings should we use to engage? Who are the target audiences?
3. **Innovative business models:** What are the innovative business models for sustainable consumption? How do we reframe the business case?
4. **Practical cases / Citizen movement activities:** Identify the most compelling examples of sustainable consumption best practice? And why are they best practice? Are they hitting mainstream? What are major barriers?

12:30pm – 1:30pm – Lunch and **tour of UBC CIRS building** led by John Robinson, UBC (<http://cirs.ubc.ca>) – One Planet Catering

#### 1:30 – 2:15pm – **Plenary dialogue and creating breakout groups**

- \* What ideas came out of the interactive dialogue? Brief presentations from each group.
- \* Identifying issues for the breakout groups – Open Space Marketplace

#### 2:15 – 3:30pm – **Breakout groups**

- \* What are **key insights and questions** about this issue?
- \* What kind of **research / knowledge** is needed to address this issue? What do we need to know?
- \* **Next steps:** What seed if we planted today would make the most difference in our work?

3:30 – 4:00pm – Break

#### 4:00 – 5:30pm – **Next steps and closing session**

- \* What needs our immediate attention going forward?
- \* How can we support each other in taking the next steps?
- \* What unique contribution can we each make?

5:30pm – Travel to Downtown Vancouver

Buses donated by West Coast Sightseeing (<http://www.vancouverstightseeing.com>)

#### 5:45 – 9:00pm – **Workshop Dinner profiling and sponsored by British Columbia Institute of Technology**

Presentation: **Jennie Moore**, Director, Sustainable Development and Environmental Stewardship, BCIT

Special Guest: **Bruce Grierson**, Canadian National Magazine Award-winning feature writer and author of *U-Turn*, and co-author (with Kalle Lasn) of *Culture Jam*.

## ANNEX 2: Participant list

FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	AFFILIATION	COUNTRY
Andrew	Robinson	Rescan Environmental Services	Canada
Ann	Rowan	Metro Vancouver	Canada
Annie	Leonard	The Story of Stuff	USA
Bard	Suen	Rangi Changi	Canada
Betsy	Taylor	Breakthrough Strategies & Solutions	USA
Bev	Thorpe	Cleaner Production Action	Canada
Bruce	Grierson	Writer	Canada
Christopher	Barrington-Leigh	McGill University	Canada
Dagmar	Timmer	One Earth Initiative	Canada
Daniel	Brody	Environmental Protection Agency (Region 10)	USA
David	Van Seters	Sustainability Ventures	Canada
David	Allaway	Oregon Department of Environmental Quality	USA
David	Levine	American Sustainable Business Council	USA
Denise	Taschereau	Fairware: Promotional Solutions for Sustainable Brands	Canada
Eleni	Sotos	Funders Workgroup on Sustainable Production and Consumption	USA
Emmanuel	Prinet	One Earth Initiative	Canada
Erik	Assadourian	Worldwatch Institute	USA
Esther	Speck	Mountain Equipment Co-op	Canada
Garth	Yule	Vancity Community Foundation	Canada
Halina	Brown	Clark University	USA
Jack	Luskin	University of Massachusetts	USA
Jacqueline	Koerner	Ecotrust Canada	Canada
James	Nevison	University of British Columbia	Canada
James	Goldstein	Tellus Institute	USA
James	Meadowcroft	Carleton University	Canada
Jane	Lister	University of British Columbia	Canada
Jeffrey	Barber	Integrative Strategies Forum	USA
Jennie	Moore	BC Institute of Technology	Canada
Jennie	Curtis	The Garfield Foundation	USA
John	Dagevos	Tilburg Sustainability Centre, Tilburg University	NlDs
John	Helliwell	University of British Columbia	Canada

<b>John</b>	<b>Robinson</b>	University of British Columbia	Canada
<b>John</b>	<b>DeGraaf</b>	Take Back Your Time	USA
<b>John</b>	<b>Stutz</b>	Tellus Institute	USA
<b>Joji</b>	<b>Kumagai</b>	Strathcona Business Improvement Association	Canada
<b>Juliet</b>	<b>Schor</b>	Boston College	USA
<b>Karen</b>	<b>Litfin</b>	University of Washington	USA
<b>Kathryn</b>	<b>Cholette</b>	Village Vancouver / Transition Town	Canada
<b>Laura</b>	<b>Stanik</b>	Rutgers University	USA
<b>Louise</b>	<b>Schwartz</b>	Recycling Alternative / Be the Change	Canada
<b>Marc</b>	<b>Lee</b>	Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives	Canada
<b>Mark</b>	<b>Roseland</b>	Simon Fraser University	Canada
<b>Mark</b>	<b>Holland</b>	New Monaco Enterprise Corporation	Canada
<b>Maureen</b>	<b>Cureton</b>	Vancity Credit Union	Canada
<b>Maurie</b>	<b>Cohen</b>	New Jersey Institute of Technology	USA
<b>Michael</b>	<b>Travers</b>	BC Hydro	Canada
<b>Michael</b>	<b>Narberhaus</b>	SMART Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)	United Kingdom
<b>Naomi</b>	<b>Krogman</b>	University of Alberta	Canada
<b>Noah</b>	<b>Quastel</b>	University of British Columbia	Canada
<b>Paulette</b>	<b>Padanyi</b>	University of Guelph	Canada
<b>Peter</b>	<b>Dauvergne</b>	University of British Columbia	Canada
<b>Peter</b>	<b>Victor</b>	York University	Canada
<b>Philip</b>	<b>Vergragt</b>	Tellus Institute / Clark University	USA
<b>Robert</b>	<b>Safрата</b>	Novex Courier / Westcoast Sightseeing	Canada
<b>Rosemary</b>	<b>Cooper</b>	Simon Fraser University / Creating Places	Canada
<b>Ruben</b>	<b>Anderson</b>	Sustainability consultant and behaviour change specialist	Canada
<b>Sadhu</b>	<b>Johnson</b>	City of Vancouver	Canada
<b>Sam</b>	<b>Johns</b>	University of British Columbia	Canada
<b>Sasha</b>	<b>Caldera</b>	Fair Trade Vancouver	Canada
<b>Stephanie</b>	<b>Shulhan</b>	University of British Columbia	Canada
<b>Stephen</b>	<b>McCauley</b>	Clark University	USA
<b>Tania</b>	<b>Del Matto</b>	My Sustainable Canada	Canada
<b>Thomas</b>	<b>Princen</b>	University of Michigan	USA
<b>Tim</b>	<b>Reeve</b>	Reeve Consulting	Canada
<b>Tobi</b>	<b>Reyes</b>	One Earth / Port Capital Group	Canada
<b>Tom</b>	<b>Bowerman</b>	PolicyInteractive	USA
<b>Vanessa</b>	<b>Timmer</b>	One Earth Initiative	Canada

<b>Vicky</b>	<b>Salazar</b>	Environmental Protection Agency (Region 10)	USA
<b>Wendy</b>	<b>Philleo</b>	Center for the New American Dream	USA

### Vancouver Organizing Team

<b>Arsalan</b>	<b>Hassan</b>	Simon Fraser University	Canada
<b>Drew</b>	<b>DePanicis</b>	One Earth Initiative	Canada
<b>Georgia</b>	<b>Love</b>	One Earth Initiative	Canada
<b>Joyce</b>	<b>Shen</b>	One Earth Initiative	Canada
<b>Julia</b>	<b>Meyer-MacLeod</b>	University of British Columbia	Canada
<b>Justin</b>	<b>Ritchie</b>	University of British Columbia	Canada
<b>Kyle</b>	<b>Rosetta</b>	Inner Flame Films	Canada
<b>Noelani</b>	<b>Dubeta</b>	Consultant - Wellbeing and Human Development	Canada
<b>Ruth</b>	<b>Legg</b>	One Earth Initiative	Canada
<b>Sara</b>	<b>Brown</b>	One Earth Initiative	Canada
<b>Thomas</b>	<b>Moore</b>	Simon Fraser University	Canada
<b>Yaheli</b>	<b>Klein</b>	University of British Columbia	Canada

## ANNEX 3: Resources

The following are some additional resources that provided a background to the discussions at the SCORAI workshop:

### **The Story of Stuff:**

Video on “The Story of Stuff” featuring Annie Leonard — (21min 25sec)

<http://www.storyofstuff.org/>

Other related videos: The Story of Broke, The Story of Electronics, The Story of Cosmetics... and resources for further understanding and action

### **Visualizing a Plenitude Economy:**

Video featuring Juliet Schor — (4min 51sec)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HR-YrD\\_KB0M](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HR-YrD_KB0M)

### **Household Consumption and Social Change:**

Arnold Tukker, Maurie J. Cohen, Klaus Hubacek, and Oksana Mont (2010) [The Impacts of Household Consumption and Options for Change](#). Journal of Industrial Ecology. Vol. 14. No. 1 (18 pages)

### **I’ll have what she’s having: Mapping Social Behaviour:**

Mark Earls and Alex Bentley explore how ideas, behaviour and culture spread through the simple means of doing what others do. <http://www.thersa.org/events/video/vision-videos/mark-earls-and-alex-bentley> (RSA video – 16 min 41 sec)

### **Smart CSOs Lab:**

<http://www.smart-csos.org/>

The Smart CSOs Lab fosters a growing learning network of civil society organisation (CSO) leaders, funders and researchers aiming to build effective CSO strategies for the ‘[Great Transition](#)’ to a sustainable society and economy.

Overview report downloadable here: [SmartCSOs Summary](#).

### **Prosperity Without Growth:**

Jackson, Tim, and Peter Victor. “Prosperity without growth is possible”. The Vancouver Sun. September 19, 2011 (1 page)

<http://www.vancouversun.com/business/Prosperity+without+growth+possible/5423370/story.html>

Tim Jackson on TED.com: “An Economic Reality Check” (20min 23sec)

[Click here](#) to watch the Ted talk

### **Herman Daly on “Limits to Growth: Forty More Years?”:**

<http://steadystate.org/limits-to-growth-forty-more-years/>

### **The Circular Economy:**

Video on “Re-thinking progress: The circular economy” — (3min 48sec)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zCRKvDyyHml>

### **Industrial Ecology:**

Video on Kalundborg, the Danish industrial symbiosis initiative – (2min 36sec)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1yCYGOxnpSY&feature=related>

**Collaborative Consumption website and video:**

Collaborative consumption website –

<http://www.collaborativeconsumption.com/the-movement/>

Video on “Collaborative Consumption” — (2min 32sec) – (you may want to mute the music)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f1\\_cpMpCOOE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f1_cpMpCOOE)

Rachel Botsman on TEDx: The Case for Collaborative Consumption (19min)

[http://www.ted.com/talks/rachel\\_botsman\\_the\\_case\\_for\\_collaborative\\_consumption.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/rachel_botsman_the_case_for_collaborative_consumption.html)

Snapshot of examples of collaborative consumption:

<http://www.collaborativeconsumption.com/the-movement/snapshot-of-examples.php>

**Design for Sustainability websites:**

Living Principles: A Roadmap for design — <http://www.livingprinciples.org/framework/roadmap/>

Living Principles for Design Context — <http://www.livingprinciples.org/resources/context/overview>