

Fostering and Communicating Sustainable Lifestyles: Case Studies from around the World

These 16 cases from around the world explore how sustainable lifestyle campaigns intersect with key aspects of meeting core domain needs around food, shelter, mobility, leisure time, and human connections.

These cases come from the full report *Fostering and Communicating Sustainable Lifestyles: Principles and Emerging Practices* (PDF), which was published in 2016.



Image Source: Shark Truth

Ba Giam, Ba Tang (Three Reductions, Three Gains) (Vietnam)

Case ([PDF](#))

Three Reductions, Three Gains (3R3G) aims to reduce the poverty level and increase the environmental sustainability and health outcomes in the rural communities and rice farmers of the Mekong River Delta. These goals are pursued through an innovative campaign that encourages farmers to modify three key resource management practices - fertilizers, insecticides, and seeds - to achieve the three gains of economic prosperity, health, and soil productivity. The campaign makes use of leaflets, billboards, and a radio drama to transmit scientific data on sustainable agricultural practices in a highly accessible way.

China Dream (China)

Case ([PDF](#))

The China Dream initiative, founded in 2007 by the Joint US-China Collaboration on Clean Energy (JUCCCE), seeks to accelerate the shift to sustainable living in China. At its core, China Dream is about reimagining prosperity and reshaping the desires of the emerging Chinese middle class, a segment of Chinese society on track to exceed 800 million people by 2025. The goal of China Dream is to catalyze sustainable behaviours in this class of consumers by encouraging social

norms around a new personal prosperity and national identity. China Dream also aims to shape policies targeting consumer behaviour such as those supporting textile recycling.

Cool Congregations (Interfaith Power and Light) (USA)

Case ([PDF](#))

Faith communities have emerged as leaders advocating for climate solutions. As part of this movement, Interfaith Power and Light (IPL) launched its behaviour change program aimed at reducing the carbon footprint of congregational buildings across America. Cool Congregations supports faith communities to “walk the talk” and reduce their carbon footprint through a range of actions – from switching to LED light bulbs to installing solar panels on roofs. Their intention is to inspire individuals to take steps at home when they see changes made by their congregation. Cool Congregations is effective in framing sustainability as based in commonly held stewardship values and measures and celebrates accomplishments along the way. It provides hands-on ways for congregants to make shifts in their energy consumption behaviours that ladder up to collective actions including engaging around policy change.

EnergiaKözösségek (EnergyNeighbourhoods) (Hungary)

Case ([PDF](#))

EnergiaKözösségek (EnergyNeighbourhoods) are composed of 5 - 12 households which come together for at least five months to compete against other neighbourhood groups in achieving reductions in energy consumption. Energy savings are measured and compared against a baseline of the household's past energy consumption. The program also provides tips on sustainable eating, mobility and free time in creative ways such as putting together a climate-friendly menu or holiday plan. The success of the EnergyNeighbourhoods campaigns stems from its participatory and diverse approach to meeting the needs of households in Hungary. Supporting a diversity of pathways to lower footprint living broadens the audience and makes engagement easier.

Feria Verde (Costa Rica)

Case ([PDF](#))

Feria Verde is a marketplace located in San José, Costa Rica where organic farmers, food artisans, designers, handicrafters, restaurants, and consumers gather twice a week to exchange products, ideas, and to support each other in pursuing sustainable, prosperous lives. Feria Verde also hosts a wide variety of courses and events including sustainability-themed workshops, producer idea

exchanges and training seminars, yoga classes, a hula-hoop club, children's programming, live music and cultural events, and a recycling centre. Feria Verde is deeply influencing the public discussion of organic foods and their production, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), industrial and family farming models, conservation, and the links between health and nutrition at the national level.

Kislábnyom - Small Footprint (Hungary)

Case ([PDF](#))

Kislábnyom was a campaign run by GreenDependent, which aimed at promoting and celebrating lifestyles in lower income households that are within the earth's ecological carrying capacity. The initiative consisted of interactive training sessions with family groups throughout the country, small footprint competitions for households, celebratory community events, and native fruit trees planting. Kislábnyom also took collective responsibility for emissions associated with program-related events. To achieve the goal of long-lasting sustainable behaviour change, GreenDependent appealed directly to the common desire to cut household costs, identified many behaviours that households were already taking and could build on. They reframed how participants thought about the issue of sustainability by promoting the idea that low income lifestyles are already inherently sustainable.

Love Food, Hate Waste (UK)

Case ([PDF](#))

Love Food, Hate Waste is a public-facing behaviour change campaign coordinated by the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) to reduce food waste in the UK. The campaign motivates the public to think differently about food, emphasizing how better food management results in substantial financial savings as well as a reduced environmental impact. The campaign uses tips on how to better manage food and provides leftover recipes to help the public reduce household food waste. WRAP runs the campaign and amplifies its impact through private, public and community partnerships. WRAP understands the bigger picture and uses this public-facing campaign to help influence retailers and government agencies to address their waste as well. This campaign is now being taken up around the world from Canada to New Zealand.

Low Energy Housing (China)

Case ([PDF](#))

The Low Energy Housing campaign, launched by SWITCH-Asia, focused on increasing the sustainable use of resources in the building sectors in the city of Shenzhen and Sichuan province, China. It influenced a shift in construction practices including energy efficiency and recycling of building materials. These activities were connected to improving quality life for citizens in the target cities by emphasizing that green buildings are more healthy environments for people to live in. Low Energy Housing also framed its activities in terms of contributing to climate change mitigation. The campaign resulted in significant savings from reducing carbon emissions by allowing construction projects to avoid purchasing carbon credits in China's carbon emissions trading system. The campaign connected with more than 700 small and medium-sized enterprises and engaged in 42 outreach activities.

NEED Myanmar (Myanmar)

Case ([PDF](#))

NEED Myanmar is a non-profit that operates professional training and village-level capacity building programs servicing the rural, predominantly ethnic minority communities of the country's north, west, and eastern border regions. NEED Myanmar works to address two key challenges in the border regions, the first being food insecurity through the Model Farm Initiative, a six-month training program that invests in skills development for young people including sustainable agriculture, environmental justice, community development, and leadership. Second, at the village level, Myanmar's border regions face the challenge of managing biodiversity loss and environmental degradation related to economic development and unsustainable agricultural practices.

One Planet Living (Global)

Case ([PDF](#))

One Planet Living is a sustainable living initiative created by Bioregional, a charity and social enterprise founded in the UK in 1994. Rooted in the science of ecological and carbon footprints, the aim of One Planet Living is to support people around the world in living happy, healthy lives within their fair share of the Earth's resources, leaving space for wildlife and wilderness. Based on ten simple principles of sustainability, the One Planet Living initiative was created out of the strategies used to develop the BedZED eco-village in the UK in 2002. BedZed is where Bioregional



was founded and where Bioregional's London office is based. The One Planet Living framework is being used around the world by global businesses, cities, towns, property developers, community groups, schools, and universities.

Penn South (USA)

Case ([PDF](#))

Penn South is an affordable, complete, low-impact, thriving community of almost ten thousand people in New York, one of the most expensive cities in the world. It is a diverse community of all ages, races, and ethnicities, who are actively engaged in the self-management of their commons. Penn South enables low- and moderate-income working families to live a dignified, high quality life with amenities that are generally only accessible to the wealthy. Residents' low ecological impact is enabled by key features of this community: high quality dense housing in ten 24-story buildings, easy access within walking distance to amenities for all ages and health needs, access to excellent public transit, and its own park. The backbone of this project is its cooperative model of ownership and its dedication to building a sense of community.

Repair Café (Netherlands; now 29 countries)

Case ([PDF](#))

The Repair Café International Foundation is a non-profit organization promoting a global movement of community-led repair workshops to address consumption and waste, and build meaningful relationships. It started in Amsterdam and spread rapidly across The Netherlands, then Europe, and is now operating in 29 countries including the United States, Ghana, Brazil, and Singapore. Cafés are grounded in local contexts - volunteers lead the effort and the program is free for participants. The Repair Café Foundation offers a toolkit and support services to community groups and volunteers, providing a model that is scaling quickly given its ease of implementation and adaptability to local contexts. Repair Cafés tap multiple values including sustainability, community resilience, and revitalizing old fix-it skills.

SEKEM Initiative (Egypt)

Case ([PDF](#))

The SEKEM group is a social enterprise composed of a set of eight companies, a development foundation, and several schools founded in 1977, has at its core a positive vision of a sustainable

future “where all economic activity is conducted in accordance with ecological and ethical principles.” Its mission is carried out across the agriculture sector from farms to food processing and pharmaceuticals, as well as through the SEKEM Development Foundation and the Heliopolis University for Sustainable Development. The business arm of the group focuses on organic and biodynamic farming, organic cotton and textiles, pharmaceuticals, and sustainable ecological management. The SEKEM Development Foundation operates several schools (from kindergarten through to vocational training), a medical centre, and a variety of social impact projects. Common to all these activity areas is the drive to improve the lives of Egyptians by investing in individual education and sustainable livelihoods, conserving the environment and giving back to the community. For SEKEM to advance its objectives, it demonstrates to its upstream suppliers, employees, communities, and customers that they can live better lives by adopting sustainable practices in their farming, business practices, and consumption and waste management habits.

Shark Truth (Canada)

Case ([PDF](#))

Founded in 2009, Shark Truth is dedicated to promoting awareness, education, and action to reduce and eventually eliminate the consumption of shark fin soup, and to build a community of change with Chinese-Canadians. To advance these goals, the Shark Truth initiative developed three overlapping initiatives: Shark Fin Alternatives, Fin Free Weddings, and Fin Free Legislation. The first two initiatives directly target consumers and producers of shark fin soup to become part of the solution, while the third seeks to change laws and regulations to protect sharks by stopping the import, sale, possession, and trade of shark fins. This campaign challenges the cultural narrative around shark fin soup which is traditionally associated with power, wealth, and generosity, and serving it at weddings is viewed as a sign of respect to guests. Shark Truth draws on the diversity of Chinese cuisine to develop a variety of recipes that address the same cultural needs, without having the same harmful environmental impacts.

The Story of Stuff (USA)

Case ([PDF](#))

The Story of Stuff is a 20-minute online movie that became a movement for systemic change toward “less stuff, less toxic stuff, less waste, more sharing and more fun.” Created by and featuring sustainability expert Annie Leonard, the film explores the lifecycle of material goods and the impacts of excessive consumerism. The film’s popularity led to the creation of the nonprofit, The Story of Stuff Project, and the development of additional, very popular award-winning animated and live-action movies which have catalyzed hundreds of initiatives and



campaigns by individuals and communities. Over the past five years, there has been an evolution in the approach beyond story-based education to campaigning on compelling issues. The Story of Stuff nonprofit engages heavily in movement building with aligned individuals, organizations, and networks. Over one million people globally have joined the Story of Stuff community to engage collectively in policy or community-based campaigns and raise awareness including educators, students, parents, community leaders and groups, entrepreneurs, and academics. Ultimately, The Story of Stuff's strategic work falls into three broad categories: fight the bad, build the good, and change the conversation; with selected campaigns based on detailed analysis and consultation.

Yerdle - Swap stuff. Save money. (USA)

Case ([PDF](#))

Yerdle is an online trading platform that encourages Americans to be part of a growing community working together to save money, cut waste and other environmental impacts, build community, and de-clutter their lives. Participants post an item they no longer need, and receive credits in the form of "Yerdle bucks" when someone claims the item. They can then use these credits to make additional purchases through the site, which helps encourage further use of the platform. Yerdle actively uses social media, blogs, and online videos to drive membership and build a sense of community among the 600,000 and growing Yerdlers who share their stories of being able to meet basic needs, save money, make new friends, help others, and reduce their environmental impact.