

We Are All Connected



Humans need the environment for survival. Present policies threaten many parts of the environment, but one way or another the planet will survive us, but if we do too much damage then humanity will be the losers. Humans are not apart from the environment. We inevitably shape the world around us, as does all life. What we have is a choice. What kind of environments do we prefer? Sustainability knows that a rich diverse environment is better in itself, for other species and ourselves.

Too often things are put into separate boxes. Experts, in their narrow field, often approach issues in isolation from the wider world. Sustainability is about making connections. About seeing how our actions interact. By seeing the whole picture we would appreciate the importance of the environment, other species and people. Profit wouldn't come first.

Sustainability gives priority to peoples' needs rather than the production of commodities for sale to make profit. The use of resources around the world and even in Britain is extremely unequal. A tiny portion of the population, government and big business use the vast majority of the world's resources. Ten men have more money than six hundred million. Much of the resources used are totally wasted. Weapons, luxury goods, and wasteful production consume resources. If alongside a fair world, we stopped wasteful production, drastically improved efficiency of resource use and built things to last it would be possible to improve the living standards of most of the people of the world and Britain. Of course the rich minority would have to make do with an ordinary life style.

Big business's control of the food, chemical and health industry has produced unhealthy food, a multitude of food additives, dangerous chemicals and drugs with unknown harmful effects. Safe food, a clean environment and meaningful employment would dramatically improve people's health and quality of life.

Rather than see the environment and people's quality of life as off the balance sheet (externalities) they should be the central concerns of economic aims and public policy. The environment and jobs are seen as in conflict because the priority is profit. A sustainable approach would see that improving the environment and people's quality of life would provide jobs, worthwhile jobs at that.