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Engaging visions

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If, as Donella Meadows says, vision without action is useless, then vision must be engaging. A vision should help its viewers look, see, understand, and feel, and so be shown directions forward and be stimulated to get involved.

The vision enabled by science of how human activities have long been dramatically changing all fundamental planetary equilibria is now available to viewers of different ages, from the very young to the elderly, at different levels, from individual to collective, and in different discourse arenas, both in material and virtual places.

In recent years more and more scientists have increasingly expressed dismay and indignation as a result of (above all, if not only) political inaction, based on a lack of understanding and/or will to act, and the way in which the relentless pursuit of vested corporate interests peddles misinformation and frustrates initiatives.

In the face of this, to be engaging, visions must contain a vital mix of awareness, advocacy and activism. The papers in this issue of *Visions for Sustainability* offer a range of perspectives on engaging with and for sustainability.

Engaging young people

The engagement of young people, both in terms of the information they access and the forms of activism they perceive as being pertinent and available to them, is fundamental.

In “Radical climate activism. Motivations, consequences, and approaches”, Vuon et al. argue that environmental activism is crucial in increasing awareness of environmental degradation and preventing actions that harm the environment. They focus on radical environmentalist groups’ motivations, their actions and their consequences and the risk that some of their actions may result in adverse outcomes and diminish public support for environmental engagement. They propose an alternative solidarity approach whereby activists focus their efforts on disseminating information to the general public on climate change and other environmental issues, advocating for the adoption of eco-surplus culture, and fostering cooperation to develop effective solutions.

In “Young audiences and climate change. Communication analysis in different public arenas”, Semova et al. consider climate change discourse from the perspective of young audiences in terms of the mass media arena, collaborative-activist arena, personal arena, and discussion arena. They pose questions related to thematic categories and level of engagement in the traditional media arena where young audiences are users of news and messages and the public arenas where they become generators of information. They show that traditional media pay less attention to environmental issues from the perspective of activism, social justice or culture, and how this contrasts with the approaches and activism of young audiences in other arenas formed by social networks.

Engaging Higher Education

Higher Education institutions should clearly be engaged in developing vision and action for sustainability, both in terms of their research and didactic activities and their organization as sustainable institutions.

In “Beyond the Global Warming issue. Understanding students’ motivations as volunteers in youth environmental community” Melati et al. investigate the motivation of student volunteers joining an environmental community and the building of an effective voluntary system for students focusing on synergizing personal and community goals. Their study looks at circular economy implementation in suburban areas and considers how an environmental community

management concept can facilitate both the personal goals of the volunteers and the common goals of the community.

In “A technocreativity learning model based on volunteers for waste management. Can it support Green Campus and Green Entrepreneurship for students?” Sumarmi et al. propose a technocreativity learning model based on environmental volunteers for waste management to support Green Campus and Green Entrepreneurship for students. The model consists of stages involving an initial briefing for students, collecting trash, waste sorting, waste processing for manufacture, waste processing, and waste profits. The results suggest that the longer an individual has been a member of an environmental volunteer group, the more they develop an interest in participating in Green Campus and Green Entrepreneur activities. for waste management in university.

In “Young people’s awareness, perception and attitude towards Sustainable Development Goals in India” Minimol & Sebastian set out to understand how young people's attitudes toward sustainable development goals are formed and the roles that awareness, perception, and personal value propositions play. They also investigate the role that worldviews play in shaping young people's attitude towards sustainable development goals.

Engaging focuses on Sustainable Development

Our journal has often expressed its reservations about an uncritical reference to the Sustainability Development Goals, starting from the need to question what is actually meant by development and its all-too-common association with the idea that economic growth is a necessary prerequisite to achieving it. At the very least, we believe that researchers should examine the many problematic aspects concerned with the design and implementation of what UNESCO defines as “common goals that humanity has chosen for itself” (UNESCO, 2023). While we are pleased to receive and publish papers which deal with aspects of the SDGs, we urge authors to go beyond mere reference to them as if they were a unique and ineluctable benchmark and to propose visions that critique the way in which they have been conceived, proposed and implemented.

Even if we are critical in this respect, engaging the SDGs directly on their own terms is a necessary part of sustainability discourse. In “Sustainability Development Goals: overcoming barriers and catalysing innovation for a sustainable future” Jarrah et al. consider sustainable development goals from the point of view of barriers to their achievement and what is necessary to overcome these obstacles. They focus on the need to promote sustainability and social equity and the

importance of applying environmental, social, and economic elements of sustainable business practices.

In “Comparison of environmental Kuznet Curve testing before and during the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals” Adzim et al. analyse comparative environmental Kuznet Curve testing before and during the implementation of sustainable development goals. They focus on 10 high, upper middle and lower middle-income countries on the Asian continent during the 2011-2020 period in order to study the variables Gross Domestic Product, Population Density, Foreign Direct Investment, Human Development Index, Agricultural Land, and Industrialization in terms of their influence on CO2 emissions in the countries studied.

Engaging rethinking energy

Like all living organisms, their populations, communities and ecosystems, human beings need a constant source and flow of energy for all their activities. Satisfying this need has led to an ever more excessive demand and consequent plundering of natural resources to satisfy that demand, in such a way as to irremediably compromise the fragile planetary equilibria on which all life depends. Changing such perverse supply and demand dynamics driven by blind greed and a wilful and pathological quest for economic growth predicated on inequality and injustice requires an engaging in a radical rethinking of human energy needs, production, consumption and distribution.

In “Enhancing energy justice through solar power proliferation in Kenya’s devolved units. Insights from Makueni and Nyeri” Chisika & Yeom examine the concept of energy justice in relation to solar power and the persistence of widespread energy injustices persist. Their study examined the socio-cultural, economic, and environmental contexts relevant to energy justice and solar power usage through case studies involving the Nyeri and Makueni counties in Kenya, highlighting the influence of contextual factors and governance policies and the need to balance affordability and public participation and long-term community involvement.

In “Future directions for solar energy in a global context with particular emphasis on Saudi Arabia, the Middle East, and North Africa” Alamrani analyse future directions for solar energy in a global context, with a particular emphasis on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. They consider the challenges and opportunities relating to solar

cell adoption in such regions, particularly since there is a potential paradox of countries who are among the largest producers of fossil-fuels being in the forefront of the move to carbon-negative technologies.

In “Electric vehicle grid demand: Potential analysis model and regional architectural planning approach for charging using Pvsyst tool”, Bukya et al. argue that electric transportation is a societal necessity to mitigate the adverse effects of local emissions and global climate change and that there is a need to maintain a steady operation of regional power grids as demand increases. Their study emphasizes how PV systems can alleviate grid peak loads, in terms of their cost-effectiveness, low maintenance, and adaptability to peak-time loads.

Engaging public participation

Whatever sustainable development means, both in terms of its conception and realization, it must necessarily include the question of what forms of engagement should be envisaged for the members of the human populations that are participants in the process.

In “Enhancing citizen participation in local development planning in Nairobi and Makueni Counties in Kenya, Chisika & Yeom argue that public participation in development planning is critical for achieving sustainable development outcomes since implementing public participation enhances responsiveness to community needs, leverages diverse skills, and instils a sense of ownership for sustainable development projects. Their paper proposes a case study that examines the preparation process of the 2023- 2027 County Integrated Development Plans for Nairobi and Makueni Counties in Kenya, considering how to enhance participation by devising strategies for sustainable participation practices.

In "Fostering environmental innovation programs in Madiun Regency, East Java, Indonesia" Handoko et al. study an area that faces numerous challenges in maintaining environmental sustainability amidst economic development. Their study examines the implementation of regional innovation programs for the promotion of a smart environment which focuses on utilizing technology to manage resources efficiently, promote sustainability, and mitigate environmental impacts in the context of collaborative and innovative efforts.

Engaging producers and consumers

Radically modifying unsustainable and irresponsible production and consumption of goods and services within a market logic of supply and demand is an essential but highly complex challenge for humanity, and visions must be engaging for both producers and consumers. Although satisfying very different demands, fast fashion and bottled water have in common processes of production, consumption and waste generation that have far-reaching implications for our planet in terms of their profound effects on ecosystems and the resources they provide.

In “Sustainable and responsible creation of shared values in the fast fashion industry”, MacGregor Pelikánová et al. consider the negative social and environment impacts of the fashion industry and its problematic compliance with criteria related to sustainability, corporate social responsibility and creating shared value. In particular they examine claims by fast fashion businesses in terms of the fundamental virtues of respect and no waste and their importance as precursors of the sustainable and responsible creation of shared values. Their study focuses on a number of well-known fast fashion businesses in the EU, comparing their claims with what emerges from third-party websites.

In “Sustainable performance of bottled water firms in Ethiopia: The role of green supply chain management”, Ababulgu et al. consider how pressure from customers, government and stakeholders for firms to adopt green supply chain management practices to minimize environmental consequences while enhancing social and economic performance. Their study examines the impact of such practices on environmental, economic, and social performance in the bottled water manufacturing industry in Ethiopia and how variable their effect can be.

Engaging forest ecosystems

Forest ecosystems are of immense significance for our planet in terms of the vast range of ecosystemic services they furnish at the level of the entire biosphere. They have a crucial role to play for engaging with whatever kind of sustainable development we may be able to define and achieve.

In “Investigating wildlife crop pests and farmers’ willingness to pay for pest management in the Batand Toru Forest, Indonesia”, Harahap et al. study the challenges faced by farmers, the strategies they employ, and their willingness to contribute to managing pest-related issues in the Batang Toru region. Their findings highlight the complex and context-specific nature of pest management strategies,

emphasizing the importance of understanding local ecological dynamics and cultural factors when designing interventions.

In “Optimizing environmental education and awareness strategies for sustainable forest management in Kenya. Lessons. From Cherangany, Mt. Kenya, Aderdares and Kakamega forest ecosystems, Chisika & Yeom offer a case study of four forested ecosystems in Kenya designed to examine the relationship between strategies to achieve sustainable forest management and environmental education. Their results show that important elements are formal education infrastructure, community engagement panels, digital platforms, corporate responsibility initiatives, media, arts, policy advocacy, and research with feedback loops on initiatives.

In “The challenges of private sector engagement in forest landscape and ecosystem restoration in Kenya. The case of Makueni and Elgeyo Marakwet Counties”, Chisika & Yeom explore the current status of private sector engagement in forest restoration and identify the key challenges facing private actors through cases of the Elgeyo Marakwet and Makueni Counties in Kenya. Their results show the importance of a collaborative and well-coordinated approach to restoration, policy reviews, and conducting a total economic valuation of forest landscapes to sustain private sector interest and engagement in the restoration efforts.

Engaging human building

If the *oikos*, the etymological root of both ecology and economy, is a place to live in, then human building is of immense significance in terms of dwelling and engaging in a vast range of activities that characterize our species. What constitutes sustainable human-building ecosystems can be explored in terms of both present and past design and construction.

In “Thermal performance study of traditional slate roofed mud houses in the sub-tropical sub montane and low hills of Himachal Pradesh”, Sharma & Sharma consider how the indoor environment of an area affects its overall functionality and sustainability. Their study examines the thermal performance of slate-roofed mud huts, which are common in Himachal Pradesh. Their findings show how well these traditional dwellings demonstrate thermal characteristics that render them functional and sustainable in different seasons with a wide range of temperatures.

In “Sustainable practices in Keylong’s vernacular architecture. A detailed study of construction and thermal efficiency in the Himalayas”, Singh et al. investigate

the resilience and sustainable attributes of vernacular architecture in Keylong, a paradigmatic region located in the Himalayan highlands. Their research focuses on indigenous construction techniques and materials, and their impact on thermal performance, highlighting the relationship between traditional wisdom, vernacular architectural practices, and sustainable practices. It offers practical insights for architects, planners, and policymakers engaged in the development of resilient and sustainable habitats in the Himalayas and similar contexts.

In “Enhancing cognitive performance and emotional well-being in Nature-induced learning environments. Insights from neuro-architecture research”, Rai et al. explore the impact of nature-induced design on cognitive performance and emotional well-being in educational settings. Their research shows how biophilic, nature-infused educational environments can significantly enhance critical cognitive processes essential for learning, suggesting their potential in environmental design for cognitive and emotional development.

Engaging human culture

If sustainability has principally been considered in terms of environmental, economic and social dimensions, human culture has in recent years emerged as a significant component of proposals for engaging with sustainable development.

In “The transcendence of the Roman Catholic Church’s Holy Bread. Bearer and usher of cultural sustainability”, Benito proposes a vision of culture that focuses on the significance of food and religious practices. He argues that for the Roman Catholic Church Holy Bread is a bearer and proof of the fundamental nature of sustainability’s cultural pillar and that this pillar should be considered an essential prerequisite for the existence of the environmental, economic and social pillars of sustainability.

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