



Community Conservation
Research Network

Sustainable Futures Communities in Action

A Documentary from the Community Conservation Research Network

Produced by Nexus Media

EDUCATORS' GUIDE

All around the world, people, in their local communities, are tackling some of the biggest global challenges... the climate, the environment, and how to sustain economies and livelihoods. The actions these communities are taking, the solutions they are finding, can inspire a way forward for all of us. Sustainable Futures – Communities in Action is a positive and powerful new film that brings you to several communities, each a story of local action and local solutions, each a story of people, working together, in unity for a common cause.

This is a guide for educators relating to the film “*Sustainable Futures - Communities in Action*” from the Community Conservation Research Network. This guide provides themes and ideas that educators may find helpful when used in conjunction with viewing the film – whether in educational settings (e.g. high school, college, university, internships) or with community groups, nongovernmental organizations, and more. The film can be beneficial to include within overarching curriculum areas of social studies (such as geography and economics), natural sciences (such as biology and conservation), as well as broad areas of food, policy, and international studies (see keywords below for more ideas).

Use this information and resource material to facilitate discussion and action with students and community groups and more – about inspiring examples of how local communities are taking on conservation activities that sustain their livelihoods.



Sustainable Futures - Communities in Action

INTRODUCTION

Around the world, there are threats to the environment, which affect our society and our economy. These threats range from damage to ecosystems, to water and air pollution, to collapse of natural resources, through to the greatest of all, climate change. These threats all pose risks to the livelihoods of people and communities. These are big threats, and they often require big responses, even at a global scale... but at the same time, there is much that can be done at a smaller, local scale. Communities can successfully respond to environmental and livelihood threats through conservation and stewardship action – to maintain and improve the environment, and as a result, to support sustainable local economies.

This film provides a way to explore the “power of community” in conserving the environment and sustaining the economy, drawing on four inspiring examples from around the globe, showing communities taking action.

The film’s running time is 52 minutes. It is engaging to watch all the way through, and is also designed to be shown in 5 major segments (as shown on the next page).

Learning Objectives for the film may include: (1) Gaining an understanding of how cooperation and ‘collective action’ can produce positive results, when people in a community work together to address their local challenges. (2) Gaining an understanding of how the economy and the environment interact at a local level, in multiple locations around the planet. (3) Being able to create connections between each of the respective communities’ stories and struggles. (4) Being able to analyze and determine basic human, social, and economic needs for a small community, both urban and rural. (5) Gaining a basic understanding of ways in which government policy shapes the lives of people and communities.

The film, and this Educators’ Guide, can be supplemented by many resources on the website of the film’s originator, the Community Conservation Research Network (CCRN):

www.CommunityConservation.net

The resources available there include: practical Community Stories from around the world, a series of videos, webinars, animations, thematic presentations (powerpoint or video), and guidebooks.



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OVERVIEW OF THE FILM AND THE FOUR COMMUNITIES IN THE FILM

INTRODUCTORY SECTION

Summary: The Introduction sets up the themes of the film, focusing on the idea that local communities, around the world, are places where modern challenges can be met – protecting the environment, creating and maintaining sustainable economies, and meeting human, social and cultural needs. It is suggested that the “Power of Community” – the strength that arises when people work together in their communities – can overcome threats of environmental and resource depletion posed by the “Tragedy of the Commons”.

[Location on film (time): 0-4:27]

Keywords: Power of Community, Tragedy of the Commons, Sustainable Economies

COMMUNITY 1 – Dartmouth North, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

Summary: The first community example in the film focuses on an urban neighbourhood, Dartmouth North, and in particular, the Dartmouth North Community Food Centre. The Centre is a community hub that aims to improve access to healthy food for the local residents of the area. The Centre provides this service in a number of ways, such as an urban garden, a produce market, meal services, and cooking classes. It was opened in response to the closing of the neighbourhood grocery store, a closure that negatively affected food access for local residents.

[Location on film (time): 4:27 – 14:49]

Keywords: Local Food, Food Access, Urban Neighbourhood

COMMUNITY 2 – Koh Pitak, Thailand

Summary: The second community example in the film is a small fishing village on an island off the coast of Thailand. The community historically relied on fishing, but the fish abundance dropped dramatically due to over-fishing and environmental damage. The community is taking steps to rebuild the fish population by restoring the ocean environment to a healthy state, by diversifying their economy through home-grown tourism (which reduces reliance on fishing, leading to less pressure on the fish), and by fighting to stop trawling boats from overfishing the local area.

[Location on film (time): 14:49-23:27]

Keywords: Depletion, Diversity, Mangroves, Tourism



COMMUNITY 3 – Papendorp, Ebenhaeser, Olifants, South Africa

Summary: The third community example is by the estuary of South Africa’s Olifants River, which provides fishing, and other forms of livelihood, for the locals in the village of Papendorp. However, in recent years, the small village has faced many changes in the government’s fishing rules, making it harder to make a living and obtain food. The community fought hard to protect their rights to food and livelihood, and managed to successfully negotiate adjustments to make their lives better. Now, however, the community faces a new challenge, as the government has allowed a mining company to prospect nearby, potentially harming the entire ecosystem.

[Location on film (time): 23:27-35:21]

Keywords: Fishery, Regulations, Rights, Livelihoods, Ecosystems, Cooperation

COMMUNITY 4 – Opitsaht, Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation, British Columbia, Canada

Summary: The effects of colonialism have had a great impact on the Nuu-chah-nulth Nation, an Indigenous people on Canada’s Pacific Coast. Historically, a focus on natural resource extraction by settlers coming to Nuu-chah-nulth territory led to considerable environmental destruction. Now the Nuu-chah-nulth are working to restore local ecosystems, and regain their traditional practices, in tune with the environment. In particular, this example focuses on Opitsaht, a community in the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation. The Tla-o-qui-aht people have established the Ha’uukmin Tribal Park to conserve the forest and engage in sustainable forest practices. They are also planning to charge a fee for those using resources on their traditional land, to support further conservation successes.

[Location on film (time): 35:21-49:50]

Keywords: Indigenous, Colonialism, Totem, Conservation, Forests, Hish-uk ts'a-walk, lisaak

OTHER THEMES AND KEYWORDS IN FILM

Additional keywords throughout the film include: community, economy, livelihoods, community conservation, collective action, empowerment, engagement, governance, stewardship, rights, conflict, grassroots action, community resilience, resilience, local conservation approaches, ecology, ecosystem, sustainability, natural resources, fisheries, forestry, agriculture.



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GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How would you define “community”? What words, ideas and places come to mind?
2. Think of a specific community – whether a city neighbourhood or a small rural town or village. What challenges are being faced there today? Which of these are economic, environmental, social or cultural?
3. If we instead think of the world as a whole, what are the big challenges being faced? Can a small local community play a role in dealing with those big challenges? What lessons can the world as a whole learn from the communities shown in the film?
4. Would certain ideas that developed in one community transfer well to other communities in this film? If you were leading a local community somewhere in the world, what lessons would you take from the communities in this film?
5. What needs can a small community provide for themselves? What needs must be provided by governments or others?
6. What are examples of cooperation or coalitions being formed in this film that served to improve equity and justice?
7. How does history help us to better understand the lives of the people in each of the four communities?
8. The film introduced two ideas at the start. The Tragedy of the Commons says people can ruin the environment through selfish and greedy actions. The Power of Community says that people cooperating together can overcome the Tragedy of the Commons. Discuss these two ideas and what circumstances lead to one or the other happening.
9. If a community has managed to find a path to be sustainable, but then its population grows greatly, or its economy expands vastly, how could it manage to remain sustainable, and not over-exploit its natural resources?
10. What do you think were the objectives in producing this film and what do you think has been achieved by making it? What do you think are the audiences who should see it?



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COMMUNITY-SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Dartmouth, Canada:

1. What are the main goals of the Dartmouth North Community Food Centre?
2. What are the benefits of urban gardens and urban food centres?
3. Why would the grocery store have closed in the Dartmouth neighbourhood?

Koh Pitak, Thailand:

4. In what ways is the village working to help restore the ocean to its original health?
5. How has the planting of mangroves protected the community?
6. How has tourism positively or negatively affected this community? Does tourism positively or negatively affect your community?

Papendorp, South Africa:

7. In Papendorp, what are the interactions between (1) natural resource use (fishing, mining), (2) environmental conservation, and (3) the community's quality of life? What do these kinds of interactions look like in your home area?
8. How do you think governments should deal with conflicts between two activities, like fishing and mining in this case? Why would the government restrict either of these activities?
9. When a small community like Papendorp has to deal with outsiders (corporations, environmental organizations, universities, etc.), what different roles do these each play (or should they play) in the local community?

Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation, Canada:

10. How might a Totem Pole and a constitution be similar? What are the differences?
11. What is decolonization and how is the establishment of a Tribal Park an act of decolonization?
12. Can you find similar principles to the Nuu-chah-nulth principles of Hish-uk ts'a-walk (everything is one) and lisaak (respect between people and the animal world) in your own culture? How are your cultural principles different, or the same?



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POSSIBLE CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Consider your own curriculum and educational needs and requirements. Consult your favourite resources. Educators tell us that they use the guides provided by film sources, and many of the activities provided there can be modified to fit the subject content of other films, such as this one.

Activity Idea #1.

The organization that produced the film – the Community Conservation Research Network – had six fundamental questions to explore in its work. Divide the class into groups, assign a question to each group, and ask students to discuss what they think are some answers to that question.

1. What does conservation and stewardship mean to different communities?
2. What motivates action and policy that supports conservation and livelihoods?
3. How are communities meeting local environmental and economic challenges?
4. What can we learn from conservation experiences of communities around the world?
5. How do local conservation initiatives meet the community's livelihood priorities?
6. How can government policy best support local stewardship and livelihood initiatives?

Activity Idea #2.

Split the classroom into groups and provide each group with large chart paper and markers. Assign each group one of the four communities covered in the film. Ask student groups to map or chart on the paper (with drawings, text, and directions) what they think are the steps involved in producing, processing, distributing and consuming one of the products produced in the community. This might be something grown in an urban garden (Dartmouth, Canada), a kind of fish (Koh Pitak, Thailand, and Papendorp, South Africa), or a forest product (Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation, Canada). Then, ask the student groups to discuss specific ways in which government policy could affect each of those steps – e.g., encouraging or regulating. What particular kinds of policies might exist at each different point? Bringing the groups back together, encourage a comparison of the similarities and differences between the results of the group work. Lead a further discussion on “What are other forms of production that you believe government is involved in and regulates, similar to the ones covered in the groups?”



Activity Idea #3.

A 'simulation' involves creating a 'pretend' situation that is a simplified 'model' of the real world. For this activity, the students in the class will be, themselves, a local community. Keep in mind that this should be a community that faces a certain environmental challenge (e.g., deforestation, a polluted river, a lack of local food, or government restrictions on access to fishing, etc.) and the idea is that the community residents come together to tackle that challenge in such a way that their livelihoods can be sustained.

Think about what are the roles in the community that should be covered in the simulation. If your students are suitably advanced, you could have them involved in this too. Once the set of roles is decided, you can either – depending on the size of the class – assign each student their own role in the community (e.g., farmer, teacher, nurse, tourism operator, homemaker, etc.) or assign small groups for each role.

The simulation involves an interactive process of role playing, with the goal of working cooperatively to resolve the environmental challenge, in a fair and sustainable way that sustains the economy and the local ecosystems. This simulation can take place in one hour, or a full afternoon, or spread over a part of multiple days (even over the course of a term) and can include sub-group presentations, mock stakeholder meetings, etc.

Activity Idea #4.

Discuss the concept of "resilience" and have the class share examples of resilience in their local community/neighbourhood. "Resilience" refers to the capability to "bounce back" from a shock. We can think of a 'resilient' young person as being able to do well despite a negative shock to their family or their social situation. Similarly, a 'resilient' forest is one that, for example, can survive a pest infestation (so the trees do not all die off) and a 'resilient' fish population is able to 'bounce back' from being faced with bad water pollution, for example.

Community resilience reflects the same idea, but for local communities (and city neighbourhoods), in which those communities endure a 'shock' of some form (which could be natural or human-caused), but the community is able to 'bounce back' and continue doing well.

What are some examples of community resilience in this film? Are there ideas in these examples that can be applied to other communities? What makes communities able to 'bounce back'? Can you give an example of initiatives that create more community resilience? Can you think of how this could apply to your own community?

NOTE: The CCRN website www.CommunityConservation.net has a wide range of supplementary resources that may enhance your activities or assignments.

