



# Capacity Building Workshops on Sustainable Lifestyles

## 1. Introduction

*What are sustainable lifestyles? How do we live in the world today?* There are multiple definitions of sustainable lifestyles. Findings of the "Global Survey on Sustainable Lifestyle" (GSSL) under the guidance of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) demonstrates that people and communities around the world have been searching for and proposing creative, different solutions and encouraging and supporting actions to promote sustainable lifestyles that respect diverse cultures around the world.

*What should you do to build capacity towards sustainable lifestyles for yourselves and for others? In Vietnam, what has been done for this capacity building? What needs changes/addition and how?* With the generous support from SGS-Switzerland, the project "Capacity Building towards Sustainable Lifestyle" has been implemented in Vietnam and the Philippines under the coordination of UNEP. Within the framework of the project, C&E has cooperated with SGS-Vietnam and other partners including Live & Learn, Action for the City, and GreennoCom to organize the first two pilot workshops on the sustainable consumption guide which will facilitate capacity building to help the youth develop and implement eco-initiatives in Hanoi on 19-20 June 2010 and in HCMC on 29-30 June 2010. (See Appendix 1: Program)



Photo 1. Discussion in the energy group in HCMC

## 2. Participants

Sustainable lifestyles as a subject have attracted great attention from the youth. After announcement of the workshops, there were 130 applications from individuals, groups, and organizations. Due to limited conditions and based on the selection criteria, *70 young people and 20 trainers and volunteers are invited to the workshops in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi.* These participants are currently working as educators, teachers, lecturers and young professionals, members of the network of youth and students of state institutions, non-

governmental organizations, and businesses who are able to communicate, guide and organize initiatives and spread them to the community. (See Appendix 2: List of participants)



Photos 2 & 3. Participants in Hanoi and HCMC

**3. The aims of the workshops are to** (1) Provide trainers (youth and teachers) with basic knowledge and skills in sustainable and responsible consumption so that they can effectively apply them for themselves, their groups/ organizations/ programs. (2) Develop eco-initiatives for themselves, their groups/ organizations/ programs. (3) Contribute inputs to complete the adaptation of the guidebook on responsible consumption in the Vietnam contexts.

#### 4. Methods



Photo 4. Game in Hanoi.



Photo 5. Discussion in the food group in HCMC

*How to turn theory into action?* The training methods encouraged trainees to solve daily problems: healthy ways of living, examination of consumption, understanding of communication, and etc. At the same time, these methods worked to build concrete approaches to sustainable development issues through awareness raising, critical analysis, networking and action.

**5. The workshops provide open contents and suggestions in terms of the methods for lesson development, communication to target groups, and selection of appropriate topics and areas for in-depth exploration. The course also provides instructions as to how to attract and**



maintain students' attention and how to use surveys, games, case studies, experience, questions, practices, photos, and movies in lesson planning and delivery.

## 6. Discussions

1. The participants exchanged and shared their experience and skills in communication and training appropriate to different target groups (students, primary school students, farmers, and the community in general). The participants also debated on equal consumption opportunities and sustainable consumption (consuming less, consuming more efficiently and with equal opportunities) based on the happiness index and a culture that is not too dependent on money. Discussions are lively and sociable with due attention to aspects of culture, society, community and family.



Photos 6 and 7. Groups prepared presentations in Hanoi

*The everyday life scenarios created by GSSL were introduced, discussed and chosen in a very exciting manner with proper adjustment to make them applicable in Vietnam:*

Urban gardens: were selected by most of the groups. In this scenario, vegetables are grown in unused urban space and in boxes and pots on terraces or with air planting techniques to provide safe and clean vegetables for families and at the same time make the city green. This scenario is simple, convenient, and easy to implement and replicate when space is available. It is a way of relaxing after work. People can take it as a community activity and share fruits and vegetables to their neighbors. This scenario has been implemented in many areas, particularly apartment buildings. The groups suggested measures such as propaganda to encourage people to implement and maintain, provision of funding and techniques to gardeners including individuals and households in urban areas. (Mr. Duy Tri informs that there is the air cultivation technology that allows farming of root-and fruit vegetables without land all the year round. This technology has been exported to the Netherlands and Norway).

Vegetable bag subscription:

*Strengths:* this option meets hygienic requirements and is cheaper because it enables direct supply from the producers to the consumers. It saves time for consumers and assures nutrition balance with diverse vegetable bags.



*Weaknesses:* it is complicated for cooking. Customers' awareness and knowledge are not good and they do not care about their nutrition regime and variety of vegetables. This option could not meet the needs of different individuals. There are issues of food preservation and transportation to consumers as distribution channels are underdeveloped.

*Opportunities:* exist for development

*Threats:* there is no technical expertise for food safety control and assurance. Consumers still have traditional consumption practices and habits such as going to markets.

*How to:* it is necessary to develop a distribution network and cultivation and preservation techniques for vegetables and fruits. There should be an intermediary between sellers and buyers (distributed at school or with students' parents) and quality control of products

Energy management: includes energy saving and efficiency with the use of energy efficient appliances, green houses and green offices. There are also suggestions for advocacy, mobilization and set up of energy-policy groups.

Mobility: all participants are of the idea that the three given scenarios cannot be implemented in Vietnam. They, however, have initiatives to put more signs at intersections to remind people to turn off their motor vehicles when they are waiting for traffic lights and especially in traffic jams. Other initiatives include car-sharing and finding road partners through particular websites. Sharing of company worker-transporting cars is also a feasible alternative.

*Participants from HCMC proposed a combination of the scenarios with interesting coordination of management and allocation of responsibilities among family members: Urban Gardens- Mother; Bicycle Center - Children and Energy Management-Father.*

*Findings of the online GSSL-Vietnam with 600 respondents* conducted by C&E in cooperation with universities, NGOs, voluntary groups, and clubs were also shared in the workshops:

- Mobility- respondents are aware of the traffic conditions. Their awareness, however, has not been transformed into practices and behaviour change. Because buses are overcrowded and inconvenient and cycling is relatively hard, most of the youth choose motorbikes. 41% choose the bicycle center option.
- Food: people understand the importance of food safety but most still choose to buy food at markets. 42% choose the scenario of urban gardens which they consider easy to implement.
- House keeping: most respondents (49%) choose the household energy management scenario. With relatively simple actions, this scenario can achieve very good results in energy and money saving.

## **7. Eco-fieldtrip**



Photos 8 & 9. Visiting the organic vegetable growing model in Ha Noi

*Participants to Hanoi Workshop took an eco-fieldtrip to an organic vegetable garden in the Thanh Xuan commune, Soc Son, Hanoi under the project "Thanh Xuan Organic Vegetables" implemented by Action for the City. Participants are excited about and observe carefully how people plant vegetables and prevent insects in their gardens. All bought some vegetables for themselves, their families and their relatives. The model of organic vegetable farming was identified as a suitable form for soil rehabilitation, pollution reduction and income generation for local farmers. To assure people of this green and clean production method, it is necessary to re-establish the consumers' confidence in farmers and support farmers in finding markets for organic vegetables. To date, there are about 250 regular customers. Bai Thuong Organic Vegetable Production Group is the first group in Vietnam to receive the Participatory Group System of Quality Assurance Certification (PGS). However, according to Mr. Do Chi Thanh-SGS in the north of Vietnam, this procedure should be completed in term of the input criteria for vegetable seedlings, soil and water quality and others.*

**8. Key results from the workshops** are that the groups discussed and developed their lessons. They developed ecological initiatives in Vietnam towards sustainable lifestyles and prepared action plans for individuals and groups.



Photo 10 Presentation of the waste group in Hanoi



Photo 11 Presentation of the food group in HCMC



Waste:

- There is a plan to mobilize volunteers "Recycle paper products into paper bags" to be used in dry stuff stores in the market;
- Slogan: Waste is money! To encourage re-use of waste through advocacy for waste separation, cost savings, increased income, save land-filled areas with the solution being the cooperation between households and enterprises. The households separate waste and sell it to green fertilizer companies.

Water:

- There is a proposal to hold a contest "Water In My Eyes" of creative photos and videos about water and sustainable lifestyles among students.
- There is a proposal to recycle and re-use domestic waste water with eco-technologies in urban areas. This includes a sewage pipe that connects the bathroom and kitchen to a storage tank and a system of stone, sand, soil, and trees that can remove soap and detergent from waste water.

Food:

- There is a proposal to hold regular traditional meals in some public places
- Another idea is to organize campaigns for smart and responsible consumption and promotion of consumers' rights including the rights to complain and provide feedback to manufacturers and distributors.

Mobility: the transport group puts forward the "Green Road" campaign. This consists of a series of events, including cycling, poster design competition for green traffic, marathon for businesspeople to build commitments to green transport, and organization of final musical shows with famous singers and actors to foster communication.

Energy: There is an initiative to hold a Green Home Contest in residential groups. This contest includes selection of household appliances that are energy-efficient and activities that save energy and evaluation of the results of these actions through household electricity bills.

**9. Evaluation**

*Participants' evaluation of the workshop organizers*

At the end of the workshops, participants are asked to write their reviews and comments on the workshops to help organizers to draw lessons and experience and improve future training sessions.

<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Suggested improvement</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The program is interesting and useful</li> <li>- It arouses the enthusiasm of participants</li> <li>- It is suitable for the target groups</li> <li>- It gathers the young leaders.</li> <li>- The exercises are interesting and practical</li> <li>- The games and movies are meaningful</li> <li>- Trainers are friendly and enthusiastic</li> <li>- It is hope to have many more workshops like this</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The program needs improvements: stricter time control and more time for participants to think and reflect.</li> <li>- Relevant concepts should be clarified and the focus on skills should be deepened.</li> <li>- There should be more realistic movies, games, and stories.</li> <li>- Trainers should be more appealing, attractive and professional.</li> <li>- Participants should receive materials earlier in the workshops.</li> </ul>

*Organizers' evaluation of the participants*

After the two workshops in Hanoi and HCMC and the presentation of lessons and initiatives of the groups, the organisers have some evaluations to help students further improve their teaching and initiatives for implementation.

Advantages	Suggested improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The participants are enthusiastic and responsive.</li> <li>- Despite short timing, participants were able to develop their lessons that meet requirements of program development and information dissemination</li> <li>- The initiatives for actions are feasible.</li> <li>- The group presentation was impressive with sufficient information. They adopted diverse and proper means and forms of communication that involve people and their participation including role-plays, games, quizzes, and pictures, ...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The initiatives should have specific plans for implementation</li> <li>- It is necessary to use diverse communication skills, plan and encourage the participation of different groups.</li> <li>- Contents should be transmitted in different forms and integrated in other activities to ensure high effectiveness and feasibility.</li> <li>- There should be a deeper focus on skills and networking, especially in HCMC.</li> <li>- There should be networking to disseminate and share experiences and promote the development and implementation of initiatives.</li> </ul>

**10. Conclusions**



Photos 12 & 13. Summary activities in HCM City

Sustainable lifestyles are cool and fun. In their aim to sustainable lifestyles, young people want improvement in the public transport infrastructure, more trees on the road, use of bioenergy, and change to public transport awareness, habits and practices, including behaviors of individuals and groups, better law enforcement and education and further networking and sharing. The urban youth have economic power and consumption demands. They are always busy and have no time to attend to social issues. They, however, have large social networks and have opportunities for media exposure. They can influence are affected by general trends and tendency.

After the workshops C&E and SGS Vietnam will continue networking workshop participants and other interested individuals and groups and in the mean time support, promote and encourage these participants to integrate and disseminate knowledge and actions to individuals/groups/organizations and to the community.

According to Mr. Do Chi Thanh, in order for dreams to come true, it is necessary fund implementation and replication of initiatives at universities, clubs, individuals, groups and organizations to entrench sustainable lifestyles in the youth and the community. After the two workshops, the YXC guide on responsible consumption will be completed with due



adaptation to the Vietnam contexts. This guide will be further disseminated in the coming years.

In summarizing the workshop in HCMC, Mr. Vu Duc Thang, Deputy Director SGS Vietnam and Mr. Tran Vo Hung Son, C&E representative emphasized the importance of networking and expressed their hope for the youth to fully utilize their time and always be pioneers in the movement. SGS, a sustainable and responsible company in the 21st century will always support so that their initiatives can be realized, or theory can be turned into action. It is hopeful that the results of this pilot will serve as a base for expanding activities in the future.



C&E and SGS Vietnam wants to create a network of youthxchangevn which will connect with "Green Generation in Vietnam" coordinated by Live & Learn. This network will connect Vietnamese youth and other young people in the world through the global network YouthXchange initiated by UNEP. Starting from the workshops, students will have opportunities to participate in a number of other activities of the project in 2010 and the coming years, including:

- Develop, promote and link eco-initiatives of individuals and groups / organizations through workshops or exhibitions to share with the public, create spreading effects and attract parents, teachers and people to join.
- Exchange and introduce good examples from Vietnam to the world and disseminate Youth Exchange materials as well as bring international experience to Vietnamese youth for information and experiences in sustainable lifestyles.
- Disseminate initiatives of Vietnamese youth as inputs to the development of sustainable lifestyles among the global youth.

**11. Activities after the workshops from July to December 2010**

Timing	Activities
Jul.-Dec.	Develop youthxchangevn network and link it with partners
Jul-Oct.	Promote initiatives of groups / organizations / individuals after the workshops, possibly support them with materials and resources for their implementation.
Jul.-Dec.	Continue dissemination of pilot training materials for further adaptation
Jul-Oct.	Complete the adaptation of YXC guide on responsible consumption for Vietnam.
Nov.	Organize open forums or public exhibition of eco-initiatives that have been developed and implemented by individuals/ groups / organizations after the



	workshops
Jul.-Dec.	Disseminate relevant information and materials.
Dec.	Evaluate the results, and link with partners, prepare and plan for next year.

**For detailed information, please refer to**

<http://www.sef.org.vn>; <http://groups.google.com/group/youthxchangevn>

YXCvn is the home to the youth who aim towards sustainable lifestyles by turning theory into practical action. It is a place where you can approach the practical problems of sustainable lifestyles. Each member of YXCvn acts through awareness raising, critical analysis and networking, and development of responsible behaviours which can be spreaded to the community.

YXCvn is supported by the SGS Group International and the Center for Development of Community Initiatives and Environment (C&E). It is linked to the Green Generation Network and is a member of the YXC global network.

C&E is a non-governmental and non-profit organization. C&E works to promote participation of and enhance capacity of organizations and community groups to better address environmental issues relevant to their own life, contributing to development of civil society and sustainable environment development in Vietnam. C&E has a network of community groups across the country including volunteer youth groups and civil society groups who work for sustainable development. C&E participated in GSSL initiated by UNEP and is continuing to promote responsible consumption and sustainable living movement in Vietnam.

SGS is the world’s leading inspection, verification, testing and certification company, founded in 1878 in Rouen. SGS Vietnam Ltd has been providing services in Vietnam from 1989 and in September 1997 became the first international, independent inspection, testing and certification company to be granted a 100% Foreign Owned Company License. The company has been certified ISO 9001:2000 for all operations, accredited ISO 17020:1998 for inspection services and ISO 17025:2005 for testing services. The company has also been approved for the inspection of imported and exported goods on behalf of the Vietnamese Government by the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST), and for Public Management by the General Department of Custom.

SGS has recently expressed interest in supporting the youth in sustainable living, environment and education in Vietnam. SGS is supporting C&E in implementing this program on a small scale and will continue its support in the years to come