



ONE SKY NEWS

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Editor's Message

By Nikki Skuce

"Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

- World Health Org. definition

This definition is holistic, although likely puts fewer people in the 'healthy' category. In the past few months I have experienced an onslaught of health issues - from a personal bout of Hepatitis, a colleague with a mental illness, a friend with a staph infection, a family member with cancer, to the on-going decline of the health of the planet. It's resulted in a lot of reflection.

One thing that I learned and adopted from my dad is the philosophy of 'carpe diem' - seize the day, live life to its fullest. In doing so and in taking risks in life and stepping out of comfort zones to grow and create change, I also recognize the importance of looking after yourself, of eating right, sleeping well, exercising, laughing lots, nourishing your mind and soul, listening to your body, taking time to recover after you've been ill, and taking extra precautions when living and working abroad. Following these doesn't make you immune to ailments but allows you to reflect on the past with no (or few) regrets - you grabbed hold of life and did your best.

Social change agents are pretty notorious for burning out and working desperately to cure or prevent further ailment to this planet earth. Or to focus on trying to help those living in poverty and suffering preventable diseases while working in west Africa or even here. But how can you try to create change if you don't also have a healthy body and sound mind?

At One Sky we push ourselves and work in challenging areas, but stress the importance of personal ecology and mitigating risk. After all, healthy individuals help maintain a healthy organization while working toward a healthier planet.

Five Years Later

By Mike Simpson

At the One Sky office we are rebuilding our roof. It is a rickety moss covered roof that the insurance company refuses to cover. Five years ago it was a difficult decision to rent an office. Two years ago we bought the building. Last summer we started renovations. This summer we are installing solar thermal systems and photovoltaics. We have planted a garden and improved on our soil. We are insulating and improving our office. Simply put, we are here to stay. We have moved from an idea about global sustainability and our initial years of surviving rapid growth to a feeling of "home place" and success in our programming. There is a rhythm to our work now and confidence in our step. We have been evaluated by detail-oriented third parties and our books scrutinized by grey haired clever auditors. We have moved through different phases of programming and succeeded in completing all of our projects. There is consensus that we are doing well. We have a solid reputation as an organization that achieves results. We have long-term staff that have stayed with the organization. When we post a job we are flooded with applications. Word has it One Sky is a good place to work.

It has not been easy building this One Sky "house" largely because the house we are promoting is a moving target... an ephemeral concept that eludes hammers and nails. We are not in the business of building bridges and buildings but shaping people and ideas. What does "sustainable living" mean? What exactly are we doing in other countries and contexts? How do we really know we are having an impact? What exactly is a "result" and how does one best develop capacity? These are the kinds of questions that we are pushed to answer in concrete measurable terms for funders. Generally speaking we can answer these questions well enough to keep going. But when do you really know you have developed a person or an idea? When do we know that our efforts to shelter ideas of environmental stewardship and human rights were worth it? Can we be satisfied when we don't know how high and fast we really could be leaping? Do we really understand what it is going to take to "promote sustainable living globally". Are we even measuring the right indicators or are we like the mythical figure Sisyphus, bound to endlessly push boulders up mountains only to watch them fall again. Condemned to the same tasks without seeing the larger picture of our quandry.

(Cont.)

(cont.) I ask these questions because it has been five years. A person walking into our operations today would not recognize our humble beginnings only five summers ago. Before we tack on those final shingles of our new roof, we need to examine the idea of permanence and success. We cannot settle into too cozy an existence. We need to remain dynamic, flexible and innovative because the problems we are really tackling are much, much more dramatic than we might imagine. Our work overseas constantly reminds us of this. Our global dilemma confirms the enormity of what we face.

The next five years should be easier... after all we have a new roof now and confidence in our step. My hope, however, is that we simply raise the bar. We simply expand our horizons and deepen our analysis. We may have a new roof, a new look and yes, it has felt like five successful years but the problem set is much larger than we have tasked ourselves with. Perhaps we can look at these experiences as a useful training ground. A place to master some basic skills and set up shop. Now we need to challenge ourselves to be creative... to think laterally and to sharpen our skillsets in order that we can affect positive change. Our challenge is to work hard and to push heavy boulders on difficult trails... "Promoting sustainable living globally" is no small task. I think we are getting somewhere - it feels like we are moving forward and climbing step by step.



Smithers Volunteer Youth Corps helping One Sky by painting their office building

Volunteer Thanks!

One Sky would like to thank all of its Smithers volunteers for assisting with our local initiatives and governance. In particular, we would like to thank Chris Gee, Greg Brown, Mark Edwards, Sue von der Porten, Smithers Volunteer Youth Corps, Los Gringos Salvajes, Helene Fleury, Max Lautenbacher, Larry McCulloch, Gail Hochachka, Jake Young, Vesna Kontic, and Ivan Thompson for their dedicated volunteerism.

Supporting One Sky

Since its incorporation, One Sky has coordinated sustainable development activities locally and has also been working in some of the most difficult places globally with projects in Sierra Leone and Nigeria. By working in challenging areas and maintaining a positive sense of hope, One Sky aims to inspire and create change.

In order to carry out our initiatives, we rely on grants and individual donations. If you would like to show your support for One Sky by making a donation or getting involved, please contact us at:

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Smithers, BC V0J 2N0 Canada
Ph: 250-877-6030
info@onesky.ca
www.onesky.ca

One Sky Goods and Services Auction

On Friday September 16, 2005, One Sky will be holding its fourth annual **Goods & Services Auction** at our office located at 3768 Second Avenue in Smithers. The auction will raise community awareness and help support One Sky's domestic and international projects.

Solar (PV) and Solar Hot Water Workshops

On August 19th, One Sky is holding a PV workshop where participants will be given the basic elements of a solar photovoltaic system and be required to complete a small stand-alone installation. Participants will also visit a net-metered (grid-connected) PV system in Smithers. A workshop on solar hot water heaters is being held on September 2nd at the One Sky office. For more information, contact Monica or Nikki at the One Sky office.



Installing One Sky's solar hot water heater

The Politics of Music

By Kristin Patten

I re-discovered my Sierra Leone tape collection this past weekend, and spent a few hours grooving at top volume to some of my favourite hit songs. Listening to the music, I can trace my various movements and moods in West Africa to particular songs. Amara Kabbah's "Lady on the Road" whisks me back to my first Friday night in Freetown- a night at a funky bar no bigger than my living room with a reggae band and two new friends, Santos and Humble Cat. Amara Kabbah had recently released a hit CD and then tragically died swimming at Aberdeen beach. The song was booming all over Freetown and the moment the band started playing it everyone in the bar got to their feet to dance, singing along with the lyrics. The temperature immediately jumped 10 degrees, faces and bodies were soon slick with sweat. I let myself go to the music and thought to myself: 'this place is going to be fun'.

As I explored the music more ('cultural excursions' to Freetown's many dance clubs) and began to pick up Krio (Sierra Leone's version of pidgin English), I began to pay attention to the lyrics. Much of the music coming out of West Africa is hip hop, but with a definite local sound. It's hip hop written by young people, singing about the issues that are affecting them - poverty, war, corruption, prostitution, barriers to education and lack of opportunities. In societies based on oral culture and with low literacy rates, music is a powerful way for the population to express their views to each other and to governments.

Although young people are writing the music, they're not the only ones listening to it. I walked into a welding shop in Freetown one day to witness an old mammy chanting the lyrics of Daddy Saj's "Corruption - E Do So" (corruption - we've had enough!). Daddy Saj raps out street slang lyrics to a danceable beat, blasting politicians and international diamond dealers, and including a reading from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I wouldn't doubt that everyone in Sierra Leone has heard the song and a good chunk have memorized the lyrics. In fact, that song signaled a shift in Sierra Leonean society

- before and during the war, people didn't feel as free to talk loudly and publicly about corruption; now it seems like every other song does. Shifting to Nigeria, the same is true - current hip hop stars follow in the footsteps of the great Fela Kuti who was jailed for his lyrical opposition to various military dictatorships during the seventies and eighties. Among many other things, Fela sang about military oppression, the right to clean water, how his people smile through their suffering, about Africans losing touch with their culture. He inspired the afro-beat music scene that stills booms in Nigeria today.

Young women are less visible in the hip hop music scene, but they're definitely there talking about issues that affect them. Sierra Leone's "Ladies Day Out" sends out a warning to sugar daddies to stay away from young girls - an all-too prevalent practice where young girls are seduced by promises of cellphones and stylish jeans, not to mention meals to fill empty bellies. In "Mr. Lecturer", Eedris and Jamila sing about university lecturers pressuring young women to exchange marks for sex in Nigeria.

Of course there are the love songs, the party tracks and the occasional song that's nothing but bragging, but generally I fell in love with West African hip hop for its lyrics. Once I deciphered through the language barrier, I found heart and passion. Even the UN is catching on - a few years back the UN Best Practices Office in Kenya traveled around the world to see what tools youth were using to talk about social issues like poverty, violence and the environment - hip hop was the number one mentioned thing. Now every time I travel to West Africa, I make it a point to pick up the latest CDs and delve into some old ones that I've missed. It keeps me in touch with the national 'gossip' and ensures that when I spend a night literally blowing off steam at a local club, I'm going to be singing along with the lyrics just like everyone else. And although pretty much none of these musicians can be found in North American music stores, you can bet that they're out there, continuing to perform music about the struggles and dreams of West African youth today.



The Truth About Buildings

By Adrian McKerracher

It's hard to look at buildings since I got back from Sierra Leone. Every well-made street that I walk down in this city - Vancouver, Montreal, Toronto - feels like something's missing. It feels like if you just gave the concrete a little push, it might fall back into a pile of rubble. But not a rubble of stones and sand and rebar. A rubble of myths. A rubble of shaky ambitions that have been built out of borrowed muscle. Borrowed from another continent or another century.

When I see what a building could be here - up tall, multi-storied, made of glass - I see inside it what a building could be there tired, burnt out, a hulk of stones. The things we have built are still so shaky. They look tough, they look like they've got good posture, like they really are made of something hard. But I'm just not convinced anymore. I don't believe that they're real. After all, I've walked through the lower shore of Freetown where walls have never had such a slithery recline. There are steps there that curve like stooping vertebrae, roofs that patch themselves on like bandaids over the same wound again and again. There are narrow cracks in the space between the houses where only the smell of smoke gets through. I have seen a city reduced to its more honest form.

Is that what's real? Now that I'm back, am I seeing the false architecture of a place that just doesn't know that the only separation between altitude and rubble is circumstance and time? With towers so high, can't we see far enough? Is there some truth in what poverty does to a city? I think there is. I think I saw in Sierra Leone something that can be found at the base of every place if you look hard enough. It's the sincerity that comes with being broken. It's the proof that walls are only made of what you build them with. It's the heart of what a place can be reduced to its people.

Now when I move around this Canadian life of mine, I can't help but see Africa. The differences between here and there are getting weaker. The ocean between us is getting smaller, the buildings are getting closer, the smell of smoke is coming through in Vancouver, Montreal, Toronto. There is no such thing as somewhere else.

Reflections on the 2005 One Sky Annual General Assembly

By Helene Fleury

A wonderful crowd of 14 people from all over Canada met at Driftwood School in Smithers on July 11-12 for the Annual General Assembly. Past interns, new interns, staff, and Board Members came together to see if One Sky was on track with its strategic plan, to update everyone on the state of One Sky's affairs, and to inspire and maintain confidence in the organization.

Facilitated by Greg Brown, this two-day event was filled with a variety of activities. Before the more brainy discussions began, we shared personal and organizational successes. This started the AGA off on a very positive note and led to updates on the Sierra Leone and Nigeria projects. Kristen Patten had organized a few quiz questions on the Nigeria Project and separated the group into two teams. Noise makers in hand, whoever had an answer hit their clavés, gazoos, or wooden spoons first. With knowledgeable people on both teams, I forget which team won in the end with Nikki on my team and Greg and Evelyne on the other.

Later on, brief reviews of the strategic plan and integral assessment warmed the crew up for a new tool called 'Path' which I facilitated. Everyone participated in this process bringing forward dreams, ideas and actions for One Sky's future. This tool was later used in a working session to help resolve some of the key issues that came up in the Integral Assessment and visioning process.

The AGA began and ended under sunny skies and participants enjoyed delicious meals prepared by the new interns. Michael was showered with compliments at the final salmon BBQ and it felt like the wonderful crowd left the AGA with a sense of confidence and a better understanding of what is going on in the various parts of the organization.



Board member Helene Fleury at intern orientation

A Recipe for Change

by Greg Brown

The catalyst and the grease.

I enjoy freshly baked biscuits. Essential elements in creating the ultimate biscuit experience is baking powder and butter. Baking powder, a catalyst, because it makes them light and fluffy during the baking. Butter because it enhances the eating experience by providing the 'grease'. How does the ultimate biscuit eating experience relate to One Sky, renewable energy and CanREA?

Energy, and its associated issues, links to all corners of the globe. At One Sky, we are involved in energy because prompt action is needed to reduce atmospheric carbon, there is the inevitable reality of the peak production of oil, and there are over two billion people in developing countries who need access to modern energy services. At Renewables 2004 in Bonn Germany, the largest international gathering to discuss renewable energy, 154 countries declared that low impact renewables and energy efficiency have an important role to play in our future energy systems.

In Canada, we are endowed with vast supplies of energy (renewable and non-renewable sources) and we are one of the largest energy consumers (per capita) in the world. Generally, we have been complacent in developing a sustainable national energy strategy and we lag behind other OECD countries in making commitments and setting targets for renewable energy. Canada can do better.

In response, a group of Canadian NGOs who are active the fields of low-impact renewable energy and energy efficiency recently formed the Canadian Renewable Energy Alliance (CanREA). CanREA is working to advocate and provide input into the development of a national renewable energy strategy and to represent the voices of Canadian civil society in international dialogues related to renewable energy.

So back to the catalyst and the grease. When Michael Simpson traveled to Bonn as part of the Canadian Government's delegation, he and Ken Olgivie from Pollution Probe discussed the need to have an alliance of Canadian non-governmental

organizations involved in renewable energy. Upon Michael's return from Bonn, One Sky began catalyzing the alliance by reaching out to other NGOs and dialoguing on the issue. After several conference calls and some face-to-face meetings, the alliance is working together and moving forward with its mandate. One Sky has played an important role in facilitating these discussions, providing some of the grease to keep things moving forward.

Future plans for CanREA include hosting a conference on renewables and climate change, Renewable Solutions, in conjunction with the international climate change negotiations COP 11/MOP 1 in Montreal this November/December. CanREA is hoping to complete renewable energy position papers for the three main services met by energy - power, heat and transport - supplementing these with papers on a national strategy for energy efficiency, a sustainable energy financing plan, and international cooperation and assistance. As well, CanREA plans to continue to engage with Canadian Government consultations to develop a national renewable energy strategy and develop a formalized presence with a national coordinator and website.

One Sky's role within CanREA will likely shift as the alliance grows and matures, and the ingredients may change somewhat, but we look forward to continuing to push renewable energy and energy efficiency on local, national and international levels.

CanREA members include:

Pembina Institute for Appropriate Development
The David Suzuki Foundation
Pollution Probe
One Sky - Canadian Institute of Sustainable Living
The Canadian Association for Renewable Energies
The Sierra Youth Coalition
Ontario Sustainable Energy Association
BC Sustainable Energy Association
The Falls Brook Centre
The Halifax Initiative
The Saskatchewan Environmental Society
STORM Coalition



Partnering in Nigeria: Ecosystem-Based Management

By Fiona Wright

Ecology or economics? Must one come first, or can we have both? Is there a way we can continue to use natural resources such as timber, non-timber forest products, water, fish or even diamonds in a sustainable manner? Do the actions of countries affect their neighbours? Are we inextricably linked around the globe? The creation of trans-Atlantic partnerships and sharing of new concepts such as ecosystem-based management (EBM) around the planet is helping us address these questions.

In 2003, One Sky facilitated the partnering of LM Forest Resource Solutions Ltd, a Canadian company based out of Smithers, BC with Living Earth Nigeria, an environmental NGO based in Calabar, for a 2-year joint initiative. The partnership is part of the Cross River Environment Project, a CIDA funded project implemented by One Sky that aims to build the capacity of five Nigerian NGOs for environmental improvement and to impact policy in Cross River State, Nigeria. Living Earth Nigeria was interested in incorporating ecosystem-based management into their operations. They brought their links with community and university-level researchers as well as extensive knowledge of the Nigerian forest ecosystem to the partnership, while LM Forest Resource Solutions brought their experience with EBM to the table.

What is Ecosystem-Based Management?

EBM is a leading-edge way of thinking about managing resources and human activities that is helping us to promote models of sustainable living. It seeks to ensure the coexistence of healthy, fully functioning ecosystems and human communities. This is accomplished by putting the maintenance of the parts, processes and functions of the ecosystem before human desire or short-term economics, while still supporting people's well-being. The concepts are meant to be applied across landscapes (rather than at the local level), directed mostly towards higher-level planners and policy-makers.

EBM identifies which areas are ecologically robust (fairly resilient), and which areas are generally more sensitive. This is accomplished by analyzing

things like biological diversity, the propensity of slopes to slough or erode, watershed hydrology, habitat use by fish and wildlife, and climate. The ultimate goal is to focus resource use in areas that can withstand it without compromising ecosystem integrity.



While EBM is a step in the right direction toward greater sustainable resource extraction, it is not without its constraints. "One of the hurdles in the process", says Larry McCulloch of LM Forest Resource Solutions, "is that we often don't have enough information about an area, so we have to come up with different approaches that try to compensate for that lack of knowledge". For example, there may not be any available data on old-growth dependent species, so instead the presence of large old trees is used as a surrogate indicator. The use of surrogates is particularly important in Nigeria.



Healthy forest in Cross River State

The Canadian-Nigerian partnership created a mechanism by which sustainable living solutions were, and are, being promoted at the national and community levels - in effect, putting One Sky's mission into action.

Creating a sustainable future for ourselves, our children and all other beings on this planet means changing the way we think. Sharing the concepts of ecosystem-based management around the world is a step in the right direction.

Promoting Energetic Solutions

By Nikki Skuce

Canadians, with some of the highest energy consumption rates per capita, need to increase their awareness, change their habits and tap into efficient and renewable alternatives in order to decrease their energy footprint and costs. Northern BC residents live in an expansive, sparsely populated region where it is difficult and expensive to provide reliable sources of energy for our basic needs. Given the extreme weather conditions and energy costs, energy efficiency and small-scale alternative energy are suitable, and needed, in the region.

One Sky's Energetic Solutions program was designed to raise awareness about energy conservation and alternatives in a northern context. To do this, One Sky renovated its centrally located office building to reduce its overall energy footprint and are in the midst of installing photovoltaics and a solar hot water heater to act as a working demonstration model in Smithers. Seven educational signs are put up around the building with information about renewable energy, energy efficiency, photovoltaics, solar hot water, composting, appropriate technology and alternative transportation. A solar dehydrator was built and an organic garden and compost were created. Our resource centre is stocked with publications on energy efficiency and renewable energy that are currently being catalogued into the Smithers Public Library system. One Sky is now host to a community bike program and is hoping to increase awareness about the links between greenhouse gas reduction and transportation options. During the past year, One Sky coordinated workshops on topics such as green building, energy efficiency and a Renewable Energy Technology (RETScreen) course, and are planning more for the coming year.



Community Bike Coordinator Chris Gee at work

As part of this local programming, One Sky developed "Energy Smart Smithers" a program aimed at reducing the energy budget of small businesses. Based on the results of an informal energy audit, nearly 30 businesses pledged to reduce their energy use in three simple ways. Participants are recognized by an Energy Smart Smithers window decal. This year, One Sky will be improving upon last year's program and outreaching to more small and medium sized businesses with products in hand for immediate results.

One Sky also designed a Sustainability Map of Smithers that highlights the "green" aspects of the community. The map is a great resource for locals and tourists alike - with information on alternative energy sources, people-powered recreation, local and organic food, where to recycle, links to locally-based sustainable resources and tips on greener living.

Overall, One Sky's Energetic Solutions initiative is meeting its objective of increasing energy efficiency and decreasing greenhouse gasses in this community through workshops, educational signs, a sustainability map, an energy reduction pledge program, modelling systems, and improved access to relevant resources. With support from Eco-Action, the Bulkley Valley Credit Union, the BC Gaming Fund, the community and many volunteers, we're looking forward to another year of promoting energy solutions in a world of rising oil prices that needs to move toward post-carbon solutions.



Ibrahim Kamara and Facundo Gastiazoro helping install One Sky's Renewable Energy educational sign

One Sky Youth Interns

One Sky's youth internship program aims to provide youth with the opportunity to radicalize, broaden, transform, activate and motivate as social change agents. Last year we had six interns in our program bringing the total of youth who have participated in our internship program to fifteen. Evelyne Ssendendo and Susan Liu traveled to Nigeria to work in the Cross River Environment project. Evelyne's work with the gender equality and HIV/AIDS team brought together a wide range of stakeholders in the Cross River environment sector to bring gender and HIV/ AIDS considerations into policy and plans for government and ENGOs. Susan's work included participating in community mapping activities, developing policy briefs, and coordinating the publication of CRE coalition case studies. In Canada, Susan and Evelyne conducted research and created policy for Canadian ENGOs on gender, HIV/AIDS, ecosystem based management, and diversity/equality. Renewable Energy intern Greg worked in Canada and Nigeria to coordinate Energetic Solutions - An international conference on making renewable energy a reality. Greg also networked with Canadian ENGOs on renewable energy issues.

Sierra Leone interns Adrian McKerracher, Solarin Harding and Kevan Berg worked in Canada to gather information and resources before traveling to Sierra Leone to work with Friends of the Earth (FOESL). Kevan and Adrian worked to develop the capacity of FOESL around food security, providing training and resources on organic agriculture, permaculture techniques and building a solar dehydrator with FOESL and community groups. Solarin worked with women's micro-credit groups to distribute loans and provide training.

The skills, talents, energy and insights that interns bring to the programs of One Sky and our partners is invaluable. We thank all the 2004-2005 interns for their own unique and special contributions.

We'd also like to welcome our 2005-2006 youth interns. Sierra Leone interns Fiona Wright and Chris Woolgar are working on educational outreach and food security issues during their time in Smithers, as well as on One Sky's annual goods



Adrian, Shola and Kevan at FOESL AGM

and services auction. Fiona will be volunteering with the Conservation Society of Sierra Leone doing outreach activities and building donor relations. Chris will be working with four farmer's groups with Mr. Michael Aruna and FORPS facilitating workshops and assisting with programming.

Monica Samec is the Renewable Energy intern helping install One Sky's solar hot water heater and photovoltaic system as well as coordinating workshops around these. She will be heading to Nigeria to do similar work at our overseas office and work with the Council for Renewable Energy in Nigeria formed last year after our Energetic Solutions conference. Narges Fazel will be assisting with this coming year's Cross River Environmental project from both Canada and in Nigeria. She'll also be helping with communications work and publications.

One Sky appreciates the support of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and our overseas partners who make it possible to provide Canadian youth with a valuable overseas work experience.



At One Sky's 2005 intern orientation training programme at Silver King