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This CAFAmerica Issue Brief presents a synopsis of facts, research and funding opportunities for causes you care about. It isn't meant to be a comprehensive report, and for that reason, provides a list of resources and website where you can learn more.



ISSUE BRIEF Go Green: Sustainability and the Environment

What is being done?

In a world increasingly attuned to human threats to the environment, a new 'triple bottom line' has become *de-rigueur* among companies striving to balance people, planet, and profit. Sustainable business "encourages companies not to just endeavor to make money but to be concerned about what kind of social impact they make in the communities where they work."¹

In today's environmentally aware world, being recognized as an eco-friendly business or charity can be a powerful marketing tool to attract donors and grantees. A 2008 study of major corporations that adopted sustainable, green strategies confirmed the marketing advantages of doing so. Released by U.S. nonprofit "Environmental Defense Fund, the study indicated that sustainable business practices can both "create competitive advantage" and "strengthen the bottom line." In addition, setting a "green example" may inspire employees and supporters to take similar steps in their private lives.²

From Chile to the Vatican, "going green" initiatives are underway. A textile mill in Chile identified multiple techniques to use energy and water efficiently and recouped its investment in conserving water and energy within two years.³ The Vatican has ordered the installation of large solar roof panels to generate energy as its effort to conserve energy. Other eco-friendly initiatives are also transforming entire communities and cities. The Danish island of Samsø is widely regarded as the first community in the world to become carbon neutral thanks largely to wind turbines generating electricity to meet the demands of the its 4,000 citizens.⁴ The island inspired the city of Eastchester, NY, to commit to reducing its carbon footprint 80% by 2050.

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¹Seid, Jessica. "Making some green by being green," CNN (April 22, 2006)

²http://money.cnn.com/2006/04/20/smbusiness/ecofriendly_biz/index.htm. ("Innovations Review 2009", Environmental Defense Fund, 2009, <http://innovation.edf.org>)

³BSD Global. "Business and Sustainable Development: A Global Guide." <http://www.bsdglobal.com/viewcasestudy.asp?id=71>.

⁴Burlund, Martin. "Living a green dream on Danish island," REUTERS (August 18, 2008) <http://www.reuters.com/article/environmentNews/idUSL2862419820080818>



Embracing Environmental Sustainability

The number of nonprofits dedicated to working on environmental causes has increased dramatically.

Charitable giving by Americans exceeded \$300 billion in 2008 according to "Giving USA 2009", a 2% drop from 2007. Donations to environmental charities are estimated to be \$6.58 billion or 2% of estimated giving. This total estimate reflects a decrease of 5.5% (-9% adjusted for inflation).⁵

The USA is not the only country where the nonprofit environmental movement is growing. According to the All-China Environmental Federation's 2008 Environmental Blue Book⁴ the number of grassroots environmental NGOs doubled between 2005 and 2008. Along with their growth the organizations have played a more active role in influencing governmental policy, supervising the government's role in environmental responsibility, and raising public awareness about environmental protection issues. According to the report, 58.6% of the organizations were involved in energy saving and emission cutting work, and 11% participated in protecting people's rights concerning environment protection."

Green efforts by U.S. nonprofits can range from instituting basic office recycling programs to ambitious renovations to make buildings eco-friendly. The latter benefit both the charitable organizations they house and the surrounding community. In Massachusetts, a long-term renovation project launched by the nonprofit group Third Sector New England transformed a multi-story building in downtown Boston into a sustainable space for other local nonprofits.

Achieving a sustainable environment to support populations and businesses involves looking at more than adopting energy saving techniques. Deforestation

and threats to species can result from populations using natural resources while living in extreme poverty. CAFAmerica, CEO, Susan Saxon-Harrold's experience is that U.S. donors are becoming more aware of how poverty impacts both protecting the environment and building vibrant communities. More donors are looking to find projects with interdependent outcomes. Charities that take a holistic approach to environmental issues and sustainability are more likely to catch the donor who wants to invest in a solution.

Resources

Green Beyond Grants: Sustainable Practices for Foundations. Environmental Grantmakers Association, April 2007. This helpful guide offers 5 key recommendations to decrease environmental footprints. Additional resources, tips, and examples address a variety of relevant topics, including how to conserve energy, environmentally conscious traveling, and how to green your office. To download this free report, please visit www.safsf.org.

⁵ Giving USA 2009 Press Release "U.S. Charitable giving estimated to be \$307.65 billion in 2008."

⁶ 2008 Environmental Blue Book: Report of Chinese Environmental NGO Development" All-China Environmental Federation, October 30-31, 2008.



Supporting the Environment with CAFAmerica

Charities such as 'Grupo para Promover la Educación y el Desarrollo' (GRUPEDSAC)⁷ and 'Kids for Kids'⁸ are proving that it is possible to successfully implement sustainable business practices in developing regions. GRUPEDSAC battles both poverty and environmental degradation in Mexico. An eco-friendly library powered by solar energy and sustainable living programs for local farmers are examples of two successful GRUPEDSAC projects.

Like GRUPEDSAC, Sudan-based Kids for Kids supports sustainable projects by providing water, goat and donkey loans, health care for humans and animals, water harvesting, and long-term improvement to the environment through an extensive tree planting program.

CAFAmerica supports many organizations worldwide working to help the environment and implement sustainable initiatives. Here are some examples of these organizations and how they are making a difference:

⁷<http://www.grupedsac.org/>

⁸<http://www.kidsforkids.org.uk/>

Green City e.V., Germany

Today, Munich is one of the greenest cities in Europe thanks to government initiatives, ecological urban planning, and a dedicated team of volunteers and experts, Green City has participated in the greening of Munich since the 1990s.

To highlight that a green life is both accessible and fun, the nonprofit designs its activities to foster community participation. 'Ecolumbini' is an innovative educational program that teaches inner-city kids about the environment through visits to an organic farm or activities like baking a pizza with organic ingredients.

Green City projects also include an annual Streetlife Festival held on a car-free weekend to present alternative forms of transport to the public and a cycling program geared towards senior citizens.

In addition to exposing Munich's citizens to sustainable living habits, Green City is working to significantly reduce the city's greenhouse gas emissions from private vehicles. With their "creativity, farsighted vision, an eye for what's "do-able" and a sense of fun," they hope to bring sustainability into daily life. To learn more about Green City projects, visit them at www.greencity.de.

Websites

Center for Environment and Regulatory Affairs
<http://www.nationalcenter.org/eptf.html>

The Daily Green
www.thedailygreen.com

Global Greengrants Fund www.greengrants.org

Green Options
www.greenoptions.com

Greenpeace International
www.greenpeace.org

Lighter Footstep
www.lighterfootstep.com

National Resources Defense Council
www.nrdc.org

Rainforest Action Network
www.ran.org

Sierra Club
www.sierraclub.org

Treehugger
www.treehugger.com

World Changing
www.worldchanging.com

Worldwatch Institute
www.worldwatch.org

YouthXchange
www.youthxchange.net

How to Give

To give to any of the organizations listed here or another international charity of your choice visit CAFAmerica at:

<http://www.cafamerica.org/dn/Home/DonateNow/tabid/148/Default.aspx>

Toronto Green Community (TGC), Canada

Toronto Green Community has come a long way from its grassroots beginnings, prompted by a light bulb moment shared between two North Toronto women over a photocopier. Today, the organization is dedicated to engaging the surrounding community in local environmental action for a cleaner, greener Toronto.

Noteworthy successes include: the Toronto Renewable Energy Co-Op, establishment of Toronto's first energy distributing wind turbine, and the city's first car-sharing program. Building on its successful apartment greening project⁹, TGC is also launching a pilot recycling program with the Toronto Community Housing Corporation, Toronto's largest residential landlord and the second largest in North America.

To learn more about these programs and other TGC activities, visit them at www.torontogreen.ca.

⁹http://torontogreen.ca/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=61&Itemid=96

Centre for Education and Research in Environmental Strategies (CERES), Australia

Walking around CERES today, you may be struck by the peaceful green environment and think you stepped back in time. Yet here is a model for a possible future, a showcase for innovative, sustainable technologies used to build a village-like green community. CERES is the most visited center of its kind in Australia, thanks mainly to its models of sustainable living and business.

The center itself is an example of successful sustainable living: the ten-acre lot runs on renewable energy, acts as a multi-ton carbon sink, recycles its water and waste, and produces organic food for its inhabitants. In addition to community education to promote environmentally friendly lifestyles, CERES seeks practical and feasible steps to create a greener world. Recent initiatives include the *Zero Emission Vehicle*, a CO₂-free electric powered vehicle converted from an existing mass produced gas powered car.

Since its creation 25 years ago, CERES has influenced thousands of people (nearly 500,000 each year according to its website). Over the next 25 years its founders hope to contribute to the evolution of "a different world, a sustainable one with a greater level of equality and peace."

To learn more about CERES and its projects, visit their website at www.ceres.org.au.



Photo courtesy of Solar Richmond, Richmond BUILD, GRID Alternatives, the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, and greenjobsnow.com.



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- **CAFAmerica connects US donors with charities worldwide.**
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We're changing the culture of global giving by creating a world where international giving is not uncommon but done every day.
- **With a network of offices around the globe, we are experts in global giving and identifying local needs.**
CAFAmerica is an independent member of the CAF International Network, which spans six continents and manages more than \$4 billion in charitable funds.
- **Join us in our commitment to make lasting change.**
Call us today for a free brochure, *Your Passport to Global Giving*, or visit our website at www.cafamerica.org.

For More Information

If you or other donors would be interested in visiting any of the projects and/or charities mentioned in this brief, please contact CAFAmerica Chief Executive Officer, Susan Saxon-Harrod at 703-549-8931 or susansh@cafamerica.org for further details.

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