

THE TURNING TIDE:
THE PEOPLE, PRINCIPLES,
AND STRATEGIES CREATING
ECOLOGICAL BALANCE

THE ENVIRONMENTAL INNOVATIONS
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I want to welcome you all as change makers because I believe we are all being change makers either consciously or unconsciously.

Every being in nature is a change maker. Whenever it is the time of the year that the fruit ripens, it changes my life. Their taste changes my life and they really bring positive change in my life. I think we can all be positive change makers in our lives when we see life as a whole and when we live with an intention of receiving the whole and serving the whole.

Victor Ananias, Turkey

This turning tide of environmental change is showing up in every corner of the globe and everywhere it goes it leaves its mark. Evidence of its impact is seen in new protected areas in Argentina and Mexico, thriving organic farms in Zimbabwe and Poland, and growing wildlife populations in Brazil and Hungary. It is reflected in the actions

of children who manage recycling programs throughout Latin America, consumers who demand packaging efficiency in Bangladesh, and indigenous communities who close the door to commercial loggers in Mexico and open the door to economic independence and political autonomy by sustainably managing their own forests.

Diverse changes within society, both positive and negative, have resulted from the phenomenon termed “globalization” – the flow of goods, services, information, and living things – including people – across national boundaries. Globalization encompasses a shift towards global governance of markets and trade and the growing influence by multi-national corporations. This turning tide described here is a needed response to the numerous negative impacts from economic globalization that threaten the cultural, economic, and environmental fiber of societies around the world. Social innovators, specifically in the environmental field, are providing practical solutions to many of the challenges posed by globalization. We are proud to note that Ashoka Fellows are playing a critical role in this transformation. The challenge remains to understand the principles behind this turning tide, and ways to accelerate its impact.

Introduction

Around the world, a societal transformation is taking place. It has been discussed in the press, and talked about at international meetings around the world. It is touching people’s lives from farmers in rural Zimbabwe to grocery shoppers in Prague. It is totally decentralized and virtually unstoppable. And though it is linked to the process of economic globalization that has been making headlines since the 90’s, it is a distinct phenomenon.

This growing trend is a turning tide of people, institutions, and communities that are responding to the growing threats to the environment with creative and collaborative new strategies. It is emerging from civil society, the segment of society that serves as an important counterbalance to market-driven and governmental institutions. As civil society grows and takes on the challenges of environmental degradation and sustainable development, it is providing powerful innovations that are changing reality on the ground. This can be seen in new technologies that utilize traditional knowledge, new industries that support communities and ecosystems, and new institutions that empower women, children, indigenous peoples, and minorities to control their own resources and development strategies.

This document will shed light on some of the people, principles, and strategies helping to bring about this turning tide. Drawing from the insights that emerged at the 2nd International Environmental Innovations Workshop that took place in the U.K. in October 2000, and through an ongoing process of distillation and research, it will share specific strategies and cross-cutting principles that help define the potential for transformation, and point the way to its continued success. Rather than focus only on the distinct examples of this trend, we are pushing ourselves to look deeper at the fundamental principles that drive effective change in the environmental arena. These principles and their dynamic interaction are at the root of this turning tide, and can show us how to amplify it. Taken together, these principles show us the way to achieve a balance between people and the natural world that enhances both. The need has never been greater, nor the moment more ripe.

Ashoka: Who are the Ashoka Fellows?

Ashoka invests in social entrepreneurs – individuals with a big new idea that has the potential to bring about far-reaching social change, and the temperament and ability to take that idea to a national or even global scale. Ashoka operated in 41 countries in Asia, Latin America, Europe, and the U.S. in 1999. Each Ashoka Fellow is the author of a pattern-changing idea, in fields including economic development, environmental sustainability, healthcare, and education. Currently there are more than 1,100 Ashoka Fellows working on diverse social issues affecting millions of people throughout the world.

Ashoka takes a “venture capital” approach to investing in social change. Through a rigorous search and selection process

Ashoka Fellows have:

- an original idea for solving an important social problem;
- creativity at the visionary, goal-setting, and problem solving levels;
- demonstrated entrepreneurial skill and experience;
- the ability to think through complex strategic implementation issues;
- a realistic action plan likely to have national-scale impact; and
- strong ethical fiber.

honed by almost 20 years of experience, we are able to find those individuals with the necessary qualities for success.

Ashoka supports these individuals by providing both a three-year stipend that provides financial security during the launch of the new idea and professional services that can help the Ashoka Fellow access peer support, training, information, and contacts. The Environmental Innovations Initiative is one such program designed to support the work of environmental Ashoka Fellows and leverage their successes for even greater impact.

The Environmental Innovations Initiative

The Environmental Innovations Initiative is a program designed to identify and disseminate the guiding principles and best practices demonstrated by environmental Ashoka



Participants in the workshop at Wye College outside London

“We need to disseminate ideas and bring our collective energy and ideas to bear”

Anil Chitrakar, Nepal

Fellows around the world. We then invest in the best new ideas to emerge from the Ashoka Fellowship and help Fellows take their work to the next level by linking them with peers, partner institutions, and other resources. To do this, the EI Initiative is building an active network among Ashoka Fellows working at the interface between people and the environment.

The EI Initiative has spurred collaboration at the local and international levels around the world. In West Africa, the Ashoka Fellow-led Network of Social Entrepreneurs for Environmental Innovations (RESINE) met in April 2000 to bring together environmental practitioners from Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Cote d'Ivoire for cooperation on issues of waste management and water conservation. In Mexico, Ashoka Fellows from the Southeast met in October 2000 to share their ideas and strategies for merging environmental protection with steps for assuring greater food security for Mexico's urban and rural poor. In Poland, Ashoka Fellows and other environmental practitioners from throughout Central Europe, as well as India, Indonesia, Ecuador, and South Africa met in November 2000 to address concrete strategies to revitalize and preserve the quality of rural life. Agricultural tourism, environmental education, and organic agriculture were discussed, as well as ways to involve the government and business sectors in this important effort.

These activities represent a growing community of Ashoka Fellows who share knowledge and work together to amplify and accelerate the impact of each. In addition, each Ashoka Fellow represents a distinct network of communities, allies, and partners that also

become engaged in the process of linking and strengthening the work of leading environmental innovators. Most importantly, this network is yielding a new understanding of what really works in the areas of greatest need. With this knowledge, the EI Initiative will seek to

test new ideas, working with Ashoka Fellows and other key partners that share our commitment to bringing innovative ideas to the environmental field.

The 2nd International Environmental Innovations Workshop

Following the first International Environmental Innovations Workshop in Delhi, India, in December 1999, the EI Initiative hosted its 2nd International Workshop in October 2000 in London, England. The Ashoka Fellows who participated (see Bios) came from 11 countries and represented a wide array of environmental fields and strategies. Nevertheless, they shared a common purpose of pooling their knowledge and experience to draw out powerful principles and strategies that will empower others working in the environmental field. They met for three days at Wye College, outside of London, then returned to present to a diverse audience of 150 environmental practitioners, media, and representatives of the philanthropy and business communities at the Zoological Society. The essence of their discussions and conclusions from both the Workshop and Conference follow.



Marcos Da-Ré, Juan Pablo Orrego, Miklos Persanyi

The Environmental Innovators: Ashoka Fellows Participating in the 2nd International Environmental Innovations Workshop



Victor Ananias, Turkey, elected 1999 Organic Agriculture

Victor is promoting production of organic foods and local Turkish products by creating a consumer base and increasing people's awareness of the links between consumption and the environment. The first person in Turkey to start a business using only organic foods, he has developed an educational strategy as well as an effective business model for promoting local sustainable industries. Victor started Bugday, (wheat in Turkish), a chain of more than a dozen health food stores, restaurants, and environmental/cultural centers located throughout Turkey. Through these retail outlets and a popular magazine on the subject of health, organic produce, and the environment, he has developed a strong and growing interest from consumers in locally grown organic foods, which were previously only produced for export. He works closely with farmers, vendors, and consumers to build support for this growing industry.



Jacek Bozek, Poland, elected 1997 River Conservation

Jacek Bozek is leading a national grassroots movement to preserve Poland's rivers by stopping irresponsible river development projects. He has focused on protecting the Vistula, Poland's largest river, which is considered to be Europe's last "untamed" river. He is achieving his goal by educating and engaging the public, counteracting the aggressive lobbying tactics of pro-development interests in Poland, building coalitions between various Polish citizen's organizations and riverside communities, and presenting alternative forms of development that will not harm fragile eco-systems. This project is one of the most comprehensive campaigns ever undertaken to preserve Poland's natural heritage.

Edison Carvalho, Brazil, elected 1992 Environmental Management and Education

Edison Durval Ramon Carvalho, geologist and educator, is working with schools, rural communities, businesses, and non-profits throughout Brazil to build practical knowledge in the fields of environmental management and sustainable development. His training course entitled *Education, Environment and Citizenship* stimulates teachers to adopt an interdisciplinary methodology for incorporating environmental education in their curriculum. His approach relies on "multipliers," individuals within schools, communities, and businesses that can train and educate others on the importance of environmental protection and planning. In 1999, there were approximately 350 multipliers using Edison's approach and reaching about 54,000 people in nine Brazilian states.



Lucas Chiappe, Argentina, elected 1996 Forest Conservation

Lucas Chiappe, a photographer, farmer, and environmentalist, has developed a program to protect and link the sub-Antarctic ancient forests of Chile, Argentina, New Zealand, and Australia in a massive "International Sanctuary of Native Forests South of Parallel 40." Lucas has succeeded in creating two provincial parks and a protected area by employing a number of innovative strategies, including media campaigns, environmental education and teacher training programs, political lobbying, the creation of native tree nurseries and reforestation projects in every municipality, and citizens' petition campaigns.



Anil Chitrakar, Nepal, elected 1989 Environmental Education and Urban Planning

As the first Fellow-in-Residence at Ashoka, Anil is working closely with the Environmental Innovations Initiative and Ashoka's Global Fellowship. Most recently he worked on urban planning and management in Kathmandu, Nepal. He created a model (which is



now widely replicated) of environmental education camps to address important environmental problems overlooked by the educational system. Founded in 1987, Environmental Camps for Conservation Awareness (ECCA) has reached over 25,000 youth and involved 1,400 volunteers. Anil also developed an alternative energy sector plan in Nepal and coordinated with the World Bank and other multi-lateral lending agencies to gain their support for the alternative strategy.



Marcos Da-Ré, Brazil, elected 1994
Community-Based Conservation

As the principal biologist and field organizer of an international effort to preserve the Spix Macaw, Marcos Da-Ré has developed a new approach to conservation. His approach places heavy emphasis on the revitalization of human communities that share habitats with endangered or threatened species' habitats. An alternative to "units of conservation" (parks, reserves, etc.) sponsored by most government conservation initiatives, Marcos's "community of conservation" approach addresses development aspirations of local human settlements as a first priority for assuring the survival of endangered or threatened species. Since first elected as an Ashoka Fellow, Marcos has applied this concept in his work with governments and businesses that seek long-term solutions to environmental planning.



Victoria Dunmade, Nigeria, elected 1991
Sustainable Women's Enterprise

Concerned since childhood with the endless hours of rural women's low-yield drudgery, Victoria Dunmade launched an effort to develop new appropriate food-processing technologies designed for use and management by rural women. Victoria has introduced technologies and methodologies for agriculture and food processing that give special consideration to women's needs and the environment. Victoria's Center for Appropriate Technology for Rural Women (CAPTEC) in Nigeria is particularly concerned that rural women be made aware

of and given the opportunity to benefit from appropriate technologies. CAPTEC now seeks to train rural women in occupational health and conservation practices by teaching food production methods that are environmentally friendly, healthy, and economically viable.

Marie Haisova, Czech Republic, elected 1998
Urban Environmental Restoration

Marie Haisova is spearheading a movement to address the poor state of the urban environment in the Czech Republic by empowering women to take a leading role in the transformation of urban landscapes. Marie has developed a program that specifically targets mothers and encourages them to become involved in neighborhood campaigns to plant trees on their streets and encourage the development of new parks and green areas. Her program provides training and leadership building seminars for women so they can effectively launch their own neighborhood campaigns. Her work has resulted in two successful campaigns in two large areas of Prague and has received considerable attention from the media and local city officials.



Jabar Lahadji, Indonesia, elected 1992
Environmental and Cultural Preservation

Working with his tribe, the Wana, in Morowali National Park, Jabar Lahadji is weaving environmental and cultural preservation together into a powerful new strategy. Through his efforts, both the tribe and the region have grown stronger as the Wana have become committed to preserving the park that provides them their livelihood. Jabar first introduced environmentally sound and profitable ways the Wana can earn livelihoods from the preserve's lands, such as tourism and traditional medicines from local plants. Responsible tourism opened up one major opportunity, and he is also encouraging the production of handicrafts and helping to broaden the markets for them. Jabar has also worked to help other indigenous groups across Indonesia go through this same transition, from traditional exploitative livelihoods to a sustainable symbiosis with nature.





Jadwiga Lopata, Poland, elected 1996
Ecological Tourism and Agriculture

Jadwiga Lopata recognized that Poland’s many small family-owned farms were ideally suited to convert to organic farming methods and thereby benefit from the emerging premium market for organic produce and livestock. In order to make this shift, however, supplemental income was required. Jadwiga’s solution was to help family farms convert to organic farming by hosting visitors who happily pay for the opportunity to stay, eat, work, and enjoy themselves on the farms. This tangible economic re-valuation of family farming has allowed the farms to thrive despite the trend towards large-scale agri-business. Jadwiga has created a network of over 150 farms in Poland, and is engaging government, business, farmers, and the citizen sector within and beyond Poland to spread this model through the International Coalition to Protect the Polish Countryside.



Rodolfo Lopez, Mexico, elected 1989
Community-Based Forestry

Rodolfo Lopez is training Zapotec Indians to develop and manage their own forestry resources in the highlands of Oaxaca. By helping the indigenous people gain legal control of their forests, Rodolfo enables them to achieve independence through the substantial revenue they receive. His organization, ASETECO (Technical Consulting for Oaxaca), provides education at all levels in forest management, accounting, and business management. Rodolfo has helped the Zapotec people take control of the timber industry in Oaxaca, and assure the protection of their forests for future generations. With the stability and financial security that has come from sustainable forestry, Rodolfo has introduced programs to enhance the communities with which he has worked, including educational programs and micro-enterprise for women.

Dinesh Kumar Mishra, India, elected 1999
River Management

Dinesh Kumar Mishra is working to replace ineffective flood control mechanisms instituted by local government officials in the Indian state of Bihar, one of the most flood prone areas of the country. Dinesh organizes citizen groups to record local knowledge on floods and then generates local information bases that spread awareness among communities. Dinesh is using a locally generated knowledge bank to package and disseminate information to grassroots communities through appropriate media – print, audio-visual tools, and community gatherings such as public hearings, press conferences, and village meetings. Since 1992, Mishra has galvanized over 700 local groups of flood activists who now interact regularly across river basins through study exchange tours.



Juan Pablo Orrego, Chile,* River Conservation

Since 1991, Juan Pablo Orrego, president of the Action Group for the Biobío (GABB), has been working with a growing network of activists and indigenous Pehuenche people to make the defense of the Biobío River the defining environmental issue of post-Pinochet Chile. Pangué, the first hydroelectric dam in a planned series of six, began operation in 1996. Even more of a threat than Pangué to the Biobío’s rich eco-system is the second dam, Ralco, which would be the largest and most ecologically damaging of the series, dislocating the entire Pehuenche community from their traditional lands. Direct actions organized by GABB have momentarily paralyzed work at the dam site. Juan Pablo has influenced media, sponsored legal actions, and continued to lobby on national and international levels to save the Biobío from further dams. The Goldman Environmental Prize recognized Juan Pablo in 1997 for his outstanding environmental work.



*Juan Pablo was a special guest attending with the support of the Goldman Environmental Prize.



Miklos Persanyi, Hungary, elected 1999
Environmental Education and Conservation

Through his transformation of the National Zoo of Budapest, Miklos is mobilizing support for environmentalism by cultivating public interest in and support of animals and their habitats. Since his appointment as the Director of the National Zoo of Budapest in 1994, he has introduced innovative educational programs designed to facilitate involvement in environmental concerns across a range of groups – businesses, schools, families, and scientists. In addition to advancing environmental awareness through the Zoo’s new programs, Miklos is cultivating civic involvement and volunteerism in support of the century-old Zoo as a prized cultural institution.



Sabina Pieruzek-Nowak, Poland, elected 1999
Wolf Reintroduction

By demonstrating the environmental and economic benefits of predator species preservation, Sabina is promoting conservation of endangered species and their habitats in Poland and throughout Central Europe. She has identified Europe’s gray wolf as an effective vehicle for shifting public opinion and government support in favor of species and habitat conservation. To combat what she increasingly saw as an educational deficiency rather than an unfounded hatred of wolves and other predators, Sabina compiled and distributed a manual for breeders and farmers. In addition to educating farmers and garnering political support, Sabina is promoting eco- and agro-tourism as a regional economic incentive for wildlife protection.

In their own words, the Fellows created the following list of shared values:

- Recognition and respect of human and natural diversity, including gender and race
- Awareness of human place in natural order
- Respect for traditional values
- Spirituality

Discovering Shared Values

Despite the enormous diversity of participants in this meeting and throughout the Ashoka Fellowship, the underlying values that each environmental Ashoka Fellow’s work embodies are very consistent. As Miklos Persanyi of Hungary stated, “we realize one of the most important values is the recognition and respect of human and natural diversity.”

Participating Fellows agreed that this value relies on a second complimentary value, “the awareness of the human place in the natural order.” These are both very subjective statements, but in application, they require extreme sensitivity to the diversity that exists within human cultures and ecological systems, and a willingness to make decisions that do not place one over the other but rather enhance both. These values reflect the belief that the world is a better place for all people when it has abundant diversity and a healthy environment. This includes diversity among genders, religious beliefs, and ethnicities.

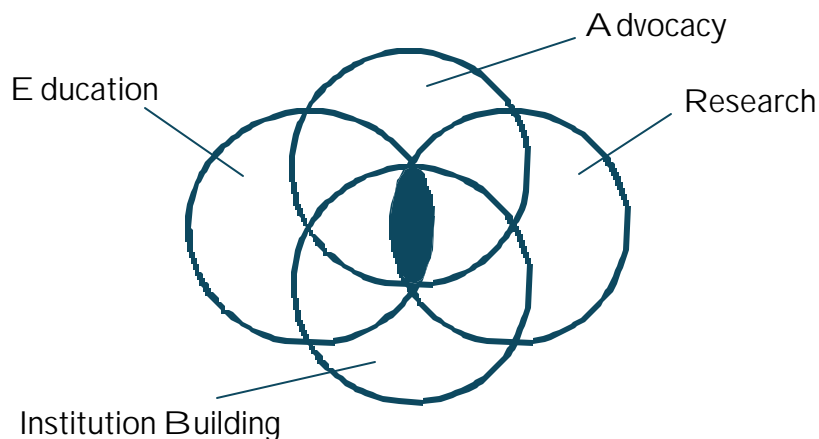
Juan Pablo Orrego of Chile transformed these deeply held values into a nation-wide campaign to prevent a dam from displacing the indigenous Pehuenche people of the Biobío River and destroying the fragile ecosystem along its banks. Dinesh Kumar Mishra of India works with people in flood prone areas to implement strategies for coexisting with the rivers of Bihar that are based on traditional practices. The values presented here are not distant ideals, but rather guidelines for the everyday work of these and other environmental innovators.

These values guide the actions of many Ashoka Fellows and others working in the environmental field, and are manifested in strategies that promote democratic decision making, equitable economic development, and restoration of natural ecosystems and traditional cultures.

Finding Common Ground: Shared Environmental Strategies

In the process of exploring common ground, the Ashoka Fellows examined the kinds of strategies that each employs to achieve widespread environmental change. Though the Fellows' efforts were each very distinctive, they identified four basic categories of strategies that each uses. These were:

- 1. Research:** examining ecosystems and the impacts of human activities, and distilling specific and accurate information. For example, Dinesh Kumar Mishra's research into traditional flood control practices, as well as the destructive effects of dams.
- 2. Advocacy:** developing policy alternatives and campaigning to change public policy and protect natural and cultural resources. Jadwiga Lopata, for example, has worked closely with local and national officials to develop a new policy framework that supports small organic family farms.
- 3. Education:** working with the public to change attitudes and behavior, as well as to inform the public of critical environmental concerns and alternatives. Through his publication and numerous retail stores, Victor Ananias is educating both consumers and vendors about the benefits of organic products.
- 4. Institution Building:** creating new institutions to address environmental change, which can take the form of new governmental, citizen-based, or private institutions. Miklos Persanyi's transformation of the Budapest Zoo, which now serves as a center for learning and conservation, is an example.



"Consider that these are not very new, and the people who work for the environment are busily acting in these areas all the time: researching what is really happening in nature and these ecosystems while also doing a lot of advocacy work for protection of a forest or a river or a culture; doing education, or building different structures in society that can work to protect the environment. We realized that if you do this work you very rarely address only one aspect. Quite frequently research and advocacy work are linked to each other. Research and education are linked, and we very often have to build new institutions in order to succeed in our other strategies. What we found interesting is that in the case of Ashoka Fellows these different strategies somehow overlap.

Research, advocacy work, education, and institution building all overlap in our activities. The interesting thing we could also say is that sometimes the secret of success is that you should not work only in one area in order to get results. Your activity will succeed if you link different strategies in a holistic way."

Miklos Persanyi, Hungary



The Environmental Innovations Principles: What We Have Learned

The work of Ashoka's environmental Fellows reflects deeply held values and branches off into diverse and creative strategies that are appropriate to distinct challenges. Just as each environmental challenge is complex and unique, so is each solution. Environmental innovators, such as the Ashoka Fellows, are capable of designing solutions that work because they are appropriate to the context of the problem. Yet even among the diverse and creative strategies employed by environmental Ashoka Fellows, there are powerful threads that are recurrent in their work.

We call these threads the Environmental Innovations Principles (EI Principles) because they demonstrate the patterns behind successful strategies, and indicate how these strategies can be replicated in other contexts. These principles have been developed through an iterative process of research, communication with Ashoka Fellows and other leading environmentalists, distillation in public settings like the EI workshops and conferences, and careful articulation by Ashoka staff. Though they are still in the process of refinement, the four EI Principles presented here capture many of the essential elements of the work of Ashoka Fellows. It is the interplay of these four threads that makes the work of Ashoka Fellows powerful. The workshop participants agreed that a holistic or systems approach must be taken in order to achieve lasting change, and emphasize different principles in their work depending on the context.

Our understanding of these principles is still evolving since the process of analyzing the work of all of Ashoka's environmental Fellows is still underway. The following EI Principles represent an early glimpse of the principles that we believe drive the work of successful environmental innovators.

"What I have learned in all of these processes is that it is possible and good to participate in the market as a common ground with incentives and cooperation across sectors. If the players are on equal levels, having the same information and the same power to bargain, that means fair play for all the people and the environment. For me and my team in A S E T E C O, the challenge is to continue innovating in the new stage of the forestry sector. To continue building the conditions for fair play."

Rodolfo Lopez, Mexico

1. Getting the Negotiating Framework Right

This is the first principle because it is in many ways the prerequisite for the success of the other principles. The development of transparent governance, enforceable laws, community participation, and property rights are all precursors to effective stewardship of our world's resources. For this reason, many Ashoka Fellows emphasize making changes to the policies that govern resource use. Tax laws, property laws, and environmental regulations can often drive innovation and prevent shortsighted use of natural resources. Beyond laws and governance, the negotiating framework also defines who is at the table, and what kind of power they have to affect negotiations.

For example, the work of Ashoka Fellow Rodolfo Lopez has been effective because it fundamentally altered the negotiating framework for indigenous communities in Oaxaca. There, the indigenous Zapotec people have been able to change their negotiating position by working with Rodolfo's organization, ASETECO, to develop sustainable forestry cooperatives. Financially independent, they are able to control the use of resources in their region and keep commercial loggers out. In this case, financial autonomy changed the negotiating framework. For more on Rodolfo's use of this principle, see the Case Study: Getting the Negotiating Framework Right for Indigenous Communities in Mexico.

The negotiating framework around urban residential property in the United States and the United Kingdom prevents the development of shared open space in the areas inside city blocks without unanimous approval by all property owners. So neighbors that wish to share their common open space to create an urban garden, a small paradise where they can create a clean, safe environment, are discouraged and hence few such spaces exist. By changing the law that governs use of private open space, the opportunity to create such cooperative open spaces in urban centers comes alive, and city planners and block associations can begin to transform neighborhoods, improving quality of life, the environment, and property value. For additional information on this concept in action, visit <http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/2000/06/drayton.htm>.

By getting the negotiating framework right, appropriate solutions, like the extractive reserve model developed by Ashoka Fellow Mary Allegretti in Brazil, can take root and spread quickly. Her vision of the extractive reserve made all interested parties owners of the renewable resources of protected areas of the Amazon. Rubber tappers, tagua nut collectors, and practitioners of agro-forestry could all benefit from the forest without owning or damaging the trees. In addition, the forest remains available for recreational use. With multiple users all benefiting from the intact forest, and policies in place to regulate use of the forest, the forest becomes a precious asset to many, and is protected.



Youth in Oaxaca prepare seedlings for local forestry



An urban garden in Mexico

2. Changing Economic Incentives

Economic systems are vulnerable to gross miscalculations of economic value provided by environmental services. By assuring that economic measurements account for externalities, like loss of environmental services, health problems, and the social costs associated with environmental problems, economic systems and markets can actually be a powerful tool for positive environmental change. In addition, a world of new opportunities is opening up in the arena of environmental enterprises. Sustainable forestry, ecological agriculture and tourism, and new alternatives in energy and materials are offering more opportunities for environmentally restorative activities to support economic development. To date, economic gain has been pitted against environmental protection. Many cutting edge businesses and Ashoka Fellows are realizing that the protection and restoration of the environment makes economic sense, and makes sense for people whose survival depends on a healthy environment.

Paco Arroyo has discovered new value in urban waste, and is teaching residents of Mexico City how to use tires, barrels, and organic waste to create urban gardens that improve their food security and increase their family income. He recently developed micro-enterprise opportunities for families who want to provide the needed seedlings and organic fertilizers to others, which has helped more families adopt this approach to meeting their nutritional needs in a healthier and more sustainable way.

We started to have visitors, and the first group of visitors were really wonderful for our farmers. People were very aware and they really supported the farmers, not only with money, but they also support them mentally. They support them by saying: "You are really doing good work and you should go on this way because we lost a lot of things in our western country because we went too fast, too far. We put too much attention to materialistic life and then we lost, and it is very difficult to make a step back. It costs a lot of money and almost is not possible because we destroyed the countryside culture and countryside life." That was very important for my farmers to realize. Many of them noticed that the comments and support were more important than even money, which the farmers were also getting from the visitors.

Jadwiga Lopata, Poland

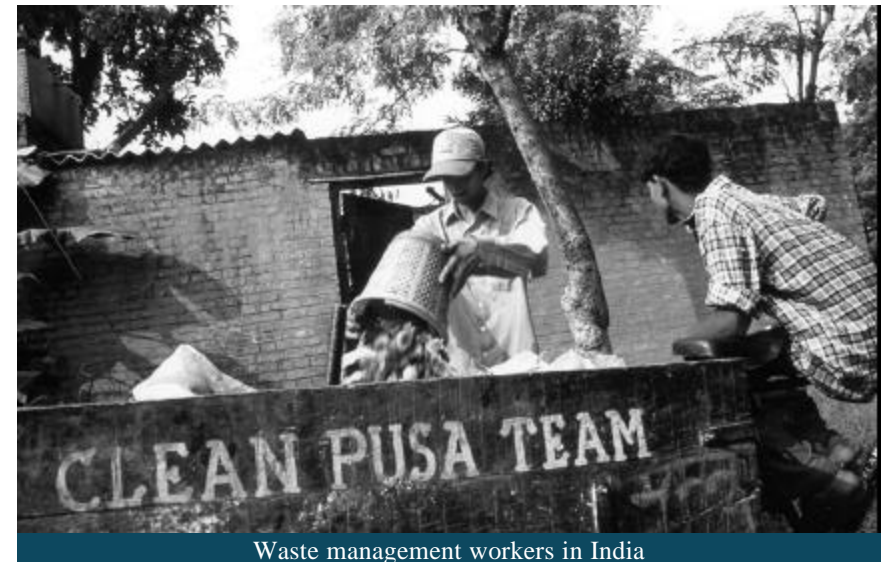
Jadwiga Lopata recognized in Poland's traditional small-scale farming an asset worth more to the world than only the food it produced. With her help, over 150 Polish farmers have successfully converted to organic farming and maintained their land and their farming culture by supplementing their income with a vibrant eco-tourism industry based on the small farm lifestyle.

It is important to note that this principle alone cannot assure a healthy balance between people and the environment. Markets work quickly and effectively, but do not always operate with accurate information about what kinds of activities are truly sustainable. Moreover, without a strong link to values, market-based solutions can easily become as dangerous as the problems they are meant to resolve. Eco-tourism for example, can easily become damaging to the environment when it lacks the appropriate negotiating framework, information about impacts, and basis in local culture and ecological values. For this reason, Ashoka Fellows are developing innovative strategies for utilizing market-based solutions with legal and social considerations that can assure a positive outcome for people and the environment.

3. Empowering People with Information

People's day-to-day behavior, as well as major political decisions, are often based on the understanding of cause and effect. As products and pollution become more globalized, it is more and more difficult for people to understand the impact of their choices. Understanding cause and effect means communicating information to diverse groups of people that can help them change behavior that has a negative impact on the environment, and often their own welfare.

For example, Ashoka Fellow Ravi Agarwal in India helps consumers understand the health and safety concerns related to different household products and consumption patterns, showing them alternatives that are healthier, and often cheaper, through reuse, recycling, and reduction of consumption.



Waste management workers in India

Juan Jose Consejo in Mexico works closely with communities in a critical watershed area of Mexico to help them think strategically about how to maximize their quality of life while protecting their source of water. The development of accurate information, new technologies, and advanced communication channels are all helping to ensure that people's choices are informed, and do not result in unintended and unwanted consequences.

Another example of this principle in action comes from efforts, both in the U.S. and abroad, to force polluting companies to disclose the amount of toxic chemicals they release each year. Without any restrictions on what they can release, companies dramatically reduce their toxic emissions to avoid having to show poor performance in comparison to other companies.

Edison Carvalho of Brazil works closely with companies throughout Brazil to give them the management tools they need to make their companies more environmentally sustainable. Armed with information and alternatives, many have reduced their waste streams, changed their production processes, and taken responsibility for environmental restoration.

We have to focus to change attitudes, to change the attitudes of the decision makers, so that we can bring together business, NGO's, and social groups for environmental change throughout Brazil.

Edison Carvalho, Brazil



Youth in Bolivia protest logging

Reaching out to Youth

When reaching out with new information and technologies, one of the most important constituencies is youth. By engaging young people and empowering them to be engines of change, dramatic transformations unfold at a much faster rate.

Understanding cause and effect goes beyond scientific research, and focuses on getting relevant information into the hands of people that can use it, be they school children, industry leaders, or rural people.

“The notion of giving children the opportunity to be creative is obviously one that we all cherish, and it is such an important one to stress. We’ve found that for every Ashoka Fellow there is a very strong role

model, somewhere in their family, somewhere in their community. Someone who has challenged authority, challenged the way things are done. Being that role model for someone in the next generation is an incredibly important act for all of us to consider. We must give young people the opportunity to lead, give young people the opportunity to create something at a very young age, so that they sense that this is something they can do, that they can contribute to solving our world’s problems. It’s just remarkable how much we see this pattern in interview after interview with candidates who come to the Ashoka Fellowship.

Derek Brown, Vice President, Ashoka, USA

4. Engaging People's Values and Culture

While laws, economic incentives, and information are effective in promoting sound decision-making regarding the environment, there are many facets of the natural environment that cannot be measured, controlled, or analyzed to understand their true significance. We recognize the link between cultural or spiritual values and the environment, and that practices and behavior are shaped by forces that often run much deeper than economic or legal incentives.

For example, Phra Boonsong Panyawutho, an Ashoka Fellow from Thailand, has incorporated environmental practices like stream conservation and environmental education of local fishermen into everyday Buddhist practices at his riverside temple, and has succeeded in restoring the fisheries eco-system of the Tha Chin River. He has also helped illustrate the spiritual and cultural value of local rivers and forests by performing rituals in nature that involve local communities.

Jacek Bozek of Poland has worked with 80 riverside communities to create a region-wide festival for the Vistula River, complete with art and theater exhibitions. As communities have begun to identify their culture with the river, they have worked harder to assure its protection as a wild river. For more details, see the Case Study: Protecting a River and a Way of Life in Poland.

People's culture and values can often override other factors in decision making, and by developing a strong link between these values and the environment, Ashoka Fellows are helping others change their behavior out of concern for their shared environmental heritage, and not purely out of self interest. Individual environmental innovators are often motivated more by their values than by any other consideration. Agents of change can often find the strength and motivation to take on seemingly intractable problems because of an ethic that requires personal responsibility for stewardship of the natural world.

For more examples and continued updates on the Environmental Innovations Principles and implementation strategies, visit <http://www.ashoka.org/global/environment.cfm>

Protecting What is Precious

My name is Lucas Chiappe and I have lived in Patagonia since 1976 where I moved after the bloodiest military coup Argentina ever had. After traveling around the world for many years, the idea was to find a beautiful and quiet place where I could raise a family with my wife and live in a very simple way. And that is what we did for 5 years. We got out of the maddening crowd, built a nice wooden house, had babies, planted a vegetable garden and so on...until a couple of engineers woke us up one morning and told us that the government had decided to build a tremendous dam and flood our valley under 40 meters of water.

That was the end of a dream and the beginning of a nightmare...but in a way, it was also the birth of another, bigger dream. I felt it was a time to wake up and wake up the people around me. Five years of fighting and debates and all kinds of activism pushed me to lead the most incredible crusade Patagonia had ever seen related to ecology. And in the end, after having been thrown in jail a couple of times, WE WON THE WAR. The time was set to start another campaign, lending my voice to the amazing native forests that grow in the very narrow strip of the Patagonian Andes.

That is how I started Proyecto Lemu in 1990, an initiative to re-enhance the value of native forests and to protect the fragile biological diversity which inhabits these ecosystems.

Lucas Chiappe, Argentina

Photo by Lucas Chiappe of his home in Patagonia

Case Study

Getting the Negotiating Framework Right for Indigenous Communities in Mexico Rodolfo Lopez, ASETECO

Summary

By shifting the economic and political power away from logging companies and into the hands of Oaxaca's indigenous communities, Rodolfo Lopez has changed the rules of the game. Lopez was elected an Ashoka Fellow in 1989, and has worked for over 18 years with ASETECO – which translates into “technical consulting for Oaxacan communities” – in order to defend the economic and human rights of the indigenous communities of Oaxaca, Mexico.

The Problem

Oaxaca has more than a million hectares of pine forests, 90 percent of which legally belong to the Zapotec, Chatino, Mixtec, and other indigenous communities of Oaxaca. For 25 years, from 1957 to 1982, the rights of the indigenous communities over their most valuable resources were seriously violated as the government had conceded use of the forests to two industrial companies, one private and one public.

During these 25 years, the communities saw their best forest resources destroyed while their own poverty and misery continued unabated. Without any access to their own resources, or economic benefits from their exploitation, their right to a decent way of life and economic security remained unfulfilled. In addition, they witnessed the destruction through unsustainable logging of the forests that had traditionally sustained their peoples. After the 25-year concession ended, the government attempted to renew it, but the local communities opposed them and impeded the two companies from entering their lands.

After a two-year halt on logging, the local communities recognized that they needed to find a more equitable and sustainable way to manage their forest resources in order to regain control of their own economic and social well-being.

The Idea

ASETECO began working with the indigenous communities in Oaxaca in 1982 with the proposal to both the government and the communities to introduce the following:

1. A new recognition that the communities were owners of the forest resources and hence had the final authority to decide how those resources would be utilized, including issues of management, processing, sales, and pricing.
2. In order to exercise their rights, it was necessary for the communities to have their own collective business and resource management strategies in accordance with their needs and customs.



Rodolfo Lopez

The idea of community-based businesses as a tool to protect their legal and economic rights was proven effective by the first pilot community that used this approach. Other communities followed their example until, by 1984, the two companies that had been logging the area were provided a sufficient supply of logs by the community-managed forest enterprises. These enterprises now compete with foreign and national logging companies by providing high quality value-added timber.

The approach to developing community-based forest enterprises is based on a system of training and capacity building that makes it feasible for local communities (whose members often lack in formal education) to manage and sustain their own companies. Through their involvement with ASETECO they gain knowledge of accounting, finance, computing, marketing, and organization, as well as sustainable forest management.

The Results

The ASETECO team has been involved in promoting and organizing 25 different business ventures among the indigenous communities of Oaxaca, paving the way for a community-based forestry strategy that includes 80 separate companies which provide over 80 percent of the timber supply for the state. The communities involved now have the possibility of initiating their own community services, such as potable water, electricity, passable roads, pharmacies, busses, pensions for senior citizens, and other critical services, all without the help of the government. They now have the freedom to determine their own priorities.



A Zapotec Indian studies Forestry

In order to encourage communities to support the rights of women and children, ASETECO began to provide resources and training for the development of micro-enterprises, allowing women to earn their own incomes and develop greater autonomy within their own communities. Through these enterprises, such as food processing, crafts, and other value-added activities, they have developed new skills and a greater authority to make decisions in their families and their communities.

Another area of focus for ASETECO and its mission to change the rules of the game for these communities has been in the area of education. Education provided by the government has not historically given youth in these communities the knowledge and skills necessary for success in their specific context. ASETECO is remedying this by providing complimentary education in themes that relate to the realities of life and employment for these young people, giving them the practical skills and hands-on experience that can round out the government educational program. With a newly found economic and accompanying political autonomy, these communities have embraced sustainable forestry, developing industries and educational programs that can instill a long-term approach to managing their forests for their own and future generations' benefit.

Lessons Learned

By changing the rules of the game, and helping to make indigenous communities the authority in decisions regarding resource use, Rodolfo and ASETECO were able to build communities into politically and socially stronger units. With the capacity to bargain with companies and the Mexican government, they regained control over their economic and political future. This control – as well as resources that their financial independence has brought them – has given these communities the ability to reinvest in their communities and their forests by promoting value-added industries and complimentary education that teaches sustainable forest management to children and adults.

These changes could be viewed as the result of new economic rights, but for ASETECO, economic security and the choices it brings are in fact a component of basic human rights.

Adapted from a speech by Rodolfo Lopez in Hamburg, Germany, on October 26, 2000, entitled “Los Derechos Económicos de las Comunidades Indígenas en Oaxaca.” (The economic rights of the indigenous communities of Oaxaca)

Case Study

Creating Local Markets for Global Change in Turkey

Victor Ananias, Bugday

Summary

Victor Ananias recognized that introducing organic agriculture in Turkey was a ripe opportunity when foreign companies began working with local farmers to produce organic dried fruits for export to Western Europe. But the key to making organic agriculture both a business opportunity and an opportunity to improve quality of life for Turkish consumers had not yet been tapped. By educating consumers and finding cost effective ways to stimulate both the production and consumption of organically grown and processed foods, Victor has started a thriving national industry that is supporting the livelihoods of farmers and the health of consumers.

The Problem

Though there are still a few people growing organic produce as a part of their traditional practices in remote mountain villages, agriculture in Turkey has for the most part been transformed into monocultures of conventional agriculture. Conventional agriculture, which includes chemicals and pesticides, has caused significant problems for both human health and the environment in the last 50 years. Turkey is not unlike any other country that has had the resources to pay for the chemicals and new technologies associated with conventional agriculture, and as a result it is facing the same degradation of soil and water quality, loss of species, and growing numbers of human diseases linked to exposure to chemicals.

The Idea

The idea of organic-certified agriculture is quite new for Turkey. It started in 1995 with some organic dried fruit projects that were controlled and traded by several European companies. Organic production grew quickly

after that, which was good for the producers and traders as well as consumers in the countries to which the products were exported. It also had a positive impact on the environment where organic production took place.

Only one important thing was left out: Turkish consumers. Until 1997, not even one percent of the organic production was consumed in Turkey. As a result of economic challenges, the quality of nutrition has suffered and increases in diseases related to lifestyle and chemical exposure have risen.

Victor and his organization Bugday – which means “wheat” in Turkish – have begun to promote certified organic products to the Turkish consumer at their center for ecological living in Bodrum (a small town on the southwest coast of Turkey). Before certification was widespread, they sold local traditional village products that were produced organically but not



Organic produce from Turkey

certified. To introduce the concept of certified organic products, they started by selling ten different organic-local products that had been processed by export companies. Initially, because of a lack of awareness of the benefits of organic products, there was not enough local support for a Turkey-based processing and packaging operation, but this soon changed.

Bugday organized public meetings, panels at conferences, and gatherings of consumers and farmers, and published articles in the national press on the growing organic movement. They also started to publish their own bi-monthly magazine to promote organic food not only as a way to discern healthier and more environ-

mentally sustainable products, but also as a way of promoting the cultural and environmental values associated with organic agriculture. It now has a readership of over 6,000 people that spans most of Turkey and parts of Western Europe.

The Results

With few staff and limited resources, Bugday has grown quickly, creating positive results in a short period. One year after launching the organization, Bugday organized and opened an organic store in Istanbul that is owned by a non-governmental environmental organization. In early 1999, they decided that the Turkish market was getting ready for organic food and more local projects would be feasible. During that year they opened four new stores in different parts of Turkey. By the end of the year the small Bugday team was in contact with dozens of people who wanted to open organic stores in different places.

In the beginning of 2000, three export companies started to package and sell nearly 70 different organic products within the Turkish market. As a result of the growing market, investors began to look at the development

of an organic production and processing industry within Turkey.

Bugday has become the reference for the field in Turkey and continuously offers advice and consulting on a volunteer basis to new entrepreneurs in the organics business. The organization is becoming a foundation for supporting a new environmental movement that syn-



A Bugday organic store

thesizes environmental sustainability with business opportunities through its professional network, volunteers, and supporters within and outside of the country.

At this time, there are over 50 sales points for organic agriculture and every month three or four new stores are launched. Catering companies have started to seek the advice of Bugday on organic ingredients, and organic dishes are appearing at festivals, meetings, and restaurants. Many farmers turn to Bugday to seek advice and look for new ideas, resulting in the appearance of new products for the Turkish market every day.

Lessons Learned

Developing a market for organic produce requires more than simply cultivating the supply by investing in farmers. The organics industry requires a strong consumer base. Since there is often a premium for organic produce, educating consumers about its benefits is essential. In Turkey, Victor has used organic agriculture as a facet of a larger strategy to revalue rural life, and the traditions and crafts that make Turkey so unique.

By demonstrating the viability of a strong, locally supported market for organically grown and processed foods, Victor has shown that environmental sustainability can also sustain people's health and livelihoods. This has paved the way in Turkey for a deeper look at issues like fair trade and socially responsible business. With farmers, producers, and consumers on board, Victor and Bugday have the needed support to introduce further environmental innovations throughout Turkey.



An open air market for local foods and crafts

Case Study

Protecting a River and a Way of Life in Poland Jacek Bozek, Klub Gaja

Summary

In the midst of soviet-era attitudes towards resource planning and top-down decision making, protecting the Vistula River from a plan for aggressive damming along its length required a broad-based citizen movement. Jacek Bozek and Klub Gaja, the organization he founded in 1994, have worked with all the communities along the river to create a new cultural identity with the river in its natural state. By engaging people at a cultural level, Jacek made saving the river a way for people to protect their own heritage and value system.

The Problem

The Vistula is a unique river not only in Poland but also in Europe. It features an extraordinary array of fauna and flora, as well as enormous economic and social potential for the region. The Vistula is also one of Europe's largest rivers, and the one that remains closest to its natural state. In addition, the Vistula is one of Europe's most important ecological corridors, allowing diverse species to migrate along its length and from as far away as Africa. It supports fisheries and attracts many of the tourists who come to riverside communities in Poland to enjoy both the cultural wealth and the natural environment of the region. Because the Vistula transverses much of Poland and travels through several major cities including Warsaw and Krakow, it has over the years become a symbol of Poland itself in much the same way the Danube is for Hungary or the Mississippi is for the United States.

There are currently plans to construct the Lower Vistula Cascade, which would include seven more dams along the Lower Vistula. In the opinion of many Polish and foreign institutions, experts and environmental organizations, this project will destroy the ecological and cultural

uniqueness of the Vistula. A dam constructed earlier at Wloclawek led to problems with siltation, and yielded none of the promised benefits. The only options that are being discussed at the government level include more dams and further river regulation. Thorough cost-benefit or environmental assessments have not been considered by the Polish government, and the lack of open, public debate on the proposals has made it difficult for the public to weigh in on an issue that clearly affects their well-being.

The Idea

Jacek's approach to building opposition to the proposed dams is based on his insight that the most important ingredient of a successful environmental campaign is local commitment, and he has discovered that by generating a sense of civic pride in a river he can begin to create the commitment needed to protect it.



Jacek shares news of the Vistula campaign

He is achieving his goal through a multi-pronged approach, which is designed to educate and engage the general public, counteract the aggressive lobbying tactics of pro-development interests in Poland, build coalitions between various Polish citizens' organizations and river communities, and present alternative forms of development that will not harm fragile eco-systems. This project represents the first time in Poland that such a comprehensive campaign to preserve the country's natural heritage has ever been undertaken.

One of his most heavily publicized events has been the national Vistula Feast, which is held every June. This festival celebrates the river and its importance in Polish

history and life and can be found in over 50 different communities every year. In addition, the public demonstrations incorporate street theater, art, and music to demonstrate the positive and life affirming nature of Klub Gaja's work to protect the Vistula.

In 1993, Jacek Bozek worked with Klub Gaja to prepare the national Polish campaign "Teraz Wisla," which means "Vistula Now." The campaign was launched on Earth Day on April 22, 1994 in Warsaw. The goals of the "Teraz Wisla" campaign are the improvement of water quality, its rational use, and protection of biological diversity and cultural values by means of ecological education and engagement by local communities.

protection of biological diversity and cultural values by means of ecological education and engagement by local communities.

The Results

Jacek's efforts have successfully reached the members of local riverside communities, creating an avalanche of support for

protection of the river. In addition to the Vistula Feast which annually involves over 50 communities in celebration of the river and its role in the community, Klub Gaja has developed an extensive network of volunteer chapters. To date, the program has recruited over 400 volunteers for the project and at any given time, there are at least 60 people heading the public education campaigns. To support his growing volunteer network, Jacek has established a network of Klub Gaja chapters in more than 19 Polish communities. These chapters serve as a focal point for all activities concerning the preservation of the river. Jacek publishes a regular newsletter called *Wisla Fax* that provides up-to-date information on the efforts to save the Vistula River and

helps to unite the chapters of volunteers into a cohesive national movement.

This movement has slowed the dam proposal, and may ultimately result in its being dismissed. More than this, Jacek's approach has created a new pride in the Vistula and an awareness of its vulnerability across Polish society. This will mean that it will be monitored and protected far into the future as communities and families share their own values of conservation and desire to protect the Vistula.

Lessons Learned

Jacek's approach and the work of Klub Gaja have always recognized the power of education, economic alternatives, and political engagement. But what makes their work so unique and contributes largely to their success is their ability to connect with people through their culture and values. Rather than introducing new knowledge or practices, the members of Klub Gaja infuse daily activities and cultural celebrations with an awareness of the Vistula River's central role in the lives and history of these communities.

Adapted from a publication by Jacek Bozek, President of Klub Gaja.



Children's art celebrates the Vistula



Street theater draws a crowd

Current Activities and Next Steps

Follow-up Activities and Local Environmental Innovations Workshops

Following the two international Environmental Innovations Workshops held in India and the U.K., Ashoka Fellows continue to develop local networks for knowledge sharing, collaboration, and the spread of cross-cutting principles.

- The International Coalition to Protect the Polish Countryside (ICPPC), an organization committed to protecting the natural habitat and lifestyles in the Polish countryside was officially launched in November 2000 at a conference held in the small village of Stryszow, Poland. The conference, which was sponsored by Ashoka and organized by Ashoka Fellow Jadwiga Lopata from ECEAT-Poland, included 10 Ashoka Fellows from Poland, Indonesia, South Africa, India, Ecuador, and Turkey as well as other representatives from Austria, the U.K. and the U.S.
- Marie Haisova, an Ashoka Fellow from the Czech Republic, published proceedings from London in Czech and shared them with a wide audience of Czech Ashoka Fellows and environmental groups in December 2000.
- Ecuadorian Fellow Raúl Cabrera met with Ashoka Fellows and other environmental practitioners in Ecuador in February 2001 to share insights from his work in the areas of sustainable agriculture and fair trade. He also used this venue to launch a local version of the International Coalition for the Preservation of the Polish Countryside. Jadwiga Lopata and Sir Julian Rose, the co-chairs of the ICPPC, attended.

- Indian Ashoka Fellow Soumyadeep Datta will hold a conference in February 2001 in Assam on the protection of the Assam rainforest, ecological farming, and ways to protect local culture. Though the emphasis of his work in Assam has been to protect the biodiversity of the area, he is now integrating the concept of ecological farming that he has gained from participating in international Ashoka workshops.

- In Brazil, environmental Ashoka Fellows led by Marcos Da-Ré and Edison Carvalho will meet with business leaders to share ideas on improving environmental performance by companies, and to explore the possibility of collaborating to tackle some of Brazil's greatest environmental challenges.

- Lucas Chiappe will meet with Ashoka Fellows and other environmental practitioners in southern Chile and Argentina to apply insights drawn from their work and outcomes of the London workshop to protecting and restoring forests of the Southern Cone.

- In Indonesia, Jabar Lahadji will gather Indonesian Ashoka Fellows to share insights from the London meeting and launch a new publication from Ashoka Indonesia on the work of Ashoka's Indonesian environmental Fellows.

- Victor Ananias will host a week-long conference called "Meeting at the Crossroads" that will include site visits to organic and traditional producers in rural Turkey, with participation from Central European and international environmental practitioners and Ashoka Fellows.

Open Space Co-opping Project takes a Domestic Focus on Making Cities More Livable and Green

In the U.S., the Environmental Innovations Initiative is collaborating with the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development on a project that introduces a new model for managing private open spaces in city centers. The project will identify several U.S. cities where open space co-opping can be piloted. With the support of local community organizers and city officials, model cities will serve to demonstrate that, by changing the legal and commercial framework for managing city spaces, cities can become safer, greener, and more prosperous places to live.

3rd International Environmental Innovations Workshop to be held in Latin America Summer 2001

The Environmental Innovations Initiative will gather its newly-formed council of Advisors from among the Ashoka Fellowship and other leading environmental organizations to define how the Environmental Innovations Principles can guide the use of market-based environmental solutions. As more and more environmental innovators turn to environmental business enterprises and environmental practices that create sustainable livelihoods, there is a need for clearer guidelines on how to wield the forces of the market in precise and effective ways. The meeting will address eco-tourism, sustainable agriculture and forestry, and new mechanisms to tap into international investment in environmental enterprises.

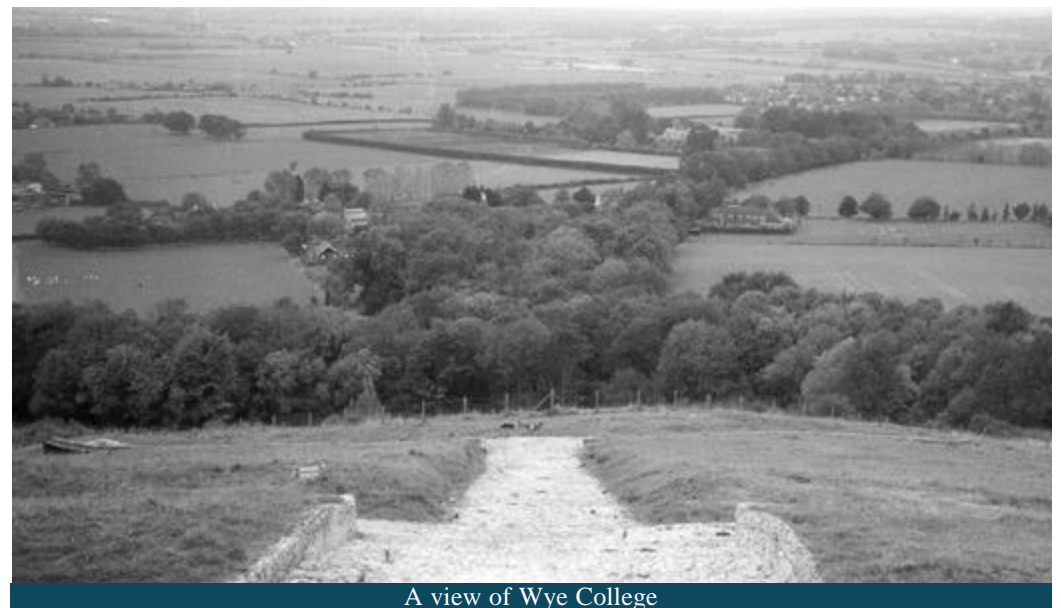
For more information on these activities, please contact: Yasmina Zaidman at yzaidman@ashoka.org

An Invitation

The process of refining the Environmental Innovations Principles and implementation strategies is an interactive one that relies on the feedback of Ashoka Fellows, EI Advisors, and individuals like you. Please join us in this effort to support the turning tide of successful environmental innovations and share with us your reactions and contributions to this document. Please visit us at <http://206.55.47.55/forums/index.cfm?CFApp=8&> where your comments and suggestions can be shared through our discussion room.

A transcription of the Environmental Innovations Workshop in London is available online at http://www.ashoka.org/global/environmentall_transcript.cfm

For updates on Environmental Innovations activities and individual environmental innovators, please visit www.ashoka.org/global/environment.cfm



A view of Wye College

