

EDST542

Final Personal Project Paper

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Sustainability Harmonist Workshop

The workshop “how can we build harmonized community for sustainability” for mixed background (international and local students/ immigrants) groups who are interested in or working on sustainability in the communities - using the videos that made with the stranger, ikigai (purpose of life), and the individual psychology perspective.

Purpose:

Increase peoples understanding ikigai and encourage perception of the unique and important value that each person, including yourself, brings as a contributor to their community/ies.

1. The workshop helps for participants to accept who they are, and recognize their potential contribution to the communities with their own pace and scale.
2. Everyone has Ikigai (purpose of life) which can be a small and make you happy
3. Respect others’ values, spaces, and paces as same as you accept yourself
4. Encourage lifestyle (sustainability can be a lifestyle) can change
5. Encourage we can harmonize together instead of criticizing or fighting each other

Workshop Schedule:

Opening: Why Community and Sustainability

Part1: a. The Stranger – watching the first video
b. Sharing their personal stories

Part 2: a. Ikigai & Sustainability – watching the sustainability harmonist video
b. Finding and sharing their Ikigai

Part 3: a. Individual psychology and sustainability/community
b. Discussing how to build more harmonized community
c. Sharing and following up each other at the forum on the website

The detail of the workshop schedule of the day is attached PDF “Sustainability Harmonist Workshop”, the power point form. That one is especially, for the Cambie demonstration garden of the Society Promoting Environmental Conservation (SPEC) in August, 2018 – one day, 60 minutes. The workshop length can be flexible depending on the group’s needs. It can be three days. Videos may be watched online individually prior to the workshop attendance.

Target participants and Communities of Practice:

Communities of Practice is proposed by Etienne Wenger, the educational theorist. According to Wenger's website, "Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly" (2015).

The domain, the community, and the practice are the three important characteristics of the communities of practice (Wenger, 2015). Wenger states "The community "has an identity defined by a shared domain of interest" (2015). Also, he says high members engagement, because of their interest in the domain, builds the community to learn from each other well (2015). The members should be practitioners to develop a shared repertoire of resources.

The workshop combines the communities of practice and boundary objects, especially, for the participants at universities because of the complicated characteristics of sustainability. Benn and Martin mentioned the needs of the combination below:

the innovation will be around a more holistic appreciation of sustainability if the university gets engaged within a community of practice that can translate an abstract concept into real-life meaning for the different members of the community. (2010)

Also, Benn and Martin prove that "the boundary objects enabled emergent concerns around aspects of sustainability" (2010). Not only Benn and Martin, Pendersen mentioned "The communities of practice model has been promoted for its potential to bring together diverse groups of people; inspire cross-disciplinary learning and to enable grass-roots level change in an institution" (2016).

Even though communities of practice seems the practitioners who are professional or have been already working on in the field, the participants in this workshop do not need to be. This workshop is for promotion to build harmonized communities for sustainability, where variety background people who are interested in/working on sustainability in their communities. Also, this workshop promotes that communicate with strangers who are different and have potential to contribute new knowledge. Therefore, as long as the members are actively interactive, and open to share their knowledge about sustainability and building harmonized communities, they are included in this workshop and the communities.

Community groups such as community non-profit groups, such as community garden group, meet regularly at physical spaces. However, the meeting space can be virtual spaces as Dube, Bourhis, and Jacob promoted in the article "The Impact of Structuring Characteristics on the Launching of Virtual Communities of Practice" (2005). Therefore, the forum space on the blogsite is prepared for participants to share their knowledge in the communities regularly.

According to Pendersen, friendships is a key factor for continuous engagement in the communities of practice (2016). It applies individual psychology, how the person defined his community, as well. Kishimi mentioned that we actually feel our value when we realize that our existence is benefiting the community or when we can contribute to others (2017).

Part I

The Stranger, Loneliness, and Community – Social Sustainability

Video #1: The Stranger

“The Stranger”, the video, through <https://youtu.be/A3pgh2l2Y4U>

Script

The Stranger – A potential to erase loneliness

“Loneliness does not come from having no people about one, but from being unable to communicate the thing that seem important to oneself, or from holding certain views which others find inadmissible.” – Memories, Dreams, Reflections by Carl Gustav Jung

The stranger - "He is, so to speak, the potential wonderer: although he has not moved on, he has not quite overcome the freedom of coming and going - Georg Simmel

The stranger – "Distance means that he, who is close by, I far, and strangeness means that the, who also is far, is actually near." - Georg Simmel

Above will be screen only (not audio)

I am a stranger, an international student from Japan in the beautiful city of Vancouver where everyone is nice and polite, but it is not easy to make deep connections. This city is one of the most livable cities in the world, but also one of loneliness.

Am I, the stranger, lonely here? I say yes and no. I think I handle my loneliness better than before, since I became the stranger.

I am not surprised that the loneliest people in Metro Vancouver are ages 25 -34. When I was that age, I was in Japan, a suburb city just out of Tokyo, where society expects people to live a certain way, as a Japanese. In Japanese communities, neighbors know each other well as they normally have lived together for a long time. Some people like my father grew up in a community, move and then come back to raise their own families. The community is very supportive and needs to be strong, especially to survive natural disasters. At the same time, it is annoying if you do not fit in its box.

I had pressure to have my own family to be normal there. Relatives and neighbors asked me the typical question, “Are you not married? It is better to have kids when you are young.” I felt isolated or maybe I isolated myself as the expectations of society and my reality were different. I also compared myself with my friends.

In Vancouver, I do not need to care about how other people see me. The city changed my definition of family: so many single people – some sharing houses – common-law couples, step dads and moms, half brothers and sisters, adopted kids, gay couples, etc. The traditional family is not the only way. Here varieties of lifestyles are more acceptable than in Japan. But I can see people here trying to be successful as defined by society and to figure out how to deal with their loneliness – filling the gap between what they have and what they want at that age.

There are different depths of loneliness. The ultimate loneliness is the time when I cannot find the purpose of life, in other words, I do not feel any connections with this life. The purpose of my existence in this world is experiencing who I am as a human being and as part of nature. I will have various kinds of loneliness, on and off, until the ultimate loneliness comes.

Loneliness is part of the human condition, neither positive nor negative. Yes, it hurts physically and spiritually. The pain of loneliness is a message from inside that tells me something is not working. Sometimes remembering to appreciate what I have erases the loneliness immediately. But if my heart is still hurting, it means my connection needs to be changed to something or someone else.

Everyone has a different life journey. The connection needs not only be with someone near me. My connection can be with family and friends outside of Canada through the Internet. They are far away but I feel much closer to them than to people in Vancouver who are near me but with whom I cannot communicate. I often choose to be alone to connect to music, food, memory of beloved ones, nature and spirituality. It sounds like the opposite from connection to people as the solution to loneliness. But I need to have my own space to process who I am, what I want.

However, we're social animals that need more connection than we're getting. Actually, experiencing loneliness gives me the motivation to create human connections and appreciate deep connection. The people whom I am closely connected with were at first strangers. I admit I cannot control what strangers I meet and with whom I would feel deep connection. Even though I make the effort to build the connection, sometimes it does not work. Amazingly, sometimes connection immediately happens regardless of language or age. But every stranger has the potential to stay in my life or move on. At least I learn new perspectives from them since they have some different experiences. The strangers I can make the right connections with have brought me new values and they have made me who I am. Without their input, I could not grow up.

In Vancouver, a multicultural city, I have been fortunate to meet strangers from all over the world. In this busy world, who wants to spend precious time to listen to the stranger's story? Why don't I take advantage of that? I will find somebody who shows me a new world, and I can also be the stranger for someone else. So, I won't stop making conversation with strangers.

Will you join me to become the stranger?

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A big thank you to the interviewees, friends sharing their loneliness here and all over the world, my teammates Misha and Scott, and to the M.Ed, Education for Sustainability program at UBC.

Forum site information:

Don't be a stranger - Past stranger forum:
<https://blogs.ubc.ca/dontbeastranger/category/past-stranger-forum/>

Part II

Ikigai and sustainability

Sustainability is lifestyle and the personal purpose of life as a whole

Ikigai, 生き甲斐, whose meaning is the purpose of life, “Iki (to live) and gai (reason)” (Moji, 2017) in Japanese. Ikigai is the one of nine commonalities, called the “Power 9” in the *Blue Zone*, where people reach age 100 at 10 times greater rates than in the United States” (Buettner, 2016). Ikigai, “why I wake up in the morning.” (Buettner, 2016), extends seven years of length of life (Buettner, 2016). The satisfaction, acceptance of purpose of life contributes sustainability. Sustainability is one of the five pillars of Ikigai, and its definition shows a person exists individually at the same time with connecting with others in the wholeness:

Sustainability is an art of life, requiring ingenuity and skillfulness. A man is like a forest, individual yet connected and dependent on other for growth. The fact that someone has lived for a long time is quite an achievement, in the ups and downs of this often unpredictable world. After all, in the long process of life, you sometimes stumble and fall. Even at those times, you can have ikigai, even when you are on a losing streak. Ikigai, in a nutshell, is literally from the cradle to the grave, no matter what happens in your life. (Moji, 2017)

Sustainability applies not only to man’s relation to nature, but also to the modes of individual activities within a social context. You should show adequate consideration for other people, and mindful of the impact your actions might have on society at large. (Moji, 2017)

Unfortunately, I could not find any direct articles that show the evidence that ikigai is used in the sustainability education. A lot of articles that include Ikigai are well-being, longevity. However, according to Uegaki, in the sustainability science, Ikigai is in the human system, the one of three systems in the sustainability science; Ikigai is one of the security bases of human system, as same as health, safety, and security (2011). In other word, satisfaction of individual ikigai is one of the key component of sustainability.

Video #2 : Sustainability Harmonist

“Sustainability Harmonist”, the video, through <https://youtu.be/ZuyDZW4Mtp8>

Script

Sustainability Harmonist
- with Ikigai live happy as a part and whole of sustainability

(On the screen)

“Sustainability comes with different meanings and is related to different practices at different times, in different places, by different actors.”

(Pfister, Thomas, (Professor of sociology), Martin Schweighofer, Andreas Reichel, and Taylor & Francis eBooks A-Z. *sustainability*.)

(On the screen)

Sustainability - What does it mean to you?

For me, sustainability is a value, a lifestyle, a part of who I am, and a part of my Ikigai, whose meaning is the pleasure and purpose of life in Japanese. Interestingly Ikigai is about the sustainability of life for us to keep going as a part and whole of sustainability.

In fact, Ikigai is one of nine commonalities in the *Blue Zone*, where people reach age 100 at 10 times greater rates than in the United States (Buettner, and Skemp, 2016). Okinawa, the southern island of Japan, is in the blue zone (García, Miralles, and Cleary. 2017). Ikigai is called “the Japanese secret to a long and happy life” (García, Miralles, and Cleary. 2017). Having a clearly defined ikigai brings satisfaction, happiness, and meaning to our lives (García, Miralles, and Cleary. 2017).

Everyone has an Ikigai (García, Miralles, and Cleary. 2017). Each person has a different ikigai. It is diverse. It is formed by different factors. Social condition means like capitalism, or under the war. Cultural Condition is traditional believe system (Miyagi, 1971). The bottom three conditions of the diagram affect typical lifestyle and individual personality that make individual lifestyle (Miyagi, 1971). Then our Ikigai is consciously decided by the lifestyle (Miyagi. 1971).

Ikigai is more than the human basic instincts – we desire to live better and meaningfully (Miyagi, 1971). It sounds you have to have big goals or achievement as a Ikigai (Mogi, 2017). But It can be small everyday things, doesn't need to be successful in your professional life (Mogi, 2017).

Ikigai has five fundamental pillars (Mogi, 2017). Your Ikigai does not need to cover every pillar. There is no hierarchy nor a particular order (Mogi, 2017).

1. Starting small – Do things in a small scale and easy.
2. Releasing yourself – free from your ego. Just go with the flow. You won't seek any rewards nor external recognition. Everything is in you.
3. Harmony and sustainability – sustainability is an art of life, requiring ingenuity and skillfulness. An individual cannot be sustainable without connecting and with being in harmony with the environment, with people around you and with society at large. That is why we are in the part of sustainability. Be mindful of the impact your actions might have on society at large
4. The joy of little things – Life is not always good. Even in the bad time, we appreciate little things in our everyday life such as a morning coffee.
5. Being in the here and now – Stop regretting the past and worrying about the future (Mogi, 2017)

(On the screen) My Ikigai

My Ikigai is finding how to enjoy my life with minimum things, using given resources effectively, and sharing those experiences with friends and family.

It sounds very wiered for some of you. But I made sense of sustainability through the view of life and death by growing food, especially compost part of life cycle, and animism activity.

The animism activity when I became a stone and made a story from its view, was a fun experience and reminded me of the connections with nature. Imagining myself as that stone, which has been and will remain here after my life ends, makes me think of the long term effects of whatever I do. I am a part of nature and ecosystem and belong to them. Therefore, I want to live and go back to nature with as little toxic impact to the earth as possible. Ideally, my dead body can decompose and support new life, as other organisms do.

As for reincarnation, I believe the body is dying but the soul never does. This planet is considered to be a place of experience for improving the soul. I can take only experience but no materials with me when I die. All materials here are just temporarily borrowed. Therefore, I prefer to own very little. I borrow things that I do not use often. In fact, 75% of things in my house are either given to me or lent by my friends. As an international student with financial limitations, my choice of lifestyle does not only help the environment (saving resources), but is also economically sound (for me, but not in a capitalistic sense).

I can satisfy by achieving individual goal that I can leave the Earth with less damage as a part and whole with joy. I would like to be happy at the same time make others happy. I appreciate my friends that support my lifestyle by sharing their possessions with me and giving their used goods even though some of the things have valuable memories attached to them. It does not only fulfill me materially but also my heart. I feel

connections with them and safe in the communities because they trust and care about me, and vice versa.

Now, it's your turn! Please tell me your ikigai.

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Image blue zones: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/06/changing-the-way-america-eats-moves-and-connects-one-town-at-a-time/>

Image power9: <http://hilo.hawaii.edu/news/stories/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Blue-Zones-Power-9.jpg>

Compost image :
<https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/home/gardening/advice/a23945/start-composting/>

Forum site information:

Sustainability Humanist Forum:
<https://blogs.ubc.ca/collaborativesustainabilityedu/category/sustainability-harmonist-forum/>

Part III

Script of the story

I would like to be and called a harmonist rather than an activist.

I feel odd to call myself an activist. Often, I am annoyed by the word “activism”. I hear and see the word “fight” for something, and “warrior” for protest and movement slogans. Why do we need to fight? “To fight” and “warrior” mean that someone is right and another one is wrong. Someone has to win and someone has to fail. Aggressive protests are not attractive to me, even if their thoughts and arguments are valid scientifically, ethically, and logically. Sometime I feel that activists, especially in the social media, only criticize against another side. I was one of them at the Fukushima nuclear plant disaster. I criticized the government, the Tokyo Electric Power Company, even though my friends did not take any actions. If we are trying to balance sustainability, and living in harmony is an essential element of Ikigai, attacking each other is not the way to go. I would like to be a “harmonist” who work together in harmony.

I was introduced to the Japanese book called *The Courage to be Disliked*. It is about Individual/Adlerian Psychology. The theory has some points that I engage: encouragement, segregation of task, social interest, and the feeling of community. When we are encouraged by others, instead of being judged or evaluated, we act in a connected and cooperative way. We cannot control others, because everyone has different values. That is why it is important to make sure who has the responsibility for the task. We should not intervene with the tasks of others. Encouragement can build equal and respective relationships among people. We actually feel our value when we realize that our existence is benefiting the community or when we can contribute to others. The recognition of our value cannot be constructed by approval or praise from others. It should come subjectively.

We want to be independent and free from caring about others' perspective when we make decisions to be who we are. At the same time, we cannot find ourselves or our values without being a part of a wholeness by contributing as who we are.

The meaning of community in theory comprises of two people, a family, society, nation, the earth, even the whole planet or universe. Time is also included: past, present, and future. When you feel you belong to a community, you are willing to support it.

As I previously mentioned, the various fields put effort to balance of sustainability. The sustainability movement has already started. Things that seem antithetic with each other try to compromise instead of working against each other. Taking both hard and social science courses mandatory at UBC, increasing the numbers of interdisciplinary collaborative research projects all over the world, allowing spirituality in academia, adapting Eastern culture and spiritual practice by Western world, and moving towards a humanity economy from neoliberal capitalism, are a couple of examples. Even though it

is often difficult to understand other's thoughts and actions, as a harmonist, I try to find solutions to live in harmony with other parties.

If I accept who others are as I accept who I am, someday we can make a big cooperative community where people live in harmony and where sustainability becomes too natural to remember the word.

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