



Inspiring leadership for a sustainable world



LEAD Fellow highlights the role of museums in sustainability education

Glenn Sutter's paper was published last month. [Read More](#)

Apply now to the LEAD Europe Sustainability Leadership Programme

Application deadline 30th April. [Read More](#)

LEAD Fellow addresses social inequality in major cities

In a newspaper interview, Leonardo Martins Dias explains how social problems can be tackled. [Read More](#)

"My LEAD training gave me the confidence to go back to my employers, Nestle, and urge them to take corporate social responsibility more seriously. They agreed, giving me the task of managing CSR issues for Nestle in Nigeria, and now Nestle is a CSR leader in Nigeria. LEAD played a crucial role in helping this happen."

Samuel Adenekan, LEAD Fellow, Nigeria



The LEAD Network

The LEAD Network reaches out to thousands of individuals every year.

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School recycling programme designed by LEAD Fellow is adopted in Nigerian City

New book on climate change, water and health by LEAD Fellow

LEAD Fellow publishes guide to improve lake ecosystems

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SD Learning course – 'Putting People First'

17 June 2012
Rio Centro, Rio de Janeiro

'Putting People First' – part of the Rio+20 conference and the SD Learning programme, brought together 70 people with a passion for sustainable cities for a three-hour learning course.

Sustainable Cities was a key topic for the Rio+20 Summit – over half of the world's population lives in towns or cities and it is predicted that this will increase to 2 billion by the year 2030. There are many initiatives that address the challenges of how to meet the basic needs of those living in cities, but the one challenge often overlooked is how to create a sense of community in overcrowded and poverty stricken urban areas. This is what we set out to explore in 'Putting People First.'

The course drew on the expertise of three LEAD Fellows who together have over 30 years' practical experience of addressing peoples' need for quality of life in cities around the world. [Leonardo Martins Dias](#) has set up [community projects in the favelas of Rio](#); Anton de Wit has in-depth knowledge of the difficulties in the townships of Port Elizabeth in South Africa, and John Lewis has designed community engagement programmes in Canada's inner-city Calgary. Over the three hours these LEAD Fellows and the course participants shared their experiences of developing sustainable cities, supported by Edward Kellow (LEAD's Head of Learning and Leadership) as the facilitator.

The course was based around [three case studies](#):

- Co-creating community projects in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- Learning from the Zanemvula project, Port Elizabeth, South Africa
- The Bow to Bluff project, Calgary, Canada



Key learnings from the course

Despite the obvious economic and geographical differences between the case studies, the participants were struck by the similarities between the three. They also drew attention to similar experiences in their own countries.

'I'm from the Niger delta and this kind of thing happened in my own country... If you try to relocate people without involving them in the decision, it will not work.'

Our learning shows that there are a few key points that are relevant when trying to build sustainable communities:

- The principle of 'putting people first' works well in the context of building prosperous, happy equitable and sustainable urban communities
- Building bridges between communities, government and business leads to more equal and prosperous communities
- Lack of community meetings spaces, infrastructure, and social services, inhibits the growth of social capital (sustainable communities)
- Listening to the community, co-creating projects is the key to sustainable urban development
- It is important to use different tools and methodologies to reach out to all members of the community
- Identifying and forming working alliances with local leaders is essential in order to create projects that meet the needs of local people
- A sense of place and belongingness is key to building and maintaining happy and sustainable urban communities
- Short term political agendas may prevent sustainability goals being met



'We have to be involved at the local level. We have to have community leadership from the youth from women, from children and from local partners. We have to engage with everyone to lead the way towards sustainability.'

Find out more

- Join our [Facebook](#) group on sustainable communities
- Download the course [handouts](#)
- Look at the event [photos](#)
- Read our [blog post](#)



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