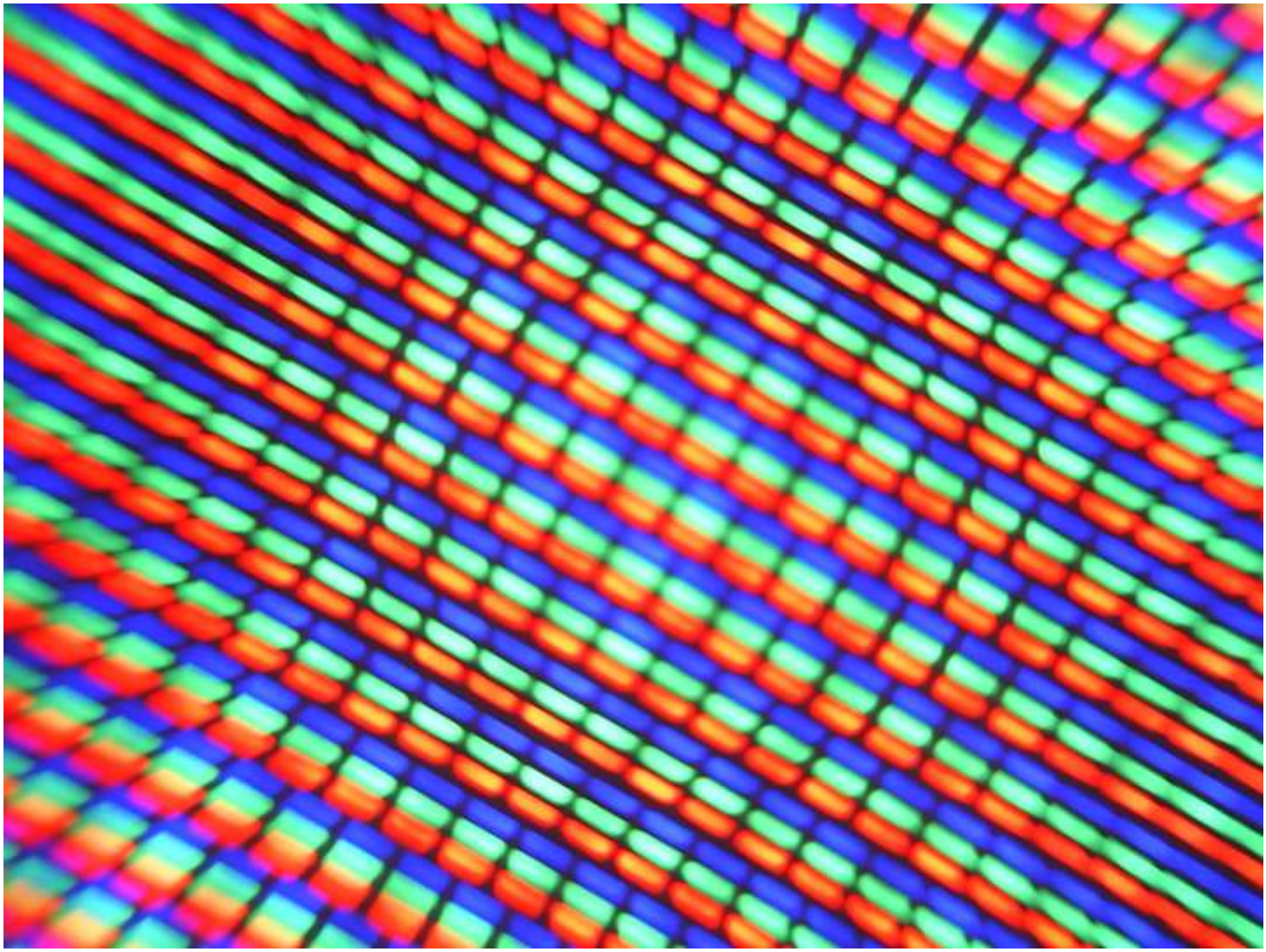
eg magazine

June – July 2013

www.egemagazine.com



INNOVATION

COMMUNITY WELLBEING

Promoting sustainable development

Published by Global to Local Foundation

Volume 18 Issue 6

ISSN 2042-1990

eg magazine

PROMOTING
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In this issue we offer a cornucopia of innovative ideas which are being put into practice. Technological solutions for saving energy, generating energy and constructing better buildings.

At the same time, we look at the human dimension of city living and how to make the experience less “toxic”; how to achieve community wellbeing.

Anne Finnane
Editor

Editor: Anne Finnane
anne.finnane@globaltolocal.com

Deputy Editor: Fay Blair
fay.blair@globaltolocal.com

Published by Global to Local Foundation Ltd
8 Black Croft, Clayton le Woods
Lancs PR6 7US

CONTENTS

INNOVATION

Floating School
3D Printing
Renewable Energy
Green Growth Knowledge
World Watch Institute
Sludge Treatment
Local Energy
Green Bus Fund
Circular Economy MBA
Data Storage
People Power
Future 360
SME Guide
Clear About Carbon
Built Environment
Solar Cell Research

COMMUNITY

Toxic High Streets – Rethinking Cities
Smart Cities and Communities
The Mediated City
PlanLoCaL Events

INNOVATION

Compiled by Anne Finnane, editor

Ideas won't keep; something must be done about them.[1]

INNOVATION is the mantra of the European Commission and most national governments. It is the aspiration of universities, industries, hospitals, schools etc, etc. INNOVATION is seen as the key to solving most of the world's problems – economic, environmental and social.

In the following pages, I present some of the latest ideas, which are being put into practice and which have transformational potential.

MAKOKO FLOATING SCHOOL, LAGOS, NIGERIA

Makoko Floating School is a prototype floating structure, built for the historic water community of Makoko, located on the lagoon heart of Nigeria's largest city, Lagos.

As a pilot project, it has taken an innovative approach to address the community's social and physical needs in view of the impact of climate change and a rapidly urbanizing African context.

Its main aim is to generate a sustainable, ecological, alternative building system and urban water culture for the teeming population of Africa's coastal regions.[2]

[1] Alfred North Whitehead http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Alfred_North_Whitehead
[2] http://www.nleworks.com/case/makoko-floating-school/

3D PRINTING

MATAERIAL creates structures on any surface without a need for additional support

The Mataerial 3D printer[3] uses a robotic arm and quick-solidifying material to form rigid, free-flowing structures on almost any surface, including vertical.

This patent-pending method of printing described by creators as 'anti-gravity object modelling' was developed by Petr Novikov, Saša Jokić from the Institute for Advanced Architecture of Catalonia (IAAC) and Joris Laarman Studio.

The Mataerial project included the building of a working prototype and the technology developed allows flexibility to create truly natural objects by making 3D curves.

"Our goal with Mataerial project was to develop a method that could overcome the limitations of traditional 3D printing", explained the designers.[4]

New hybrid renewable energy technology

A new hybrid technology that integrates wind and solar power generation is set to overcome many of the problems associated with traditional renewable power systems and revolutionise the green energy sector. The project has been developed by SME McCamley Middle East Ltd[5] with research input from the University of Bath's Department of Mechanical Engineering.

McCamley's hybrid turbines encase wind turbine blades in an outer frame, which is topped with solar cells. Unlike traditional turbine, the McCamley structure has proven to be bat and bird friendly, with animals being deterred from the blades by the outer frame.

The turbines are specially designed to be mounted on buildings and in built-up areas, helping to facilitate a growth in Urban Renewable Power. They're lightweight so reduce the impact on buildings, and the multi-leg design distributes the load onto the building evenly.

The compact, noise-free design overcomes concerns that many people have about living near traditional wind turbines farms.

While traditional turbines lose the ability to generate power at very high wind speeds, the McCamley turbine operates safely in storm conditions and doesn't need to be shut down. Conversely, when wind speeds are as low as 1.8m/s it can still self-start and therefore needs no power from the grid.

[3] http://www.mataerial.com/
[4] http://www.technology4change.com/page.jsp?id=103
[5] http://www.mccamleyme.com/#!

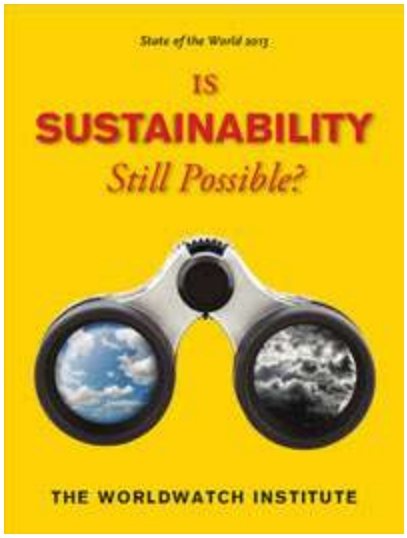
Green Growth Knowledge

The Green Growth Knowledge Platform's recent publication Moving towards a Common Approach on Green Growth Indicators [6]proposes a set of headline indicators for monitoring and communicating progress on greening growth and a greener economy and an international agenda for action for taking these forward.

The Green Growth Knowledge Platform (GGKP) aims to help countries design and implement policies to move towards a green economy, and to identify and address major knowledge gaps in the theory and practice of green growth. The GGKP emphasises a practical orientation for research and believes that the best policy can only emerge from close collaboration among scholars, practitioners, and policy makers.

The GGKP was founded by the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the World Bank. The organisation also works with a number of knowledge partners active in areas related to green growth and green economy at the local, national, regional, and international levels.

Sustainable or sustainababble?



The Worldwatch Institute's 2013 State of the World report considers the question "Is Sustainability Still Possible?"[7], how it should be defined and measured, and what might happen if we fail to achieve it.

In his opening chapter, Worldwatch Institute president Robert Engelman argues that the word "sustainable" has become practically meaningless in today's society, with most sustainable products just a step less bad than conventional alternatives. Engleman suggests that the science of sustainability is now clearer than ever, while the word "sustainable" is becoming more and more vague and abused through increasingly frequent vernacular use and corporate greenwashing. He warns of the power of "sustainababble" to enable the world to ignore the rich spectrum of political, cultural, and technological changes that would set us on the path to a truly sustainable future.

Engelman describes the scale of the changes needed to ensure a truly sustainable future: "Simply doing 'better' environmentally will not stop the unraveling of ecological relationships that we depend on for food and health. Vastly larger changes are needed than we have seen so far. It is essential that we take stock, soberly and in scientifically measureable ways, of where we are headed. The information detailed in State of the World 2013 does that."

[6] http://www.greengrowthknowledge.org/Pages/Reports.aspx
[7] http://www.worldwatch.org/bookstore/publication/state-world-2013-sustainability-still-possible

END-O-SLUDG project

END-O-SLUDG[8] is a collaborative research project involving 14 European partners drawn from industry, academia and Government establishments.

Together, the partners are tasked with identifying and developing innovative system solutions for municipal sludge treatment and management in the context of EU climate change mitigation and energy policies.

The END-O-SLUDG project aims are:

Sludge reduction: To improve the sewage treatment processes by using innovative techniques to reduce net energy consumption and sludge arising.

Sludge treatment: To develop a range of novel sludge treatment processes that increase biogas yield, reduce capital investment requirement and combat the resurgence of the pathogen indicator in the sludge products.

Market development: To develop a portfolio of high quality sludge products that cater for a range of value-added applications. The project will also seek to address the legal, economic and market issues associated with the introduction of waste-derived products.

Contribution to carbon reduction: Reducing green house gas emissions and developing energy efficient techniques is at the heart of the END-O-SLUDG project and will help to support the move towards a low carbon economy.

END-O-SLUDG is coordinated by United Utilities Water PLC (United Kingdom).

Local energy investment

Mobilising Local Energy Investment (MLEI)[9] is an ambitious project with the aim of attracting more energy investment and infrastructure delivery into Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

The MLEI project builds on research completed in 2012 that estimated they could deliver 28% of Cambridgeshire's energy needs from renewable sources by 2013, but that it would require in the region of £2 to 6 billion in upfront investment.

The aim is to attract investment for energy efficiency and energy generating schemes by creating the right investment conditions to secure delivery. This will be achieved by identifying the best financial model for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to attract investor interest and 'bundling' smaller projects together to provide the scale.

MLEI includes an ongoing programme of learning; ensuring that as the project develops, stakeholders capitalise on new skills and experiences about energy project financing and delivery, to maximise the potential for low carbon energy in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

[8] http://www.end-o-sludg.eu/
[9] http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/business/economicandcommunitydev/energy-security/local-energy-investment.htm

Green Bus Fund

Bus passengers in England are set to benefit from cleaner, greener bus journeys thanks to the 4th round of the Green Bus Fund

The £12 million funding for 213 new low carbon buses will deliver better services for passengers while also cutting carbon and delivering economic growth.

The Green Bus Fund aims to cut greenhouse gas emission levels and encourage bus operators and local councils to make the switch to more environmentally-friendly buses. In total 4 rounds of the fund, worth £87 million, will have delivered more than 1200 new low carbon buses in England, saving around 28,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions per year.

The government is paying up to half the cost difference between low carbon diesel-hybrid and biomethane gas buses and their standard diesel equivalent.

The Circular Economy MBA

Bradford University School of Management (BU SoM) has launched the world's first circular economy MBA, developed in partnership with the Ellen MacArthur Foundation and leading businesses including B&Q, BT, Cisco, Renault and National Grid. [10]

This pioneering initiative delivered through the Distance Learning Platform of a leading international business school– BU SoM has recently achieved the coveted triple crown accreditation (AACSB/EQUIS/AMBA)– offers a coherent framework for a fast-evolving global economic context.

The MBA comes after the successful delivery of the Post-Graduate Certificate in the circular economy and marks the next big step in educating future business leaders for a changing world.

Applications for cohort 1 of the MBA, which starts in July 2013, should be submitted by end June. Applications for cohort 2 of the MBA, which starts in January 2014, should be submitted by end November 2013. Click here for further information.

[10] http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=zCRKvDyyHml

DATA STORAGE

Although the controversy over the use and mis-use of data by national security services will continue, the demand for more and more data storage will still increase. Finding more energy-efficient solutions is the challenge.

More energy efficient data centres

At present, data centres consume approximately two per cent of the global electricity supply, equivalent to the total output of 30 nuclear power stations, and this is predicted to rise significantly in the years to come. IO, the global leader in software-defined data centres, has partnered with MAT to apply its expertise in performance management systems, simulation and high performance engineering, to help improve the design and operation of future data centres and reduce energy consumption.

The partnership with IO will draw upon MAT's extensive Formula 1 derived intelligence to tackle a wide range of challenges. These include improving the "aerodynamics" within data centres, to cut the energy used in cooling; using advanced analytics to model patterns of data usage, optimise data centre operations and reduce energy usage; and applying simulation technology to further improve resilience to seismic events on data centres.

Dr. Geoff McGrath, Managing Director of McLaren Applied Technologies said: "Data centres are integral to all our lives. However, as the amount of information we collect, process and store continues to grow, the demand for energy will also increase. Our partnership with IO will enable us to utilise our expertise in performance management, simulation and high performance design to make a real difference to this global energy challenge." He added: "IO is the world leader in the development of cutting edge data centre technology and systems. However, they have challenged themselves and McLaren to think differently and to identify ways to improve efficiency, to cut energy usage and reduce emissions."

Data storage in DNA

Researchers at the EMBL-European Bioinformatics Institute (EMBL-EBI) have created a way to store data in the form of DNA – a material that lasts for tens of thousands of years. The new method, published in the journal *Nature*, makes it possible to store at least 100 million hours of high-definition video in about a cup of DNA.

There is a lot of digital information in the world – about three zettabytes' worth (that's 3000 billion billion bytes) – and the constant influx of new digital content poses a real challenge for archivists. Hard disks are expensive and require a constant supply of electricity, while even the best 'no-power' archiving materials such as magnetic tape degrade within a decade. This is a growing problem in the life sciences, where massive volumes of data – including DNA sequences – make up the fabric of the scientific record.[11]

[11] http://www.ebi.ac.uk/about/news/press-releases/DNA-storage

Space Monkey – the future of data storage?

Space Monkey[12] aims to replace public cloud service providers such as Dropbox and Google Drive with thousands of devices located in our homes. These 2-terabyte hard drives and software connect to all other Space Monkey devices on the internet. You are allocated half the storage space – the rest is for other subscribers' data. The data is copied and split into many encrypted pieces distributed over the network.

'People power' could cut workplace energy costs

Imaginative new ways of empowering factory employees to cut energy use have been devised and successfully trialled by a consortium of UK universities and businesses. In the new approach energy usage data is collected by specially developed low-cost sensors and fed into a live 3D computer model of the factory that staff can consult on their PCs, enabling them to pinpoint where energy is being wasted. The sensors also automatically trigger text messages reminding staff to turn off lights and equipment that have been left on.

Thanks to innovative measures like these, a six month trial has seen reductions of up to twenty per cent in energy use at a Derbyshire factory, proving that big savings can be achieved in factories and offices without the need for major capital investment.

Funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) and the Technology Strategy Board (TSB), this approach to boosting workplace energy efficiency has been developed thanks to expert input led by specialists in clean technology Moixa Technology working alongside the Universities of Dundee, Leeds, Southampton, University College London and a range of other industrial partners. The successful 6-month trial took place at the Federal Mogul factory in Chapel-en-le-Frith.

See short video on the project (called *The Energy Project*)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eAxNl2vCYA4

[12] http://www.spacemonkey.com/

Future 360

Future360[13] is a media company that introduces early adopters to the latest clean technology and design solutions through high end videos.

"Our mission is to champion clean technology and design solutions. We believe new technologies can perform better than conventional ones, while reducing harmful impacts on the environment and conserving natural resources.

We believe video is the best medium to illustrate and deliver this message. Video can condense and visually communicate how new technologies and design solutions work, why they are important, their applications and impact on the future.

We specialize in the creation of high-end videos on cutting-edge technologies, sustainable design and innovative business models for our audience of early adopters and affluent consumers."

SME Guide - Eco-innovate: a guide to eco-innovation for SMEs and business coaches

A practical guide to eco-innovationfor small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The booklet overviews emerging business opportunities eco-innovation has to offer to companies that reconsider business models, develop new products, technologies or services, or improve production processes. The guide summarises key business issues, questions and lessons learnt for SMEs as well as presents selected eco-innovation good practices.

This guide is divided into six sections. The opening chapter introduces the concept of eco-innovation. The focus then shifts to the key issues, challenges and opportunities of eco-innovation for SMEs. The guide includes sections on:

- business model and value proposition
- process eco-innovation
- product eco-innovation
- getting eco-innovations on the market
- online resources for eco-innovation.

This guide is addressed above all to companies that have not yet embarked on any eco-innovation activity, but are interested in exploring the potential offered by eco-innovation for their business or new business idea. The publication will be equally useful for business support organisations providing—or planning to provide—eco-innovation support and coaching services to SMEs. The Eco-Innovation Observatory has partnered with the Centre for Sustainable Design (CfSD) to develop this publication.[14]

[13] http://future360.tv/

[14] http://www.eco-innovation.eu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=638:sme-guide2&catid=79:thematic-reports&Itemid=212

Clear About Carbon

Financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) Convergence Programme for delivery in Cornwall, Clear About Carbon was a project which began in 2009 and which aimed to find new ways of increasing carbon awareness within businesses and the public sector. Delivery of the project was carried out by a quartet of regional organisations that specialised in communicating green issues and delivering business development:

- The University of Exeter Business School
- Cornwall Development Company
- Eden Project
- Duchy College Rural Business School

The project was successful in delivering a 'carbon literacy' e-learning package in conjunction with the Department of Health and Defra (as a part of its National Sustainable Public Procurement Programme), and won several awards for its innovation and mainstreaming, including winning the top award for mainstreaming at the 2013 ESF Innovation, Transnationality and Mainstreaming Awards.

Throughout the four years of the project, the team from the University of Exeter Business School concentrated on leadership development and carbon management aspects. The multi-disciplinary team, featuring staff from the Centre for Leadership Studies and Supply Chain Management, worked with senior management teams in Cornwall on how best to embed carbon in procurement processes.

Based on the principles of the Action Learning methodology, the team established a leadership development programme designed to support the embedding of low carbon operations within the participant organisations, and in particular through procurement and supply chain management practices.

The results of this programme, with teaching case studies and examples of carbon reduction initiatives from participant organisations, are now available in a final report produced by the University of Exeter Business School and available to download on the Clear About Carbon website: **www.clearaboutcarbon.com** The website also offers a wide legacy of practical, free resources to support procurers, managers, trainers and educators engaging with the carbon agenda, including a carbon calculator tool, a range of carbon literacy resources and training materials.

Clear About Carbon

Supporting Cornwall's Transition to a Low Carbon Economy

Houses built of straw

Eco-innovation is not always about new materials. Three projects in the far east and west of the European Union have shown that eco-innovation can also be about finding new approaches to old materials. In these cases, the material is straw.[15]

In Lithuania, a construction company, Ecococon, is successfully showing that houses can be built from straw panels. Construction of straw houses can be done quickly. A basic structure of up to 200 square metres can be put in place by a team of a few people in two days. The construction process is low-intensity, with no need for preparation of concrete or high-energy consuming equipment - straw houses can be assembled by craftsmen with handheld tools. At the end of its lifespan, a straw panel house can be dismantled and the materials reused, in contrast to brick-built houses, which entail large amounts of demolition waste and potentially hazardous materials.

The **Inspire Bradford Business Park** consists of two buildings providing 2,800 square metres of office, workshops and shared facilities, including meeting rooms and a café. It was constructed on a brownfield site from straw panels provided by British company **Modcell**[16], and was formally opened in October 2012. The business park buildings are believed to be Europe's largest straw constructions. As well as being built according to sustainable principles, the buildings meet the BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) Excellent rating for energy efficiency.

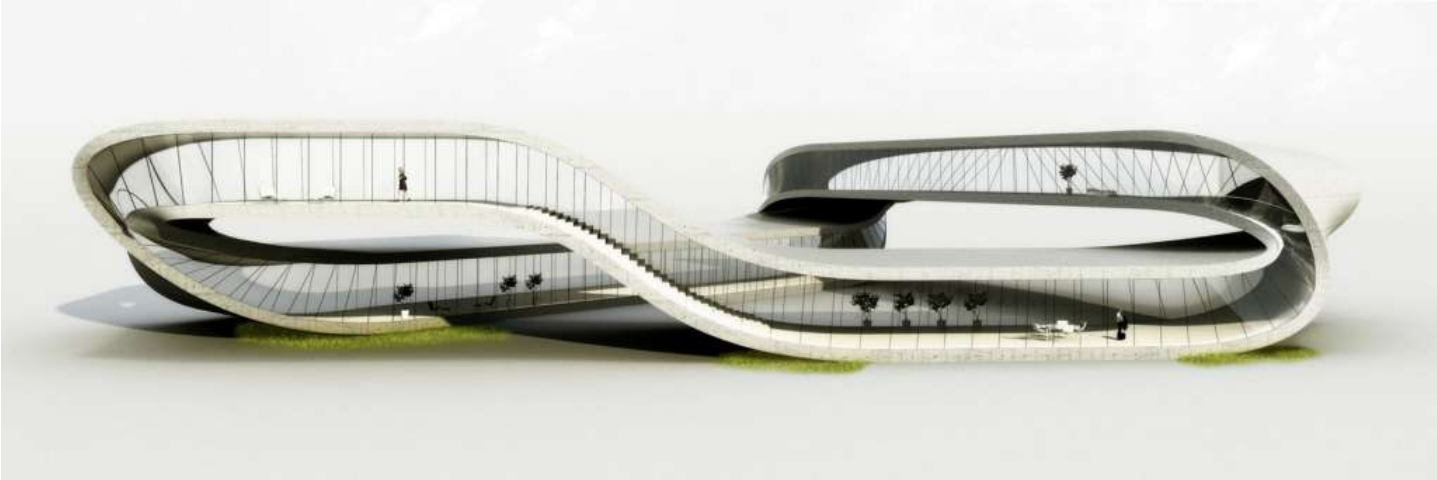
Also in the United Kingdom, the European Union's Competitiveness and Innovation Programme Eco-innovation initiative is supporting the **EUROCELL** project. The Eco-innovation initiative is providing half of the project's €1,611,096 budget. EUROCELL is researching the certification of straw panel buildings, as a basis for market development and acceptance of the approach.

The project, which also involves Modcell, is building on the monitoring of the performance of the "Balehaus", a two-storey prefabricated straw bale and hemp clad building at the University of Bath, western England. Architects have been measuring indicators such as interior temperature, and moisture and humidity levels as the basis of a certification scheme that will demonstrate to the construction industry the viability of straw panel buildings.

[15] http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecoap/about-eco-innovation/policies-matters/eu/20130409-houses-built-of-straw_en.htm
[16] http://www.modcell.com/

Houses – from 3D printers

In the past few months, three architecture and design firms announced that they will be using 3D printers to build a house/building.[17] Two Dutch firms — Janjaap Ruijssenaars and DUS Architects — and one British firm, Softkill Design, are competing to be the first one to build an architectural structure with a printer.[18]



While we can expect that the first buildings to be printed will be quite expensive and may not live up to current building standards, this is the first step in what may become the way we build the cities of the future. Imagine when new buildings, monuments, parks, and fountains aren't built the way they are today, but are designed and "printed" in place. The precision and efficiency of 3D printers has the potential to prevent materials, and time, from going to waste — allowing for safer, greener, more creative, and one day, more affordable — building options.

Ultra elevator uses carbon-fibre tape

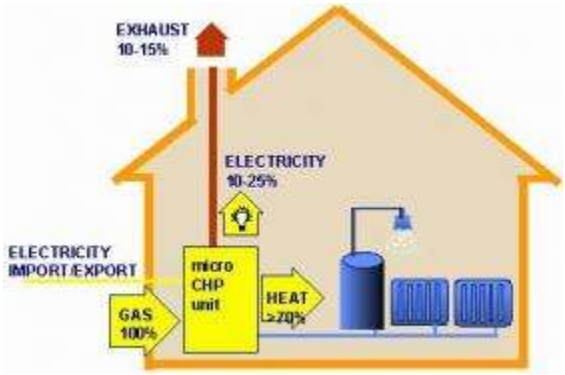
Elevators can now carry people to the top of a kilometre-high skyscraper in a single run. The key is the development of a super-light and super-strong lift-hoisting cable. The sheer weight of the steel cable that hoists today's elevators has prevented them going any higher than 500 metres in one go.

With at least 20 buildings more than 500 metres high on architects' drawing boards around the world, and more expected as megacities proliferate, lift maker Kone Corporation of Espoo, Finland, has been engineering ways to move people up and down them in more convenient and less energy-intensive ways. Its solution: UltraRope.

UltraRope beats steel for tensile strength but weighs only one-seventh as much. UltraRope will also save energy. Simulating its use in a 640-metre-high building, Kone found that the elevator used 11 per cent less electrical power than a steel-cabled version.[19]

[17] http://qz.com/68780/architects-are-starting-to-3d-print-houses-but-without-a-house-sized-printer/
[18] http://sustainablecitiescollective.com/embarq/145756/printing-our-buildings?utm_source=hootsuite&utm_medium=twitter&utm_campaign=hootsuite_tweets
[19] http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn23681-ultra-elevator-takes-you-higher-with-carbonfibre-tape.html

Micro CHP – the next generation solution



For existing buildings, heat demand remains high and the ability to retrofit many renewable technologies is physically limited. For much of the existing housing stock, micro-Combined Heat and Power (micro-CHP) is therefore the next generation solution. It is a high efficiency solution for a market with a current annual potential of around a million units a year across Europe.

Larger scale up-take of micro-CHP technologies will relieve the pressure on the electricity grid, while allowing greater active participation of consumers in the management of their energy consumption.[20]

COBRA – international renewable energy project

Manchester based Colour Synthesis Solutions (CSS) has announced it has secured a major grant as part of a three-way international renewable energy collaboration.

Over the next three years, the rapidly growing chemical solutions provider, based in Hexagon Tower (a specialist chemical and bio-tech science park in Blackley, North Manchester), will receive £600,000 through the Technology Strategy Board (TSB) to fund their advanced solar cell research and development.

Working alongside German multi-national giant Merck and Jerusalem-based renewable energy company 3G Solar, CCS will focus on developing novel, high efficiency sensitizer dyes required for advanced Dye Sensitized Cells (DSC), a high efficiency, lower-cost alternative to traditional silicon based solar cells.

It is hoped that the new cells developed by the three way project, named COBRA, will allow for more efficient solar energy generation in lower light areas – making solar a more realistic alternative to fossil fuels across the planet, particularly for the developing world where the relatively high cost of silicon cells still proves prohibitive.

There is even the potential for DSC solar cells to be used effectively indoors.

The project marks a major milestone for CSS – which started only six years ago as a two man spin-out from the University of Manchester. The company has now grown to nine chemists, with the potential for further rapid growth over the coming years.[21]

[20] http://www.buildup.eu/news/35443?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=BUILD%20UP%20-%20News%20Alert%20-%20April%202013&utm_content=BUILD%20UP%20-%20News%20Alert%20-%20April%202013+CID_7ab970bcad6fcb18061eb51dfa6cceb2&utm_source=Email%20marketing%20software&utm_term=Micro-CHP%20the%20Next%20Generation%20Solution

[21] http://manchestergazette.co.uk/manchester-company-lands-major-grant-for-international-renewable-energy-project/

‘Toxic’ high streets : undermining community wellbeing?

By Andrew Stuck, Rethinking Cities

One of the most popular local high streets close to where I live is in Deptford, presently undergoing a regeneration with a new look station and an architectural award-winning Library cum Primary School cum Community Centre. Part of the week it boasts a vibrant street market and on Saturdays, the adjoining streets buzz with a flea market as well.

To a casual observer, all looks rosy, but there’s more to what is going on in this street. You don’t have to walk far to place a bet, or to play a casino slot machine, to purchase cheap alcohol, and there is a myriad of fast food take-aways too. Throw in payday loan shops, pawn brokers and money transfer, and you have a heady ‘toxic’ cocktail of cash and a fairly unhealthy retail environment from a public health point of view.

Deptford High Street runs between two significant trunk roads that carry heavy traffic at all times of the day, and when the market doesn’t occupy the street, there a number of cars and vans travelling up and down it; they may add to its vitality but they impinge on the quality of the air, and the comfort of those who walk or cycle.

I wonder:

If Deptford High Street is a typical ‘toxic’ street or an exception?

What research is out there that maps the ‘toxicity’ of streets, and

What, if any, initiatives are being deployed to counter this toxicity?

Do we really care or are we hell bent on revitalising the retail offer of our high streets whether or not what’s on offer sustains a healthy community?

Seeking out national comparisons of common characteristics of high streets is no easy task. Although there has been some helpful research by GENECON and others[22], they have found that research into how high streets contribute to the community health and wellbeing is scant.

High street performance tends to be viewed in terms of retail performance, as if its sole function is commercial consumption, but many other services are offered in high streets[23].

Often for urban residents with little choice in living elsewhere, a high street is where their home is.

Again I wonder, how do we measure the value of a high street if we only consider retail turnover, commercial rents and business rates?

What is needed is a careful thinking about how high streets contribute to the physical and social wellbeing of the communities working and living in high street premises, as well as their impact on surrounding neighbourhoods.

The Portas Review[24], Pop-Up Shops, Clone towns[25] and Shop Local initiatives are keeping the high streets' could-be renaissance high on the political agenda. This is strengthened by the desire of planners and urban designers alike, who seek to have 'active' ground floor urban frontages. The adage that 'with diversity comes strength', making the high street less vulnerable to competition, but it is not without its flaws.

---

[22] Understanding HIgh Street Performance December 2011Report by GENECON for the Dept. Business Innovations & Skills http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/BISCore/business-sectors/docs/u/11-1402-understanding-high-street-performance.pdf

[23] Dr Suzanne Hall, an ethnographer, leads the London School of Economics research into the global to local money transfer connections that are becoming more prevalent http://lsecities.net/objects/research-projects/ordinary-streets

[24] The Portas Review An Independent review into the future of our high streets December 2011 for the Dept. Business Innovations & Skills

http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/BISCore/business-sectors/docs/p/11-1434-portas-review-future-of-high-streets.pdf

[25] Clone Town Britain New Economics Foundation June 2005 http://www.neweconomics.org/publications/entry/clone-town-britain

Planning regulations are being relaxed[26]and one of the unintended consequences could be a surge in toxic streets. As a myriad of commercial landlords seek more consistent returns, less regulated by the local authority, will we see more concentration of the very outlets that produce such a cocktail? Certainly the Local Government Association thinks so[27].

Public Health practitioners may be shuddering, but they have an opportunity to grasp the nettle and take a lead on place-based initiatives that promote healthier communities. For now, with a ring-fenced budget[28] they too sit within the local authority, and can apply pressure and influence to the planning decisions that have been contributing to the heady cocktail.

Do Public Health practitioners only see value in the high street measured through the lens of fast food and alcohol outlets? The emphasis clearly has been on trying to influence fast food caterers to improve on ingredients, and influencing planning decisions on A5 retail outlets (planning uses class for Hot food takeaways) and their proximity to schools[29].

Social housing provider Circle (http://www.circle.org.uk/corporate/) is now restricting leaseholders through leases that disallow gambling outlets. But this can be an expensive and legally resource-demanding exercise for local authorities to defend streets from slipping into a toxic cocktail. Some local authorities are implementing Supplementary Planning Documents for existing properties and Development Plan Documents[30] that define exclusion zones for certain fast food outlets, while others are defining Cumulative Impact Zones[31] to limit the numbers of licensed premises.

Monitoring and connections with wellbeing: understanding social value

Better understanding, measurement and monitoring of **the social value and community wellbeing** of streets will help local people to become aware of what's happening. It will also help them understand how they can affect change. We need to understand how such toxicity comes about, as well as offer some practical cost effective ways of reversing this trend. Where does the (shared) responsibility of this lie?

---

[26] Making the planning system work more effectively 2013 Det. Communities & Local Government https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/making-the-planning-system-work-more-efficiently-and-effectively

[27] New permitted development rules could drain the life from high streets Local Government Association Media Release 30 May 2013 http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/media-releases/-/journal_content/56/10171/4011824/NEWS-TEMPLATE

[28] Letter from Hon. Jeremy Hunt Minister of Health https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/127451/DH-JH-DS-letter.pdf.pdf

[29] Takeaways Toolkit Chartered Institute of Environmental Health and Food Matters for the Mayor of London http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/TakeawaysToolkit_0.pdf

[30] London Borough of Tower Hamlets for example

[31] Brighton & Hove City Council

Positive practical action:

Rethinking Cities would like to support Public Health practitioners as they find their feet in the local authority as they could lead on place-based initiatives.

In the late summer and autumn, we are planning a series of expert panel seminars around the country to gather evidence of effective interventions, whether at the policy level or on the street.

We are compiling a simple series of indicators so that local people can gain a better understanding of what's healthy about high streets.

We would welcome suggestions and support from others who are concerned about and are seeking to tackle toxic streets.

Please get in touch if you are interested in:

- contributing to the discussion
- coming to a workshop
- co-sponsoring a workshop in your organisation or local area.

Interest in co-sponsoring and hosting an event has been shown from Brighton & Hove City Council and in central London, and we would welcome approaches from others.

About Rethinking Cities

Rethinking Cities occupies a special niche set against the social enterprise world. It's run as a business but with a strong social purpose that clearly has the 'public interest', individual and community wellbeing at the heart of what it does. Andrew Stuck, Managing Director who set up Rethinking Cities, outlines some of the work that increasing numbers of public sector professionals are inviting them to do, adopting in amongst other things, their innovative 'walkshop' technique.

> Our mission is to improve wellbeing for residents, empowering them in developing better city living for all, young and old
>
> *If I sum up what we do in a sentence, it is bringing community stakeholders and professionals together to share a common understanding, learn from each other and collaborate to improve local neighbourhoods. You could say we contribute to the development of 'social infrastructure', to use the jargon. This is about building capacity and strengthening multi disciplinary teams. We do this in the belief that design plays a key part in our lives, and good, well-designed neighbourhoods create the opportunity for convivial and nurturing environments that improve the wellbeing of all.*

Andrew Stuck will be facilitating a workshop on Healthy Places at the forthcoming Sussex PLACENet event on 20 June at the University of Brighton - further details here: http://tinyurl.com/kfcd2t5

Wellbeing Walkshops: Feedback and future sessions

London and the South East: September & October 2013

Rethinking Cities has devised a short training course for practitioners in housing, public health, and planning on *Weaving Wellbeing in Neighbourhoods* that is based on a series of 'walkshops & debriefs'.

From the simple evaluation from the first two walkshops (held in March and May 2013) key points of interest include:

- Quality of the green space and the impact of shared spaces
- Understanding the different elements of the regeneration project and the context behind it
- The comparison of before and after – the realisation of what can be achieved
- The level of community involvement in the green spaces around housing
- Joined up working to achieve strategy and how to effectively work together with other departments to pool resources
- Reaffirmed the importance of good planning
- Meeting others from a diverse background – more of this is needed across groups
- Insight into the potential impact of lots of small changes
- Seeing the difference even the smallest of initiatives can make to residents' lives
- Perspectives from people with different backgrounds
- Viewing a number of areas of improvement and how it makes the whole area 'one' to some extent
- The cross sector approach to the walk
- Seeing improvements both completed and in progress

Further details:

If you interested in taking part please contact

Andrew Stuck
Rethinking Cities
andrew@rethinkingcities.net
07725555460
http://www.rethinkingcities.net

Smart Cities and Communities

Support for a better future

The European Innovation Partnership on **Smart Cities and Communities** (EIP-SCC)[32] brings together cities, industry and citizens to improve urban life through more sustainable integrated solutions.

This includes applied **innovation**, better **planning**, a more **participatory approach**, higher **energy efficiency**, better **transport** solutions, intelligent use of Information and Communication Technologies **(ICT)**, etc.

The European Innovation Partnership for Smart Cities and Communities combines Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), energy management and transport management to come up with innovative solutions to the major environmental, societal and health challenges facing European cities today.

With the aim of coming up with scalable and transferable solutions to contribute to the EU's 20/20/20 climate action goals, it looks to reduce high energy consumption, green-house-gas emissions, bad air quality and congestion of roads.

The Partnership aims to overcome bottlenecks impeding the changeover to smart cities, to co-fund demonstration projects and to help coordinate existing city initiatives and projects, by pooling its resources together.

It ultimately looks to **establish strategic partnerships between industry and European cities to develop the urban systems and infrastructures of tomorrow**.
The Partnership follows the Smart Cities and Communities Initiative which was launched in 2011. This initiative initially only covered energy and had a budget of € 81 Million, which grew to € 365 Million and extended to include the transport and ICT sector with the launch of the Partnership in July 2012. To find out more, please view the timeline.

They welcome anyone who is interested in becoming a member of the platform. You can do so by filling in the registration form.

Being a member will allow you to:

- **have a voice at EU level.** With our wide membership network of high-level stakeholders, you can directly affect debate on how to reach make our cities smarter at the highest level
- **meet potential partners** and form partnerships to reach common goals
- **learn about best practices.** Take advantage of the easy access to expertise at your disposal
- be part of a **dynamic group** pushing for Smart European cities

[32] http://ec.europa.eu/eip/smartcities/

The Mediated City

two multidisciplinary conferences examining “the city”
…… a virtual, filmic, social, political and physical construct.

CONFERENCE 1.
Place: London
Dates: 01-03 April 2014
Host: Ravensbourne (University)

CONFERENCE 2.
Place: Los Angeles
Dates: October 2014 (TBC)
Host: Woodbury University

Outline:

The nature of the city is a contested concept. For architects it is generally a question of bricks and mortar - a physical entity. For human geographers it is a place of human interaction and engagement. For filmmakers it is a site for action and futuristic nightmare. For animators and computer programmers it becomes a virtual world - a second life, a SIMulated city. For sociologists, it is a defining aspect of cultural identity. For political activists and theorists, it is a place to ‘occupy’ and the site of the polis.

THE MEDIATED CITY conference offers a platform for multiple and diverse examinations of the city. It aims to bring people together from diverse backgrounds and fragment, multiply and reconfigure our readings of the city; to offer multiple and conflicting discipline perspectives. The intention is to share views of the city as physical entity, online community, film set, photographic backdrop, geographical map, sociological case study, political metaphor, digital or video game etc…. – to examine it as a mediated and shared phenomenon.

Key dates – Conference 1 – London

15 September 2013. Deadline for abstracts / initial proposals

15 January 2014. Deadline for full papers / detailed proposals

01 April 2014. Conference –1

For full details visit: http://architecturemps.com

PlanLoCaL events

The events will showcase the new PlanLoCaL toolkit on Energy Efficiency and the Green Deal, and help attendees to discover how the resources can be used to effectively plan and run a community project.

One-day events are planned in Birmingham, Manchester, London and Bristol, aimed at community groups and organisations set up to support them. If you'd like to attend please sign up by following the links to each individual event below:

Friday 5th July – The Priory Rooms, Birmingham http://planlocalbirmingham.eventbrite.co.uk/

Saturday 6th July – Bridge 5 Mill, Manchester http://planlocalmanchester.eventbrite.co.uk/

Friday 12th July – Roots and Shoots, London http://planlocallondon.eventbrite.co.uk/

Saturday 13th July – The Create Centre, Bristol http://planlocalbristol.eventbrite.co.uk/

---

eg magazine is published by
Global to Local Foundation