How can villages become eco-villages?

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Human activity & climate change

• Human activity probably contributes (Crowley, 2000; Levitus et al., 2001; Stott et al., 2000)

• We can reduce our impact by:
  – Recycling
  – Using public transportation
  – Purchasing local and environmentally friendly products
  – Conserving energy
  – Conserving water, and so on (Stern and Gardner, 1981a, 1981b; Stern, 2000)
Why don’t people do more?

• Lack of knowledge about the causes, consequences and current state of climate change (Sundblad, Biel and Gärling, 2009)
• The costs to individuals override or outweigh the benefits to others (Burke, 2010)
• The belief that the actions of individuals have little or no effect on climate change (Burke, 2010)
• The belief that technological advances will provide a solution in the future (Burke, 2010)
• The sunk costs in established habits and prior investments (Burke, 2010)
• A lack of trust in the government and other information sources (Burke, 2010)
Theories of connectedness

• Wilson (1984, 1993: 31–41) described *biophilia* as an emotional and innate connection people have with all living things. It assumes that most people will have a preference for natural environments.

• Stern *et al.* (1999) developed the *value-belief-norm (VBN)* model. In this model, our values can activate beliefs about the environment and, in turn, these beliefs cause us to behave in certain ways towards the environment.
This study

1. Connectedness to nature will have a significant positive relationship with pro-environmental behaviours when social desirability is controlled for.

2. Egoistic, altruistic, and biospheric values will have a significant positive relationship with pro-environmental behaviours when controlling for social desirability.
This study

• Participants
• Measures:
  – Connectedness to Nature Scale
  – Environmental Concerns Scale
  – Environmental Behaviour Scale
  – Crowne-Marlow Social Desirability Scale
This study

Results:

• Connectedness to nature was positively correlated with pro-environmental behaviours, $r(74) = .36, p < .01$

• Egoistic values were not related to pro-environmental behaviours $r(73) = .10, p = .39$.

• Altruistic values were positively related to pro-environmental behaviours, $r(74) = .33, p < .01$, as were biospheric values, $r(74) = .37, p < .01$. 
This study

Results:

• The positive relationship found between connectedness to nature and pro-environmental behaviour confirms our first hypothesis.

• The second hypothesis was partially supported as altruistic and biospheric values, but not egoistic values, were positively related to pro-environmental behaviours.
How to increase pro-environmental behaviour...

• Education is not enough - We need to change beliefs
• Repetition helps
• And some environmental changes can change behaviour too
Example – planting trees leads to:

• Fewer accidents
• Increased value of property
• Improved health and well-being
• Reductions in crime
References


Burke, S. (2010), 'Understanding the psychological barriers to climate change action', inPsych, 32 (6), 40–41.


