



***THE GIFT OF
SUSTAINABILITY***

PLANT WITH PURPOSE 

A true conservationist is a man who knows that the world is not given by his fathers, but borrowed from his children.

JOHN JAMES AUDOBON



SUSTAINABILITY

B I G G E R T H A N A B U Z Z W O R D

The term “sustainability” seems to be everywhere.

Walk onto a college campus, and you’ll find plenty of student activists using the term to talk about the importance of environmentalism.

In a business school, you might find the term used to describe when profits can cover operating costs.

In a marketing department, you might hear all sorts of brainstorming about how to sell an earth-friendly product using the buzzword.

Environmental practices like recycling and composting are important parts of sustainability. So is good financial health. But these behaviors are part of something bigger.

Sustainability is a way of seeing. It’s the perspective that recognizes all of creation was designed to exist in a harmonious relationship. Ultimately, sustainability is about belonging and being connected to each other. It means that things have significance beyond our individual lives, on a global level.

When this relationship is fractured, it looks like

high rates of lung cancer in the world’s largest and most polluted cities, or rural farmers not producing enough food for their own families.

These challenges call us into action to work with on something that is bigger than our individual concerns. It gives us the chance to have an impact that will outlive us.

That’s why a villager in Northern Thailand explains that “sustainability means I will pass not just farmland and cattle, but also knowledge to my children.” It’s why famed environmentalist Paul Hawken doesn’t describe sustainability as a collection of practices, but as “the endless expression of generosity on behalf of all.”

Sustainability is a shift in our behavior, knowing that what we do, what we consume, and what we invest in doesn’t just impact ourselves. It affects villages around the world and future generations as well.

A life of purpose goes beyond our individual needs and concerns. Purpose is connected to our relationships with each other, and our shared humanity. And that’s what sustainability is all about.



MEET AH JEE

You are together as a community and the togetherness should be carried on by the next generation.

HUAY LU LUANG, THAILAND

Ah Jee lives in the hills of Northern Thailand, in a village called Huay Lu Luang. He hasn't always lived there. He once lived in Myanmar, where he faced the risk of being forced into conflict. Like many others, he had to escape to the hills he now calls home.

When he first got there, however, things were tough. His family were farmers and in the area they where they settled, big government-backed timber businesses were extracting trees and pulling out logs with trucks and elephants. With trees removed, the soil beneath their feet was robbed of its nutrients, necessary to grow healthy crops.

Fortunately, students from the city arrived, who could explain to the people of Huay Lu Luang what it would take to protect the area. They said that if the villagers could manage their forest, the government officials wouldn't disrupt them. If they did it really well, they should be able to live in the area for a long time to come.

That motivated Ah Jee and his fellow villagers. They sought out the best practices to ensure their village could truly be a great place to live and to raise their children. Plant With Purpose began working in the area in 2005, and Ah Jee and his community participated in farmer field schools. They began to practice compost, animal husbandry, and planting in contour lines.

Today, the area is lush and green. The timber harvesting has stopped. The villagers have found favor with the government and have even gained

citizenship. Most of all, there is a strong sense of kinship and unity within the community, and Ah Jee considers that to be the essence of sustainability.

Ah Jee points to a two step process towards sustainability.

"First thing- we need to learn unity. If people want to learn from us, they can come."

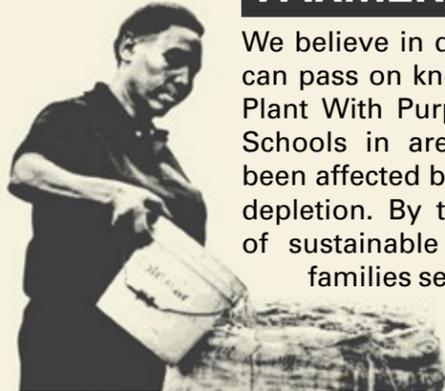
"Next is the management of resources. If we take care of what we have here, we can share with other people."

"Sustainability is important," he reflects. "You are together as a community and the togetherness should be carried on by the next generation."



SUSTAINABILITY IN ACTION:

FARMER FIELD SCHOOLS



We believe in developing local leaders who can pass on knowledge in their community. Plant With Purpose facilitates Farmer Field Schools in areas of the world that have been affected by poverty and environmental depletion. By training farmers in a variety of sustainable agriculture methods, rural families see their crops increase by 80%



CREATION CARE MATERIALS

Our relationship with God does not exist in a vacuum. It is meant to impact every area of our lives. The way we treat creation reflects our own relationship with its Creator. Our outlook on our work and livelihoods also demonstrate how we apply spiritual wisdom to daily living. By partnering with local churches to connect a farming life to one's relationship with God, we see deep-rooted, long-lasting change.

AGROFORESTRY

Agroforestry is the practice of planting trees amongst crops. Some trees add nutrients to the soil. Others grow fruit for nutrition and income. And forest trees create longevity and biodiversity. Crop production increases in the short-term, and improves future resilience.



WAYS TO PRACTICE SUSTAINABILITY

BUY LOCAL GOODS

When you buy food that was grown and harvested within your area, your own neighborhood will reap the rewards. The planet will benefit too, as a decreased demand for goods to be flown all over the world will result in a reduction in pollution that comes from excess shipping. The biggest benefit, however, just might be the sense of unity that shopping locally brings. When you shop at a farmer's market, you are far more likely to enter a personal conversation than you are at a supermarket chain. It's a great way to begin to expand the way we love our neighbors.

CONSIDER GLOBAL COSTS

A five dollar shirt that fits can be an exciting find! But before you buy it- what is the story of the shirt? Where did it come from? Who made it? Between the cost of labor for the people making your clothes, the environmental cost of how went from factory to store, and the concerns of retail workers, does five dollars seem to fairly cover those costs? Looking to save is generally a good thing, and spending more isn't always best, but thinking through the story of our stuff will help adjust our perspective.

PRACTICE UNITY

It's easy to think of the world as two sides that are in contrast with each other. Western and eastern cultures. Christians and nonbelievers. Right and left. But a big part of sustainability is the understanding that we are working together on things that are good for the community we share. The next time you find yourself reading a news-feed, listening to a broadcast, or participating in a dinner conversation, recognize moments where something is being presented in an "us versus them" fashion and imagine a different way of seeing the world.



