



VISIONS FOR CHANGE COUNTRY PAPERS

Australia
Brazil
Colombia
Egypt
India
Japan
Lebanon
Mexico
New Zealand
North America
(Canada & USA)
Philippines
Portugal
South Africa
Sweden
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Vietnam

UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME




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VISIONS FOR CHANGE

FOR CHANGE

Country Papers

*Based on the Global Survey
on Sustainable Lifestyles (GSSL)*

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North America (Canada & the United States of America): Sustainable Lifestyles and Young Adults in the New York, Montréal and Halifax Metropolitan Areas

399 Participants

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NEW YORK, MONTRÉAL AND HALIFAX – THREE CITIES, THREE CULTURES, THREE WAYS OF LIVING

When the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) invited us to participate in the Global Survey on Sustainable Lifestyles (GSSL) and compare the attitudes of young people from North America regarding sustainable development, we wondered whether young people living in New York, Montréal and Halifax would have common attitudes and values. We knew that the young people living in these three cities would not be representative of all young people living in the United States and Canada. Life in North-East America and in Canadian East regions is definitely different from what can be experienced in the Mid-West or on the Western coast. Results collected in Canada are from both Anglophone (Halifax, Nova Scotia) and Francophone (Montréal, Québec) regions.

Culturally speaking, these three cities' history is fascinating and each of them reflects the evolution of British, French and European presence in North America pretty well. New York is modeled on the American melting pot, since most young people living there are often originally from other American States or other countries in the world. Montréal is a francophone city that is strongly shaped by an intercultural model in which the francophone majority had to adapt during the last decades to the arrival of new immigrants. Halifax, in a way, reflects Canadian values. With 19 million inhabitants living in New York, 3.75 million in Montréal and 394000 in Halifax, these three cities represent the archetypal megacity, middle size city and town. For these reasons, comparing the way young people live in these three areas is very interesting.

Since the ratification of the Canada – United States Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in 1989, which became the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with the participation of Mexico in 1992, trade relations have intensified from both sides of the border despite waning since the 11th September 2001 events. Halifax and Montréal are the two main harbors of East Canada, where numerous containers convey in transit to New York. At the political level, meetings between the governors of the Eastern regions of the United States and prime ministers of Eastern Canada have been increasing, progressively shaping a real North American culture. The American nature of Canadians, Quebecois and Americans has helped the emergence of common values and of a common understanding of responsibilities regarding the environment, energy and economic development. As an example, the Administration of Barack Obama as well as political and economic elites of Montréal are now considering the development of hydro energy networks and a high speed train to connect Montréal and New York in the short term.

There are some differences in terms of what is being done regarding sustainable development. In Québec, the *Sustainable Development Law* was adopted on 16 April 2006, recognizing the interconnectedness of the environmental, social and economic dimensions of development. In January 2008, Québec's Government Strategy on Sustainable Development for 2008-2013 entered into force with the objective of supporting governmental institutions in the implementation of the law in cooperation with the population. A few months later, the Government of Canada adopted the Federal Sustainable Development Act (June 2008). On the American side, on the eve of the Copenhagen negotiations in 2009, President Barack Obama changed directions regarding climate change and sustainability issues, heading towards a greener economy.

METHODOLOGY AND RESPONDENTS' PROFILE

The respondents come from the three regions of North-East America that are anchored in the urban areas of Montréal (Québec, Canada), Halifax (Nova Scotia, Canada) and New York (New York, United States). Four universities participated in this survey: Université du Québec à Montréal - UQAM (Montréal), Concordia University (Montréal), Dalhousie University (Halifax) and Fordham University (New York). Questionnaires were distributed electronically (via email) and no specific information about environmental or sustainability issues as related to the survey was provided beforehand. In Montréal, the two universities that participated in the survey created a random list of participants, ensuring a good mix of genders, levels and disciplines of studies. As a means of not distorting the results, it was important not to focus specifically on young adults studying environmental issues or sustainable development without excluding them³⁰. Once respondents who did not fit the age group targeted were taken out of the sample, 399 questionnaires remained with the following distribution: Montréal, 178; Halifax, 95; and New York, 126.

EVERYDAY LIFE

Young people living with comfort

The questions regarding housing reveals that 41% and 35% live with friends in New York and Halifax areas respectively and 37% and 34% in the same regions live with their parents. According to the Canadian 2006 Census, living in the parental home is a trend following an overall upward in Canada, which could reflect reasons such as school attendance, financial difficulties, lack of job opportunities, cost of living in a particular area, a break-up in a relationship, and so forth.: "In 2006, 43.5% of (of the 4.0 million) young adults lived at home, up substantially from 32.1% two decades earlier."³¹ Over half of the respondents (53%) depend economically on family assistance, 47% need a salary and 32% a loan: more specifically, 66% depend economically on family assistance in the New York area, 62% need a salary in Montréal and 41% depend on a loan in Halifax. Since 95% of respondents are students and rely on family assistance as their main source of income, a full

time job is declared by only 16% of the respondents, while 45% have a part time job.

Generally, housing (60%) and food (almost 40%) represent the most important expenditure among respondents. However, this result is strongly influenced by what was observed in Montréal (more than 75% and 50%), which is significantly different from what is observed in the two other regions. In Halifax, housing is clearly the most important expenditure, either at first rank (50%) or second rank (34%). In New York, health and education come first (43%) when housing is ranked as the second most important expenditure (38%) and food being far behind (29%). Given that housing is the most important expenditure of households in New York, 10% higher than in the two other regions, one should be surprised by the results obtained among young respondents from this city. However, these results can be explained by the fact that in terms of income, two out of three respondents in the New York region benefit from family support when it is less than half of them in the two other regions (Montréal and Halifax). In general, it can be said that respondents have a satisfying standard of living.

Involved in their community

Young respondents from the three cities are particularly involved in their community: less than 15% say they are not interested in any of the activities mentioned in the survey.³² Hence, more than two thirds (67%) participate in sport, leisure or cultural activities. Around 44% of participants say they are involved or have been involved in peace and human rights issues – more than a majority in the New York region (53%). Interestingly, environmental and sustainable development organizations stand at the third rank among organizations in which young people are involved with, at 21%, but this proportion increases to 33% in the Halifax region, where more than 10% of respondents have studied environment (less than 3% of respondents have studied in this field in the two other regions). Regarding religious activities, there is an important gap between New York (32%) and Montréal (less than 10%) where three times less respondents say they are involved in religious organizations, Québec being a society relatively secular.

Respondents' life satisfaction (7.7) is globally quite good, while it is lower in New York at 7.3. At a social level, a large majority considers their neighborhood

³⁰ About 4% of all respondents from the three cities have selected 'Environment/ecology' as their study area. They were more than 10% in Halifax (1% in Montréal, 2% in New York and 11.5% in Halifax)

³¹ Statistics Canada www.census2006.com/census-recensement/2006/as-sa/97-553/p18-eng.cfm

³² Refers to the questionnaire and list of activities.

to be a pleasant area to live in (85%). Almost 45% of respondents think that people who live in their local area trust each other and 58% think that, altogether, these people can have an influence on local public policies. However, a bit less than 40% think they are well or very well informed about the way their local area is managed, certainly expressing strong expectations in that regard.

Different priorities in the regions

Poverty (57%), the environment (46%) and social services (33%) are seen as the most important priorities for respondents. However, choices are made in a very different way in the New York region. As shown in the table below, poverty is the first priority, and more importantly in the Halifax region (64%). But if the environment is the second most important priority in Montréal (52%) and Halifax (47%), it is not the case in New York (35%), where it is the third most important priority for respondents. In this region, the second most important priority is the economy with 39% of respondents mentioning it against 8% in Montréal and 10% in Halifax. It is important to note the fact that the unprecedented economic crisis hitting the world economy since 2008 was born in the United States, which certainly plays a role in these differences.

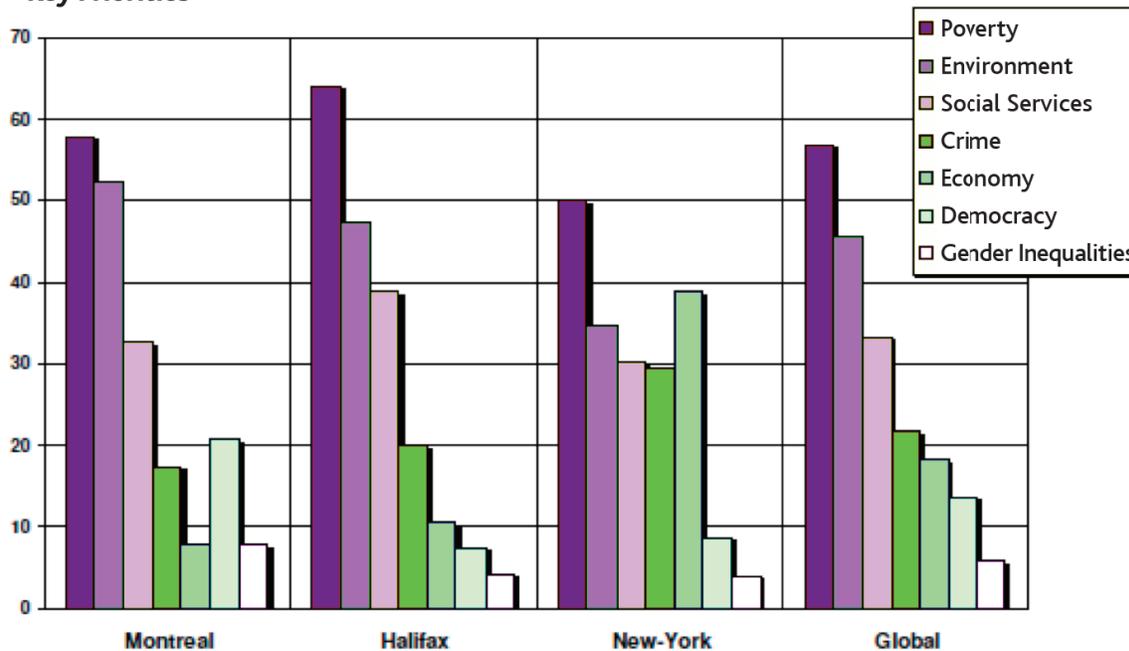
Regarding the improvement of social services, it stands as the third most important priority in Montréal (32%) and in Halifax (39%), but only as the fourth in New York where it is almost at the same level as crime prevention – approximately 30% in both cases.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN EVERYDAY LIFE

A way of living based on comfort

In all three regions, respondents' habits and activities show that their lifestyle is based on comfort. Most of them use diverse communication means (notably television and telephone, including mobiles) and regularly use their computer for school work as well as the Internet. On a practical level, they use a microwave or an electric cooker for cooking. Those spontaneously mentioning their fridge are less numerous even if they prepare their own meals. Several respondents mention their washing machine as an electric device they use regularly, unlike the dishwasher and vacuum cleaner, which they use less often. Regarding food, an important proportion of respondents go shopping at the supermarket in their neighborhood. However, many respondents also buy their food at the grocery store and local markets. Some respondents, particularly in New York, say their parents buy food. Freshness, value for money, diversity and healthiness are the most important criteria for purchasing food products even if discounts also have an influence. There is a high level of environmental awareness among many respondents referring to local food markets, nutritional quality, local, seasonal, organic and if possible, fair trade products in Montréal, which looks more like an exception in Halifax and New York. Some respondents also mention specifically less packaging as a criteria in their purchasing choice:

Key Priorities



"The most important criteria for me is that the product is as bare as possible. Less packaging = less waste"
(Montréal, Canada, F, 18-23)

Public transport is what respondents mention the most often in terms of mobility, especially to go from home to school/university, followed by walking. Bicycling is a mean of transportation that is more often adopted during hot seasons for respondents from Montréal and Halifax. The use of cars is more often associated with professional activities, holidays or week-end activities. Several respondents mention environmental concerns as an important criteria in their mobility choices. It is, however, not the case for respondents from New York who are focused on convenience: only one of them said one of the reasons he used the metro was the environment, when others have a very different approach:

"I DO NOT like my commute.....It is dirty, crowded and polluted" (New York, United States, F, 24-29) .

Expectations and Concerns: Three Perspectives

The objective of the survey was to evaluate young people's attitude and behaviors but also their expectations, taking into account their current needs and the future of the community or environment they live in. Unsurprisingly, young people from the three cities that were explored – New York, Montréal and Halifax – have very different expectations and concerns.

New York: Housing, Energy and Transport Costs

For most of the young people in New York who participated in the survey, good and affordable housing seems to be a major concern. One of the recurrent criticism they have concerns the price of energy and the impact it has on housing costs, particularly when accommodation often lacks good insulation and ventilation systems. Some respondents would like a greater attention to be given to energy savings:

"I wish the lights in our dorm rooms and living areas could have sensors to save energy."
(New York, United States, F, 18-23)

Another key concern is the lack of green space in New York and the fact that one has to move away from the city center to really be able to breathe, which explains strong expectations for more efficient and reliable public transports. Regarding food, respondents wish products were more affordable, diverse and of quality, but also to be able to buy organic products that are less frequent and much

more expensive. Transporting shopping bags from the grocery store to one's house is perceived as the main problem in New York:

"I dislike to bring all the bought groceries back home since they are heavy."
(New York, United States, M, 24-29))

Last but not least, respondents from New York clearly identify three main issues that are quite common but contribute significantly to their dissatisfaction: pollution, crowded public transports and the difficulty to move in Manhattan, either by car, by train or by bike. New York suffers from the same syndromes as all big cities and the young people from New York would like to see the quality of their public transports increase, in terms of cleanliness but also in terms of services. Some would like more bicycle lanes but in a city where cars are still largely prevailing, it seems hard to imagine that their dream will ever come true.

Montréal: More Space and a Better Quality of Life

Young people from Montréal dream about space: to have a bigger apartment or garden and maybe one day a house. Space, a very North American concept, is an essential component of quality of life. In addition to this aspiration, comes the desire to live in a pleasant, bright and personalized environment. Mowing the lawn allows one to take in air, and it is considered a pleasant activity for respondents. However, for young people living in New York, this activity does not really make sense. Many of them consider they are only there temporarily, and no one thinks about mowing the lawn in New York.

In Montréal, respondents also wish for an environment or surrounding that integrates sustainable development objectives: more bicycle lanes, recycling centers available nearby, equipments to produce compost. But Montréal is not exempt from the impacts of urban development, as noticed with nostalgia by some:

"It used to be the country side here, now with urban development we don't even need to move to live in town" (Montréal, Canada, F, 24-29).

Regarding food, the price or products – especially organic products – and their availability (quality), particularly during the winter, are real concerns among respondents. In addition, the possibility to buy these products in small local markets also matters. Several respondents would like to have a market nearby where they live, so that they can frequently interact with the producers and better

know their products. During the winter, the quality and diversity of food products is lower. However, because they would like to encourage local shops and producers, some respondents regret that products are often more expensive in groceries than in supermarkets. They also wish for organic and fair trade products to be more affordable and accessible. The difference between organic and fair trade products is also very important for those who want to know the origin of the products and what they contain. Lastly, regarding mobility in Montréal, several respondents express their lack of satisfaction when it comes to the availability and quality of services: "I would encourage even more car sharing and the use of public transports. Current prices are too high to help most people access these. I would even say that our society today reduces the access instead of encouraging it, because regional and inter-city transport services are being cut down" (Montréal, Canada, M, 18-23). Respondents also wish for more bicycle lanes but most importantly, they wish for a transport network that goes in all areas of the city.

Halifax: Best policies and true nature

Young people in Halifax would like to be able to have more outdoor activities. This is a paradox, given that they live close to nature since Halifax is a coastal city, but they don't have time or the necessary transportation means to move around. The survey reveals that the quality of housing – especially in terms of heating costs and bad insulation – is a real problem in this city. Several respondents would like to go back to true nature or simply walk along the beach.

Regarding food, young people from Halifax share the same concerns as those living in New York and Montréal. It is also difficult to find organic products and they remain too expensive. Some respondents think the way products are packaged in supermarkets and the packing obsession is in contradiction with the quality of the products. They also note that if there were more public marks nearby, people would certainly shop there more often.

The labeling of products is not good enough. I would love to know where the products I buy come from, and if they contain any genetically modified foods" (Montréal, Canada, M, 18-23).

Lastly, a large majority of young people from Halifax wish for a better quality of public transport services and huge investments in this sector. Respondents

strongly criticize the reluctance of public authorities when it comes to developing bicycle lanes, which leaves cars as the only means of transportation even for short distances:

"More bus routes should be available in Halifax and the potholes in the road make riding a bike very uncomfortable! Public transport in general is poor throughout the province and travelling outside Halifax is all but impossible without a car" (Halifax, Canada, F, 24-29).

CHANGING SOCIETIES: UNDERSTANDING THE PAST TO BETTER MANAGE THE FUTURE

Generally, one could say that respondents are well aware of the social transformations and changes that have occurred during the last century. Some of them are satisfied with the importance given to sustainable development values or principles, such as the awareness of the impact our actions can have on our environment, especially in a context of resource scarcity, as well as of the disappearance of community values (solidarity, simple life, closer to nature, seasons).

On the other hand, a large majority of respondents is realistic. Life was difficult in the past, their grandparents had fewer opportunities; they had to work and have children younger, and did not have a lot of time for leisure. Having less access to the media and limited means of communication (transports, computers, Internet, etc.), meant a less stressful life but this was also a great limitation to their understanding of the world. However, among the youth who have participated in the survey, there are some differences in the way they think about how their grandparents lives looked like and more importantly, what they want for the future.

New York: A Great City is Born

The contrast in New York comes from the large number of respondents whose grandparents are not from the United States but immigrated from Eastern Europe, communist countries, Central America (Cuba, Trinidad, etc.) or Latin America. It is also interesting to note that people living in New York seem more concerned about economic issues and social status differences.

"My grand-parents were coloured so that primarily made their life ultimately hard (319)". (New York, United States, M, 18-23).

Among the positive aspects of the lives of their grandparents frequently mentioned, we can emphasize the image of an outdoor life, better relations with neighbors and communities, less crime, more time to spend with children and less stress. Overall, the general impression is that their life was less complicated, they took pleasure in simple things while being aware of the environmental impact of the American Way of Life in their daily lives:

"They relied on sustainability and had a grander sense of community investment and communal living. I think while they were very hard workers, who had their struggles, life was more simple, healthy and less distractive and stressful."
(New York, United States, M, 18-23)

Among the negative factors mentioned, it is essential to highlight the pressures caused by the economic issues that were more important, information technologies that were less developed and less education. People had to work at a very young age, working days were longer, and especially distances to work were interminable. Moreover, racial segregation was very present during those times.

Montréal: The Clash of Values

Respondents are very aware of the historical changes that have occurred in Québec and in particular the difficulties faced by their grandparents. The weight of institutions, like the clergy and religion, have certainly played a role in the social development of Québec and slowed down, in large, part of its economic development. Some noted that prospects for work and life choices were clearly defined in the past (negative) but that it helped to strengthen the social ties that are now much more blurred. Respondents from Montréal are also very aware of the evolution of women's rights and their arrival in the labor market, a theme absent in other cities. It is also important to note that their grandparents experienced what was called the "dark ages" which limited the development of innovative ideas:

"My grandmother was exiled to France to escape the grip of the Church on the arts"
(Montréal, Canada, F, 18-23).)

Among the positive aspects of the lives of their grandparents, the topics most frequently discussed are: more time to talk, a better understanding of neighborhood, more developed relations with people, more control over their time, less pressed with their time, and the little things in life were

appreciated; the river water was clear and people could swim there.

As for negatives, some issues are specific to the social constraints of the Quebec environment: daily life was hard and made of resignation. Their grandparents had a short youth marked by family responsibilities, work and many children at an early stage in their lives, and limited access to education. They lived in small villages and depended on particular industries and had few opportunities for employment and leisure. In addition, the religious, pervasive at that time, and numerous prejudices created walls especially for women, whose roles were drawn on maternity, child education and household chores:

"They had many more children at that time. The men worked hard and the women stayed at home. Gender inequality was more frequent and it was all too much based on religion" (Montréal, Canada, F, 24-29)

Halifax: Between Rural and Urban development

Life around Halifax seems much more oriented towards local and rural values. The grandparents of the respondents often lived on the farm, there was no electricity and they had to meet their basic needs are recurring themes. The impact of the Second World War also seems to have made an impact on their grandparents, making them more fearful and perhaps less optimistic about the future.

"I think there will be very little comparison. Although we live simply and eat as locally as possible, my grandparents led very simple lives when they were my age. We are faced with a colossal problem of global change from all the greenhouse gases we've emitted into the atmosphere. They faced the terrible Second World War. Although, World War II threatened to tear the world apart, the horrors that came with it will likely pale in comparison to what could happen if we don't drastically abate our greenhouse gas emissions."
(Halifax, Canada, M, 24-29).

Among the positive elements mentioned, it can be said it took some time before the means of mass communication could bring the effects of commodification in their daily lives. Family values were more prevalent, people worked hard, there were more domestic and especially fewer products assembled and packaged at the factory. As for negatives, there was often no electricity, especially in winter, and a limited variety of products.

TOWARDS MORE OPPORTUNITIES

Promising Scenarios

Among the scenarios of the survey, respondents in the three metropolitan areas identify the Vegetable Bag Subscription and, almost equally, energy management and urban compost, as the most promising scenarios regarding food and household activities. In terms of mobility, all scenarios are equally perceived.

Vegetable Bag Subscription

This choice is primarily based on factors that promote health and a more balanced diet. However, respondents also emphasize support to local producers and the fact that this option is an innovative idea and quite realistic in terms of potential application. In this regard, they suggest putting in place information campaigns for such options to be better known. It is also suggested that it should be more affordable and available in supermarkets for families who make all their purchases there and need to monitor their budget. The adjustment of quantities and portions depending on the needs of different customers - people living alone and larger families - is also a modality that would be welcomed. Greater flexibility in the delivery days and a wider variety of products especially during the winter are also discussed. The main actors identified for the implementation of such initiatives are mainly groups of farmers, municipalities, civic associations, associations of local merchants, supermarkets, shops for organic food, non-profit organizations (NPOs), the Government and health authorities.

Energy Management

In general, respondents spontaneously identify environmental protection as a reason for adopting such a scenario while seeing a direct economic benefit from it. The scenario is perceived as very easy to put into practice, and as a solution that encourages greater individual responsibility for energy consumption and natural resources protection. Respondents who selected this scenario also have suggestions to improve outreach: information campaigns and easy access to the equipment, government grants, incentives or penalties based on consumption, mandatory installation for all new construction. The actors that are especially important are governments and municipalities, civic associations, but also companies (discounts on the purchase of products with low energy consumption).

Urban Composting

For respondents who expressed a preference for this scenario, they said this is a very good idea, easy to achieve and it is a simple way of raising awareness of environmental problems that helps reduce and reuse of waste – all of which can be directly applicable and visible in neighborhoods. Among the challenges: sorting and smell, lack of accessibility and proximity of equipments and a clear lack of information. It is suggested that the recovery of compost is taken care of by the municipality, to organize public information campaigns on the benefits of composting and on how to do it, but also to ensure the availability of many bins given the slow pace of decomposition and to propose possible applications in winter. The actors that are the most relevant are municipalities but also governments, citizens' associations in neighborhoods and businesses.

HOW TO TALK ABOUT SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?

Almost all respondents think they are already very well informed about climate change. But they believe outreach is essential to expand the number and extent of behavior changes around them. Two out of three young adults consider that education is key and a public duty to perform and almost 25% maintain that behavior change takes a long time and that we must go beyond mere information on sustainable development.

Studies show that people's expectations with regard to the communication of sustainable development are numerous (Tremblay, 2006, 2007, Tremblay and Lachapelle, 2009): whether workers who say they have little information or are uninformed about the commitment of their employers in relation to sustainable development, citizen critical of the discourse of private organizations, public or government, or consumers who demand eco-responsible products and services, communicative issues on sustainable development are multiple. Communication of sustainable development is still a very young area: less than five years ago, these issues were not yet listed in the agenda of the vast majority of organizations. In addition, the professionals of different disciplines of communication, who are themselves confronted with the magnitude of the issue, still have only very few reference tools and research to guide them and help them advise and assist organizations so that they develop a culture of responsibility based on the principles of sustainable development in their overall structure.

The words to use

The expressions used to talk about sustainable development among English-speaking respondents are organized around the concepts of environmental heritage, moral responsibility and quality of life. They use phrases like “environmentally friendly”, “preserve our planet for future generations”, “give back to the earth, take away as little natural resources as possible”, “live happily without causing environmental damage”, “no or little net damage on one’s surroundings”, “where waste is limited and necessities are just that, necessities”, “good for you and does not harm those around you”, “do not hurt the people or nature of this world”, “live on less but still get what you need”, “not causing too much waste ... giving back to the earth somehow”. In addition to these environmental references, there are some more complete definitions, which incorporate the three environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainable development:

“Trying to reduce your impact on the environment [...] reducing the gap between rich and poor [...] having accountable governments to lead us [...] live in a way that will allow future generations to enjoy similar prosperity”. (Halifax, Canada, F, 18-23)

Some expressions are used in the same manner in Franchophone Montréal: “A lifestyle is sustainable if it is not destructive,” “use of renewable resources and pollute as little as possible to enable the next generation to have a good life.” The social element also appears several times: “Where it is appropriate to the greatest number and is not selfish.” But the more complete definitions are more numerous:

“A sustainable lifestyle must be environmentally friendly, respect nature, earth and humans who inhabit it. It must be consistent with good faith, common sense, peace, freedom and goodness. The lifestyle must consider future generations” (Montréal, Canada, F, 24-29).

“A sustainable lifestyle is directly related to preserving the planet for future generations. Not only does it preserve the environment for these generations, but it must be healthy and viable. In addition, a sustainable lifestyle should ensure that ALL human beings live a decent life, among other means using redistribution of wealth” (Montréal, Canada, F, 24-29).

More responsible actions

For most respondents in the three metropolitan areas, more responsible actions are accepted without question by a more moderate use of the car, through

the adoption of public transports for their regular trips, as well as a consumption based on needs, hence being more responsible. They recognize the need to conserve water and reduce energy consumption. The purchase of local products, recycling, composting in addition to what they can integrate as their individual responsibilities and, in general, they stress the importance of limiting over-consumption and waste in all its forms.

CONCLUSION: MANAGING THE FUTURE AND CHALLENGES FACING THE NEXT CENTURY

Young people in North America dream of a future based on a balanced life, based on more human values allowing self-development at a familial, professional and social level. In general, as most of our respondents are students, they are very concerned about their future and are generally very aware of the challenges and opportunities available to them in the coming years while being fully aware of the limitations they face in their ability to be able to act on their immediate environment. And if many want to become more involved in their community, they are generally optimistic while being realistic about the tasks that await them in future years without feeling like they have to pay for decisions made by the generations that preceded them. In fact, the challenges of the next century remain as challenging for them than those held by generations that preceded them. And controlling the future remains a challenge at all times. In fact, they recognize that some control issues and collective actions clearly point to the place that should be given to education and communication to respond appropriately to these issues. In addition, differences in individual and collective values observed in the three cities and three cultures studied demonstrate the importance of being attentive to target populations and regional realities, and to develop solutions tailored to needs and expectations. In this regard, issues of communication are numerous and it is clear that the support of research in this emerging field is increasingly essential.

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This publication provides recommendations to develop efficient sustainable lifestyles policies and initiatives based on the Global Survey on Sustainable Lifestyles (GSSL). It is aimed at policy-makers and all relevant stakeholders on how best to help support the shift to sustainable lifestyles, for instance through effective communication and awareness-raising campaigns.

The survey, which involved 8000 young urban adults from 20 different countries, points to three key dimensions of empowerment and creativity: new visions of progress, behavioral alternatives, as well as trust and participation. The report highlights the need for working together to better comprehend, educate and empower young adults globally, to enable them to create their own positive visions of sustainable lifestyles, and therefore become actors of change.

The GSSL was jointly developed by UNEP and the Task Force on Sustainable Lifestyles, which was led by Sweden from 2005-2009, in the framework of the Marrakech Process on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP).

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