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Environmental Citizenship: Towards Sustainable Development

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ABSTRACT
It is assumed that changes in the behaviour of individuals, institutions and organizations are a prerequisite for sustainable development. This article broaches the question of how best to bring about such change. A distinction is drawn between changes in behaviour and changes in attitudes, and it is argued that attendance to the latter will lead to more secure and long-lasting changes in the former. Fiscal incentives, as a means of changing behaviour, are compared and contrasted with the 'environmental citizenship' route to attitude change, rooted in considerations of justice and injustice. Finally, the citizenship curriculum at high school level is considered as a way of promoting environmental or ecological citizenship. Copyright © 2007 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd and ERP Environment.

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IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE GREEN MOVEMENT, THE FOCUS WAS ON HOW BAD EVERYTHING WAS. Perhaps the most iconic book of this period was *The Limits to Growth* (Meadows *et al*., 1974), which sold millions of copies around the world in the 1970s. The message was that various limits to the environment's capacity to support human and other forms of life were being exceeded, and that if nothing was done environmental collapse within 100 years would be inevitable. If there was a theory of political transformation in this book at all, it was based on the message itself. The idea seemed to be that once people knew how bad everything was, they would change their attitudes and behaviour accordingly. It is clear that this strategy has not worked: we continue to be assailed by environmental problems that will not go away. What other options are available to us to try to get people to change their attitudes and their behaviour? Social and political theory provides us with a vast range of options, and I cannot deal with them all here. One simple way of mapping this large territory, though, is by dividing it into two approaches: 'structuralist' and 'voluntarist'.

Structuralists say that our attitudes and behaviour are driven by deep structures that need to change before our behaviour can change. A favourite example is *economic* structures. The idea is that if economic structures are of a type that encourages competitive behaviour, for example, and we want people to be

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more co-operative, there is no point in simply asking people to be more co-operative, because this will be undermined by the competitive structures that ultimately determine our behaviour.

Voluntarists take a different view. They argue that, while of course we live our lives in a context, this context is determined in part by how we live our lives. In other words, our attitudes and behaviour are 'relatively independent' of the structures that inform them. For structuralists, attitudes and behaviour are too *superficial* to bother with; for voluntarists they are, on the other hand, part of the complex web of influences that causes us to behave one way rather than another.

In this article I shall spend most of my time talking about voluntarist approaches to changing environmental attitudes and behaviour – but I shall try to avoid a *naïve* voluntarism. I focus here on the voluntarist side of the equation simply because this is where most of the public policy debate seems to be taking place, and it requires examination.

In the UK, at least, there is a very obvious front-runner as far as policies for changing people's environmental attitudes and behaviour is concerned: fiscal incentives. The idea is that people are encouraged into environmentally beneficial behaviour through offering them financial advantages and penalties (including, of course, so-called 'green taxes'), to which they respond appropriately. Let me describe two examples from the British and Irish contexts.

The first is a road-pricing example. It comes from the ancient city of Durham. We all know that Durham has a very beautiful and old city centre, which was beginning to suffer from the effects of too much traffic. So city planners were confronted with the challenge of dissuading people from driving their cars into the square, and they decided to adopt a road-pricing scheme. Where once it was free to drive your car into the square, it now costs a relatively modest amount to take it there. The planners had no real idea whether this would work, but they hoped that traffic would be cut by 50% within a year. In fact it was cut by 90% in just a few months. This was success beyond the planners' wildest dreams, and it seems to suggest that the fiscal route to changing people's environmental behaviour actually works (Dobson and Bell, 2006).

The second example comes from the Republic of Ireland. On 4 March 2002 a plastic bag environmental levy (PBEL) was introduced as a charge on plastic shopping bags throughout Ireland. From this date, non-exempt bags have cost shoppers 15 cents each. As a result, the use of plastic bags has been cut by more than 90% – removing over one billion plastic bags from circulation each year. Once again, the news seems completely good. Fiscal measures work – behaviour is changed, almost overnight (Dobson and Bell, 2006)[1].

There is no doubt that fiscal measures of this sort have a place in the environmental policy toolbox. Such evidence as there is suggests that behaviour can indeed be altered by such measures, and even a moment's self-examination will reveal how susceptible we are to inducements and punishments that focus on the money in our pockets. Governments would be foolish indeed to ignore these sources of motivation and the political possibilities they produce.

However, it is also important to see that if governments focus on these methods of changing our behaviour they are likely to fall short of their objectives. There are two difficulties with the 'fiscal self-interest' approach to environmental policy. The first is that it is based on a 'self-interested rational actor' model of human motivation, according to which people do things either for some gain or to avoid some harm to themselves. This makes it seem realistic and hard headed, but it has a soft underbelly. To explain.

[1] What we also learn from the Irish experience, though, is that changes in the behaviour of individuals is not enough; effective systems for recycling require an adequate infrastructure for dealing with recyclables after they have been collected from domestic and other properties. In the absence of such an infrastructure, recyclables may just be taken to landfill, incinerated or shipped to China.

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Household waste in Britain in currently growing at 3% per year, and the government is considering ways of encouraging people to throw away less waste. One suggestion is to impose a 'rubbish tax', so that people who throw away over-quota rubbish will be asked to pay a small tax. From one point of view the logic is impeccable: people will want to avoid paying the rubbish tax and so will reduce the amount of waste they throw away, but critics of the proposed scheme immediately pointed out that this model contains the seeds of its own demise. People uncommitted to the idea behind the scheme will take the line of least resistance in a way entirely consistent with the model of behaviour on which the scheme depends – but entirely at odds with its desired outcomes. As a *Guardian* newspaper editorial pointed out, 'Rather than pay up, the public are likely to vote with their cars and take their rubbish and dump it on the pavement, in the countryside or in someone else's backyard' (12 July 2002). Fiscal incentive/ disincentive approaches allow no space for the deliberation that greens have often argued provides the best opportunity to engage people at deeper levels of potential preference transformation, as well as behavioural change. As Tim Jackson has pointed out, 'The evidence suggests that discursive, elaborative processes are a vital element in behaviour change – in particular in negotiating new social norms and "unfreezing" habitual behaviours' (Jackson, 2005, p. 133).

So the first problem with this approach is that financial penalties invite attempts to get around them. We see this in other environmental policy contexts too. For example, a whole industry has built up around means of making number plates illegible to cameras as cars enter the Pay Zone in the centre of London. Drivers (in this case) react to superficial signals without caring about, understanding or being committed to the underlying rationale for the incentives to which they respond. With this behavioural structure in mind we could try a thought experiment. What would happen if a future Irish government took away the plastic bag tax? Would people revert to using a new plastic bag for each couple of items of shopping, or would the levy have had the effect of changing people's attitudes to the point that more sustainable behaviour was cemented in place? What would happen if Durham City Council abandoned the road-pricing scheme? Would people keep out of the city square? Or would they go back to their original and unsustainable behaviour?

In the absence of an experiment to determine the answers to these questions definitively, we can conjecture that the 'success' of the Durham scheme has been bought at the cost of the failure to make anything other than a superficial impression on people's habits and practices. The change in behaviour lasts only as long as the incentives or disincentives are in place – and these are inevitably subject to the vagaries of fashion, experiment and the direction of the political wind that happens to be blowing at the time. From the point of view of designing successful environmental policy this possibility should be taken extremely seriously.

This points to the second problem with the 'fiscal self-interest' approach to environmental policy – and it can be illustrated by the Irish plastic bag example. According to the Irish government, the two stated aims of the scheme were, and are, 'to encourage the use of reusable bags and to change people's attitudes to litter and pollution in Ireland'. As far as the first aim is concerned, as we saw, the evidence is that the PBEL has been a success. The use of plastic bags has been cut by 90%, and a billion bags a year have been removed from circulation. So *behaviour* has changed. But have *attitudes* changed? Have people's 'attitudes to litter and pollution changed in Ireland'?

As far as I know, no specific follow-up research on this issue has been done, but the language of the PBEL policy document provides us with the key distinction between changing *behaviour* and changing *attitudes*. The PBEL is designed to do both, and the levy's aims are expressed in such a way as to make us think that there is an uncomplicated reciprocal relationship between the two: changes in behaviour will lead to changes in attitude, and changes in attitude will lead to changes in behaviour.

However, a moment's reflection might lead us to think that the latter is more likely than the former – that changes in attitude will lead to changes in behaviour: it makes sense to think that if our underlying

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attitudes to waste and pollution change, changes to our behaviour will follow. The reverse effect – that a change in behaviour will lead to a change in underlying attitudes – seems perhaps less likely. We can change our behaviour in respect of the consumption of plastic bags without that change of behaviour 'overflowing' into a more general change of attitude as far as waste and pollution is concerned. It should also be recognized, though, that if behavioural change goes on for long enough the new behaviour could become *habitual*. In this case it might be argued that the root cause of the cemented behaviour change is unimportant – as long as the change is indeed cemented and secure. In this regard it is arguably the *superficiality* of change that is the problem, not the focus on behaviour itself.

Yet the distinction between *underlying attitudes* and *superficial behaviour* still seems important. We have seen some of the problems associated with focusing too much on the latter – yet this seems to be exactly what governments are doing. The UK government quite recently carried out a major review of its sustainable development strategy, and citizens were asked to comment on a document called 'Taking it on'. The part of the document that deals with bringing about sustainable development is called, significantly, 'Changing behaviour' (rather than 'Changing attitudes'), and much of the focus is on 'the market', 'economic instruments' and so on, with no apparent reflection on the difficulties we have discussed with this kind of approach to environmental policy. I believe that governments committed to sustainable development – i.e. virtually every government on the planet, formally at least – need to give some thought to changing attitudes as well as altering behaviour, since both are key to achieving the objective of sustainability.

This is easier said than done. Just where do we start? It would certainly help to begin with a broader picture of human motivation. The policies we have discussed thus far are all based on theories that have individuals acting out of self-interest. However, we all know that some of us, some of the time, do things because we think they are the right thing to do, even if they conflict with our perceived self-interest. In this connection, Tim Jackson's work for the UK Sustainable Development Research Network is very important. He points out that there is evidence to suggest that pro-social attitudes can be promoted through community-based deliberative processes: 'There are some strong suggestions that participatory community-based processes could offer effective avenues for exploring pro-environmental and pro-social behavioural change. There are even some examples of such initiatives which appear to have some success' (Jackson, 2005, p. 133).

This reference to 'pro-social' behavioural change prompts us to think in terms of an alternative framework, admirably captured in the following from Ludwig Beckman:

> the fact that the sustainability of the consumerist and individualist lifestyle is put in question undoubtedly raises a whole range of questions about how to reconstruct our society. What new economic and political institutions are needed? What regulations and set of incentives are necessary in order to redirect patterns of behaviour in sustainable directions?
>
> However, the question of sustainable behaviour cannot be reduced to a discussion about balancing carrots and sticks. The citizen that sorts her garbage or that prefers ecological goods will often do this because she feels committed to ecological values and ends. The citizen may not, that is, act in sustainable ways solely out of economic or practical incentives: people sometimes choose to do good for other reasons than fear (of punishment or loss) or desire (for economic rewards or social status). People sometimes do good because they want to be virtuous (Beckman, 2001, p. 179).

Beckman is gesturing here towards an aspect of environmental or ecological citizenship, and I propose to explore this idea in what remains of this article. Beckman is talking about the kind of behavioural structure that some aspects of sustainable development would seem to demand. It is surely

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a fantasy to think that sustainability can always be a 'win–win' policy objective, in which each gain for the common good will also be a gain for each and every individual member of society, so it is at this point that thoughts of environmental citizenship begin to emerge from the fog of policy options. There is no determinate thing called 'environmental citizenship', but in the broadest possible compass such citizenship will/can/may surely have something to do with the relationship between individuals and the common good (Barry, 1999; Smith, 1998). In the terms I introduced above, the environmental citizen's behaviour will be influenced by an attitude that is – in part, at least – informed by the knowledge that what is good for me as an individual is not necessarily good for me as a member of a social collective. Crucially, market-based instruments do not raise this possibility in any systematic way, and so must be regarded as incomplete as prompts for social learning[2].

This starting-point prompts a host of questions. What do we mean by environmental or ecological citizenship?[3] Might it mean different things in different places? What are the ethics and values that might inform it? How is to be promoted? What is the role of the state in all this? What are the obstacles to its promotion? How and where might it be 'done'? We cannot answer all these questions here (see Dobson, 2003, for a much fuller account), but some broad indications can be given.

First of all, environmental citizenship involves the recognition that self-interested behaviour will not always protect or sustain public goods such as the environment. Thus environmental citizens make a commitment to the common good. We have already remarked on this. In contrast, the fiscal self-interest approach to environmental policy takes self-interest as the driver of environmentally sound behaviour (although sometimes a public virtue is made out of ring-fencing income from such measures for environmentally beneficial measures. It is a moot point whether *this* is the motivating factor behind people's response to the fiscal measure, though). The environmental citizen worries about this for two reasons: because, as we saw, 'self-interested behaviour will not always protect or sustain public goods such as the environment', and because the constant focus on 'self-interested' solutions to environmental problems is in danger of undermining the very possibility of collective, common good solutions.

Second, environmental citizenship follows through the implications of the view that environmental responsibilities follow from environmental rights as a matter of natural justice. Citizenship has always been a matter of balancing rights and responsibilities. Historically, *liberal* citizenship has focused on the rights of citizens – the right to vote, the right to social security entitlements. Responsibilities have a place in liberal citizenship, but do not play a major role. *Republican* citizenship focuses on the responsibilities of citizens to the collective. Again, while republican citizens have rights, these are less important to the republican than are responsibilities or duties.

Against this background we would have to regard environmental citizenship as being more 'republican' than 'liberal'. In an obvious sense, environmental citizens have a responsibility to work towards a sustainable society, and this embraces all the activities one might normally think of as relating to good environmental citizenship: recycling, reusing, conserving.

But *why* should we recycle, reuse, conserve? There is no one single answer to this question, but environmental citizenship supplies its own particular answer. The key thing to remember is that citizenship

[2] It is important, though, to recognize – and respect – the fact that governments having to deal with a competing range of conceptions of 'the good' will be drawn to market-based instruments. Liberal states are reluctant to be seen to be 'shaping' the values of citizens and are formally committed to 'state neutrality' and value pluralism. Market instruments can be seen as prodding people in a particular direction, but without interfering in the values they hold. On the other hand, even liberal states recognize limits to value neutrality, and they actively discourage racist, sexist and xenophobic beliefs and worldviews. The issue of whether 'unsustainable values' are of the same order as racist and other worldviews is a complex one and there is insufficient space here to deal with it, but it is important to bear in mind that there is some 'wriggle-room' as far as value preference change and liberal states are concerned. At the very least such states should be open the possibility of the kind of value preference change outlined by Jackson, above – not imposed by the state, but generated through discursive and participatory procedures.

[3] I make no distinction here between ecological and environmental citizenship, although in the work of Dobson (2003) the distinction turns out to be an important one.

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is about activity with public implications. From an environmental point of view, *every* act has public implications. As we live our lives, we draw on environmental resources and leave environmental waste. As human *animals* this is inevitable.

However, some of us draw on more environmental resources and leave more environmental waste than others. In other words, we have different environmental *impacts*. One way of visualizing our environmental impact is in terms of what has come to be called the *ecological footprint*. The ecological footprint is the environmental space we occupy as we go about our daily lives – and because we go about our daily lives in very different ways, our ecological footprints are of different sizes. The planet on which we live is of finite size; therefore, there is a limited amount of environmental space to share out. Fairness demands that we all have roughly the same amount of space, but ecological footprint analysis suggests that some of us have too much. From this it follows that the specific responsibility of the environmental citizen is to try to occupy an appropriate amount of environmental space. Interestingly and significantly, this discourse is finding its way into descriptions and explanations of UK environmental (and international/security) policy in the form of the 'One planet economy' objective (UK Government, 2005, Chapter 3). While some of the rhetoric here is more security than justice orientated – in the context of 'peak oil', declining resources, climate change and geopolitical insecurity and instability, the rhetorical commitment to 'one planet living' opens up the possibility of justice-based defences of the changes in value and behaviour that are being discussed here.

It is vitally important to see that this that this is a matter of justice, not of charity. The responsibilities of the environmental citizen are not the same as those that follow from the 2004 tsunami in the Indian Ocean, for example, or from the earthquake a year later in Pakistan/Kashmir. The key difference in my relationship to climate change, and to the tsunami or an earthquake, is that I am partially responsible for the first and not at all responsible for the second.

This prompts very different types of moral response. In the case of suffering for which I am not responsible, compassion and charity are appropriate responses. In the case of suffering for which I am responsible, justice is the appropriate response. This is vitally important, since the obligation structures of justice and of charity are very different. Charity is a notoriously weak basis for obligation. First, it is easily withdrawn ('terribly sorry, no spare change in my pocket this morning'), and second, the structure of giving contained within it reproduces the vulnerability of the recipient.

The contrast this with justice is powerful. You can also 'not do' justice, of course, just as you can 'not do' charity, *but the obligation to do justice remains, even while you are not doing it*. Moreover, relations of justice are relations between putative equals. The element of paternalism that is present in charitable relations is absent in relations of justice. There is perhaps something of an irony here, in that the response to the Indonesian tsunami and the Pakistan/Kashmir indicates that people do charity better than they do justice. It is much easier to do charity, of course – one can switch it on and off. Justice requires constant vigilance and political commitment. In sum, those individuals, agencies, corporations, departments that occupy too much ecological space have a duty to reduce their impact for the sake of those who occupy too little.

Another reason why people might choose charity ahead of justice is that the latter is famously a 'chilly virtue'. One might suggest that it would be better to couch this aspect of environmental or ecological justice in term of *injustice*, as it captures and expresses more accurately the anger and indignation that underpins objections to the profoundly unequal distribution of ecological and other goods.[4] Either way, it is crucial to see that remedying injustice is not simply a matter of lifestyle changes, but of commitment to changing the institutional structures that underpin and serve to reproduce the injustice.

[4] I am indebted to an anonymous reviewer of this article for this suggestion.

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While the contrast drawn here between justice and charity is – I believe – helpful, it might be regarded as too stark. In the first place, it might be argued that charity-based activity is an example of just the kind of deeper, value-driven, behaviour that is being argued for here. In fact, of course, the motivations that underlie charitable behaviour and complex and multiple, and not all of them will be attributable to values of this sort. It might still plausibly be argued, though, that where charity is indeed prompted by such values it might be regarded as a partial precondition (in 'value learning' terms) for learning to 'do justice' – not least because of the typical absence of any disciplinary paraphernalia underpinning or 'encouraging' charitable acts.

A further characteristic of environmental citizenship is the recognition that rights and responsibilities transcend national boundaries. We have seen that we all have a right to roughly equal environmental space, and a corresponding responsibility to make sure we do not occupy an unjust amount of it. These rights and responsibilities are genuinely international. In a very obvious way my ecological footprint is not confined to the UK. I constantly draw on environmental resources from beyond my national boundaries – and most of us in so-called advanced countries do so, so it follows that my responsibilities as an environmental citizen are *international* (and almost certainly *intergenerational*) responsibilities. Therefore, unlike any other type of citizenship (with the possible exception of the cosmopolitan model, but see Dobson, 2003, pp. 21–30, 78–81), environmental citizenship is both international and intergenerational.

There is one final way in which environmental citizenship differs from all other types. Traditionally, citizenship has been associated with public spaces: debating, acting, protesting, demanding – in public. Environmental citizenship shares this traditional element. Environmental citizens will debate, act, protest, demand – in public, but environmental citizens also know that their private actions have public implications. As we saw earlier, from an environmental point of view all actions are public actions – even those that originate in the home, so we heat our homes, we cool our homes, we buy food to consume in our homes – and so on. Each of these apparently 'private' decisions has public environmental implications, so environmental citizenship is a citizenship of the private sphere as well as the public sphere.

Overall, the duty of the environmental citizen is to live sustainably so that others may live well, and this takes us back to the beginning of the article. There I drew a distinction between attitudes and behaviour. I argued that attitudes work at a deeper level than behaviour, but that behaviour change is what most environmental policy is aimed at. The most common form of this type of policy is the 'fiscal incentive' policy. It should be clear that environmental citizenship gets at things at a different level. It works at a *deeper* level by asking people to reflect on the attitudes that inform their behaviour. More specifically, it asks people to consider their behaviour in the context of justice and injustice.

In most cases, this may give us the same answer as the 'fiscal incentive' route, but for different reasons. And the reasons are important. We can see this from the Durham city centre example.

- Under a fiscal incentive policy, people stop driving into the city centre because of fear of a fine.
- From an environmental citizenship point of view, people drive less in general because they know that car driving contributes to global warming, that global warming affects poor people more than rich ones, and that too much car-driving leaves too big an ecological footprint.

My suggestion is that behaviour driven by environmental citizenship considerations is more likely to last than behaviour driven by financial incentives. (It should be recognized that if behaviour change becomes *habitual* the distinction between attitudes and behaviour might not much matter, but we have seen how many factors can stand in the way of behaviour changes being so long lasting and embedded that they become habitual).

There is, in any case, a corresponding disadvantage. I would have to admit that environmental citizenship is much harder to 'get going' than fiscally driven behaviour. Fiscal incentives can change behaviour

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almost overnight, while environmental citizenship initiatives could take much longer. The dilemma can be illustrated with a grid:

	Environmental citizenship	Fiscal dis/incentives
Change attitudes (long term)	good	less good
Change behaviour (short term)	less good	good

Can environmental citizenship be kick-started? There is one arena in which environmental citizenship might be promoted: the formal education system. We are all aware that citizenship is now a statutory part of the National Curriculum for Secondary Schools in England. In a longer study of environmental/ecological citizenship I devoted a chapter to examining the extent to which environmental citizenship might be taught through this citizenship curriculum (Dobson, 2003, pp. 174–207). One would be entitled to be sceptical of the potential for citizenship in this context, given the tendency for its school-based delivery to be organised around 'civics', but the English and Welsh curriculum, at least, is potentially more interesting than this, and this may give food for though for contexts well beyond the English and Welsh one. Distilling aspects of what has been discussed so far, we can develop a rough-and-ready template for a citizenship curriculum in the environmental context.

- The importance of rights: any curriculum that fails to broach this question will be incomplete.
- Justice is a key component of *ecological* citizenship, with an explicitly transnational and duty- or responsibility-oriented component, so the citizenship curriculum must raise the issue of international, and perhaps intergenerational, and even interspecies, obligations.
- Sustainable development is at least as much about values as about techniques and technologies. For example, science might be able to tell us what the threshold tolerances of nitrogen in the atmosphere are for any given species, but it cannot tell us which species we should be concerned about. The key questions, then, are not technical – they are *normative*. Bearing this in mind, we have to say that we will be short-changed by any ecological citizenship curriculum that does not confront normative questions of this sort.

The traditional civics course would not have delivered this range of teaching – hence my initial scepticism.

So it is good to see the citizenship curriculum's creator, Bernard Crick, setting out his stall in this way: 'We have tried to construct a curriculum that will not bore the kids, as old-fashioned civics did. Rather than learning facts about institutions, it encourages discussion of "events, issues and problems" and suggests that pupils learn about institutions best when they have to know how to get something done' (Crick, 2002, p. 17). In addition the curriculum contains

> education for sustainable development, through developing pupils' skills in, and commitment to, effective participation in the democratic and other decision-making processes that affect the quality, structure and health of environments and society and exploring values that determine people's actions within society, the economy and the environment (DEE and QCA, 1999, p. 8).

We have referred to the importance of norms and values in ecological citizenship, so it is good to see the instruction to teach 'spiritual development, through fostering pupils' awareness and understanding of meaning and purpose in life and of differing values in human society' (DEE and QCA, p.

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7). More specifically, the teachers' guide says that 'Citizenship provides . . . opportunities for pupils to explore the range of attitudes and values in society and *to consider the kind of society they want to live in'* (Teachers' Guide, 2002; emphasis added). This provides teachers with an excellent opportunity to broach key questions at the heart of sustainability and sustainable development, and therefore at the core of what it might mean to be an ecological citizen. This is because the classic sustainability conundrum is what kind of a world we want to pass on to future generations. This raises questions of value related to environmental protection: do we want Blade Runner or the Waltons? Or something else entirely? Is it possible that future generations will want electronic birds and plastic trees? All this is underscored by the requirement to teach 'moral development, through helping pupils develop a critical appreciation of issues of right and wrong, justice, fairness, rights and obligations in society' (DEE and QCA, p. 7). The triumvirate of 'justice, fairness and obligation' is particularly important given everything I have said about environmental and ecological citizenship being underpinned by notions of justice.

So in formal terms the England and Wales Citizenship curriculum lends itself to the teaching of environmental citizenship as I have described it, but we might go further. We could make the case that the entire citizenship curriculum be taught *through* environmental or ecological citizenship, because practically every theme in the curriculum is present in them.

- The injunction to help pupils 'develop a critical appreciation of . . . rights and obligations in society' (DEE and QCA, 1999, p. 7) could be fully met through examining environmental citizenship.
- Two other aspects of the 'moral development' part of the citizenship curriculum – 'justice and fairness' – lie at the very heart of ecological citizenship, so a curriculum organized 'through the environment' would provide ample and concrete opportunity to deal with them.
- We know that the key sustainability question is 'what kind of world do we want to hand on to future generations?'. This provides a perfect platform to 'foster pupils' awareness and understanding of meaning and purpose in life and of differing values in human society', as the curriculum asks teachers to do.
- It is not hard to imagine how environmental issues in any given school's community would provide the opportunity for pupils to 'share ideas, formulate policies and take part in responsible action in communities'.
- 'The environment' is an exemplary vehicle for the deployment of all the so-called 'key skills' in the citizenship curriculum: communication, application of number (use and abuse of statistics), IT and problem solving.
- The 'political literacy' parts of the curriculum cry out for a case-based treatment so as to avoid the dangers of desiccation present in anything that sounds like the old civics courses. What better than an environmental dispute (plans for a by-pass, for example) to pick over the 'characteristics of parliamentary and other forms of government', the work of 'community-based voluntary groups', 'how the economy functions', 'the importance of resolving conflict fairly' and 'the importance of playing an active part in democratic and electoral processes'?
- Finally, key internationalist themes in ecological citizenship provide an ideal opportunity to broach other curriculum issues such as 'the world as a global community', and 'global interdependence and responsibility'.

My point is that the *general* topics in the citizenship curriculum could be taught in a lively, engaging and relevant way through the *particular* case of environmental issues – through environmental citizenship. However, of course it is no good just sitting in a classroom and listening. All teachers know that the best way to learn is to do. The idea of environmental citizenship can be made real by getting pupils involved in a project that involves part of the school, or even all of it. One potentially interesting way of doing this is through something like the one of the many environment-orientated accreditation and

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award schemes. Involving pupils in these schemes, and working towards an award, would entail them learning something about virtually all of the knowledge-based elements of the citizenship curriculum, as well as developing the skills of enquiry, co-operation and communication that are found there.

However it is to be brought about, I have argued that environmental citizenship must have a presence in the social, political and economic life of societies aiming at sustainable development. It is tempting to say that fiscal incentives and environmental citizenship can be pursued simultaneously, but recent research from Sweden suggests that self-interest based policy initiatives can 'crowd out' citizenly behaviour, making it less likely that such behaviour is either followed or fomented (Berglund and Matti, 2006). To date, the UK government has seemed determined to focus wholly on the fiscal incentives and not at all on environmental or ecological citizenship. This means that a whole vocabulary of action, built up over centuries, is going to waste. If the citizenship curriculum is a success we may be in the ironic position of having a generation of young people who know and do citizenship, and a government that does not. What a tremendous shame that would be.

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