

THE GREEN PAPERS

# SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

**GREEN  
TECH  
FESTIVAL**  
CONFERENCE



# GTF LONDON 2021

## SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES



Imagine if we could unlock the power of collective knowledge to help solve the challenges of climate change. That's the idea behind the launch of the Green Business Bootcamps which took place during the GREENTECH FESTIVAL in London on the 5th of November 2021. The following Sustainable Communities Green Papers aim to capture the key learnings, innovations and take-aways from the Communities Bootcamp hosted by Sustainable Ventures at their stunning heritage listed County Hall Building, directly across from Westminster and the Houses of Parliament in central London.

The Green Business Bootcamps are a set of hands-on workshops for conference attendees focussed on key sustainability topics, and were launched for the beginning of our global event series. For the launch, each Bootcamp had a different topic focus (energy, finance, community) and took place at three inspiring locations across London. Once attendees arrived at the locations,

they were greeted by a set of three topic-themed tables, each hosted by experts from different companies. The following Sustainable Community Green Papers represent the key learnings from each of the following workshops/roundtable discussions:

### **TABLE 1 / NURTURING SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION HUBS: HOW TO GROW ONE IN YOUR BACKYARD**

Host: Andrew Wordsworth, Founder and Managing Partner, Sustainable Ventures; Emily Orlik and Danielle Davis, Senior Venture Associates, Sustainable Ventures

### **TABLE 2 / THE NEW SOCIAL BUSINESS: IS COMMUNITY THE NEW BRAND?**

Host: Tasmin Chilcott, Environmental Projects Manager, SOMWR

### **TABLE 3 / WILD AT HEART BUT STILL CAGED?**

Hosts: Nicoline Wöhrle, Global Head of Communications, Dr Hauschka/Wala; Daniela Felder, Designer and Co-owner, FELDER FELDER

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**#1 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES**



# NURTURING SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION HUBS: HOW TO GROW ONE IN YOUR BACKYARD

Host: : Andrew Wordsworth, Founder and Managing Partner, Sustainable Ventures  
Emily Orlik and Danielle Davis, Senior Venture Associates, Sustainable Ventures

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In the first workshop, Andrew, Emily and Danielle made use of the session, to both probe attendees about how stronger startup networks and innovation hubs could be created and to get feedback on how his business can support such networks in the future.

### **APPRAISAL OF THE SUSTAINABLE STARTUP AND INNOVATION MARKET**

On the personal front, feedback on Sustainable Ventures' endeavours was positive and the enduring message was that with 8 companies founded, investments in 29 and support for a further 270 over just 10 years that they should "carry on, double down and continue working to achieve their goal of supporting top-of-class sustainable innovation. However, discussions delved

much deeper to look at business and startup innovation more generally outline challenges, opportunities and key paths forward.

First it was acknowledged that the current advancement of sustainability in business and community were the product of a complex and sometimes unaligned ecosystem. Stakeholders such as mainstream business, local and national governments, advocates, pressure groups and protesters, the cleartech and startup community are often driven by different priorities or are in different stages of their sustainable development. Participants emphasised the importance of sustainable start-ups, investors and business people needing to operate and create influence beyond their

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own "Green Bubbles". It was also noted that a growth spurt in consumer interest in sustainability could be a primer and act as a bridge to span the values/approach gap.

### **CHANGING CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR POINTS TO A 'GREEN TECTONIC SHIFT'**

Workshop participants talked about a fundamental change whereby consumers are eager to get informed about and pay for truly sustainable products. This was seen as fundamentally different to past sustainability waves which: 1) In the earliest phases were isolated to the science and alternative communities; 2) Were only taken up by isolated parties and then later more mainstream government; 3) Only included businesses that

had leadership who valued sustainability on a personal level. This new wave was attributed to young, educated professionals with means and influence who have grown up witnessing the consequences of humanity's unchecked 'withdrawals' from our future. This has helped develop a generation that are unwilling to compromise on finding ethical, sustainable and transparently sourced products. Despite this fundamental shift, participants highlighted that the kind of quantum leap changes that are needed are only evident in small enterprises and startups. Large swathes of mainstream industry are yet to adopt sustainable practices and agreement was reached that efforts need to be made to cross-pollinate between agile innovators and incumbents. The challenge of moving sustainable

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production into the mainstream was succinctly summed up by moderator Andrew Wordsworth when he said:



If we want to have a net-zero economy then it can't be a niche market. It can't be produced by a select few for a select few... it's time we started thinking and acting outside the bubble!



DANIELLE DAVIS LEADS A DISCUSSION AT THE COMMUNITY BOOTCAMP



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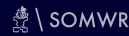
# THE NEW SOCIAL BUSINESS: IS COMMUNITY THE NEW BRAND?

Host: Tasmin Chilcott, Environmental Projects Manager, SOMWR

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Tasmin Chilcott led a session diving deep into what it means to be a 'brand' in a user-driven world. Grapelling with concepts like 'defining your own corporate identity', Tasmin was surprised to discover that many companies find themselves in similar unfamiliar waters.

### **FINDING CORPORATE IDENTITY IN A WORLD OF SHIFTING TRENDS**

The first round discussed concepts like 'organic growth' and allowing your company to evolve into its own market. Bootcampers agreed that 'generic marketing' was dead with digitisation showing us that every market is niche upon niche of hidden complexity/opportunity. Tasmin rallied the participants to dare to "be personal, be intimate" and invite customers to create buy-in by becoming part of their story and journey.

### **WHAT CAME FIRST: THE COMMUNITY OR THE BRAND?**

Attendees felt you should take a 'semi-passive' approach to the building of a brand: "Become the observer of the evolution of your brand" and that you should be "nudging not dictating". "You can't own a community" said Tasmin, comparing this process of letting go to wave-riding "you've just gotta let go and ride the wave" adding that wave riding isn't a completely passive process, that you still have to "head your board in the right direction". Participants translated this to 'success sustains itself but you have to guide your brand's story'. A fascinating concept was put forward to conclude: your brand should become like your company's personality evolving through the dialogues you have with your community.



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### **BRAND SHOULD EVOLVE FROM THE OPEN DIALOGUES YOU LEAD WITH YOUR COMMUNITY**

An interesting thought challenge was proposed: 'If you exist thanks to your customers, and you begin an environmental campaign, doesn't that mean that your community owns it?' The group agreed, but also said that such actions must be driven and guided by the company as the customers should also look to you as leaders in 'action and in thought'.

### **TRUST IS THE COMMON CURRENCY, BUT IN WHAT SHALL WE TRUST?**

Trust was seen as the common currency from which a community can be built, but what can we really trust? Transparency and honesty were seen as the way to show your customers you could be trusted but that certifica-

tions were problematic. The assertion was put forward that even trusted organisations like science-based targets don't have a rigorous checking process behind their certificates. The B-Corp's movement was seen as an answer to the transparency problem facing the impact sector, with accreditation requiring a completely 'open books' approach. Finally participants discussed the challenges of working with external parties who carry your name (distributors/influencers). The group agreed that the key to making sure you create an integrated community that understands and 'lives shared values', is through dialogue, engagement and education. Understand what moves your influencers, your customers, your distributors, your suppliers and all the players in your ecosystem, because only through creating combined story, can we move forward together.

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TASMIN CHILCOTT PRESENTS HER BOOTCAMP FINDINGS

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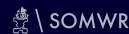
# WILD AT HEART BUT STILL CAGED?

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Collaborators in their daily work and friends in life, Nicoline from Dr Hauschka/Wala and Daniela Felder from FELDER FELDER led a thoughtful bootcamp challenging what it means to be “Wild at heart” driven to create change through your intentions, “but still caged” by the confines of the structures that surround us. Key findings and insights showed that ‘the cage’ that we all too often find ourselves in may only be as confining if we obey its boundaries.

### **DOES THE CAGE EXIST? NOT IF YOU CAN REACH SOMEONE ELSE BEYOND THE BARS.**

We all know that feeling: it could be that you're working on a project and your customer or boss asks you to do something that doesn't agree with your values or something far more prosaic, like that the purchasing

options in your supermarket leave you with a tinge of guilt. That's 'The Cage' and according to the participants of this bootcamp saw community and the connections beyond your immediate situation/confines as essential in thinking, acting and living outside of it's bars.

### **COMMUNITY AS AN ANTIDOTE TO 'THE CAGE'**

After discussing how we can escape the cage with participants, Nicoline noted that: *„A beautiful outcome of the workshop is that we realised that being at the GTF London is the beginning of a global community that brings together various expertises and powerful players with a common vision and the goal to bring vision to action in their individual fields.“*

Co-moderator Daniela Felder added: *„We are drawn to*

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*like-minded people. We place importance on mindfulness and respect for people and nature, but also on the desire for adventure and new ideas."* Overall it was perceived that the GTF community already exists and that strong, trusted connections have and are growing within it. Therefore, it has the potential to act as a strong vehicle for transformation by cheerleading excellence but also by giving a framework where people can create new dreams together.

#### **THE ECO-BUBBLE: ANOTHER CAGE WAITING TO BE BROKEN**

As the discussions progressed a theme that featured at the other round tables was also seen to be relevant: the need to break free of the eco-bubble within which so many of us operate and truly 'go mainstream'.

One challenge that was posited in bringing sustainability into the mainstream were intergenerational differences, with the key role of values and habits seen as pivotal in affecting lasting behavioural/attitude change.

#### **ONLY THROUGH COMMUNITY WILL WE SOLVE MONUMENTAL PROBLEMS**

In the final sessions of the Community Bootcamp, Daniela and Nicoline invited the group to reflect on what it means to build, be part of and interact with community. The concrete example for reflection was experiences at the GREENTECH FESTIVAL. The participants listed countless examples of inspiring new meetings, idea exchanges, and possibilities for collaborations. One attendee even suggested, that the real quantum leap advances in business and technology, don't happen with

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'some geneious working alone on the dark' but through cross politionation and dialogue within expert communities exactly like this one. Daniela and Nicoline agreed, mentioning just how many important conversations they had had and often how the most exciting opportunities for collaboration came from parallel industries. Closing with an inspirational quote, these two female leaders left the participants inspired and empowered to create change:

*In a world based on exclusivity,  
we found beauty in inclusivity.*

*Only together,  
we can create the changes we would like to see,  
where all forms of life-  
from humans, nature to animals- are all allowed to be.*



**NICOLINE WÖHRLE AND DANIELA FELDER PRESENTING  
THEIR IDEAS TO THE GROUP**

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# STAY INFORMED GET INVOLVED.



If you enjoyed reading the Sustainable Community Green Paper, stay tuned to our [LinkedIn Channel](#) where Sustainable Finance Green Paper will be released shortly. All Green Papers will be available to download [here](#). For more information about the Sustainable Business Bootcamps and to get involved in our global festival series, please follow us on: [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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