

June 2006 at Harmony Foundation

It was a busy, exciting and productive month of June for Harmony Foundation.

Gaining Ground

Harmony Foundation participated in the inaugural **Gaining Ground Sustainable Urban Development Leadership Summit** in Victoria from June 15-17 (www.gaininggroundsummit.com). It was a great opportunity for developers, consultants, land use practitioners, policymakers, industry leaders, educators and advocates for sustainability to meet, share ideas and work together. Harmony presented two workshops with the British Columbia Institute of Technology and Smart Growth BC on sustainability education and topical case studies.

World Urban Forum III

Less than 24 hours later Harmony Foundation arrived in Vancouver for **World Urban Forum III**, (www.wuf3-fum3.ca) which marked the 30th anniversary of the first United Nations Conference on Human Settlements and birth of UN-HABITAT, which also took place in Vancouver in 1976.

The World Urban Forum was established by the UN to examine one of the most pressing issues facing the world today: rapid urbanization and its impact on communities and their social, environmental and economic and policies. It is projected that within the next fifty years, two-thirds of humanity will be living in towns and cities.

The World Urban Forum is a biennial gathering that provides for participation of non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, urban professionals, academics, governments, local authorities and national and international associations of local governments. The Forum provides a common platform in the conceptual and preparatory phases as well as in the formal discussions. It is not a conventional UN meeting—it is non-legislative, inclusive and suspends the formal rules of procedure that usually govern UN meetings.

The theme of this third Forum was “Our Future: Sustainable Cities – Turning Ideas into Action.” 11,418 people registered for the Forum ; 9,689 participants and 1,847 staff and volunteers. The Forum was held from June 19 to 23, 2006.



Left to right: Prof. Dr. Wang Lixin (Environmental Management College of China) and Michael Bloomfield (Harmony Foundation) at the World Urban Forum in Vancouver, BC

Harmony Activities at the Forum

Harmony Foundation was delighted to stage the following activities at World Urban Forum III:

1. Networking Session

A dynamic networking session on “Power and Hope of Sustainable Community Development: Building Strong Local Leadership and Active Public Participation.” The meeting room was packed to standing-room-only with over 40 people waiting outside to join the session. Moderated by Michael Lithgow from Concordia University, our international panel discussed successful sustainable community development initiatives from around the world and the key role of citizen participation. Our distinguished panelists were Gordon Feller, Urban Age Institute (USA), Hector Castañón Reyes, LEAD Mexico, Michael Bloomfield, Harmony Foundation (Canada), Salvador Peniche Camps, University of Guadalajara (Mexico), and Wang Lixin and Xue Yanyan from the Environmental Management College (China).

Panelists then joined participants in working group discussions to address:

- The importance of local leadership committed to long-term strategies over short-term economic goals,
- The importance of active citizen participation in local decision-making,
- How cooperation among business, government and community groups can realize the benefits of sustainable community development, and
- How people working together can transform harmful patterns of development into ones that provide prosperity that is ecologically and socially sustainable.

The networking session was successfully broadcast live over FM radio to demonstrate how community media can help promote sustainable community development.



An international panel sits before a standing-room-only audience at our networking session

2. **China Announcement Ceremony**

Our announcement ceremony for the national community leadership training program in China with Earth Council Alliance and our Chinese partners at the Environmental Management College of China attracted media attention and a great audience to the Vancouver Conference and Exhibition Centre. Tommy E. Short (Chairman, Earth Council Alliance), Prof. Dr. Wang Lixin (President, Environmental College of China) and Michael Bloomfield, (Founder and Executive Director, Harmony Foundation and Chair of Programs Committee, Earth Council Alliance) pledged to work together to create a national community leadership training program for China based on Harmony Foundation's

acclaimed programs and materials. The partnership will implement the International Community Leadership Training Program (ICLT) in China, a program through which local Chinese educators and other community leaders will receive leadership training.

The aim of ICLT is to enable leaders to effectively work with their communities to initiate sustainable development activities at the local level. The announcement ceremony was book-ended by captivating performances of traditional Chinese music by the Oxygen Music Ensemble of the Yangling School.



Oxygen Music Ensemble takes the stage at our announcement ceremony

3. **Delegates from China**

We also hosted an esteemed delegation from the Environmental Management College of China (EMCC) and laid groundwork towards establishing a national leadership training program unique to China. We prepared a memorandum of understanding with EMCC and Earth Council Alliance outlining our three-year plan. We committed to:

- Professional translation and cultural adaptation of Harmony Foundation's two publications, *Community Action Workshop Manual* and *Green Cities: Guide for Sustainable Community Development*. The translations will incorporate relevant local examples and methods while being faithful to the original texts,
- Consultations and testing in China to ensure professional quality and culturally appropriate translations,
- A return visit to China in October, 2006 for the project partners to work together

on the adaptation of Harmony Foundation's community leadership training,

- Pilot workshops in China using the adapted and translated materials, to ensure the result is an effective set of tools to conduct community leadership training in China,
- A demonstration session for a China Mayors Forum,
- Publication of the Chinese language versions of the *Community Action Workshop Manual* and *Green Cities: Guide for Sustainable Community Development* and an accompanying supplement with additional sustainable community success stories from China,
- A project report and leadership training presentation at World Urban Forum IV, Nanjing, China, 2008, and
- Develop plans for the ongoing use of the Chinese language versions of the above mentioned publications and training.

4. **Smart Growth Funders Caucus**

The thought-provoking caucus for funding foundations interested in sustainable community development and smart growth entitled "Urban Sustainability: Linking International Cooperation, National Goals and Local Action" was graciously co-hosted with Earth Council Alliance and The Vancouver Foundation at the Terminal City Club. Speakers were Faye Wightman (President & CEO, Vancouver Foundation), Tommy E. Short (Chairman, Earth Council Alliance), Dr. Wang Lixin (President, Environmental College of China), Michael Bloomfield, (Founder and Executive Director, Harmony Foundation and Chair of Programs Committee, Earth Council Alliance) and keynote speaker Charles Kelly (Commissioner General of World Urban Forum III).



Left to right: Michael Bloomfield (Harmony Foundation) and Faye Wightman (Vancouver Foundation) at the Smart Growth Funders Caucus

Harmony Foundation (1985) is a registered charitable organization recognized internationally for its leadership in multi-sector cooperation and creating innovative training programs and educational materials for educators, youth, schools, the workplace and communities. Harmony's innovative programs have been recognized through a variety of honours including the United Nations Environment Programme's Global 500 Award (1992), a Commonwealth Foundation Fellowship (1994), and the Ethics in Action Award (1998).



Harmony Foundation is the Earth Council Alliance representative for Canada

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