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04/09/2020

FCID 4200

Sustainable Community Event Reflection

For my sustainable community event reflection, I chose to reflect on the challenges of sustainability in the time of the Covid-19 pandemic. This pandemic has had the largest singular impact on many people’s lives, more than any other event in recent history. The immediate concerns are obviously about the health and safety of people all over the world, however this virus is also influencing every aspect of our society including sustainability.

The environmental impact from the spread of this virus is vast and we are seeing that work to address climate change such as research, installation of renewable energy, and government legislation is being slowed. People all over the globe are being forced to work remotely which means that no in-field research can be performed and data collection on issues such as global warming, ocean acidification, and marine plastics is not being measured. In addition, the bans on travel, both domestically and internationally, are preventing people from studying many environmental issues. The regulation of public gatherings means that sustainability focused conferences and meetings all over the world are not occurring or being postponed for months. Furthermore, non-essential businesses are closing everywhere which means people are ordering necessities from large corporations such as amazon. This will lead to a steep increase in plastic waste from shipping and potentially force boutique retailers out of business. These issues are direct threats to our hope for a sustainable future and are caused by the outbreak of this virus.

Although, Covid-19 has led to struggles in every facet of our society, I think that there are some positive impacts on sustainability. It seems like every time I look on social media platforms like reddit, there is new evidence showing how quarantines are drastically reducing carbon emissions worldwide. The bans on air travel mean that planes are staying on the ground which are usually some of the largest carbon emitters. In addition, the remote working experiment means that people are driving less and not using as much fossil fuels. People are also encouraged to shop locally at farmer’s markets or suppliers in their area to prevent being exposed to the virus at large grocery stores. These are just a few of the positive things that come to mind because of this pandemic and I know that there is a great deal more.

I feel like the Covid-19 pandemic may be a unique opportunity for people and governments all over the world to reassess their views on sustainability. We have proven that it may not be necessary to commute to an office space to get work done every day or that bicycles may be a more viable means of transportation than we previously thought. Hopefully going forward, we can use these new perspectives to reassess when it comes to building new office space of buying a new vehicle. Despite the horrible effects this virus is having from a healthcare perspective, I think that ultimately it has proven that we can unite as humans from a more global perspective to solve pressing issues such as climate change and sustainability going forward.