

Vinyl 2010 Essay Competition Submission Template

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Summary:

The interlinked food, energy and economic crises necessitate action at multiple levels. The transition to sustainability is urgent, but is it possible? Food and energy production has hitherto focused on enhancing productivity, often addressing the issues strictly in terms of profitability. Ecological and socio-cultural aspects of food production and natural resource management have gained momentum, under the pressure of accelerated ecosystem degradation and deterioration of bio-cultural diversity. Society now needs to redefine its responsibilities and realize this transition to sustainability, towards a world that allows humanity as a whole to maintain and extend quality throughout the diversity of life.

Essay:

The world is submitted to very drastic economic, technological, political, social and ecological changes that reflect a deep transformation. The challenges are well-known and are coming to head together at a faster pace than most stakeholders could have predicted. No one is immune from their influences and they affect the poorest and most vulnerable parts of the society the hardest. But they also provide a unique opportunity for current socio-political and scientific institutions, as well as individual citizens to change their ways of functioning, thinking and acting. By re-discovering, demonstrating and utilizing the basic values of our civilization that envisage that all humans are connected. Those values that recognize that we have mutual responsibilities to help each other in order to meet the need for a more hopeful future.

All over the world, terms and people's demands are being redefined. More than ever before, we are now able to comprehend that the generation that destroys the environment is not the one that pays the consequences. Our generation is very well informed about the environment; that it can be approached not only as source of life and bliss, but also as a method for progress and viable growth. Unfortunately, at the same time we are being exposed to a limitless consumerism that in many cases wastes this cognitive capital. This is characterized by the rapid processes of internationalization and interdependence of the global economy, increasing our footprint over the planet's natural resources, especially food and energy.

It becomes clear that it is henceforth necessary to seek changes towards a path that globalization truly serves the people, especially the ones in dire need. The unprecedented, multi-level crises in which the world is being subjected today demand that we should put an unprecedented effort in changing our consuming behaviour. Being conscious about basic, everyday needs can lead to a change in our behaviour and ultimately in our mentality with respect to how we consider life, man and society and the planet. Societies can achieve such a progress through an approach of life that acts upon different levels. To the individual and -through family and education- to society and politics. A basic point to this is to render sustainability - economic, social and ecological

– a primary notion of everyday life, both in the developed and in the developing world and both in rural areas and urban centres.

The state of the environment is related to poverty, health and quality of life. Societies of abundance, like ours, should therefore recognize that our daily lives not only affect our own environment. What we put in our plate, how wisely or pointlessly we consume, our means of transportation have direct consequences in the landscape, the culture and the economy and politics in the other side of the world. Our increasing energy demands primarily require a renewed dialogue on our food systems. From production to processing and consumption, our food choices have an enormous impact on the planet's biodiversity and natural resources, all vital for the survival and continuation of our civilization.

Decision makers should therefore think about the future and consider if we really gain from present practice. It is important to understand that from now on, 'feeding the world' means not just feeding people, but every life on Earth. It is thus an imperative to undergo an efficiency revolution. This must be inspired and implemented by appropriate strategies and policies that will enable scientists to deliver what they have long been promising: sustainable food production and energy that fully comes from renewable sources. This includes technologies with potential for higher energy efficiencies and a broader range of uses, like the second generation of biogas production. It also involves efficiency in land use, for example the production of bio fuel crops in marginal areas where they do not compete with food production.

Improved efficiency is based on the strengthening and reinforcement of democracy and peace. This necessitates improved global governance and an advanced role for international organizations as well as the institution of new development agencies that will be able to guarantee transparent delivery of results, without inefficient bureaucracies. This is expected to project a transition towards a world that allows and encourages humanity to conserve and expand quality of life not only for the human species, but also every life around it. For the transformation towards a hopeful and creative world, that evaluates and values each one's contribution.

All these processes depend on the opening up of personal perception and the re-definition of what we make 'natural' to our lives. For example, people are made to believe that self-interest and consumerism are natural to humans. That agriculture based in chemicals and fossil fuels is 'conventional'. That it is natural to drive one, two or three cars. That it is natural for corporate leaders to only think about their company's bottom line. Now is the time that we must honestly discuss about the challenges we face and try to seek ways to make it natural for people to think for the good of the society as a whole. To infuse the ease in people that they can do certain things for the larger good and not feel that they are sacrificing. That doing with less is in fact more satisfying; sharing more is more satisfying and that this ability is an inner one and not an economic state of affairs occurring in the market place.

Faced with a food and energy crisis, the world's society needs to recognize its responsibilities, understand the urgency and seriously engage into action at the social, political but mainly the personal level. The increase in global population should be followed by an increase in moderation, prudence, perspicacity and the need for the society to form an integrated resilience against the risks resulting from potential internal or external changes, like such crises. This earnestness can provide and enforce the belief in the change the world must see in order to improve its well being.