

Vinyl 2010 Essay Competition Submission Template

ID number: 936 *(insert your id number here)*

Summary:

(insert your summary here – maximum 100 words)

Mankind has been facing food and energy limits on all different stages of society. Growth of freedom, productivity and innovations has been the main reason man has been victorious throughout the history. This triangle is necessary for rational human action. There's a lot to do in developing countries, but developed world has some duties too. On the first place stands promoting free, unbiased information, which is essential for activating natural human action to secure energy and food safety for the future.

Essay:

(insert your summary here – maximum 1000 words)

The word "crisis" implies something sudden and acute. I would redefine it into „continuous challenge on different stages of human society". Since the dawn of mankind, people had to struggle for energy and food. Caveman was keeping his small wood fire and hunting mammoths. Not only he survived, but he was also able to improve his well-being. Today, we can enjoy comfort of our gas heated houses and fridges filled over the top, comfort and security our ancestors even couldn't dream of. Can we reach up for more?

In this time of booming demand for electricity, peak oil panic and the danger of famines still not being swept in some parts of the world, we have to remember it's not the first time we are facing such limiting problems. In 19th century, it was believed the world will run out of coal within a few decades. It never happened. Mankind moved to the next stage and coal was smoothly replaced by oil. In 1945, estimated oil reserves were enough only for 20 years. In some years, many new oil resources were discovered and more; we entered the nuclear age. Energy became more accessible again. Year by year, the effectiveness of agriculture has been increasing - commercial hydroponic farms are able to produce food for one man on less than 8 square meters. Clearly, scarcity of energy and food has been always limiting, but mankind has always been a step ahead.

There are three firmly bounded indicators of the level society is living on – innovations, productivity and freedom. Every new stage of these three indicators represents a new stage of human welfare. However, on the tip of this triangle stands freedom. The more free man is -the less unbounded by restrictions- and the better protected by law and justice, the more he is able to pursue his own happiness, to focus all his intelligence, abilities and creativity on improving the world around him and finding new solutions to the problems. Frozen productivity, no innovations and restricted freedom are the

reasons why rice fruitfulness per square kilometer in Bangladesh is the same as in Japan in 18th century and electricity is unreachable for most of its citizens. The sooner democratic institutions are promoted and established, the sooner they can jump on the next stage of productivity and innovations, where food and energy will be as accessible as it is for us.

Freedom and democratic institutions in developed countries seem well established and maintained. Something is missing though. Freedom includes also free, correct information about the world around us. Rational human action requires unbiased, non-fake information. We have to understand the real face of all expenses and profits, complete advantages and consequences of all our actions. Governments and bureaucratic authorities have always tried to become cleverer than billions of individual minds. They have tried to change, force and redirect rational human action, often with disastrous consequences. No wonder two biggest famines in history happened in USSR and China after promoting new methods of centralized agriculture, when the freedom of deciding was taken from the hands of farmers and given into the hands of planners.

Nowadays, developed countries don't practice Stalinist strategies, but still, much important information is hidden. Energy and food prices are regulated in most of the developed countries. Farmers are subsidized, thus forced to produce plants chosen by bureaucrats. All this leads to wastage; what's even worse, the perception of an individual is distracted by this fake information. We often don't know what the real price for electricity and food is due to the fact it's biased by the net of taxes, subsidies and duties. It's not only about the basic commodities – industrial subsidies to ineffective, energy consuming low productive factories have the same effect. People can't focus their innovations and raise their productivity, because they don't see where the problem exactly is! That's the main part to improve in developed countries to move well-being on the next level – truthful, unbiased information. Then, mankind can take care of itself and push the limit of energy and food up, like many times in history.

Last summer, booming oil prices changed the face of motorization in the USA. After many years, Americans scaled back their driving, demand for hybrids jumped and people started to learn how to drive more efficiently. This wasn't any centrally directed action. People understood the energetic problem and immediately started with precautions, which were more effective than any government's effort before. There is no need for genius world leader, there's no need to force some technology just because somebody believes it's our sole hope. Trying to secure safe future of your family and yourself is a basic human instinct.

These proposals may be disappointing for many readers, but nevertheless I don't believe there is any possible miracle to be done, no revolutionary policy boosting well-being of mankind. We know examples from history which ended up in disaster. Thousands little actions have to be done every year, in every country. Rising productivity and flow of innovations are backed by rising freedom of man. While there is obviously a lot to do in this field by developing countries to achieve the level of energetic and food security of developed countries, western world can't fall asleep on his already achieved level. Freedom is a complex question and free unbiased information about the real costs, advantages and disadvantages of actions related with energy and food is the most missing one in developed world, but so vital to enter the new stage.

Underestimating the abilities of man is the biggest mistake that can be done. Everybody knows how to improve his well-being and when free he is able to follow it. Sustainable growth of mankind is bounded with sustainable growth of freedom, productivity and innovations. Taking into account all these, energy or food scarcity represents no limiting problem.