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Sustainable Development in our Communities
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Sustainable Development in our Communities

By 2030, six in ten people will live in urban areas. As people, we have a great responsibility to each other to provide a safe, healthy, and friendly environment to both plants, humans, and animals. To support this large population, we need to ensure that people have ample clean water, fresh food, and adequate living spaces. We also need to keep our environment clean to prevent climate change that could occur rapidly amongst a growing population. Perhaps most importantly, we also need to keep our farmers working so we can provide produce to our community. In all we do have what it takes to support six in ten people who are going to live in urban areas by 2030. Sustainable communities worldwide have already established strategies to help our growing populations and communities.

The first interesting and effective strategy used by some sustainable communities is the method of creating Sponge cities. This strategy reduces impurities in water and mitigates the occurrence of climate change. Plants filter impurities through the water by feeding off of the nutrients from phosphorus and nitrogen. By feeding off of nutrients, plants will get the natural minerals they need and water will be decontaminated and safe to drink. Detaining it uses much less natural resources, gas, and energy which are all factors to climate change, thus reducing this reduces the cause of climate change.

Another effective strategy used by sustainable communities is a 20 minute neighborhood. This provides safe transportation for everyone that resides in the community. Sometimes it is hard for people to get to work, school, or grocery store due to lack of transportation. With this new system, it will make it easier to get to places. The less people have to travel, the less carbon emissions are emitted through cars and buses. To summarize, the 20 minute neighborhood is basically providing transportation for everyone in the community while reducing carbon emissions.

A third effective strategy is establishing a mini forest. This expands land to more eco friendly systems that would consist of rivers, canals, forest, farms, plants, animals, and it would be free of wildfires and tree cutting. This provides a solid defense against global warming and climate change. This also provides a good supply of produce to our supermarkets, habitats for our animals, and good weather and environment for our plants.

In my own local community of Camden, NJ, I see examples of efforts to increase sustainability and improve quality of life. Camden County is the only county in the entire state with an Office and Director of Sustainability. Since 2016, we've been implementing hydroponic farms which are indoor farms that use LED lights to grow plants. We have a tool lending library, so people can borrow tools instead of purchasing new ones. This eliminates waste and clutter in the community. I personally am proud of what our community has done to keep it sustainable.

We've been in the midst of a pandemic for almost a year now. We've learned a lot, but what I don't understand is why the big news groups and even local news groups aren't talking about the agriculture, the community, and sustainability in the cities. In the midst of this pandemic, many people think they are forced to stay inside. That's not true! Don't social distance, physical distance. Go outside! This is the only way we can improve on our communities because if the community can't function as a whole, there is no community based system. Some safe, sustainable activities that you can still enjoy include walking, running, biking, going to parks and nature reserves, visiting a local farmer's market and planting a garden. You can also look for virtual sustainability committees to join. This is not a time to take a break from sustainability!

In conclusion, Sustainable communities can be achieved through many strategies and having a team of citizens committed to practicing sustainability. These efforts are needed to ensure that future generations have a safe, healthy, clean environment to enjoy.

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