Grassroots Innovations for Sustainability

Workshop Information,
16-18 May 2012, University of Sussex

www.grassrootsinnovations.org
Rationale for the workshop

A key objective of the workshop is to bring together a set of high-quality papers for publication on the topic of grassroots innovations research. With this in mind, the focus of the sessions will be on discussing pre-prepared papers from experts in their fields. Following the workshop, we will ask authors to revise their papers in line with workshop feedback and comments from the organisers, and to submit their papers formally by the end of July 2012. We have a commitment from Global Environmental Change that papers submitted by this date will be published during 2013 (ie these papers could be included in the UK’s next Research Evaluation Framework).

Outside the formal sessions, we hope to contribute to building a community of researchers with common interests, empirical domains, and theoretical expertise. The workshop programme therefore includes plenty of time for informal discussions and networking, to help build connections between participants, and facilitate ongoing discussions after the event about research and engagement with grassroots innovation.

We see each of these two functions as vital elements of a successful workshop.

Format of workshop sessions

All papers have been circulated to participants, to read as preparation for the workshop. At the workshop, there will be no formal presentations; rather, we will use our time together to discuss the papers in depth.

Each author will have a maximum of 5 minutes to present their headline arguments/findings to the group, drawing on those elements most pertinent to the workshop’s themes. Each paper will also have a discussant allocated. Discussants will prepare a 5-minute critical appraisal of the paper, identifying its objectives, strengths and weaknesses (in the manner of a journal review).

Every paper will be allocated 45 minutes in the schedule (comprising 5 minutes author’s summary, 5 minutes discussant’s critique, 35 minutes group discussion).

In the spirit of collaboration and inclusive co-production of this workshop, we have allocated roles for participants as session chairs, discussants and note-takers. Please see the attached chart and read the relevant notes accompanying each role. If you have any concerns about your allocated role, please contact us.

Please bring with you....

1. An A4 colour printout of an image that represents something about your research (be imaginative!); we will use these to introduce ourselves and create a gallery of grassroots innovations research.

2. Your printed-out workshop papers;

3. Ideas about future collaborations or opportunities for grassroots innovations research;

Catering arrangements

We will be providing lunches and refreshments throughout the workshop. We will offer a mixture of vegetarian and non-vegetarian food – please let us know if you have any further dietary requirements.
Informal Time at the Workshop

Brighton is a lovely, vibrant city, and we hope you will have time to enjoy its many attractions. We have walking maps and tourist information available for workshop participants, and we list below a few weesites to help you plan your time outside the workshop schedule. In particular, a stroll along the promenade and down to the sea is highly recommended (about 10-15 mins walk from the station).

We invite you to join us for a workshop dinner on the evening of Wednesday May 16th, at Terre a Terre in Brighton, an award-winning vegetarian restaurant close to Brighton Pier.

On Thursday afternoon, we have scheduled a tour of Earthship Brighton*, a low-impact, off-grid sustainable building made from recycled materials. We are confident you’ll be inspired and enthused to see this experimental dwelling in action, and to hear its story.

http://www.lowcarbon.co.uk/earthship-brighton

This type of housing, developed in the US, has spread around the world and is a good example of a ‘grassroots innovation’ – as such it is an excellent demonstration of the opportunities and pitfalls of trying to replicate a bottom-up radical model, challenging mainstream housing regimes, and inspiring grassroots activists the world over.

We will be guided by Mischa Hewitt, author of a BRE book on Earthships and subject of an episode of Grand Designs on his residential Earthship in France. He will talk to us about the challenges of scaling up innovative experiments of this type, and the challenges and opportunities for niches working with regime institutions.

*Workshop Walks: The Earthship is situated in undulating park land (Stanmer Park) next to the university, in the South Downs National Park. We will be walking to the Earthship from the University. This will take 50 minutes, and involves fairly level walking over grassy trails. We recommend you bring flat-soled shoes for this walk, and lots of conversation. We’ll provide water bottles and a snack. If the walk is difficult for you, then please let us know.

After the Earthship tour, we will go directly back to Brighton. You can choose to either go on foot (90 minutes – including a steep climb, but taking in views of the city from the Iron Age hill-fort at Hollingbury) or by walking back to Falmer train station (50 minutes) – you can choose. We advise you bring a bag that allows you to carry your lap-tops and other stuff with you.

On Thursday evening, we encourage you to explore Brighton and make your own evening dining plans.

On Friday morning, we will hold a special poster session for early career researchers to present their work in an informal setting, with refreshments and an opportunity for one-to-one discussions, and a prize for the best poster. We are very pleased to have a strong group of postgraduate students working with us and with other colleagues, on grassroots innovations, and we have 7 PhD students taking part in the workshop and presenting their posters.
Internet access at the University of Sussex

We are arranging wi-fi internet access with the university facilities managers. Sussex University is also part of the Eduroam internet system. If you are also at an Eduroam participating institution, then you should already be able to access the internet whilst here. For more information visit:

http://www.sussex.ac.uk/its/services/networkandstorage/networkandinternet/conference

Travel and Accommodation

We will be staying at the Jury’s Inn hotel in central Brighton. It is right by the train station, a 2-minute walk from the concourse (turn left immediately after the ticket barriers and follow the signs around to the left to the hotel).

Jurys Inn Brighton Hotel, 101 Stroudley Road, Brighton, BN1 4DJ
Tel:+44 1273 862 121, Fax:+44 1273 862 111
http://brightonhotels.jurysinns.com/

Travel between Brighton and the University of Sussex is by rail – a frequent service runs from Brighton Station to Falmer (every 15-20 mins, journey time 9 mins).

Useful Brighton information and links:

Eating in Brighton:
http://www.visitbrighton.com/eating-and-drinking
http://www.brighton-eating.com/

Brighton Arts festival
http://brightonfestival.org/

Brighton Fringe Festival
http://www.brightonfestivalfringe.org.uk/

Open Houses – these are artist’s houses that you can visit on weekends during May, and which display works by groups of local artists (it is also a good way to nose around other peoples’ homes! We especially recommend the posh houses, big gardens, and tasty cakes in the Five Ways area, where the Open House tradition began in 1982)
http://www.aoh.org.uk/home

Live music
http://www.brightonnoise.co.uk/
The workshop is held at the Freeman Centre, University of Sussex.

Contact nos:
Adrian Smith  07842 569424
Danielle King  01273 678166
Day 1 Wednesday 16th May 2012

12.00 registration and lunch
13.00 welcome and introductions
14.00 **GRASSROOTS INNOVATIONS: SETTING THE SCENE**
   *Gill Seyfang and Adrian Smith*
14.30 break
15.00 **SESSION A: ENERGY AND COMMUNITIES**
   - Of solar collectors, wind power, and car sharing: Comparing and understanding successful cases of grassroots innovations
     *Michael Ornetzeder and Harald Rohracher*
   - Grassroots innovations in community energy: The role of intermediaries in niche development
     *Sabine Hielscher, Tom Hargreaves, Gill Seyfang and Adrian Smith*
   - What is a community-led initiative in France? Overview concerning French literature and analysis of a French energy-related case study
     *Melike Yalçýn, Mathilde Szuba and Isabelle Moussaoui*
17.15 close, get train to Brighton, accommodation in Jury's Inn
19.00 workshop dinner at Terre a Terre

Day 2 Thursday 17th May 2012

08.30 coffees
09.00 **SESSION B: GOVERNANCE AND ENCOUNTERS WITH FORMAL INSTITUTIONS**
   - Grassroots Sustainability Innovation, green economic zones and clean tech clusters
     *Anna Davies*
   - The role of science shops in enabling civil society organisations' societal influence
     *Søsser Brodersen and Michael Søgaard Jørgensen*
10.30 break
11.00 **SESSION C: FINANCIAL INNOVATIONS**
   - Transitions, Societal Change and Countervailing Power: Finance, Democracy and Green Energy in the United States
     *David Hess*
   - Desperately Seeking Niches: complementary currencies, grassroots innovations and green niches for sustainability transitions
     *Gill Seyfang and Noel Longhurst*
12.30 lunch
13.30 **SESSION D: COMMUNITIES AND CONSUMPTION**
   - Community, Place and Consumption: theorising sustainable consumption in communities
     *Lucie Middlemiss*
   - Grassroots organisations, cycling and behavioural change in the UK and in Italy: the examples of the Transition Towns movement and urban bike groups
     *Sylvia Gullino and Carolina Pacchi*
15.00 Walk to Stanmer Park
16.00 Earthship tour
17.00 walk back to Falmer station – or into Brighton
   evening - dinner on your own
Day 3 Friday 18\textsuperscript{th} May 2012

09.00 coffees

09.30 **SESSION E: HOUSING**

Grassroots Innovations: Local Socio-technical Experiments and Systemic Change: the case of the Residential Housing Stock

*Halina Brown and Philip Vergragt*

From Ecovillages to Ecocities? Power Dynamics between Moderate and Radical Actors in the Transition to Sustainable Communities

*Flor Avelino*

11.00 **PHD RESEARCH POSTER SESSION** - vote for your favourite poster!

Innovation Journeys in Community Energy Initiatives

*Jake Barnes (Sussex)*

The Role of Members in Grassroots Innovations

*Sarah Bradbury (Leeds)*

Civil Society in Sustainability Transitions of food Systems

*Rachael Durrant (Sussex)*

The Role of Culture and Worldviews in the Diffusion of Green Niches

*Jeppe Graugaard (UEA)*

The Innovation of Community Energy Projects in Finland and the United Kingdom

*Mari Martiskainen (Sussex)*

Urban Grassroots Initiatives and Sustainable Systems of Provision

*Jyotsna Ram (Oxford Brookes)*

Governing in a finite world: how energy constraints and large technical systems shape the way we do politics

*Mathilde Szuba (Lille)*

12.00 poster-voting, lunch and optional half-hour walk

13.00 **SESSION F: FOOD**

Grassroots social innovations and food localisation: an initial investigation of the Local Food programme in England

*James Kirwan, Brian Ilbury, Damian Maye and Joy Carey*

The Governance Of Consumption Transitions: Analysing Institutional Factors Influencing The Emergence And Subsistence Of Local Food System

*Tom Bauler, Coline Ruwet and Valentine Van Gameren*

Resilience Building in Trajectories Towards Sustainability: An Examination of Community Growing in the UK

*Rebecca White and Andy Stirling*

15.15 break

15.30 **CLOSING REMARKS, POSTER PRIZEGIVING, AND NEXT STEPS**

*Adrian Smith and Gill Seyfang*

16.15 close
# Grassroots Innovations Workshop May 16-18 2012, University of Sussex

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Information for session chairs

Your task is to keep the session to time (5m author, 5m discussant, 35 mins group discussion) and to facilitate an inclusive group discussion, encouraging everyone to participate, and hopefully keeping the discussion focused around the key workshop themes. It is in everyone’s interest that sessions run to time and discussions are well-facilitated, so please consider this as license to be firm!

We suggest a system where participants indicate a wish to comment by signalling with their name-sign, and you can then keep track of who wishes to speak and come to them in turn. You may wish to collect two or three comments at a time before inviting the author to respond. You may wish to invite comments from people who have spoken less, before returning to more vocal participants. There will be clear links across sessions and between papers – do use your position to invite comments from other participants who you think might have a particular response to a paper.

Information for authors

You are invited to speak for a maximum of 5 minutes to remind participants of the key points of your paper. Please do not try and summarise the whole paper! Rather, draw out your key arguments or findings in relation to the workshop themes, and see it as a launching point for the discussion.

Information for discussants

We invite you to spend up to 5 minutes presenting your review of the paper, and we would specifically like you to consider the paper’s strengths and weaknesses, particularly in relation to how it addresses the workshop’s themes. Your role is to kick-start the group discussion with a thoughtful critique. You may wish to open out questions for further discussion, or point to areas where the paper might be usefully developed, to address the workshop themes.

Information for note-takers

As one of the purposes of the workshop is to develop a strong set of papers for publication and generate ideas for further research, it is really important that we capture the good ideas that come out of the discussions! Your role is to record the main points of the discussions to help authors revise their papers, and to jot down any particularly interesting avenues of thought that open up. We envisage this as being in the form of notes and bullet-points on key issues and themes, separated out for each paper. We don’t need a full set of minutes!

Information for poster-presenters

PhD posters should be set up during the Thursday lunchtime, and left in place until the Friday session. The PhD research poster session is on Friday morning, and we have a dedicated hour for participants to view the posters. Poster presenters will stand by their posters to receive visitors and discuss their research. This will be an informal session for everyone to mingle and view the posters at their own pace.

We will award a prize for the best poster, as voted by workshop participants on the basis of the poster’s visual appeal, clarity of communication, and the presenter’s ability to convey their research ideas clearly and engagingly.

Thankyou everyone, for helping to make this workshop run smoothly!