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Hard to believe how much has happened over the past 18 months!

The big development on site has been the opening of the West Quad. All 53 student bedrooms have been occupied. The library, seminar rooms and lecture theatre are regularly full. The landscaping is lovely. The project has had its challenges, but has made a huge difference.

We can now offer Fellows, students and alumni the opportunity to give and host lectures and events which were simply not possible before. We have thriving, student-led Arts programming, a discussion series which has broadened the scope of study of International Relations, regular Insaka events hosted by AfOx and led by one of our Fellows, as well as Special Ethics seminars, and alumni talks.

The College has become a key location for the Oxford Literary Festival and is welcoming increasing numbers of external groups to learn more about its own art and architecture, helping extend awareness of the College and its activities. Commercial lettings, with the financial contribution they make, have also been very successful, always supported by our great catering team.

Fellows have received awards and recognitions aplenty, from Fellowship of their learned societies, to major research grants, to great reviews for their latest books. Fellow Dan Hicks was the University’s Junior Proctor for much of the period. We were delighted to welcome our alumnus, the King of Malaysia, to a very special evening to mark his Honorary Fellowship.

Tim Shaw RA and Humphrey Ocean RA, both of whom have made work for the College, have recently joined the Common Room.

And then there are the student achievements, beyond the academic. It has been a particularly successful period for our sporting competitors, not least the footballers and rowers, with three of our women in the Boat Race squad this year. But we also have representatives in sports from clay pigeon shooting to Jiu-Jitsu, including trampolining, athletics and lacrosse.

We are often surrounded by music, with full use made of the pianos and one of our violinists giving a free recital in the Sheldonian. The choir continues to uplift at the annual Carol Concert hosted by our friends and neighbours at Pusey House.

Student activities are supported by the Student Representative Committee, and the Ball Committee, which organise welfare and social events and raise student issues and suggestions.

We have met alumni in Singapore, Rome, Geneva, Canada and the USA (San Francisco, Houston, New York and Washington) as well as the UK. Everyone mentions the good food and great conversations – and the College cookbook, a first for an Oxford College, means they can now recreate at home!

We have raised funds for a significant number of Master’s Scholarships for 2019-20 thanks to the generosity of our supporters and the encouragement of match funding. We aim to do even more.

In short: we have had a great time, everyone has worked hard and achieved much. I look forward to keeping you updated!

Carole Souter
Master
St Cross alumnus Dr Josep Garí is a senior policy advisor for the United Nations Development Programme. Here he shares the history and background of sustainable development as a global policy venture.

At Oxford I was often perceived as an odd scholar, not for a focus on archaic or perplexing themes, but for investigating a seemingly utopian issue: sustainable development. My research on political ecology and the associated fieldwork in indigenous territories in Amazonia were considered novel and thoughtful, yet deemed unable to break through mainstream policy thinking.

Most people wondered whether the sustainability theory could find a place in a world rather excited with economic globalisation and the revolutionary prospects of information technology. Two decades after such debates inside Oxford quads, on the turf of indigenous communities and across the world, sustainable development has become a leading policy endeavour. In 2015, two major international agreements endorsed this new paradigm of development that seeks to integrate economic, social and environmental objectives: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris climate agreement.

A new paradigm

Sustainable development pursues the deliberate integration of economic, social and environmental considerations in every human endeavour, whether it is public policy, business activities, farming, industry, trade, consumption, land management, social organisations, travel, investments, food, leisure, housing, the workplace or personal lifestyles. It represents not just a new stream of development, but also a new international practice. It intends to permeate all sorts of human activity, while engaging an unprecedented diversity of stakeholders.
Unlike past development doctrines, which were an affair of public policy and aid organisations, sustainable development concerns and challenges every social, political and economic force: from governments to businesses, from rural communities to technology entrepreneurs, and from the large metropolis to the individual consumer. We are probably at the most complex and heterogeneous crossroads of development history: sustainable development aims at transforming the ways we live, work, invest, produce, consume and behave.

Sustainable development has shown an unprecedented ability to federate a wide range of social factions and human endeavours, providing the international community with a transformational and transversal agenda. A rapidly growing number of municipalities, rural cooperatives, transnational corporations, civic associations, governments, humanitarian agencies, banks, farmers, restaurant chains, media networks, indigenous peoples’ organisations, airlines and even oil companies are engaging in sustainability policies and practices – albeit in disparate degrees, but signalling a paradigm shift.

A historical perspective

The concept of development was born in the middle of the 20th century, just after two destructive world wars and in view of a major decolonisation process. It reflected the aspiration and right of every nation to socio-economic prosperity, setting a path for international cooperation. Development was meant to support national emancipation and hence foster peace and security globally. An ensemble of international institutions was created to promote it, including various United Nations agencies and multilateral development banks.

In the first phase, 1950-1980, the dominant development doctrine was economic growth, based on commodity trade, industrialisation, public infrastructures, private entrepreneurship and capital investments. A communist alternative ran in some countries, also focusing on economic principles, but rather servile to the command of state structures.

In the 1980s, the market became the totem of political theory, flooding development policy with an emphasis on the private enterprise, structural reforms of the state and accelerating production and trade, hoping that markets themselves would underpin development.

In the 1990s, development practice shifted attention towards the ideals of democratic governance. It sought to empower state institutions and civil-society organisations to define and
pursue development in a participatory and inclusive manner. Alternative issues and approaches for development also flourished, such as the sustainable management of natural resources (three major environmental treaties were adopted at the Earth Summit in 1992), innovative development streams (e.g., ecological economics, political ecology), the NGO dynamism (which would give birth to the World Social Forum movement, an alternative to the World Economic Forum where the dominant ideas of development were often generated) and, not least, a growing development critique mixed with post-development theory (partly fed by communism-free Marxist thinking). Oxford nurtured many of these alternative streams.

The 21st century arrived but the international community, confronted by such a panoply of development ideas as well as many chronic development issues unmet, set a rather conventional blueprint: the Millennium Development Goals. They focused on social rights such as education, health, food security and gender equality. In fact, the two decades around the turn of the millennium, 1990-2010, experienced notable social breakthroughs worldwide, with the largest amount of people escaping poverty and political tyranny in history. In particular, extreme poverty declined from about 40% to 20% of the world’s population, benefitting almost one billion people. At the same time, democracy was expanding into more nations than ever.

**An existential crisis**

Despite economic progress, the new century has commenced amidst an existential crisis afflicting the planet at large, as reflected by colossal environmental damage and widespread social inequalities. New and more arduous development challenges emerge.

Climate change has been accelerating and starting to show its brutal impacts and threats. It may even seem to shape a new geological epoch, one we would paradoxically generate ourselves: the Anthropocene. Other human-induced planetary changes are also contributing, such as air and water pollution, land degradation, biodiversity loss, the overexploitation of mineral and petroleum resources, and the production of waste. This mix of ecological impacts is already disrupting our socio-economic systems, from food production and water management to urban settlements and coastal communities. Climate change will increasingly disrupt livelihoods, impoverish communities and force the displacement of many populations.

In parallel, social tensions have been unfolding since the 2000s. In spite of the hopes brought by economic globalisation and rapid technology progress, large populations remain chronically unable to meet basic social needs, from food and shelter to securing a livelihood. The 2008 global financial crisis showed capitalism is erratic and unjust, further aggravating social inequalities across the world. Global population displacement and migration have escalated: in 2015, the world had more than 65 million forcibly displaced people, including 21 million refugees, and about 250 million international migrants. Rural communities are increasingly marginalised while urban settlements are crowded with slums. Social exclusion and economic inequality are growing. The development doctrines of the 20th century are unsuited for these new challenges.

**A new global pact**

All these combined ecological and social crises persuaded policy-makers and diplomats to craft a new global compact for development. In the 2000s, climate change increasingly took a central stage in international diplomacy, replacing trade as the most prominent global policy issue. The recurrent humanitarian crises have revealed the centrality of the nature-society nexus, which underpins the livelihoods, resilience and rights of so many communities. Sustainable development has progressively settled with the aim of integrating three major forces that had been nurtured before – whether in mainstream policy or within alternative movements – but remained disconnected: economic growth, social equality and environmental protection.

Sustainable development aspires to interrogate, orient and shape every human activity, whether at local or global level, in the public or private sphere, or related to individual or collective action. It somehow blends and reconciles many of the development ideas, lessons and streams proposed and experimented with in the past decades. Although not branded as a revolution, sustainable development has a revolutionary potential in terms of redefining human actions, relations and ways of life.
Sustainable development stimulates new policy formulae, the mobilisation of a wide range of actors, and the crafting of innovative agreements, partnerships and investments. In this vein, the international community endorsed the paradigm of sustainable development through a policy compact composed of the two mentioned agreements. The Sustainable Development Agenda represents the international policy framework for development co-operation, structured around 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) in the horizon 2030, common for all nations. The Paris Agreement outlines a mix of policy and financial arrangements to transform societies and economies towards climate sustainability – it was adopted by 195 countries, a record level of international engagement for any major treaty in this century so far.

Unlike past development doctrines, sustainable development is a universal venture: every country is bound to it, albeit in different scope and manners. The old divide between “developed” and “developing” countries blur, as all nations have a role in, and an obligation to safeguarding the global commons, be they water, the climate or human rights.

These new international agreements require every country to act through national legislation, policy reforms, government budgets and multi-stakeholder partnerships, among other means. For instance, countries as diverse as Colombia, Germany and Sierra Leone are currently engaged in setting up policies, budgets and partnerships for the SDGs, tailored to their priorities and circumstances. Similarly, the Paris Agreement compels every nation to publicly commit policies and measures (known as NDCs) to promote low-carbon development across their different economic sectors, then to monitor and report on their delivery, while increasing their degree of ambition every five years. Sustainable development is thus becoming a macro-policy construct.

A policy on the move, everywhere

The gateway to sustainable development is already wide open. Some governments have made tangible policy commitments. The UK, for instance, is the first country that has set legally-binding carbon budgets which restrict the total amount of greenhouse gases the country can emit. Ethiopia has set a policy goal of becoming a middle-income, carbon-neutral economy by 2025. Many countries are currently defining their policies, measures and targets for low-carbon, climate-resilient development, and progressively inserting them in their laws, institutions and budgets.

“sustainable development is a universal venture: every country is bound to it”

Hundreds of companies are also committing to reduce their carbon footprint, progressively aligning to the Paris Agreement. For instance, the American Business Act on Climate Pledge, a joint US government-business initiative launched by President Obama, has been signed by more than 150 major companies that publicly support the Paris Agreement. In particular, they commit to tangible and ambitious targets for low-carbon practices and sustainable natural resource management, ranging from purchasing 100% renewable energy to pursuing zero-net deforestation in supply chains. These companies, which include many ranked under the Fortune 500 List, have operations in every US state, employ over 10 million people and represent a combined annual revenue in excess of 4 trillion USD. Last year, the world association of airlines, IATA, committed to a carbon-neutral growth from 2020 while adopting an environmental finance mechanism to assist them in this target. Most recently, the Climate Leadership Council, which reunites the major oil companies in the EU and the US, endorsed the establishment of a carbon tax. There may be strategic and marketing tactics behind some of these schemes, but a paradigm shift for sustainability is certainly encroaching on the business realm.

The global pact for sustainable development and climate action is a unique global policy venture. It is already on the move. It underpins a new paradigm of development and a new architecture for international co-operation. Yet implementing the Sustainable Development Agenda and the Paris Agreement requires governments to engage and concert a wide range of reforms and stakeholders, as never before. Almost every human organisation, enterprise and project is concerned. Public agencies, private businesses, civic organisations, scientists, activists, innovators, artists, entrepreneurs, educators, traders, and rural communities – to name some – are all called to change and innovate, mobilising and merging their different competencies, resources, ideas and forces.

This is an ambitious, complex and likely contentious plan. It has also a note of anarchism: sustainable development will not result from mere governmental or institutional action, but through the dedicated, innovative and collegial action of a wide array of social actors, public institutions and economic stakeholders – many of which are not used to cooperate. This new global policy venture is as convoluted and inspirational as it is vital for our future.

Pictures from the author’s photographic archive.
This article was originally written in 2017.
Alumna Kelsey Leonard (MSc Water Science, Policy and Management, 2010) is the Philomathia Water Policy Fellow at McMaster University. She was named a 30 under 30 Environmental Leader and recipient of a Peter Benchley Ocean Award for Excellence in Solutions. Kelsey’s research centres on adaptive water governance for more resilient and sustainable communities in the face of extreme climate events.
• A large part of the world’s freshwater resources are contained in river basins and groundwater systems that are shared by two or more nations.

• More than 60% of transboundary basins do not have co-governance agreements.

• Additionally, 80% of existing agreements are bilateral and do not necessarily involve all basin states or Indigenous Nations.

• As climate change is expected to raise the number of extreme situations of flooding and drought, both in frequency and in duration, transboundary management of these water resources becomes more essential to reduce the impact of these extremes.

• In 2015, UN member states adopted a set of goals to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all as part of a new sustainable development agenda.

• Sustainable Development Goal 6 calls for countries “to ensure access to safe water sources and sanitation for all.”

• Currently, Indigenous Science and knowledge for adaptive governance of water resources is undervalued leading to fractured decision-making.

There are more than 370 million Indigenous People spread across 70 countries worldwide. In the United States and Canada there are more than 1200 First Nations, Inuit, and Métis with inherent sovereignty over their lands, resources, and waters. However, many Indigenous Nations face crises of water injustice as ongoing acts of colonialism disenfranchise Indigenous Nations from equitable decision-making authority in the co-governance of transboundary water resources.

With modern Indigenous movements like the Great Sioux Nation’s fight against the Dakota Access Pipeline, #NoDAPL, the world is gaining greater understanding of the politics of protecting Indigenous waters for current and future generations. However, as Indigenous Peoples we have always known that we are the miner’s canary. In 1953 federal Indian law scholar, Felix Cohen is famously quoted using this metaphor:

“Like the miner’s canary, the Indian marks the shifts from fresh air to poison gas in our political atmosphere; and our treatment of Indians, even more than our treatment of other minorities, reflects the rise and fall of our democratic faith.”

This is the great test of the 21st Century. Will the world continue to let Indigenous Peoples suffocate as it mines to satisfy insatiable greed or will we heed the canary’s cry?

As Indigenous Peoples, we are on the frontlines of climate change. We are climate refugees, losing our first foods, lands and waters to ongoing processes of colonization. Elizabeth Ann Kronk Warner, a legal scholar, argues that nation-states, such as the United States, are violating Indigenous treaties through their climate change inaction. The treaties are often bound in language tied to natural elements and waterscapes captured in phrases such as, “so long as the rivers flow”. But what if anthropogenic climate change and hydrocolonialism cause the rivers to run dry? Every failure to act on climate change is a reneging by colonial states on commitments made to Indigenous Nations and guaranteed in treaties.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development promises to leave no one behind and many of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) support rights delineated in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). The successful attainment of the 2030 Agenda must include Indigenous Peoples’ participation at local, national, and global levels to ensure Indigenous rights are protected.

In Canada, more than 120 First Nations have been on boil water advisories for years without access to clean water. The Neskantaga First Nation have been without safe tap water for 22 years and only recently has the Canadian government committed to fixing the failing water infrastructure by 2018. In the United States, many Indigenous Peoples lack access to clean water and sanitation, which is further compounded by acts of water injustices such as the 2015 Gold King mine spill which dumped 3 million gallons of heavy metal sludge into the Animus River, the main water source for a large portion of the Navajo Nation. SDG 6 commits countries to ensuring access to safe water sources and sanitation for all. If Canada and the United States are to reach this target then Indigenous Peoples and governments must be equitable partners in water management.

According to Māori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith, “throughout the period of colonisation indigenous peoples survived because of their imaginative spirit, their ability to adapt and to think around a problem.” As Indigenous Peoples, we have always carved an innovation path forward. Colonisation has necessitated our ability to adapt and develop solutions to some of our most pressing problems. Indigenous innovation for water governance is thereby an exercise in transformation to use our “imaginative spirit” to build Indigenous resilience in the face of climate change and water insecurity.

Understanding the roles of Indigenous Nations as rightsholders in a given social-ecological-system is necessary for understanding the institutions, policies, and processes shaping collaborative water governance in transboundary basins. According to the Global Water Partnership (2002) and UNESCO (2003) water governance is:

“The range of political, social, economic and administrative systems that are in place to develop and manage water resources, and the delivery of water services, at different levels of society.”
However, this definition does not reflect Indigenous knowledge and fails to account for Indigenous cultural values, rights and relationality to water. In 2008, the Chiefs of Ontario signed the Water Declaration of the Anishinabek, Mushkegowuk and Onkwehonwe, which states:

“Water is the life giving gift that our mother the Earth provides for all of us and it is through the relationship that women have with our Mother Earth that they are the keepers of the special ceremonies needed to ensure waters are respected and that future generations will continue to experience this gift.”

At the core of Indigenous water governance is the recognition that all peoples are connected to one another and that the life blood of Mother Earth – water – is impacted daily by dynamic political systems. Indigenous Nations continue to be exposed to hazards of water governance failures and are building resilience by resisting conventional regimes to restore Indigenous epistemologies of caring for water for protection of future generations.

Achievement of the SDGs while ensuring Indigenous Peoples are not left behind will require actors at the local, national, and global levels to collaborate with Indigenous Peoples to find new ways to value Indigenous Science, respect Indigenous rights to self-determination, and protect our waters. Indigenous Science is an applied science over thousands of years that is gaining greater recognition in co-governance frameworks as reliance on solely Eurocentric methods is challenged. The inclusion of Indigenous Nations and traditional knowledge in transboundary water governance has shown that the bridge between western science and Indigenous science can be achieved through knowledge co-production and open data if carried out in a culturally responsive and respectful manner. Indigenous Nations are revolutionising water governance frameworks, the ways in which decisions are made, and who gets a seat at the table. Ultimately, creating a space for Indigenous knowledge holders to be respected in these governing processes.

In recent years, I have seen a global shift in calls for climate justice, often led by...
Indigenous Peoples, in the face of extreme environmental changes. A large part of the world’s freshwater resources are contained in river basins and groundwater systems that are shared by two or more nations. As climate change is expected to raise the number of extreme situations of flooding and drought, both in frequency and in duration, transboundary management of these water resources becomes more essential to reduce the impact of these extremes. As an Indigenous scholar/activist I endeavour to bring to the forefront a “set of tools” that Indigenous Nations can use to develop adaptation strategies for water security. Indigenous water governance is grounded in the principle of Indigenous “survivance” – the capacity of an Indigenous Nation or community to survive stressors to water security through resilience building that allows for sustainability and protection of water resources for future generations.

If countries, such as the United States and Canada, are to carve a true path towards reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples then they must recognise the intellectual inheritances that perpetuate ongoing acts of water colonialism. The world must work together to dismantle archaic forms of knowledge production, which privilege western science over Indigenous Knowledge. As countries work towards achieving the 2030 Agenda and SDG 6, collective action for our sustainable future must respect the diversity of users for transboundary water governance. Ensuring that all people have access to safe water sources and sanitation is critical to combat further losses in biodiversity and ecosystem resilience. As Indigenous Peoples, we recognise that water is sacred – it is the “first medicine”. It sustains us in our mother’s womb. It is used in ceremonies to heal people. Water is Life.

Kelsey was painted by her sister, artist and filmmaker Courtney Leonard, for the University’s ‘Diversifying Portraiture’ project, which asked present University students and staff to suggest outstanding figures they would like to see represented on the walls of the University.
St Cross College lunches are a perennial source of excellent fare, engaging conversations, and exciting connections, but it felt particularly special to be sitting down with Chad Frischmann, in a place of shared history, to discuss Project Drawdown. An Oxford alumnus now working as Vice President and Research Director of the project, Frischmann was in the UK to promote the project’s book, Drawdown. Before speaking about Project Drawdown to his first UK audience, he joined student members of the newly formed St Cross Green Impact team, and graciously allowed us to pester him with both personal and practical questions over lunch.

Unsurprisingly, five students, all mid-degree and mid-twenties, had a lot to ask. We wanted to know how Frischmann got to where he was—working on a New York Times best-selling book about reversing global warming—from a Master’s in Art History at Oxford. We wanted to know what Project Drawdown is about, what the most urgent matters are, and most of all, we wanted to know what current and future St Cross students could do to help.

It became obvious that Project Drawdown required his breadth of expertise, as Frischmann answered our ever-expanding questions (and his lunch grew steadily colder). The project is a large one, both in concept and content. The subtitle of the book grandly states that Project Drawdown is “the most comprehensive plan ever proposed to reverse global warming”, but in the introductory section entitled ‘Origins,’ editor Paul Hawken explains that the brashness is validated “because no detailed plan to reverse global warming has been proposed.” And in this, Hawken is correct; other media based proposals focus on halting, slowing, stopping—nothing so hopeful as reversing.

The subtitle also reveals a structural element to the project: beyond being a source of statistics and reference information, Drawdown is a plan, a playbook, a framework of suggestions, models, and hypotheses. A large team of researchers and policy makers came together and over the course of several years “gathered comprehensive lists of climate solutions and winnowed them down to those that had the greatest potential to reduce emissions or sequester carbon from the atmosphere. [They] then compiled literature reviews and devised detailed climate and financial models for each of the solutions” (Drawdown).

The project is now composed of 100 sections, 80 of which are existing solutions, separated into eight major categories (Energy, Food, Women and Girls, Buildings and Cities, Land Use, Transport, and Materials) and the remaining 20 are ‘Coming Attractions,’ and feature possible future technologies or nascent ideas in climate science. Each solution is ranked against all others based on “the total amount of greenhouse gases [it] can potentially avoid or remove from the atmosphere (Drawdown).” Such is the scope of the project: to provide positive information about the most efficient ways to help ourselves and our homes.

At St Cross College – and in any other relatively small community – such vast and overarching plans can feel distant and unattainable. Over lunch, however, we were able to draw Chad Frischmann’s
attention to our concerns. Although Project Drawdown itself is globally focused, many of the solutions are, or can be, locally realised. The conversation moved from the crisis of food waste, refrigeration, and water use, to the fact that yes, actually, changing one’s light bulbs can make a difference. Bringing a reusable mug to the café can too. The tone of hope, of positivity, comes across distinctly in Drawdown, and it was even more poignant when speaking with Frischmann. He lauded us for getting involved with Green Impact, the University-wide sustainability programme, and encouraged us to stay focused on short term goals while keeping perspective on long term gains. He also cautioned us to act early, because it is wiser – and cheaper – invest early as opposed to retrofitting later.

We asked him how to continue the dialogue of climate change in our day-to-day lives, and how to maintain the tone of positivity in doing so. This is often one of the main challenges in bringing environmental conversations to the table – that one will be lambasted as an eco-warrior and that all the information will be negative. Frischmann thought about this, and identified that it is fear that imprisons people, whether that fear is for their lifestyle or for their planet. Opportunities, however, and hope, do the opposite: they free people. Thus, he gently suggested, giving people choice in the conversation is important. Do we want to continue living in a world we know is rather doomed, or do we take action now, towards an innovative future? In this way Drawdown offers the best kind of hope: a realistic one.

For more information about Project Drawdown visit www.drawdown.org.

ST CROSS GREEN IMPACT

Some of the solutions in Drawdown are applicable to St Cross College as an establishment, and some more appropriate for individual students, and others for the University at large. Most powerfully, though, I am so proud to say that we are working on it, and I am full of hope and excitement for the upcoming year.

Green Impact is Oxford University’s ‘sustainability and social responsibility engagement and reward scheme.’ Teams can be formed at any department or college, and are composed of students, faculty, fellows, and staff members.

Formed in Hilary 2017, the St Cross team has already completed several projects:

- **Introduced mixed recycling** in the new West Wing building where previously there were only general waste bins
- **Begun composting** (food recycling) in the dining hall and kitchen, redirecting thousands of kilograms away from landfills
- **Invested in ceramic yogurt dishes** to be used at lunches, replacing the non-recyclable plastic ones used previously
- **Promoted plastic-free food options** by hosting a plastic-free intercollegiate potluck, an “Anything But Clothes: Wear your recyclables!” bar party, and provided a free screening of Before the Flood, the 2017 environmental documentary
- **Collaborated** with the catering staff to organise a booked-out “Farm to Fork” hall meal, featuring all local ingredients.

The Green Impact team at St Cross is fledging, but highly successful. Last year we competed in the Student Switch Off campaign (focused on reducing energy and saving water) for the first time, and with the huge amount of student engagement we fostered, we won a Gold award. In addition, with the inception of our composting programme, we won an award for ‘Recycling and Reusing’, and were awarded £150 to implement a new project this year.

What’s next?

In the next year we hope to keep up momentum in the realm of waste reduction, especially food recycling, but we want to reduce our use of plastics and paper products around College.

We also plan to compete again in the annual Student Switch Off campaign, which reminds students to be aware of, and reduce, their use of energy. In addition we want to provide more recycling bins in communal College spaces.

Green Impact would love to have all members of the St Cross community involved, so do email the Green Impact team at: stxenvi@stx.ox.ac.uk or join the Facebook group, search “St Cross Green Impact” on Facebook!

There is a staggering amount of work to do, and many changes we can make. St Cross, however, is lucky to have alumni and students alike who are willing to turn their faces towards the sun, and lead our young college onto a sustainable future.

- BRONWEN HUDSON
An ethnography of experiences of pollution and practices of “RESIGNED ACTIVISM” IN RURAL CHINA

DR ANNA LORA-WAINWRIGHT
Associate Professor in the Human Geography of China, St Cross Fellow

Rural China has experienced significant changes since the foundation of the People’s Republic in 1949, through the period of economic reforms following the death of Mao in 1976, and in the course of the past two decades. Some rural areas have become wealthier, and industrialisation has been instrumental to rural development. Development however, particularly when it is pursued with disregard for long-term sustainability, has some undisputable side-effects. These have become apparent through images of black, stagnant water, thick “smog” and less visible but no less toxic reports of contamination of crops and human bodies.

The fact that China’s current leader, Xi Jinping, has put such prominent emphasis on building a “beautiful China” and on “ecological civilisation” – including higher fines for polluters, severe repercussions for officials who fail to curb pollution, and amendments in environmental law and regulations – is testament to the severe levels of pollution in certain parts of the country. But complex problems may not be solved overnight, nor can the overwhelming focus on economic development be easily reversed, particularly in poor areas which struggle to find sustainable pathways of development.
Pollution not only causes environmental damage, but also potentially social unrest. Those affected by degradation in their vicinity file petitions and lawsuits, take to the streets in protest, vent their frustrations on social media, and reach for help from NGOs, the media and a broad range of experts. But what is it actually like to live in one of these highly toxic places? Although China’s environmental plight is a prominent topic of scholarly and public debate, we still know little about how communities affected by severe pollution make sense of it and react to it.

As part of my DPhil in medical anthropology I spent over a year living among and working with farmers in Sichuan province. In the book which resulted from this research, titled Fighting for Breath: Living Morally and Dying of Cancer in a Chinese Village (2013), I explored the ways in which villagers attempted to make sense of a cancer diagnosis, to seek an explanation for what may have caused it, and to reach decisions about how to care for cancer sufferers in their midst. Pollution by chemical fertilisers and pesticides was often mentioned as a potential cause of cancer. This spurred my interest in the ways in which those living with pollution derived from mining, industry and waste processing understand the potential health effects of pollution. Do they oppose pollution? Are they complicit with its presence?

In the course of a decade of research, I became increasingly aware that opposition and complicity are not as mutually exclusive as they may at first seem. Indeed, the diverse answers I gathered to these questions are testament to the complex experience of development among rural populations, and the inequalities which underpin it. In my new book, Resigned Activism: Living with Pollution in Rural China (2017) I examine the processes through which pollution comes to be regarded as normal and the coexisting forms of activism embraced in response to it. This offers an important prism for approaching key issues surrounding contemporary Chinese culture and society, such as state responsibility, social justice, ambivalence towards development and modernisation and some of the new fault lines of inequality and social conflict which they generate.

Focusing on three polluted rural sites, Baocun, Qiancun and Giuyu, I draw on fieldwork carried out as part of three distinct but interrelated interdisciplinary projects facilitated by the Forum on Health, Environment, and Development (FORHEAD) and review research by Professor Chen Ajiang and his team in several “cancer villages” throughout China.

While pollution differs across these sites (Baocun is affected by phosphorous processing, Qiancun by lead-zinc mining,
and Guiyu by processing of electronic waste), their respective social, economic and political contexts present productive points for comparison. Strikingly, in all three sites, local residents displayed a mixture of ambivalence, resentment, and resignation towards the toxic effects of local development.

As is often the case, the vision I set out with changed significantly as a result of fieldwork. Having spent years living in rural China, I was particularly keen to show that villagers can play an important role in demanding more sustainable development. The picture I emerged with after a decade of research, however, is predictably more complex.

Communities are regularly divided rather than united by pollution. Different entitlements for locally registered residents and migrants from poorer rural areas (who make up the majority of the cheap and informal labour force but have no entitlement to compensation and little if any welfare protection) mean that there was no common basis on which to unite and demand change. In the case of Guiyu, virtually all local families were involved in some way in the cottage industry of recycling electronic waste, and therefore were at the very least mixed about demanding stricter regulations against pollution.

Inspired by their mixed reactions to pollution, the book proposes the concept of “resigned activism” as a conceptual invitation to rethink conventional approaches to agency, collective contention and environmental justice. It demands attention to a spectrum of practices comprising acts that may fit the label of activism alongside less confrontational and more individualised or family-oriented tactics aimed at minimising pollution in one’s immediate surroundings, such as closing windows, wearing masks, avoiding the harmful jobs, and temporarily sending small children and pregnant women to live elsewhere.

Time and again, villagers would claim, early on in our conversations, that they were in “good health”. As the conversation progressed, however, it became clear that they were afflicted by several endemic ailments closely related to pollution (nose bleeds and throat infections in Baocun, for instance), which were so common locally that they ceased to be regarded as ailments at all. They had simply become a “normal” part of life. These processes of normalisation are not confined to China. Rather, they are a crucial component of the experience of living with pollution across the globe and inextricably linked to the practices which locals may embrace in reaction to pollution. Cosmopolitan green campaigners may not regard some of the practices I elucidate as activism.
By contrast, I argue that they deserve attention as alternative, resigned forms of activism and environmental subjectivity, whereby those who live with pollution have become used to its presence. Such an approach allows us to grasp the circumstances in which collective action takes shape, the many instances in which it does not, and the wide, most interesting, space between them.

Why draw attention to these seemingly inconsequential and invisible practices now, when the Chinese government is paying increasing attention to the problems posed by environmental pollution, in terms of both environmental effects but also social effects, that is, the unrest that pollution may trigger? Some analysts and scholars have argued that the present moment provides an opening for environmental civil society. NGOs can now bring lawsuits on behalf of citizens affected by pollution. But this government’s concern with the environment may also have the effect of making environmental protection predominantly the remit of government rather than civil society. The recent crackdowns on NGOs would support this point.

All the evidence suggests the government tolerates complaints that are localised in nature, but will clamp down on any campaign that threatens to gain broad popular support and take on a life of its own. Similarly, the potential to increase networking between activists is curbed and service-based NGOs are freer to operate than advocacy NGOs. These changes underscore the importance of the approach I promote in my book: devoting closer attention to shifts in the aims and forms of activism and the ways in which pollution becomes acceptable. These subtle forms of activism may take on even more importance when control on civil society is particularly tight.

All photos: © Anna Lora-Wainwright
AFRICAN FUTURES
AND THE AFRICA OXFORD INITIATIVE

KEVIN MARSH
Professor of Tropical Medicine, University of Oxford;
Senior Advisor, African Academy of Sciences
St Cross Fellow

Fellow Kevin Marsh is Professor of Tropical Medicine at the University of Oxford, Senior Advisor at the African Academy of Sciences, and Director of the Africa Oxford Initiative - a cross-University platform for facilitating the development of sustainable and mutually-beneficial research collaborations with African institutions.

In 2000 the Economist featured a grim cover with the title ‘Africa - the hopeless continent’ and deservedly received a lot of flak. By 2011 their tune was changing and the cover story was ‘Africa rising’, to be followed in 2013 with ‘Africa - a hopeful continent’. All of these labels can be criticised as misinformed or naïve but they probably do reflect perceptions widely held outside Africa, or at least in industrialised countries outside Africa. Whatever the case, we can all agree that Africa is changing rapidly and that the future will be very different from the past, and indeed from the present.

First, it must be said that talking of ‘Africa’ as a single entity risks gross oversimplification - Africa comprises 55 incredibly diverse countries. However, there is at least one sense in which it can make sense to talk about the ‘future of Africa’ as a concept. Uniquely, all the countries of this massive continent (Africa could absorb the landmass of USA, China, India and most of Europe) have signed up to a common vision of the future. In 2013 the African Union published ‘Agenda 2063 - the Africa we want’, described as ‘a shared strategic framework for inclusive growth and sustainable development’.

The future(s) of African countries will be impacted by a host of global influences, many out of the control of African governments, ranging from climate change, through changes in international commodity prices to the strategies adopted by China for investment in the continent. However, there are a number of key transitions which are already underway and gathering pace, which cumulatively will be critically important.

First is the health and epidemiological transition: childhood mortality is both a good reflection of the importance governments give to health and a major driver of life expectancy. Over the 25 year from 1990-2015 childhood mortality across the continent as a whole fell by around half, with some countries having even more dramatic reductions. In parallel, African countries are in the midst of a transition in which non-communicable diseases, such as diabetes, cardio vascular disease and cancer, traditionally thought of as being ‘western’ problems, are of increasing importance with major implications for restructuring health systems.

Changes in both death rates and the patterns of disease will be hugely amplified by demographic changes. The population of Africa in 1950 was around 200 million, currently it is around a billion, but population growth rates for Africa are higher than any other part of the world and by 2050 it is estimated that the population will stand at around 2.4 billion. Significantly, a large proportion of this population will be under 25 years of age. This can be seen as a demographic dividend, providing a young and increasingly educated workforce to drive the economies of Africa. However, if employment opportunities fail to grow rapidly, this dividend may turn into a threat, driving massive migration or internal disruption.
The third transition is the move to urbanisation, a global phenomenon but more marked (and perhaps with greater implications) in Africa. In 1950 only 10% of African people lived in urban settings. Currently this figure is around 40% and by 2050 it will be around 60%.

The digital transition is clearly a global phenomenon with implications for the way we work, learn, move money and information and interact socially but it has special dimensions in Africa. These stem from the fact that where there are gaps in the infrastructure it is easier for new technologies to be adopted rapidly. Mobile phone penetration has been extraordinarily rapid across the continent, where there was little competition from established infrastructures. This has the potential for new approaches in almost every sphere; Africa has lead the way in phone based money transfer and in some countries digital approaches to diagnosis and giving health advice are expanding rapidly.

Although numbers are never precise, we can be clear about the direction of the trends discussed. The economic transition, the most critical of all, is much more difficult to make predictions about. Following decades of stagnation, over the last ten years most African economies have shown substantial growth, of an average of 4-5% year on year. Clearly whether this continues will have a significant bearing on how the implications of the other transitions play out.

The Africa Oxford Initiative

My personal engagement in the continent stems from the fact that, although holding an appointment in Oxford for over thirty years, I have spent the majority of my working life living in Africa, first in West Africa and then for 25 years leading the large Oxford-linked Kenya Medical Research Institute - Wellcome Trust, a collaborative health research programme in Kenya. On stepping down from directing the programme in 2014 one of the things I wanted to do was find out more about academic links between Africa and Oxford beyond health. It was not surprising, of course, to find that a university like Oxford has a great number of collaborations across many departments. More surprising was that it was almost impossible to get any coherent picture of them all! It was also striking that these often long standing links were not reflected well in the composition of either the student or staff bodies of the University. From these conversations arose the idea of bringing together information and discussion on all Africa-linked activities under a single platform, and so the Africa Oxford Initiative was established http://www.afox.ox.ac.uk/. Although key aims of the initiative include providing a communication platform and facilitating the development of equitable academic partnerships with African academics, the broader aim is to make Africa a strategic priority for Oxford as a whole. The arguments for doing this go beyond those of good citizenship and the role of a global university in working with colleagues to help develop the knowledge base essential for development. The rapid transitions discussed above mean that Africa will play an increasingly important role in the world and any institution with a global outlook has much to gain from engaging seriously with this.

The St Cross College Thembisa Hope Scholarship

This Scholarship, founded by Member of Common Room Tonia Cope Bowley and her late husband Stephen Bowley, aims to provide financial support to students from South Africa and neighbouring countries who have been admitted to St Cross for Master’s level study. Without this kind of support the opportunity of studying at Oxford for financially disadvantaged bright students is quite out of reach. This is the first scholarship at St Cross specifically aimed at students from southern Africa.

Jan-Georg Deutsch Fund

The Jan-Georg Deutsch Fund was established in memory of St Cross Fellow Dr Jan-Georg Deutsch, who sadly passed away in December 2016. The Fund aims to provide financial support for students in the field of African History or Global History from an African perspective – through both scholarships and hardship funds.

Please get in touch with the Development Office if you would like to support any of these initiatives.
STARTING UP: TRANSITIONING TO TEA

DEMETRIO SANTANDER
MSc Law and Finance, 2013

Demetrio (left) with Waykana co-founder Juan David Gómez
Following a year in Oxford at Said Business School and St Cross College, Demetrio returned to Ecuador to take up a corporate finance position in a large real estate investment company. His training and experiences at Oxford had diversified his earlier professional training as a lawyer and expanded his knowledge and understanding of corporations, but it had also broadened his horizons. As we hope you experienced, St Cross provided Demetrio an opportunity to converse and debate on topics far beyond his academic field. He recalls conversations on medieval history and plant genetics with College friends and Fellows, both now relevant to his work today. Demetrio believes perseverance and patience were two of the most useful skills developed during his time at St Cross.

In 2015 Demetrio had the opportunity to travel around Ecuador, exploring regions new to him and his travelling companion and friend, Juan David. Deep in the Amazonian rainforest, whilst staying in an indigenous Quechua community, Demetrio and David were woken shortly before sunrise by their new acquaintances. Led to a smoking wooden fire, they were greeted by chattering voices and stories of the origins and mysteries of the guayusa leaf, a plant native to the Amazonian rainforest. Before long, a pot was lifted out of the fire, and a tea-like beverage poured into a traditional wooden cup. Demetrio recalls the drink as being smooth with a natural sweetness, and ‘grass-like’ flavours.

The guayusa leaf is commonly used in the Amazonian rainforest and is cultivated using traditional agro-forestry systems. The leaf, not related to tea, but a species of the Holly genus, is highly caffeinated and has been found to be rich in polyphenols, more commonly known as antioxidants. Quechua people have brewed the leaf for centuries, often in pre-dawn ceremonies, with guayusa providing energy for the day ahead, and hunters believe it provides them with strength and power to sense dangers around them.

Compelled by the power of guayusa leaf, recognition of the global trend for super-foods high in antioxidants, and the popularity of energy drinks, Demetrio and Juan David returned from their travels and quit their jobs. They believed they could market the guayusa leaf to the world, and their company, Waykana Guayusa, was born. Not losing sight of his aspirations for a socially impactful business model, Demetrio works with large numbers of smallholder growers, buying leaves at prices higher than the local Fairtrade standard, and processing these in a state-of-the-art processing plant within the Amazon region, employing only the local population. Committed to conservation, his company is working with GIZ (a German development agency working towards sustainable development) and Waykana products are certified organic by the US Department of Agriculture.

Waykana Guayusa today produces a range of tea products that are available in North America, China, the Middle East and South Africa. Demetrio hopes to enter European markets soon and expand the range to offer ready-to-drink products. Back in the Saugman Common Room at St Cross, four years after starting his studies here, Demetrio reflects on his journey, sipping a cup of Waykana tea, gaining energy for his next adventure. For the full story go to: www.waykana.com/waykana

Photos courtesy of Waykana

Demetrio Santander joined St Cross College in 2013 to study for an MSc in Law and Finance. His long-term aspirations were to establish a social enterprise, but the question was how? Crossword catches up with Demetrio to find out how his company, Waykana Guayusa, has emerged into the global drinks market.

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE SINCE LEAVING ST CROSS? CAN YOU SUPPORT OUR CURRENT STUDENTS?
We are keen to share the experiences of your career with the College community to establish new networking and mentoring opportunities. Please get in touch to let us know where life has taken you and to find out more about getting involved.
Welcoming the King

We were delighted to welcome His Majesty Sultan Muhammad V, The Yang Di Pertuan-Agong (King) of Malaysia, on 28 February 2018. His Majesty attended St Cross in 1990 on the Foreign Service Programme. The Master and Fellows of St Cross bestowed upon His Majesty Honorary Fellowship of the College in recognition of his role and achievements, and presented him with the College medal.

The 50:50 Scholarship Challenge

In late 2017 we launched the 50:50 Scholarship Challenge with the aim of raising £50,000 to support students with scholarships for Master's-level study. Through the fantastic level of support from across the College community, we have now reached this £50,000 target, which has been match-funded by the College Contribution Fund to provide £100,000 for scholarships. To find out more please visit www.stx.ox.ac.uk/5050
Oxford Literary Festival

The College was delighted to be an official ‘Festival Venue’ and host the Oxford Literary Festival once again this year. The highlight of the programme was undoubtedly the Festival Opening Dinner on Saturday 17 March, which saw the Oxford Cultural Collective organise a dinner in Honour of the BBC Radio 4 ‘Food Programme’ with the College's kitchen team joined by chefs Angela Hartnett, Jeremy Lee, Fergus Henderson and Margot Henderson.

CRISP Programme

St Cross College is now delivering the CRISP Programme from 2018-2020. The CRISP (Chevening Rolls-Royce Science and Innovation Leadership Fellowship) Programme is aimed at mid-career professionals with high potential in the fields of science, innovation and business from India and Sri Lanka. The programme has wide-reaching academic themes including science policy and its economic impact, global challenges, innovation and entrepreneurship, leadership and management, and politics and international relations.

Since 2011, the programme has been delivered and hosted by the Said Business School with participants becoming visiting students at St Cross. From 2018 until 2020, St Cross will be the home college for these students, hosting them throughout their time in Oxford. The international and interdisciplinary nature of the College make it the perfect home for the programme.

Ruth van Heyningen at 100

In October 2017 the College was delighted to hold celebrations to mark Founding Fellow Dr Ruth van Heyningen’s 100th birthday. A special tea was held in College, and Ruth was joined by her family and College friends, as well as the Master, Carole Souter. Carole presented Ruth with a piece by the English artist John Piper, who had been a friend of Ruth and her husband Kits van Heyningen, the College’s first Master. The artwork is now displayed in the West Wing for all College members to enjoy.

The Master’s Blog

Master Carole Souter maintains a blog, which is one of the best ways of finding out what is going on in College beyond the headline news. You can find it at: www.stx.ox.ac.uk/mastersblog.
St Cross College
Alumni Events:
Dates for your Diary

Booking information and further details will be available for the below events on the College website in due course. Please email alumni@stx.ox.ac.uk if you would like to register interest or have any queries.

AUGUST 2018

Friday 31 August
Edinburgh, UK: Informal Evening Drinks with Victoria Cox

SEPTEMBER 2018

Tuesday 4 September
Berlin, Germany: Informal evening gathering with Carole Souter

Friday 14 – Sunday 16 September
Oxford, UK: University of Oxford Meeting Minds Alumni weekend

Saturday 15 September
Oxford, UK: St Cross Alumni Gathering – as part of the Meeting Minds weekend St Cross will host a variety of events

Tuesday 18 September
Singapore: Informal evening gathering with Carole Souter and Victoria Cox

Thursday 20 September
Taipei, Taiwan: Informal evening gathering with Carole Souter and Victoria Cox

Friday 21 – Sunday 23 September
Hong Kong: Informal gatherings in Hong Kong with Carole Souter and Victoria Cox

OCTOBER 2018

Thursday 4 October
London, UK: Informal evening gathering with Carole Souter and the St Cross Alumni team

November 2018

Saturday 20 October
Oxford, UK: Audrey Blackman Society Lunch (by invitation only)

Tuesday 23 October
Beijing, China: Informal gathering with Victoria Cox

Wednesday 24 October
Oxford, UK: St Cross College Senior Members’ Special dinner

Thursday 25 October
Seoul, South Korea: Informal gathering with Victoria Cox

Wednesday 31 October
Tokyo, Japan: Informal gathering with Victoria Cox

DECEMBER 2018

Saturday 1 December
Oxford, UK: St Cross Careers Day

Tuesday 4 December
Oxford, UK: St Cross Carol Service

Wednesday 5 December
NYC, USA: University of Oxford North America Holiday Drinks and Dinner

January 2019

Wednesday 30 January
Oxford, UK: St Cross College Senior Members’ Special Dinner

FEBRUARY 2019

Thursday 7 February
Paris, France: Informal evening gathering with Carole Souter

MARCH 2019

Saturday 2 March
Oxford, UK: ‘Fred’s Lunch’ – talks and lunch for alumni and friends

Friday 22 – Sunday 24 March
Tokyo, Japan: University of Oxford Meeting Minds Alumni Weekend. Carole Souter will host a St Cross event as part of the weekend

APRIL 2019

Sunday 7 April
London, UK: The Boat Race: Join St Cross alumni and friends to enjoy the annual Oxford-Cambridge Boat Race

Wednesday 10 – Saturday 13 April
Boston, USA; Toronto, Canada; Washington DC, USA: To coincide with the University of Oxford in North America events and the visit of the Vice-Chancellor, St Cross will host a variety of events

MAY 2019

Thursday 9 May
Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Informal evening gathering with Carole Souter

Wednesday 15 May
Oxford, UK: St Cross College Senior Members’ Special Dinner

Friday 31 May
Oxford, UK: Donor Celebration Event (by invitation only)

JUNE 2019

Saturday 1 June
Oxford, UK: Summer Eights Celebrations

Wednesday 26 June
Oxford, UK: Encaenia Drinks, Prizegiving and Dinner (by invitation only)

JULY 2019

Saturday 6 July
Oxford, UK: St Cross Archaeology Reunion Day

ST CROSS COLLEGE
61 St Giles
Oxford
OX1 3LZ
+44 (0)1865 278490
www.stx.ox.ac.uk

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