

Small and Slow Solutions: growing a new and fruitful climate in our schools, homes and communities.

Climate Change is at the forefront of most people's minds, particularly parents who fear for their children's future, and most of us don't know what we can do to help make the essential, large scale changes that are needed to avert what the Secretary General of the UN has called "a direct existential threat" (2018). But, here in Powys, a local organisation called Sector 39 is teaching people - young and old - how to change the climate in their own backyard, with low-cost, small-scale solutions that, already spreading throughout the world, are helping people manage the changes in climate, agriculture and food supplies that scientists say are heading our way.

Permaculture is a system of working in harmony with the natural balance to provide or families with the means to grow their own food in small or large spaces under changing climatic conditions, restoring the wildlife that is disappearing, enriching the soil so that it can safely store more carbon, and providing ourselves with food and with important survival skills, as individuals and as groups of people working together to protect and strengthen ourselves.

"One School, One Planet" is an EU and Welsh Government funded project enabling school pupils and the wider community to learn the simple ways of restoring their own natural environment and feeding themselves into the bargain. The project teaches us how to create our own permaculture, a culture of natural growth that is self-sustaining and existing in harmony with nature, where trees, fruit, flowers, herbs and vegetables grow and thrive together in a natural, balanced ecosystem alongside vitally important insects such as bees and animals, providing the materials we need for fencing, water preservation, flood defences, and shelter.

Permaculture is happening world-wide, harmonising with nature, but here in the UK we have come to rely heavily on the products of monoculture and mass production, leading to the use of carcinogenic chemicals and huge costs associated with transport and mass trading. Without shops and supermarkets providing us with food many of us would not know how to survive – and yet the food we are buying is part of the complex network of systems that are, actually, destroying our planet through the use of fossil fuels and mass agriculture practices, a network of systems that is itself endangered by the threat of climate change.

But there is a solution. The solution to this dilemma is in our own back yards, is in our schools, is in the natural need of children to dig their hands into the earth, explore what's under rocks and the many ways to play with a bunch of sticks. The solution is in the answer to the children's shouts for us to stop releasing carbon into the atmosphere, and to find better, more sustainable solutions to the energy demands and the climate crisis brought about by fossil fuels and agribusiness. Permaculture provides a chance to work and play with your children and, at the same time, help them learn how to regenerate their world.

All around the world children are marching to call on us to change the world and save the planet. You can start here by attending Sector 39's launching of the project One School, One Planet on October 11th 2019 at Llanrhaeadr ym Mochnant Community Hall SY10 0JN at 3.30pm and again at 6.30pm. Come along and find out more about how you can get involved in the wealth of opportunities available to everyone of all ages helping us to re-make our world better for the next generation, working alongside children, and growing the chance of giving them a better, more balanced world.

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