

The Stockholm Seminars: Frontiers in Sustainability Science and Policy

This lecture is a part of a seminar series that cover a broad range of perspectives on sustainability issues, particularly focusing on the need for a sound scientific basis for sustainable development policy.

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Urban Origins and Sustainability Strategies

Prof. Charles Redman

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Monday, February 2, 2009, 13.00–14.00

Linné Hall, the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences,
Lilla Frescativägen 4, Stockholm

Are there lessons to be found in the human past that will help ensure the viability and desirability of the future? The key elements of urban sustainability are reviewed and several pivotal challenges identified. Core processes that led to the origin of cities and characterize their long term success are then outlined in relation to their importance in identifying sustainability strategies for today. This leads to a number of seminal questions to be discussed with the audience that are related to the following issues: resilience versus efficiency, excessive information, short-term maximization, broad participation, displaced costs, and normative values.



Charles Redman's interests include human impacts on the environment, sustainable landscapes, rapidly urbanizing regions, urban ecology, societal resilience, environmental education, and public outreach. His work focuses on global change and landscape transition, using both the tools of archaeology to acquire a very long-term perspective, and the cutting-edge techniques of remote sensing to project future scenarios from current patterns. Redman has been committed to interdisciplinary research since, as an archaeology graduate student, he worked in the field with botanists, zoologists, geologists, art historians, and ethnographers.

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