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Energy

Assignment part 2

Overview of organisation

The organisation I would like to change is, if only slightly is Campus life services. Since I'm currently living in Plassey village and have done throughout this year, I've noticed that certain aspects of environmental sustainability could be handled better. For instance, if a certain house is using up more than would be expected for an average house, I believe that certain measures could be made to reduce energy wastage in that household. Or at least that household would be made aware of their energy usage. In my opinion they should be educated on what appliances use the most energy and how to use appliances such as the emersion and the oven more efficiently.

For many this will be their first time living away from home for such a sustained period. They will have no idea about electricity and energy usage. Most haven't a clue how much electricity each appliance uses or, indeed, the cost of electricity. In my opinion, students need to be educated about energy usage, recycling and waste production. If they are, I believe students will go on to live 'greener' after they graduate and even further into the future.

With all the on campus accommodation, Campus life services must be a large user of energy in UL. Reducing energy wastage here would save money, reduce energy wastage in the college as a whole and create a greener campus to live on. Adding incentives like these could be implemented to other aspects of energy wastage; such as carpooling when traveling into town or to Aldi to do shopping. These are only a small number of changes that could be enforced and I will explain many more examples further on in this essay. Some of these ideas could also, if implemented, help The University of Limerick to become carbon neutral.

Role of Change Agent

My role in this project is very simple. I would have to talk with the village manager and also the Campus life services manager and try to discuss ways in which each village could become more eco-friendly. Since I'm studying energy and it's my idea to change this organisation, I would be expected to come up with most of the ideas and convince the managers to implement them. I'd rely on some key skills at this point. Such skills as; communication, knowledge of energy wastage and ways to reduce this people skills would be valuable skills to have.

Good communication skills are a must, I'd have to explain scientific ideas to the village manager and with that help her to understand these ideas. I'd have to give a pitch, more than likely, discussing the advantages of a change like this would have. I'd have to be educated in the day to day running of the organisation to come up with the best ideas of change. Diligence is another skill that would be highly valued. A lot of work would have to be put in in the planning stage to ensure a satisfactory arrangement.

Changes that could be made

As I've said, I believe that each houses' energy usage should be monitored. And the highest offenders should get a small punishment and those who are the most environmentally friendly should get a reward of some sort. An example of a punishment could be something small like 'community service', whereby students from the house with the worst record would be forced to pick up papers

around the UL campus. This would have positive knock-on effect of a cleaner, greener campus. Also as an added incentive, rewards should be in place for the most environmentally friendly house. For example, this house could be let host a party, without the fear of being shut down. Another prize could be a voucher for a free dinner in the Stables. The most energy friendly house throughout the college year could even receive a larger reward.

From my own experiences and from talking to other households in Plassey village, I've realised that students are keen to reduce their energy wastage. They just weren't educated enough to know what were the main energy consumers in the house. Reducing their energy output would have beneficial impact on students.

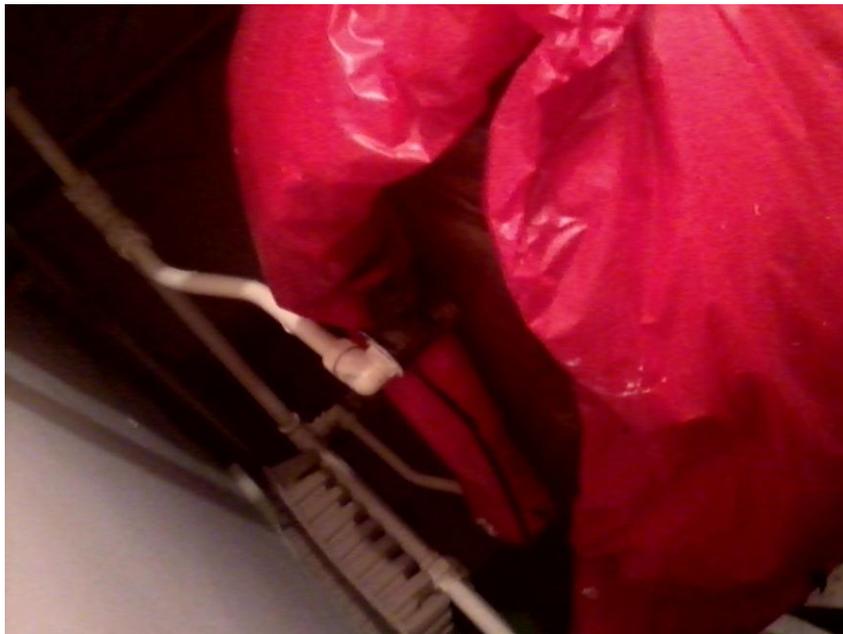
Most students prefer to spend their hard earned cash socialising than paying a very high electricity bill. Students will only need a basic education to live a lot more sustainably. Perhaps, a short educational video could be shown to all the students living on campus during enrolment day. Just to explain how to use each device correctly and which devices are the bigger energy consumers. The cost to implement this idea is minimal; so many people in charge will be very slow to condemn it.

At the moment, in Plassey village we pay for our rent, electricity, bins etc. in 3 separate payments throughout the year. I believe each house should pay its own electricity bill after each month. With that each student would be aware of their electricity costs and will certainly try to reduce that cost so they have extra money for socialising and shopping etc.

Here we could see three aspects of sustainable development vastly improved. The economic improvement is obvious, using each appliance more efficiently and using when only necessary will save

quite a substantial bit of money to a college student. With this, each student should have more spare cash to socialise and enjoy themselves with. This would be a social improvement. Also as students may not be spending as much time on the computer or watching TV, in order to save energy, they may begin to socialise with their neighbours more. The environmental benefits are clear also, using less energy and more efficiently will mean lower emissions and less air pollution.

Another aspect of student living that could see change is the insulation in each house. In my house, for example, the hot-water tank is very poorly insulated. From personal experience, it's very difficult to get the water in the emersion to a temperature whereby even 2 consecutive showers could be had.



Poorly insulated hot-water tank.



The last two pictures are of my own hot-water tank. It's poorly insulated. However, it's not the only one in Plassey. From talking to neighbours and friends around Plassey Village, they're experiencing the same problems. They told me their hot water tank was also poorly insulated and often had very little hot water even with the emersion turned on for considerable length of time.

In my opinion, Campus life services should hire builders to insulate these tanks, to a very high degree of insulation. It would slash energy loss as I've mentioned that the emersion is usually left on for 2-3 hours before someone wants to shower.

I believe that this organisation would be slow to implement this kind of investment as it would mean a large financial loss for them.

When we visited Cloughjorgan earlier this semester, we learned that they heated their water using a district water heating scheme powered by wood pellets. In the future, I think Plassey village should introduce this type of heating system. This type of system has very small energy losses relative to all the energy losses in each water heating system in each individual house. I believe that Campus life

services could afford this type of project if they receive a grant from the government and also invest some of their own profit.

This kind of systematic change would have at first a reasonably large investment, but will begin to pay back in a short amount of time. A financial benefit shared by both the students and the organisation. For example, once all the costs of heating the water are covered the village could charge an extra 15% commission from the residents. The electricity bill for each household would still be significantly less.

Most houses in Plassey and most likely other on-campus villages have hours where their demand for energy increases dramatically. These hours would be between 8 and 10 in the morning and 4 and 7 in the evening, where people have; the heating, emersion and cooker operating. I've heard an idea mentioned in one lecture this year that this need for extra energy at these specific times leads to more generators having to be turned on. Unfortunately, this greatly increases the cost of electricity. However, it also results in a wastage of energy as relatively little power from this extra generator is actually used.

This problem could be solved by allowing different houses different time slots to cook etc. Although it would be difficult to implement and would certainly be met with opposition from the residents. The hours mention are the hours when people are getting up/ finished college. The students will be hungry and will want to eat their evening meals.

The solution? Offer the students some sort of incentive. Maybe vouchers for meals at The Stables Club to each person not in the 4-7 times slot. I'm sure a deal could be done with the Stables as they would receive a lot more business out of this project.

The benefits of such a project are obvious. Since people wouldn't be paying for electricity at the inflated price between the times mentioned, a significant amount of money would be saved in the course of a college year.

Recycling is also a big issue in Plassey. From what I can tell, the majority of houses don't bother recycling. It's simply too much effort separating the different colour glass. Plassey Village could offer incentives to recycle and have some sort of mild punishments such as the previously mentioned, community service. An incentive could be free tickets to the headlining act during rag week etc.

Barriers and Some Solutions

Of course I would also meet some barriers in trying to get approval for some of these projects. Simply the cost of each project will discourage the management to apply these changes. For example, the solution for getting more houses to cook and heat their water at different times to reduce energy usage would be very costly. Perhaps another solution could be agreed to, maybe just forcing people to use energy at different times. However, the students will try to rebel and disagree with this kind of radical change. I'm sure if some residents and the manager sat together to discuss these problems that each party could meet half way on. In my opinion the residents should be made aware or consulted on every decision as they are a major shareholder.

As I've said the cost of many of these projects will be considerable. Would Plassey Village be willing to risk so much money on risky projects? Students may not want to comply with many of the proposed changes. Such as community service for the house who have the highest energy usage. Many students wouldn't want to spend their free time picking up rubbish around campus, and will

simply refuse to. Would the management be willing to put up with the extra hassle?

However, A higher organisation, for example the University of Limerick itself, could intervene and help Plassey village fund some of these projects and also provide some extra help in implementing some of the changes that the students may not like doing. It's in U.L's best interest to make the on campus accommodation more environmentally friendly if it ever wants to become carbon neutral.

Perhaps if these rules were written in the lease that each resident has to sign at the beginning of the first semester and there are harsher punishments for those who constantly refuse to comply.

Being a change Agent

I'd imagine that being a change Agent is a difficult job and comes with a lot of stress and strain. One has to recommend strategies and plans for an organisation. The change agent would be under pressure as if these projects fail to meet the standards or targets were set, the change agent will be fired. This is why the change agent has to be highly educated and experienced.

Good social skills are vital for a change agent as one has to communicate with people who are both for and against plans or projects and has to get both to agree to common ground. The Change Agent may also be powerful as they advise organisations; large and small on what are the best options to take when it comes to sustainability. These changes may affect a wide group of people, all of the organisations shareholders for example. This is why the change agent must be careful of any recommendation they make as if they've been misinformed about some projects, they could have a disastrous impact on many people's lives.

