

TITLE:

Embedding Environmental Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship ESDGC across the curriculum at Coleg Ceredigion



SUMMARY

An increasing expectation that educational institutions should raise awareness of environmental considerations with their students led Coleg Ceredigion to make a commitment to embed Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship across its curriculum in 2003. As a small, rural college, it did not have the expertise or capacity to employ someone dedicated to the subject, so developed partnerships to help it progress.

INSTITUTION PROFILE

700 full time learners
A small rural General FE college with 2 sites, 40 miles apart – one at Aberystwyth, one at Cardigan
8 buildings circa 8000m²

EAUC COMMENT

This case study demonstrates how a small institution, without the specialist knowledge needed, can use the skills of other organisations and initiatives to integrate sustainability into college practices.

THE PROBLEM

Many staff at Coleg Ceredigion were committed to Sustainable Development (SD) and Global Citizenship (GC) and included these topics in their lessons. However, many lacked expertise on how to deliver the information in a way that would be meaningful to the students. Management agreed staff would be better supported if the college could partner other organisations that could advise on identifying and integrating the SDGC message within the curriculum.

PROJECT PARTNERS

Ymlaen Ceredigion

THE APPROACH

Coleg Ceredigion approached a local organisation which was familiar with the rural environment of the college and was already engaged with SDGC related organisations regionally and nationally across Wales. Ymlaen Ceredigion is a voluntary organisation which supports communities to fulfil their social, economical and environmental needs. Ymlaen Ceredigion was able to access funding from sources not available to the college unless it worked in partnership, such as from the Welsh Assembly.

Working together, Ymlaen Ceredigion and Coleg Ceredigion submitted a proposal to the Welsh Assembly to enable the Ymlaen Ceredigion Education Officer to work on a consultative basis within the college delivering SDGC sessions to staff and learners at the college's Cardigan campus. Further funding was secured from the Department for International Development to appoint a second Education Officer to work at the Aberystwyth campus

This work was enhanced by the development of subject-specific messages which students could relate to their study areas. Business support staff were also given training, enabling the development of a "whole institution" ethos.

Classroom sessions were supplemented with other projects and visits such as:

- Visit to the Centre for Alternative Technology
- Creation of a solar kiln by students for students' use
- An interactive performing arts Theatre in Education project focused on poverty and moral responsibility taking sustainable development and Global Citizenship message to schools
- A recycled fashion project with designs sold for charity

The work is evaluated through the college's self assessment and internal inspection process. This includes evaluation of lecturers' lesson plans and learning programmes to evaluate the way in which they have woven the SDGC message into their planning. Every lecturer is observed and their lessons analysed to see how they are embedding the message into their mainstream delivery and challenging the perceptions of learners.

GOALS

- To integrate Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship into all aspects of the college's business, to ensure that its activities contribute to the successful development of society whilst considering the effect on the environment both locally, nationally and globally
- To specifically integrate the concept of SDGC into all areas of learning in the college
- To ensure lecturers and business support staff are regularly trained, and that they understand how they can become aware of their own environmental responsibility. Lecturers must be able to pass on that understanding to learners in the context of their subject(s) and business support staff able to integrate that understanding into their working practice by, for example, ensuring sustainable procurement is implemented.

OBSTACLES AND SOLUTIONS

Obstacle

- Understanding the intricacies and sensitivities of managing partnership working
- Lack of funding for equipment
- Lack of staff enthusiasm
- Embedding processes to ensure the college is able to sustain the activity once funding has ended
- Ensuring a fit between SDGC matters related to the curriculum and those related to the institution's legislative and environmental obligations

Solution

- Set clear boundaries at the outset so that all parties involved are aware of their roles
- Ensure that the SDGC message is interwoven into the day to day learning activity of students, so that they are able to see the messages in context
- Ensure that the messages you want lecturers and business support staff to pass on are valuable and meaningful to them, so they can see that by transmitting the messages they are making a difference
- Integrate the Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship message into all aspects of the college's work so that it becomes the norm. By becoming integral to mainstream activity, the activity requires less additional funding and also becomes part of staff and students' day to day thought processes. For example when planning a lesson in Wood Trades, a lecturer would automatically consider talking to students about sustainable forestation, wood sources, cutting to minimise off cuts, recycling off cuts and purchasing from an ethical local supplier to reduce the carbon footprint. A member of staff in Administration would think about purchasing recycled paper, organic inks and question the appropriateness of a letter rather than e mail
- A whole-college approach is needed. Ensure staff from the curriculum and estates teams work together so the college can fulfil its legal and environmental obligations while embedding SDGC across the college

PERFORMANCE AND RESULTS

Bedford College was awarded Centre of Vocational Excellence Status in January 2006. Bedford has a whole-college approach to sustainability. This includes the development and implementation of a Sustainability Policy and cross-college workgroups focusing on estates, curriculum and community initiatives.

Since 2005 the college has trained hundreds of plumbers and electricians in installing photovoltaic and solar thermal systems. Hundreds more have studied sustainable development and environmental awareness courses and worked on projects relating to energy and sustainability.

The college won the 2007-2008 HEEPI Green Gown Award in recognition for its contribution to sustainability training.

PERFORMANCE AND RESULTS

- Around 700 students each year have specific lessons in SDGC and all learners have taken courses with it integrated into the standard curriculum
- Over 25 individual curriculum-based projects have been undertaken – e.g. the use of recycled materials in Furniture Making and Fashion Design
- A recycling scheme has been established at both campuses, one of which has contributed to learners achieving their Duke of Edinburgh Award
- The college has now established formal committee structures to develop and monitor SDGC and a policy to drive SDGC forward in the coming years.
- In 2008 the Theatre in Education Performing Arts Project won an IMPETUS award from the Institute for Global Ethics.
- Excellent links have been established both with Ymlaen Ceredigion and other organisations as a result of the partnership working. This has enabled lecturers to develop their own initiatives within their specialist areas.
- The college received the Fforwm Award for Sustainability in 2006 and is now working towards the achievement of the Green Dragon Award.

LESSONS LEARNT

- It takes time to embed practises so they become the norm. This is not something which can be rushed
- If you want people to be ambassadors, work ESDGC into their chosen subjects so it is relevant and interesting. Understanding it in this way means they are most likely to continue to understand the importance of the message and to share that message with those around them
- Ensure you have a clear plan for how the initiative can continue once any external funding has finished



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