
Good practice in Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in the UK: Case Studies

March 2017

Case Study

1



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

United Kingdom
National Commission for UNESCO

Published by the UK National Commission for UNESCO
March 2017

UK National Commission for UNESCO Secretariat
3 Whitehall Court
London SW1A 2EL
United Kingdom

+44 (0) 20 7766 3491
www.unesco.org.uk

Any part of this publication may be reproduced without
permission but with acknowledgement.

Designed by Soapbox, www.soapbox.co.uk
Typeset by Cambridge Publishing Management Limited, www.cambridgepm.co.uk

Copies: For additional copies, contact the UK National
Commission Secretariat
Copyright © UK National Commission for UNESCO 2017

ISSN 2050-8212 (Print)

1 / Introduction

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is described by UNESCO as enabling us to address present and future global challenges and create more sustainable and resilient societies by changing the way we think and act. This requires quality education and learning for sustainable development at all levels and in all social contexts.¹

This report provides a series of case studies from across the UK that illustrates how ESD has been used to influence the people and communities involved. The studies are drawn from formal education, community engagement and the private sector.

Each case study provides a brief description of the activity and, where possible, draws lessons and identifies opportunities for scaling up the approach to a regional or national level.

1 Education for Sustainable Development.

2 / Background

In November 2014, UNESCO launched the Global Action Programme (GAP) on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)². The GAP follows the UN Decade on ESD and calls on Member States to:

Generate and scale up action in all levels and areas of education and learning to accelerate progress towards sustainable development.

The Global Action Programme seeks to:

- Reorient education and learning so that everyone has the opportunity to acquire the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that empower them to contribute to sustainable development;
- Strengthen education and learning in all agendas, programmes and activities that promote sustainable development.³

In May 2016, government Ministers at the UN Environment Assembly endorsed the GAP with a Resolution calling for effective cooperation between the Environment Programme, UNESCO and other UN bodies to help ensure the GAP is effectively delivered.⁴

ESD has also been included as a target in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, and is central to delivering many of the other 168 targets.

2 Aichi-Nagoya Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development. November 2014.

3 37 C/57: Proposal for a Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development as Follow-up to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) after 2014. November 2013.

4 List of Resolutions adopted at UNEA-2. May 2016.

SDG Target 4.7: By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.

This policy brief seeks to showcase good practice in ESD from across the UK. The case studies are offered as examples to the UNESCO Secretariat, other Member States and ESD practitioners of approaches to ESD which can be applied in different educational and social contexts.

3 / The Case Studies

The selected case studies cover a wide range of approaches to Education for Sustainable Development in a range of contexts:

- **Case Study 1** Engaging schools in sustainability: Eco-Schools, England
- **Case Study 2** Learning for sustainability and teacher training: The General Teaching Council for Scotland's professional standards
- **Case Study 3** Students as change agents: National Union of Students UK
- **Case Study 4** Institutional change programmes in higher education: the UK's Green Academy change programme
- **Case Study 5** International education through distance learning: the post-graduate Education for Sustainability programme at London South Bank University
- **Case Study 6** Disadvantage and ESD: Down to Earth Project in Wales; St James's Community Forum, Belfast
- **Case Study 7** Education business partnership and professional practice: Bulmer Foundation and Heineken
- **Case Study 8** Aligning Welsh business and sustainability: Cynnal Cymru-Sustain Wales

Some general themes emerging from these case studies:

- ESD requires long-term commitment. Change can be slow and programmes may need time to develop before their impact can be assessed.

- There is grassroots enthusiasm for ESD among many of the institutions, companies and communities involved. Schools, higher education institutions, local community groups and businesses can all engage in successful ESD programmes, often driven by people on the ground.
- ESD can play a key role in the delivery of many of the new SDGs. ESD is a tool for delivering practical change.
- ESD can take many forms, from a community-led regeneration project in a deprived area to a master's degree for future world leaders. This represents both a challenge and an opportunity for policy-makers seeking to develop coherent and effective ESD strategies.
- Changes in government priorities and support can have a significant effect on the success or otherwise of ESD programmes.
- ESD activities lend themselves to various forms of scaling up – some could be adopted and promoted at a national level, others could be replicated in different local communities.

Case Study 1 / Engaging schools in sustainability: Eco-Schools, England

Introduction

The Eco-Schools International Programme was launched in 1994 by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) in response to the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development. Eco-Schools now exist in 53 countries around the world, involving more than 40,000 schools worldwide. The Programme is managed by the NGO *Keep Britain Tidy*.

England has the most Eco-Schools in the world: more than 70% of all schools in England are registered with the programme and just under half have achieved the initial 'Bronze Award'. The programme was initially fully-funded by UK government and from March 2015 completed its transition to having no state support. Funding now comes from a variety of sources including school

assessment fees, paid-for training and commercial partnerships including a recent donation from a supermarket chain linked to the introduction of a 5p carrier bag charge.

How the scheme works

Participating schools must follow the Programme's "seven steps", beginning with registration and the formation of an Eco-Committee that is led by school children. The school works to embed good practice across nine themes such as Biodiversity, Water and Global Citizenship. As their work across the nine themes progresses, schools are awarded bronze, silver and ultimately Green Flag status.

An Eco-Schools "road show" introduces schools to the Programme's seven steps process. Schools that are interested in participating in the scheme are required to identify the top three attributes they think their pupils will develop through their involvement with the programme and how they, as educators, can contribute. The scheme acts as a learning programme for teachers and students and is not simply a tool for environmental management.

Impact

- In 2013, an independent evaluation of the programme "found evidence of positive impacts on wellbeing, behaviour, motivation and cognitive skills that benefit the whole school community."
- All 12,144 participating schools that achieved at least the Bronze Award by 2015 have an Eco-Committee. This means that an estimated 120,000 children in England (about 12% of all the school children in England aged between five and eighteen) are members of some form of Eco-Committee.
- Schools judged to be 'good' (high performing) under the independent schools inspection system appear to make up a high proportion of Eco-Schools. However, there has not been any research to explore the strength of this correlation or demonstrate causality between these variables.

There has been a slight reduction in the number of schools participating since the end of the Sustainable Schools initiative in 2010 and many schools and teachers have reported a desire to continue the initiative.

Conclusion

The Eco-Schools Programme is popular amongst schools in England. The take-up is strong and the incentivised system of rewards effective within the school structure. Local authority backing may contribute to the effectiveness of these types of programmes. The increased freedom in the new National Curriculum may work in favour of Eco-Schools, allowing schools to build the scheme in to their work. Introducing a financial cost to schools for participating in the programme may inhibit take-up of this type of scheme.

An ethnographic case study of an Eco-Committee that ran as an after-school club in a primary school revealed the potential for developing critical thinking, confidence, communication skills including digital and verbal skills, questioning authority and team work. A particularly striking feature of this club and others that were observed during this study is the informal set-up contextualized within the formal setting of the classroom. This set-up appears to disrupt the normal teacher-pupil hierarchy and may contribute to its potential for developing a wide range of attributes, according to context. This study highlights the role that such clubs play in the way that children develop as active citizens, and suggests that continuing support for programmes like Eco-Schools is important as they provide (both intentionally and unintentionally) opportunities for children learning to live sustainably as global citizens.

Further reading

1. Eco-Schools: <http://www.eco-schools.org.uk>
2. The 2013 Evaluation Report: http://www.eco-schools.org.uk/AssetLibraryFiles/EcoSchools_Report_2013_1183.pdf

Case Study 2 / Learning for sustainability and teacher training: The General Teaching Council for Scotland's professional standards

Introduction

In 2013, the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) launched its revised Professional Standards which apply to all registered teachers in Scotland. The new standards embedded Learning for Sustainability in the criteria that all registered teachers and education professionals are expected to demonstrate throughout their careers.

The new standards were launched following the decision by the Scottish Government in 2012 to implement the recommendations of the 'Learning for Sustainability Ministerial Advisory Report' relating to the whole school experience of 3-18 year-olds. 'Learning for Sustainability' (LFS) in Scotland encompasses ESD, Global Citizenship and elements of Outdoor Learning. It includes four key commitments:

1. All learners should have an entitlement to Learning for Sustainability
2. Every practitioner, school and education leader should demonstrate Learning for Sustainability in their practice
3. Every school should have a whole school approach to Learning for Sustainability that is robust, demonstrable, evaluated and supported by leadership at all levels
4. School buildings, grounds and policies should support Learning for Sustainability

The formal process of embedding these recommendations continued until March 2016.

This suite of standards provides a framework for all teachers to examine, inform and continually develop their thinking and practice throughout their

professional career. The standards relate to “registration”, “career-long professional learning” and “leadership and management”. LfS is embedded throughout the Professional Values and Standards which all registered teachers/education professionals are expected to demonstrate in their practice irrespective of career stage.

Impact

- The integration of LfS into national education policy led to systemic change in Scotland. Previously LfS was often the work of committed individuals in schools or universities. There is now an obligation on every Local Authority, Teacher Education Provider, school and individual teacher to demonstrate LfS in their relevant educational contexts and it is a significant feature of the new general evaluation framework for schools *How Good is Our School?*⁵
- Teacher Education Programmes are accredited by the GTCS and must reflect the values and expectations within the Professional Standards Framework. An “audit tool” to ensure LfS features prominently, is currently being developed by the GTCS and Scotland’s UN Centre for ESD.

Conclusion

Incorporating ESD into the professional requirements of teachers has been very effective in raising the importance and profile of ESD. However, this is a developmental process and it will take time for the full impact of these recent changes to become fully evident.

Learning for Sustainability Ministerial Implementation Group

Scottish Ministers established a Ministerial LfS Implementation Group, working from September 2013 - March 2016. This brought together representatives of all the key educational bodies in Scotland. Through a mix of work within the group and by the agencies themselves, many

5 How good is our school? 4th Edition. August 2016.

aspects of the LfS implementation commitments have been fully or partially met. Embedding the four LfS principles into the professional expectations of teachers has been particularly effective. The input provided by Education Scotland and the United Nations University Regional Centre of Expertise in ESD for Scotland has been central to the process.

Further Reading

1. Learning for Sustainability (LfS) Ministerial Advisory Report 2012: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/Schools/curriculum/ACE/LearningforSustainability>
2. General Teaching Council for Scotland: www.gtcs.org.uk
3. Education for Sustainable Development Policy in the United Kingdom: Current Status, Best Practice, and Opportunities for the Future: <http://www.unesco.org.uk/publication/policy-brief-9-education-for-sustainable-development-esd-in-the-uk-current-status-best-practice-and-opportunities-for-the-future/>
4. British Council Connecting Classrooms and LfS: Professional development for Scottish teachers from 2015 to 2018: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/education/professional-development/connecting-classrooms-learning-and-sustainability>
5. Scotland's United Nations Recognised Centre of Expertise in ESD: <http://learningforsustainabilityscotland.org/>
6. Vision 2030+: Concluding Report of the LfS National Implementation Group: <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/res1-vision-2030.pdf>

Case Study 3 / Students as change agents: National Union of Students UK

Introduction

The National Union of Students (NUS) is a confederation of around 600 institution-based students' unions in the UK, with devolved sub-groups in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. It provides a national voice for students in UK universities and colleges, and helps students' unions to work effectively at improving the experience of all students. The charitable arm of NUS, NUS Charitable Services, seeks to drive improvement within students' unions, focussing on issues such as equality and diversity, strategic development, and sustainability. The NUS Department for Sustainability works on behaviour change, educational and institutional development programmes within and across universities and colleges.

Activities

Over time, behaviour-change activities have evolved into more ambitious institution-wide and national activities. Some of these activities include:

Green Impact: begun 10 years ago, this initiative seeks to help students' unions to 'green' their campuses, curriculums and communities. The NUS project team deliver bespoke workshops and training to equip and inspire students, students' union officers, staff, academics and volunteers to make their workplace 'greener' while generating economic savings and social benefits. 47 universities and colleges and 100 community organisations have become involved including local authorities, hospitals, businesses and GP surgeries. The scheme was awarded the UNESCO-Japan Prize in Education for Sustainable Development in 2016.

Dissertations for Good: a matching service between academics and social causes to help generate social value from student research. This was piloted in 2014 and involved 3 new universities.

Responsible Futures: 20 universities are involved in this externally-assessed accreditation mark to assist institutions in helping students to gain the skills and experience they need to thrive in a global economy at a time of climate change.

Snap it Off!: empowers students to send in photographs of energy wastage, supporting energy managers to cut electricity costs. 650 photos were received in 2014.

Student Eats: 35 campuses are experimenting with student-led food production.

Student Switch Off: 44 UK and 7 international universities (150,000 students) are involved in an inter-dormitory energy-saving competition giving students a chance to win prizes. The competition saves an estimated 1,300 tonnes of carbon a year.

The Black Out: 10 universities are involved in this project to encourage students and staff to switch off departmental equipment over the weekend.

NUS is now building on this solid base of activity by organising annual Student Sustainability Summits, and international collaboration through Students Organizing for Sustainability. This is augmented by divestment campaigns and working on COP21 preparation campaigns.

Impact

- These activities are well-received by students and resulted in tangible savings in materials, fuel and carbon emissions, helping universities and colleges work towards their ambitious targets.
- Although difficult to quantify, many students have developed practical skills and have had their awareness raised and motivation enhanced in relation to climate change and other pressing issues.
- A wide range of academics within institutions have re-focussed their teaching programmes to address sustainability.

- The impact has been much stronger within universities than in vocational colleges.

Conclusion

The long-term work to seek the opinion of students has been crucial. These surveys have helped to establish that UK students want their institutions to take sustainable development seriously, to ensure that what they are taught has an appropriate sustainability focus and that sustainability is infused within established programmes, rather than presented in free-standing units or courses.

The key to the effectiveness of this work is leadership. This led to the manager of the programme winning the Inspiring Leader award in The Guardian newspaper's 2014 University Awards scheme. The citation for the manager's nomination said:

His energetic, focused, and incisive leadership has had a significant impact on the involvement of students in university efforts to address sustainability...he champions a vision of students leaving tertiary education committed to resolving social and environmental issues through what they do in their lives.

Further Reading

1. NUS: www.nus.org.uk/en/who-we-are
2. NUS Sustainability: www.nus.org.uk/sustainability
3. NUS Sustainability Programmes: <http://sustainability.unioncloud.org/our-works>
4. HEA / NUS / Change Agents 2015 Student Survey:
<https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resource/student-attitudes-towards-and-skills-sustainable-development-2015>

5. Students Organizing for Sustainability: www.sos-alliance.world
6. The Guardian University Awards Scheme: <https://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/competition/2014/jan/14/higher-education-inspiring-leader-vote>

Case Study 4 / Institutional change programmes in higher education: the UK's Green Academy change programme

Introduction

Green Academy is an institutional change programme initiated by the UK's Higher Education Academy (HEA). It is a voluntary scheme, seeking to help Higher Education institutions take a holistic approach to sustainable development by embedding ESD within campus, curriculum, community and culture.

Seven institutions took part in the pilot scheme in 2011. They were asked to: identify what they hoped to achieve from taking part in the Academy; appoint a project team of 5 people; and join a two-day residential workshop to develop a business case.

The Green Academy identified a number of challenges facing the Higher Education Sector in relation to the implementation of ESD and sought to help institutions address these, as well as their own individual challenges.

Impact

In 2012, the impact of the pilot Green Academy programme was evaluated. The evaluation included on-site visits and interviews with students and staff. It sought to assess:

- the impact on institutional practice in teaching and learning and curriculum review and development;
- impact on wider institutional policy;

- effectiveness of the programme in contributing to wider staff participation in the change programme.

The evaluation took account of the fact that the seven participating institutions were at different starting points in their sustainability policies and practices. It sought to provide an analysis of the pilot which could inform future development of the Green Academy change programme.

It identified a number of themes to help measure the impact of the Green Academy change programme on the implementation of ESD within the institution. These included management, curriculum, teaching, learning, decision-making, employment and careers advice and specific projects.

The evaluation concluded that overall the impact of the Green Academy had been positive. The institutions involved found that being part of the programme galvanized their work on ESD – they were able to develop their sustainability agendas more quickly, on a broader front, in different ways and at bigger scales than would otherwise have been possible.

The participating teams focussed their work on: changing institutional strategies; embedding sustainability into the curriculum; developing the institutional narrative; and engaging management and students.

The institutions demonstrated significant progress across all areas. One particular benefit of the Green Academy pilot was to help provide a more cohesive approach to ESD which had previously been fragmented. The teams identified ways to engage disciplines which had not previously placed sustainability high on their agenda.

Conclusion

The Green Academy pilot provided a solid basis on which further progress could be made, but familiar obstacles of insufficient time and resources and discipline silos remain a barrier to such a scheme achieving its full potential. University teams would benefit from support with areas such as leadership, mapping, target-setting and monitoring.

One institution set a specific compulsory target for every faculty in relation to the curriculum presented to students. The majority went for a voluntary approach – working with departments to demonstrate sustainability's relevance to each discipline.

The teams also discovered the importance of using the most effective methods of communicating the sustainability message including: engaging with key committee, holding profile-raising events, and having presentations and discussions with faculties.

Further Reading

1. Higher Education Academy Green Academy: http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/projects/detail/esd/esd_green_academy
2. Evaluation of the impact of the Green Academy programme and Case Studies: <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/esd/Green-Academy-Evaluation-Case-studies.pdf>
3. Embedding Sustainability Into the Higher Education Curriculum: Lessons from the UK's Green Academy Change Programme: <http://sciforum.net/conference/wsf-4/paper/2459>

Case Study 5 / International education through distance learning: the post-graduate Education for Sustainability programme at London South Bank University

Introduction

This post-graduate Education for Sustainability programme was established in 2004 by a consortium of NGOs and academics in response to the Rio Earth Summit's calls for education to play a key role in sustainable development. With funding from the EU and WWF-UK, the programme was developed as

a distance-learning course to enable the widest possible access for educators from all global regions. It is designed to be relevant to real world applications and to encourage active engagement with the business, public and not-for-profit sectors.

The programme offers courses that cover the theory and practice of Education for Sustainability. It has provided capacity building for educators from NGOs, environmental journalism and conservation organisations from over 40 countries and contributed to policy and practice, for example, in case studies for the United Nations Environment Programme.

Impact

- Regular independent reviews of the programme have rated it as highly effective in promoting transformative learning and critical thinking and enabling participants to become effective agents for change.
- Participants from the Commonwealth African Scholarship have gone on to hold key positions of influence in education ministries, universities, news media, African RCEs and environmental NGOs. This student group has formed a strong learning network of practice in ESD across the whole African region, including Nigeria, Zambia, Kenya and the Seychelles.
- ESD academics are widely published and engage in national and international research projects for government departments, multi-lateral bodies such as UNESCO and the EU, and international NGOs.
- The programme has contributed to discussions on embedding ESD within the Higher Education curriculum.

ESD academics are also practitioners and have strong links with a number of key environmental and development NGOs.

Conclusion

The programme has been successful at attracting a wide range of participants from across the globe, many of whom have gone on to act as change agents within their subsequent institutions or employers. The provision of substantial external funding has been a significant factor in increasing the reach and impact of the programme.

Further Reading

1. Impact of the Education for Sustainability Master's Programme: Perceptions on Professional Development of African Alumni from London South Bank University: <https://www.lap-publishing.com/catalog/details/store/ru/book/978-3-659-30092-9/impact-of-the-education-for-sustainability-master-s-programme>

Case Study 6.1 / Disadvantage and ESD: Down to Earth Project in Wales

Introduction

Down to Earth (DTE) is a not-for-profit organisation in the Swansea area created to explore hands-on, practical ways of using sustainability education to engage with disadvantaged and marginalised people. Programmes to engage people who are not in mainstream education or employment in ESD are rare. However, such communities are often more exposed to risks relating to lack of sustainability such as air pollution, poor nutrition and poor housing.

DTE provides opportunities for people to engage in ESD, in order to improve their life chances. The idea is to provide life-changing experiences through improving quality of life and tackling poverty, improving communities with inspiring, sustainable infrastructure and increasing community cohesion and social inclusion.

Activities

The people DTE works with build cutting-edge training venues which then become the venues for future participants. The groups learn to merge traditional and sustainable construction and create sustainable food growing areas and outdoor learning spaces. This action-orientated approach helps to boost self-esteem by developing skills and a sense of achievement.

Impact

DTE puts disadvantaged learners into a learning environment where they experience sustainability. External evaluations of the project have recorded significant improvements to the lives of the participants in the project. These include:

- Increased self-esteem.
- Improved social interaction.
- Increased understanding of sustainable development.

"The sense of support and camaraderie was like being wrapped in a warm blanket. That feeling of security and safety enabled me to take initial tentative steps back into the world and within such a short time without my realising I found myself taking huge strides."

- DTE participant who had a brain injury

Case Study 6.2 / Disadvantage and ESD: St James's Community Forum, Belfast

Introduction

St James's Community Forum is a community-led initiative which provides practical support for local residents and promotes tolerance and community

cohesion. It was established twenty years ago in an area of high unemployment and deprivation, beginning with the renovation of a derelict building. The building was used as a base to bring the community together and act as a hub for community activities.

Activities

Practical activities include parent and toddler groups, after school care and access to computers. Children are also exposed to life-enhancing visits to museums and theatres. Young people are actively involved in deciding the direction of the Forum and offered a range of courses to help build skills and self-esteem. An urban farm was recently introduced, providing access to animals and the only green space in the area.

Impact

Since its inception, many young people and adults have come through the doors of the renovated building, contributing and learning to live more sustainably.

Having emerged from extensive conflict, the ethos of the Forum is to promote an open door policy and provide a safe space free of sectarianism, hate and fear. The Forum aims to show children and young people an alternative way of life, using learning and experiences to help leave behind old prejudices.

Conclusion

ESD can be used to help vulnerable and marginalised communities. It does not have to be something which is 'taught' but can be experienced practically to demonstrate and provide a way out of poverty, build bridges and promote community cohesion.

Further Reading

1. Down to Earth Project: <http://www.downtoearthproject.org.uk>

Case Study 7 / Education business partnership and professional practice: Sustainable Development Advocacy

Introduction

The Bulmer Foundation's Master's Degree in Sustainable Development Advocacy (MA SDA) is a career-focused course that trains graduates to influence their employer to adopt more sustainable practices. The Masters has involved hundreds of students from a wide spectrum of careers in local government, businesses and the professions. The Bulmer Foundation was established as an independent charity in 2001 with financial support from the Herefordshire cider makers H P Bulmer Ltd. The remit of the charity is to educate and enable those who aspire to demonstrate sustainable development. The Foundation currently receives part of its core funding from the drinks company Heineken UK. It faces a number of key sustainability issues such as the supply of water, sourcing its ingredients sustainably and reducing its carbon footprint.

The MA SDA provides academic training and professional experiential learning. Graduates from the programme become knowledgeable critical thinkers and sustainability practitioners with professional experience of leading real life projects for a range of clients.

Since its inception in 2003, the course has produced sustainability professionals who have progressed to successful careers, promoting sustainable development across all sectors.

Impact

- Students gain real world professional experience, relevant skills and increased confidence.
- The sponsoring businesses benefit from an enhanced sustainability reputation, bespoke sustainability projects and strategies and increased sustainability skills in their workforce.

Conclusion

Private sector partnerships can provide an effective route to delivering sustainable development. Participants gain valuable insight into how corporations might approach sustainable development. A partnership with one company can be used to promote the credibility of “sustainability is good business” to other businesses and organisations in other sectors.

A local vegetable box company benefitted from being involved in the MA SDA by gaining a better understanding of the vegetable box market, increasing its network of suppliers, raising its profile and becoming more economically sustainable. Heineken UK has benefitted from research into sustainability interventions which can be developed across production sites, a bespoke report showcasing its contributions to sustainable development and the opportunity to reflect and plan how to take the sustainability agenda forward. The students involved in these studies gained market research, project management and business skills and had the experience of working in a successful corporate marketing team.

Further Reading

1. Sustainable Development Advocacy (Professional Practice) MA:
<http://www.worcester.ac.uk/journey/sustainable-development-advocacy-professional-practice-ma.html>

Case Study 8 / Aligning Welsh business and sustainability: Cynnal Cymru-Sustain Wales

Introduction

Cynnal Cymru-Sustain Wales was established in 2002 to support the Welsh Government's statutory, constitutional commitment to sustainable development. From 2013 to 2016, the Welsh Government contracted *Cynnal*

Cymru-Sustain Wales to manage the Sustainable Development Charter – the means by which organisations in Wales voluntarily committed to the principles of sustainable development.

Cynnal Cymru-Sustain Wales facilitates shared learning through peer networks. It runs annual events which bring practitioners together to explore issues and challenges and provides training and consultancy to help professionals and organisations embed systems into their strategy and operations. The Charter was run as an extension of these activities.

A Welsh Context for ESD

The Well-being of Future Generations (WFG) Act requires 44 public bodies to pursue a set of seven national Well-being Goals based on the principle of sustainable development. *Cynnal Cymru-Sustain Wales* provided seminars and workshops to help train professionals and organisations in how to interpret and embed the Goals. This included:

- Seminars for Corporate Planners, Procurement Managers and Facilities Managers which used scenarios to enable critical analysis on the potential impact of the WFG Act.
- A Continuing Professional Development certified training module for businesses and third sector organisations.
- A level 4, 200 credit, work-based module accredited by Cardiff Metropolitan University that explored strategic approaches to behaviour change, materiality, policy and integrated reporting within the context of the WFG Act.
- Seminars for publicly-subsidised arts organisations on how to use industry-specific tools to generate strategy and reports that provide evidence on contribution to the Goals.

Impact

These activities have increased knowledge and understanding of the Act and prompted businesses and third sector groups to align their strategies and values to those of the WFG Act. This was designed to ensure coherence between public policy and practice, commercial business and citizen-led actions. This will help to enable the alignment of data across sectors to monitor progress towards the national goals via a set of 'National Indicators'. These will be population-level indicators, not KPIs for organisations which are relevant and engaging for citizens.

A number of organisations re-aligned their strategies so that their work plans could be cross-referenced to the Well-being Goals. By doing this, organisations are reporting not just on their own business interests but on their contribution to national goals. As a result, there is evidence that businesses in Wales are beginning to be mindful of how their pursuit of profit contributes to wider well-being.

There is a growing demand for ESD and work-based learning in Wales in recognition of the strategic intention and potential of the WFG Act. As managers and leaders develop their understanding of sustainable development they are increasingly commissioning training for their employees.

Conclusion

Legislating for Sustainable Development demonstrates a strong commitment by the Welsh Government to the principle and a requirement for action on the part of public bodies. As this example demonstrates, legislative requirements need to be accompanied by education and training to ensure that there is real change in understanding and practice on the ground, both in public and private sector bodies.

A civil engineering firm used the assignments of the level 4 module to align its annual sustainability report to the Well-being Goals. Many of its clients are public bodies. It can now demonstrate how each contract contributes to the client's statutory sustainable development obligations.

Further Reading

1. Cynnal Cymru: <http://www.cynnalcymru.com/training/>
2. WFG Act: <http://thewaleswewant.co.uk/sites/default/files/Guide%20to%20the%20WFGAct.pdf>
3. WFG Act: <https://youtu.be/rFeOYlxJbmw>

4 / Summary of Case Study Themes

- ESD requires long-term commitment. Change can be slow and programmes may need time to develop before their impact can be assessed.
- There is grassroots enthusiasm for ESD among many of the institutions, companies and communities involved. Schools, higher education institutions, local community groups and businesses can all engage in successful ESD programmes, often driven by people on the ground.
- ESD can play a key role in the delivery of many of the new SDGs. ESD is a tool for delivering practical change.
- ESD can take many forms, from a community-led regeneration project in a deprived area to a master's degree for future world leaders. This represents both a challenge and an opportunity for policy-makers seeking to develop coherent and effective ESD strategies.
- Changes in government priorities and support can have a significant effect on the success or otherwise of ESD programmes.
- ESD activities lend themselves to various forms of scaling up – some could be adopted and promoted at a national level, others could be replicated in different local communities.

5 / References

1. UNESCO, Education for Sustainable Development, <http://en.unesco.org/themes/education-sustainable-development>
2. UNESCO, November 2014, Aichi-Nagoya Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002310/231074e.pdf>
3. UNESCO, November 2013, 37 C/57: Proposal for a Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development as Follow-up to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) after 2014, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002243/224368e.pdf>
4. UNEA, May 2016, List of Resolutions adopted at UNEA-2, <http://web.unep.org/unea/list-resolutions-adopted-unea-2>
5. Education Scotland, August 2016, How good is our school? 4th Edition, https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/Frameworks_SelfEvaluation/FRWK2_NIHeditHGIOS/FRWK2_HGIOS4.pdf

6 / Acknowledgements

The views contained in this report are those of the UK National Commission for UNESCO and do not necessarily reflect those of the UK Government or of the individuals or organisations that have contributed to this report. Thanks go to the case study providers: Professor Peter Higgins, University of Edinburgh; Professor William Scott, University of Bath; Jamie Agombar, National Union of Students UK; Professor Stephen Martin, University of Worcester and University of the West of England; Drs Elsa U Lee and Paul Vare, Cambridge University and University of Gloucestershire; Dr Rolf Jucker, University of Swansea and Swiss Foundation for Experiential Environmental Education; Christianne Wakeham, Bulmer Foundation; Breige Brownlee, St James's Forum; Professor Ros Wade, South Bank University; Rhodri Thomas, Cynnal Cymru-Sustain Wales. The UK National Commission expert leads are Professor Stephen Martin and the UKNC's Non-Executive Director for Education, Gary Brace. The UKNC Secretariat staff lead is Moira Nash.