

Higher Education and Sustainable Development (ESD) in the East Midlands: a networking event

29 November Rutland Square Hotel, Nottingham 10am-4pm

Welcome and Introduction

Simon Steiner (Engineering Subject Centre):

A multiple international policy mandate is in place which emphasises the importance of integrating sustainable development into education systems at alle levels: e.g. Agenda 21, Plan of Implementation of WSSD

Initiative from the Higher Education Academy:

- Formation of an ESD Planning Group (2004/5)
- Commissioned Research Report (2005/6)
- Engagement with the community (partnerships, workshops)
- Dissemination to stakeholders (Managers, employers, students)

ESD Teaching Approaches

Techniques for Embedding ESD: Personal, holistic

Barriers: Overloaded curriculum, Irrelevance, Limited staff awareness and expertise, Limited institutional commitment

Current and future work of Academy's ESD Working Group: different pilot projects (events, seminars, conferences, staff development)

The East Midlands Initiative so far:

Some thoughts on the role of Higher Education Institutions within the Regional Education for Sustainable Development Group (East Midlands)

Ed Brown, EM ESD, Loughborough University

Background:

The regional group started in 1994, when the government office for the East Midlands initiated a Regional Environmental Education Forum. Several meetings had been taking place during the last years in order to develop the network. Several subgroups were formed. 100 participants are on the group mailing list (support trough Leicester University).

What can be achieved: Examples

ESD Forum (Yorkshire & Humber)

Regional Centres of Expertise (e.g. Toronto)

HE Participation in Regional ESD Activities

- Dissemination of sustainability research beyond the ivory tower
- Training
- Engagement with policymakers including critical analysis
- Innovative multi-sectoral educational projects
- Universities are major regional players

Current Issues:

- Working Group
- Involvement in the UN RCE bid
- Regional bis under HEFCE's Leadership, Governance and Management

Sustainable Development: A Flag of Convenience?
Examples of Panama and central america

Broadening the Social Responsibility Agenda in Universities
Putting our own shop in order
provide a new framework

Points not included so far:

e.g.

- Ethical standards of suppliers and contractors
- management of university investments
- the ways in which we connect with the communities
- the type of research we engage in

**The regional context: Sustainable Development: Developing the regional skills architecture
James Luger and Sarah Bentley, EMDA (East Midlands Development Agency)**

- National and regional Policy context
- (Inter)national ESD policy context
- Where are we now? UK educational system

East Midlands Integrated Regional Strategy (IRS), including economic, social ,
environmental and spatial objectives

Achieving a Sustainable Economy: Raising productivity, Achieving equality, protecting
environment

East Midlands Employment, Skills and Productivity Partnership (esp), different esp partners

esp priorities set by the RES

currently directly addresses 2 RES themes: Raising Productivity, achieving equality

esp has impact and strategic influence on other regional priorities
through its architecture, structures, frameworks and networks

Where are we now?

A fragmented education system

21 century teachers need: e.g. self-management, action research skills, resilience,
adaptability and recognition of the role individuals plays in learning environments

QTLs regulations for teachers include a reference to sustainable development

Skills profile should change through policy interventions and change of employment
conditions from 2006 to 2026.

Teaching Sustainable Development within Higher Education

Tracy Bhamra, Loughborough University
Department of Design and Technology, 360 undergraduates

Year 1: Simple concepts relating to reducing environmental impact taught as part of core design practice module.

Historical development of sustainable development within design education

Year 2

More in-depth education, optional module (steadily increase of number of students taking part)

Year 3

Individual projects by students

optional additional module (to be introduced 2008)

A more detailed look at the second year:

Sustainable Design: In practice; scale and diversity; ethics, people and consumption; systems, ecology, whole life; energy, materials; history, strategy, values

Reducing unsustainability: can be measured

creating sustainability: more complex

linking design and sustainability = a wider context for design

Design briefs sets:

- resource efficient transport system
- system within the home
- manifesto for responsible design
- development of proposal to regenerate a market town through creating a local „food hub“

Limitations:

- not yet an explicit part of all final year design projects.
- Most will consider sustainability if marks are attached to it

Final Thoughts:

- students attending the special module become very enthusiastic
- developing material to promote sustainable design
- students realise that sustainability gives more work opportunities

The community perspective: Sustainable Development and Communities

Karl Walkinshaw

- Context of New Deal for Communities programme
- Examples of work underway
- communities and Higher Education Working in Partnership
- Key learning from Derwent Community Team:
10 year scheme, year 6, £42m grant + Match, 4000 households, 9500 Population, 7 strategic objectives

Principles of Working

- Community leadership and engagement
- Community Development approach to the work

- Addressing inequalities

Links to Higher Education

- all eight schools in Derwent
- Derby College
- Derby University

Important: Creating also a non-formal learning environment

Valuing Experience

- In partnership with Derby University
- Personal recognition and accreditation for existing skills, knowledge and involvement in Derwent
- Network of life long learners

15 people on foundation degree that would not have done that by themselves

Community Evaluation (e.g. mini-conferences on evaluation, national evaluation conference, development of 20 case studies)

Capital Build Programme

- aim: creating a local supply chain for professional work in the building sector
- development of groups for each scheme including community champions

Ecological Features of Builds

Energy use (e.g. insulation), ecology and materials

Key learning

- Sustainable development agenda relies on relationships with communities
- Key for HE organisations to build relationships
- academic theory must be translated into practice on the ground
- Key role for sector in developing behaviours, skills, knowledge and understanding in communities
- to achieve this new methods for sector to engage communities should be looked at

Higher Education and Sustainable Development in the East Midlands: The student perspective

Adam Cade (replacing Michael Feury)

- Graduate surveys show that students want to work for employers that are taking into account ethical standards .
- Students are the loudest voice in order to achieve „greening universities“.
- More and more employers are looking for graduates the have competences in sustainability.

Careers advice for students: courses, training, work experience, internships and placements (more short-term placements become longer-term jobs, more schemes with accredited training), volunteering (more employers value volunteering and gap years), own enterprise, jobs (more qualified applicants, more mobile employees)

Many possibilities for a placement:

StudentForce, Forum for the Future, Knowledge Transfer Partnership, AIESEC, IAESTE, National Graduate Development Programme

Many volunteering projects as well: e.g. Student volunteering UK, Millennium Volunteers, European Voluntary Services (EVS), Community Services Volunteers, Overseas volunteering

Three volunteering projects at StudentForce: YouthCheck (bringing together younger and older people, towards youth-friendly communities), CommunityCheck (eco-checking, efficiency issues), LocalCheck

Students need a range of competencies that employers will need over the next 50 years (thinking creatively, looking beyond a single discipline, considering longterm and global implications).

Graduate Competencies

Paul Jackson, Student Support & Development, University of Leicester

5 'C's: Campuses, Communities, Curricula, Competencies, Careers

Career changes are mostly based on values. Ethical aspects are important. How do students find out about values of employers? Mission statements: Values are often very explicit. Students should be able to think about their own values.

Sustainability literacy: skills and knowledge

- core skills are the same for the work place and academic careers

The universities are challenged to transform the required skills and values into an understandable language.

The European perspective

Jos Hermans, RCE – Rhine-Meuse

UN Decade for Education for Sustainable

Aim: to create a global learning space

Difference between learning and education

Learning for world citizens:

- access to good quality education
- individual cognitive and social processes
- physical and virtual learning environment

Global Learning Space: will be constituted by a worldwide network of Regional Centres of Expertise (RCE's)

RCE Rhine-Meuse in the triangle Eindhoven-Leuven-Cologne

Foundation to Dutch Law

Board of Governors (6)

Coordinators (2)

Advisory Board (25)

A local network supporting the project is very important!

Different partners (e.g. universities) in Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium are part of the centre.

Mission RCE Rhine-Meuse:

A knowledge intermediate and a process innovator

Strategy of a good RCE: Always in line with the politics in the region

1. Technological top-region
2. sustainable regional
3. social cohesion

Two RCEs are already existing (Rhine-Meuse and Barcelona). Four other applications have been made in order to obtain the RCE status. All these projects are going on in urban areas. Joss would like to form a European network of RCEs.

The East Midlands RCE initiative

Adam Cade, StudentForce for Sustainability

10 universities are in the region, not everyone is here today, but we want to be inclusive

Barriers for HEIs for embedding ESD in subject disciplines (*see page 1*)

University Challenge:

- educational buildings should be a model of sustainable development
- universities should be regional champions of sustainable development
- all education to link with regional agendas
- skills to be improved for sustainable communities
- all attitudes to be supportive of tackling climate change
- all graduates to be sustainability literate

Strategies:

- Suitable metrics can be defined in order to obtain funding.
- Links with all stakeholders in the educational system

the 6th 'C': Culture

8 elements for Sustainable Communities

IRS: 5 priorities with 20 headings

Employment Skills and Productivity Partnership Action Plan

What has been done so far?

Application for a RCE in the East Midlands Region

Regional ESC Partnership: Governance, Collaboration, R&D, transformative education in order to change behaviours

Issues and comments raised in the networking session:

- promote sustainable development in university management
- our institutions should be forced to not only implement easy things but also to really change fundamental perceptives.
- Shall we aim for worldwide projects if local issues are not sorted out?
- 10 universities are in a pilot project that is providing a formal structure for universities in order to set standards in sustainable development (four different levels)
- How can other HEIs be invited into the network? New partners will never be so close to the heart of the network than the founder members. An invitation should come from the existing network members.
- What do you need from the network to get senior managers involved in the issue? The RCE will bring an umbrella structure that can be used. If it is possible to put projects into practice, it is also possible to raise money and therefore involve senior managers. The founder members of the network are invited to go out and spread their concerns and ideas directly in the institutions.
- Do business and show people how they can save money through sustainable development.
- Influence senior managers where they get their training
- Establish a ranking table for sustainable universities
- Don't we need a more radical approach in order to really make an impact (thinking of climate change)?
- Providing distant learning for people who can't afford going a whole day to a conference can be a solution to transport knowledge