

**learning  
and skills  
development  
agency**

# **Good practice in sustainable development education**

## **Executive summary**

**John Blewitt**

# **research report**

**Good practice in sustainable  
development education**  
– Executive summary

**John Blewitt**

Published by the Learning and Skills Development Agency

[www.lsd.org.uk](http://www.lsd.org.uk)

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Registered with the Charity Commissioners

Printed in the UK

ISBN 1 85338 751 7

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1224/ 04/02/100

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# 1 Introduction

Education for sustainable development is about the learning needed to maintain and improve our quality of life and the quality of life for generations to come. It is about equipping individuals, communities, groups, businesses and government to live and act sustainably; as well as giving them an understanding of the environmental, social and economic issues involved. It is about preparing for the world in which we will live in the next century, and making sure that we are not found wanting.

*Source: DEFRA. Advisory Panel on Sustainable Development Education*

1.1 In 2001, 11 small scale Sustainable Development Education (SDE) projects were financed from category 5 of the Further Education Funding Council's (now the Learning & Skills Council – LSC) Standards Fund, which specifically relates to practitioners sharing good practice with others. These projects, taking place within a number of FE colleges and partnerships, were in operation from April to September 2001. The aims of the LSC's Good Practice in Sustainable Development Education initiative included:

- the identification of common examples of existing good practice
- the identification of priority areas in which practice could be improved
- the provision of illustrative studies from a representative sample of colleges/partnerships which demonstrate elements of good practice
- the facilitation of the sharing of good practice between practitioners

1.2 Areas of good practice were suggested as involving: use of sustainability indicators; understanding of and commitment to sustainable development within their local environment; and evidence of partnership working to promote sustainability practices.

1.3 The FEFC/LSC also suggested a series of outcome-based indicators by which individual projects could be developed and evaluated. These included:

## **Economic**

- The percentage of students who, by the end of the learning programmes, have been taught key sustainability concepts.
- The percentage of students – particularly those who have taken a programme that includes a sustainable development unit or units – who achieve their qualification and find employment or embark on further study within six months of completing their programmes.

## **Environmental**

- The percentage of student and staff daily journeys to college routinely made by car.
- the volume of waste per student per annum.
- local habitats and/or species actively stewarded.
- the volume and range of recycling within the institution; for example, of aluminium cans, paper products.
- whether the institution has a system in place for monitoring and analysing energy consumption and efficiency: targets and outcomes from this system can be benchmarked against FHE sector best practice.

## **Social**

- the percentage of staff and students participating in local community activity related to their area of work or study in sustainable development.
- the percentage of students from disadvantaged groups engaged in programmes related to sustainable development.

## **Curriculum**

- the percentage of all students on placement undertaking community based placements or programmes with a focus on sustainable development.
- whether there is an audit of the curriculum identifying courses with a dimension relating to sustainable development.
- the percentage of programmes including an explicit element of sustainable development education; for example life skills, citizenship.

## 2 Method

- 2.1 The evaluative research was undertaken by the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA), formerly the Further Education Development Agency (FEDA), and included:
- the employment of a consultant, John Blewitt.
  - background research on the status of SDE within the post-16 sector.
  - a questionnaire sent to all project co-ordinators.
  - a network meeting held in Birmingham in June 2001 involving all projects and/or partnerships and representatives from the LSDA and LSC.
  - visits to all colleges and/or partnerships between May and July 2001 which included:
    - semi-structured interviews with co-ordinators, managers and others involved in the projects
    - observation of sites, premises, etc
    - gathering of additional hard data
- 2.2 An advisory group was established by the LSDA to oversee the research process from its initial conception to its final reporting stage.
- 2.3 A full project report was produced and can be found on the LSDA's website at [www.lsda.org.uk/research/sustainability](http://www.lsda.org.uk/research/sustainability).
- 2.4 The purpose of this Executive Summary is to outline the specific recommendations for this important area of work, which arose from the project.

### 3 Conclusions

The SDE projects generated a wide range of valuable experiences. Many issues pertinent to the future of SDE in the post-16 sector can be identified. These may be summarised as follows:

- 3.1 Success depends on a clear holistic understanding of what sustainability and SDE means in terms of curriculum, estates management and other aspects of provision.
- 3.2 Given the potential difficulty of communicating complex ideas simply, it is important to find creative and expressive ways of presentation and dissemination.
- 3.3 SDE will make very limited progress without senior management support. This support is best nurtured when managers themselves understand and see the ethical and instrumental relevance of sustainability. This may be accomplished through continuing professional development. (CPD)
- 3.4 Many outside bodies from which funding is frequently sought require a recognition of commitment e.g. Regional Development Agencies, European Union, etc. These requirements may be used to help embed sustainability principles into the policies and practices of post-16 learning organisations.
- 3.5 Drawing on the existing strengths and commitments of an institution (eg widening participation) is the best way of developing SDE. These strengths may be explored systematically through a review or auditing process. The key to success is not trying to do everything at once or start something without prior experience or guidance.
- 3.6 To avoid one policy or action counteracting another, a degree of 'joined-up-thinking' needs to be developed by students and staff at all levels. This can be developed by a continuous process of formal and non-formal learning and significant culture change in institutions.
- 3.7 Significant progress can only be achieved where there is effective leadership, operating both laterally and vertically. Commitment from senior management is vital. The encouragement and emergence of sustainability 'champions' among both staff and students is highly useful.



- 3.8 Sustainability principles and practices may be successfully introduced into the curriculum through enrichment programmes, development of key skills and the introduction of new programmes offering an SDE dimension including citizenship, equal opportunities and life skills.
- 3.9 Networking and partnerships with other organisations are effective ways of enhancing the impact of SDE activities internally and externally. This is particularly important with regard to engaging with processes of local economic development.
- 3.10 Important learning experiences may be drawn from the construction of new (green) buildings, extra-curricula and 'fun' events, international links and community outreach. Linking the local with the global needs only a little imagination and knowledge in the first instance.
- 3.11 A concern with sustainable development can connect and adds value to many other projects, which might otherwise operate in isolation within an institution: eg addressing the needs of students with learning difficulties, energy conservation, transport, health and safety, caring for the campus.
- 3.12 Targets and indicators need to conform to both general principles and to the needs and requirements of a particular locality. A fully sustainable project needs to address more than one dimension and should be conceived as a living, changing and growing enterprise.

Although SDE for many staff ought to be recognised as a strategic funding and curriculum issue, opportunities nevertheless exist for funding a range of short-to medium-term projects that could significantly move the sustainability agenda forward. The following recommendations address both broad strategic concerns and more specific project orientated ones.

## 4 Recommendations

### General recommendations

- 4.1 The DfES could offer policy guidance on the development of a national strategic framework for SDE, which would then help to motivate the sector, possibly by providing incentives through new funding opportunities from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and others at local, national and European levels.
- 4.2 The common inspection framework developed by the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) for post-16 learning could include criteria that would enable the assessment of progress based on agreed sustainability principles.
- 4.3 Local Learning and Skills Councils could undertake strategic policy-making and implementation in partnership with appropriate regional bodies such as regional development agencies as well as local authorities, learning partnerships, and voluntary and community organisation.
- 4.4 SDE could also be linked to the quality process and awards system. A provider could be designated as a 'best practice' organisation for its work in SDE.
- 4.5 Future funding of SDE projects or broader developments could address and be evaluated in the following areas:
  - curriculum development
  - partnership with HE
  - community participation
  - campus greening
- 4.6 A staged approach to policy making and implementation at institutional level should be designed and encouraged.
- 4.7 The development of SDE within and between institutions and partners could be facilitated by the employment of 'sustainability champions' and the development of a mentoring system.
- 4.8 Separate guides or briefings should be produced for the stakeholders. These might include:
  - educational policy makers at local and regional level
  - college principals and other leaders of provider organisations

- managers in estates, curriculum learner support marketing and finance
- teachers, trainers, learning support and other staff working directly with learners
- support staff
- students

4.9 SDE should be fully integrated into in-service and initial teacher education pre- and post-16.

4.10 A review and audit of the post-16 curricula could be undertaken with a view to integrating sustainability principles throughout subject areas, vocational learning and the wider curriculum.

4.11 All key skills could be developed to reinforce learning about sustainability issues and principles.

### **Project-specific recommendations**

4.2.1 The LSC could consider ways of further financially supporting SDE. Possible funding for specific projects might include:

- Briefings on key concepts – sustainability, sustainable development and sustainable (development) education – for students and staff in all categories with a view to national dissemination.
- Development and delivery of short CPD programmes in SDE for college managers, governors and teachers.
- Creative approaches to, and representations of, sustainable development and SDE – student media projects, multimedia, fine art, creative writing, music, performance – with a view to national dissemination and further development and good practice activity.
- Initiatives, training and briefings which help colleges and achieve:
  - EcoCampus awards
  - The production of internal good practice guides
- Seminars to address the ways in which sustainable development and SDE can be incorporated into:
  - College strategic planning
  - Funding
  - Inspection
  - Teacher training and CPD

- Development and delivery of leadership programmes in SDE for all categories of college staff with a view to national dissemination.
- Development of good practice projects in creative thinking skills for all categories of FE staff with a view to national dissemination and further development of good practice.
- Case study guides demonstrating how lectures might address sustainable development in their learning programmes.  
Suggested pilot areas could include.
  - business and management studies
  - leisure studies
  - travel and tourism
  - early childhood education
  - ICT
  - In-service teacher education and or C&G 7307
  - citizenship
  - key skills
- Development of partnership projects in the area of community economic development closely involving work with both local community groups, and small and medium sized businesses.
- Development and delivery of short programmes on sustainability indicators – their identification, evaluation and creative (re) presentation.

## 5 Good Practices

### A Implementing Sustainable Development

#### Good Practice Elements:

- the use of clear definitions with practical real-life references and communication.
- the use of these definitions throughout the organisation.

**Good Practice *Practitioner* Recommendation:** be clear in your own minds as to what sustainable development refers to, avoid abstract definitions and frustrating and confusing discussions.

**Good Practice *Management* Recommendation:** organise and support staff development sessions on the meaning and relevance of sustainable development. This should be a whole-college activity.

**Good Practice *Funding/Policy* Recommendation:** briefings should be produced on key concepts – sustainability, sustainable development and sustainable (development) education – for students and staff in all categories with a view to national dissemination.

### B Starting Points

#### Good Practice Elements:

- audits and review tell you where you are, providing a base from which to develop
- internally produced good practice guides are positive, motivational and forward-looking.

**Good Practice *Practitioner* Recommendation:** start from where you are and build incrementally on existing experiences and try not to do too much too quickly.

**Good Practice *Management* Recommendation:** develop auditing tools that allow for a staged realisation of sustainability goals.

#### Good Practice *Funding/Policy* Recommendations:

- provide funding for the production of auditing tools that may be adapted to the specific location-based and institutional needs of colleges.

- provide funding for staff training at all levels in the proper application and development of auditing tools, allowing staff and students to realise a constructive approach in their sustainability practices.

## **C Promoting Sustainability Development Concepts**

### **Good Practice Elements:**

- partnership with creative and imaginative projects adds additional dimensions to learning.
- developing the physical and ecological environment through 'green' buildings and developing habitats formally and informally communicate and express sustainability value.

### **Good Practice *Practitioner* Recommendations:**

- think and act creatively, be visual, tell stories, make use of iconic objects when attempting to communicate difficult or unfamiliar concepts and practices.
- Creative departments in colleges should be enlisted to help promote sustainable development.

**Good Practice *Management* Recommendation:** capital and other funding should be dependent on colleges implementing sustainable development principles.

## **D Management Support and Training**

### **Good Practice Elements:**

- training in sustainable development for management to alter attitudes and values.
- linking this management training to management aims and practices with a view to altering them.

**Good Practice *Practitioner* Recommendation:** find ways of gaining the support of college management by stressing practical, instrumental and ethical institutional benefits.

**Good Practice *Management* Recommendation:** undertake appropriate CPD in sustainable development and sustainable development education.

### **Good Practice *Funding/Policy* Recommendations:**

- in-service management training schemes should be developed and made available on a national and regional basis.
- SDE should become part of a college's strategic planning process and be monitored appropriately.

## **E Moving from the Margins**

### **Good Practice Elements:**

- Moving from the margins is about survival and this has been dealt with by connecting activities and practices that already require a commitment to sustainability; for example, EcoCampus, EU or RDA funding bids.

**Good Practice *Practitioner* Recommendation:** find ways of rooting sustainability and SDE into college practices by changing the way estates services are provided, or try to embed elements of sustainability into parts of the curriculum.

**Good Practice *Management* Recommendation:** review the college's practices and mission with a view to fully integrating and putting into operation sustainability principles.

**Good Practice *Funding/Policy* Recommendation:** college funding and inspection regimes should incorporate sustainability criteria in all areas and at all levels.

## **F Putting Small Actions in Context**

### **Good Practice Elements:**

- the joining up of related policies and practices create a context in which sustainability principles can be fully realised.
- widening participation and waste minimisation, sustainability and health and safety are ways in which this has been attempted.

**Good Practice *Practitioner* Recommendation:** small actions are important and need to be encouraged both as important in themselves and also for the beneficial consequences that may result.

**Good Practice *Management* Recommendation:** policies should be reviewed and where necessary, changed to realise a holistic approach to implementation.

**Good Practice *Funding/Policy* Recommendation:** holistic thinking should be an element in funding and inspection criteria and the monitoring and evaluation of college planning and activity.

## **G Leadership**

### **Good Practice Elements:**

- harnessing expertise, energy, enthusiasm and leadership wherever it is found, and encouraging it to operate vertically and horizontally is most valuable.
- the employment of an SDE (project) co-ordinator is of key importance.

**Good Practice *Practitioner* Recommendation:** create hubs of animateurs or leaders who will help change the culture of the institution.

### **Good Practice *Management* Recommendations:**

- employ people who have the personal capacity, knowledge and skills to lead the sustainability agenda in key areas of college activity.
- SDE leaders, particularly if employed as such, should act as mentors to others who may then in turn take on that role to develop identifiable *communities of practice* within the institution.

### **Good Practice *Funding/Policy* Recommendations:**

- funding should be provided for colleges to develop SDE champions.
- SDE mentoring and leadership programmes should be designed in conjunction with higher education institutions.



## H Curriculum and Learning

### Good Practice Elements:

- working with the community and business.
- using existing provision as a vehicle for SDE.
- integrating sustainability principles into the Key Skills programme.
- creating new learning opportunities.

**Good Practice *Practitioner* Recommendation:** search for ways in which sustainability principles can be emphasised in existing training and education provision. This will help embed sustainability into the culture of the institution but it is only a start.

**Good Practice *Management* Recommendation:** institutional initiatives should be developed to bring out sustainability elements in existing learning programmes, introduce SDE-related courses, include SDE elements in enrichment programmes and key skills.

### Good Practice *Funding/Policy* Recommendations:

- the full integration of sustainability issues and principles into the curriculum should take place in partnership with SDE-related work undertaken by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and the awarding bodies.
- sustainability learning may be promoted through its incorporation into the strategic plan of local LSCs, project funding and partnership work with organisations concerned with regeneration and community empowerment.

## I Networking and Partnerships

### Good Practice Elements:

- working with others to build new relationships, share good practice, generate new ideas about future development and most importantly, *implementation*.
- making links with important regional or sub-regional policy developments supporting sustainable development.
- being proactive – consciously taking on the role of a change agent.

- SDE leaders, particularly if employed as such, should act as mentors to others who may then in turn take on that role to develop identifiable *communities of practice* within the institution.

**Good Practice *Funding/Policy* Recommendations:**

- funding should be provided for colleges to develop SDE champions
- SDE mentoring and leadership programmes should be designed in conjunction with higher education institutions.

**J. Drawing Out Learning Experiences**

**Good Practice Elements:**

- learning from experience and using what is immediate to that experience.
- empowering local communities.
- learning to do things in different ways.
- linking the local to the global.

**Good Practice *Practitioner* Recommendation:** ensure that learning takes many forms so that sustainable development principles can be realised in as many walks of life as possible.

**Good Practice *Management* Recommendation:** curriculum managers should pay close attention to the value of informal learning opportunities offered by sustainability practices.

**Good Practice *Funding/Policy* Recommendation:** informal learning should acquire a greater prominence at institutional, local and regional levels. This will require placing a greater value on community learning and development.

**K The Value Added**

**Good Practice Elements:**

- benefits of even modest sustainability projects may have lasting and wide consequences beyond those anticipated.
- using connections to other areas to expand learning experiences.

- creating an organisational environment that is sustainably and ethically sound, aesthetically attractive and socially engaging.

**Good Practice *Practitioner* Recommendation:** be prepared to work in different areas and in different ways to ensure that the holistic and self-organising nature of sustainability initiatives have a positive and productive effect. This requires creative as well as critical abilities.

**Good Practice *Management* Recommendation:** the informal learning opportunities and other value-added benefits of sustainable development education should be recognised and sympathetically accounted for in college planning and evaluation procedures.

**Good Practice *Funding/Policy* Recommendations:**

- funding and policy imperatives should be developed that support substantial long-term projects which aim to alter cultural habits and institutional predispositions.
- research should be undertaken on the influence of a sustainable college environment on formal and informal learning achievement and attainment.

## **L Indicators and Targets**

**Good Practice Elements:**

- indicators are used, adopted or adapted to serve specific review and evaluation purposes.

**Good Practice *Practitioner* Recommendations:**

- develop pertinent local indicators using national ones heuristically.
- look for ways of presenting them visually.

**Good Practice *Management* Recommendations:**

- appropriate sustainability and sustainable development education indicators should be produced and integrated into the college strategic planning process.
- this should be achieved with the participation and commitment of as many stakeholders as possible.

**Good Practice *Funding/Policy* Recommendation:** national and regional strategic planning and evaluation should allow for local variation, flexibility and change through experience.

## 6 The Projects: Summary Outlines

Each project had a particular focus reflecting its own specific local and historical interests. Overall they covered the major themes of sustainable development though few attempted to cover all of these individually. The projects also differed in scope and ambition. Some were relatively self-contained, limiting themselves to their original bid. Others were much more ambitious, challenging and comprehensive, being perceived as just one step in a long-term process of creating a meaningful sustainable education provision. Some, learning from experience, changed the nature of their project as circumstances dictated. All three of the land-based colleges were in some way affected by the foot and mouth crisis. The summaries below are drawn largely from the project co-ordinators' own briefings presented at the network meeting in June 2001.

### **Bishop Burton College**

Bishop Burton is primarily a land-based institution. Its project aims were to identify good practice within the college; to establish management and reporting systems where necessary; to identify goals for longer-term improvements; and to develop good practice guides for the land-based sector underpinned by general online learning materials focusing on the development of FE students' understanding of sustainable development.

The college's recognition that sustainable development affects all aspects of people's lives informed the production of the good practice guides and learning materials.

Bishop Burton College is a member of the EcoCampus pilot scheme.

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### **Blackburn College**

The SDE project involved a two-fold strategy:

1. By working within the estates department, an area which has a direct and significant impact upon the environment, the college aimed to identify existing good practice and actively seek accreditation to the Environmental Management Standard, ISO 14001. To this end, the use of energy and the efficient management of waste on the campus were examined, which also involved a programme of awareness raising and staff training within the estates team.

2. On the curriculum side, Blackburn College looked at ways to develop a sustainable and environmental consciousness among students and staff, including the wider community in which the institution is situated. In May 2001, the annual Green Day event was held to promote sustainable issues. The area of Key Skills was chosen as a vehicle for integrating sustainability into the curriculum and a generic assignment was written and internally verified. Other initiatives included the development of several lesson plans on sustainability-related themes to be integrated into a cross-college tutor resource pack, and the implementation of a community recycling initiative.

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### **Cornwall College: Duchy College campus**

Two aspects of Cornwall College's project included:

- a. the development of further links between Duchy College – Rosewarne (DR) and the Eden Project (EP)
- b. the enhancement of the Cornwall College curriculum to address sustainability both within the college and via the Eden Project's outreach work with schools.

The objectives identified were:

- awareness raising between DR and EP in relation to their current activities.
- exchange of good practice between DR and EP.
- mutual support for new developments in sustainability and sustainability education.
- a review of sustainability education in college mainstream programmes to draw a baseline and raise awareness of staff and students.
- promotion of sustainability aspects in college mainstream programmes as a specific feature.
- design of vocationally-orientated assignments addressing sustainability elements for use in mainstream programmes.

Developments stemming from the project or forming part of it include:

- the development of a national diploma in horticulture (Eden Diploma)

- the production of a baseline questionnaire used by Cornwall College to analyse the level of sustainability in the curriculum. Practical examples of sustainability were used to enhance staff knowledge.
- the writing of 40 assignments by staff from across the whole of Cornwall College which encompass sustainability.
- information sheets on sustainability written by Dr Peter Whitbread-Abrutat (Eden Project) and published in the college staff/student magazine *Branches*.
- a two-day conference on sustainability for all students run by Cornwall College in conjunction with Duchy College – Rosewarne campus, the Duchy College Organic Research Project and the British Association for Science.
- consultation with Eden Project with regard to the new teaching glasshouses at Duchy College – Rosewarne to cover all possible aspects of sustainability. Elements such as energy efficiency, water recycling, direct feed and water systems and health and safety will be taught to all students. The teaching glasshouses also provide improved access to students with disabilities.

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### **Huddersfield New College**

The project concentrated on the environmental and curriculum indicators specified by the FEFC/LSC. The initiative has been closely integrated with the work being undertaken as part of the EcoCampus development pilot.

In the environmental sphere, work focused on the following areas:

- research on travel-to-college patterns for staff and students with a view to producing an action plan and monitoring procedures to reduce journeys to work by single-occupant cars.
- a waste review and consultation exercise with staff, students and contractors was carried out in order to minimise waste generation. This work was linked to the further development of existing successful recycling schemes.
- the existing policy and action plan for energy and water use was reviewed, involving all members of the college community with view to bringing about continuous improvement in environmental and financial performance.

- a review of the college grounds was undertaken and a three-year action plan formulated to improve habitats and produce a more inspiring learning environment. The development work provided stimulating learning opportunities for students to explore sustainability concerns.
- outside the college, several projects have been undertaken to protect and enrich habitats. These successful activities have had a strong focus on community involvement and education. Since the original bid was submitted, the scope of work developed to include an innovative river project to be delivered in conjunction with a community trust, several voluntary sector groups, schools and family learners.

On the curriculum front there are a number of projects:

- staff and students have been developing a website with the White Rose Forest Project led by Yorkshire Forward. This will become a useful curriculum and communication resource.
- Web-based learning materials are being developed with international partner institutions in Poland and Tanzania to explore sustainable development concerns. This is a good example of a project growing global links.
- curriculum development work is taking place to embed sustainability both in the enrichment curriculum and through mainstream subjects. It is envisaged that this will include planning a major curriculum audit exercise.

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### **Skelmersdale and Ormskirk Campus**

Skelmersdale College operates many centres throughout West Lancashire as part of its commitment to Lifelong Learning. Skills audits undertaken for Skelmersdale have identified that many residents (33%) have no formal qualifications and have considerable barriers to learning. The audit also revealed that while ICT knowledge was high on the list of needs acknowledged by the residents, access to computers was limited.

As a result Skelmersdale College developed its community-based learning, which improves access to learning for all. In order for this to be achieved, it is necessary to secure all possible ways of supporting individuals before, during and after their time on the programme so that the process of personal change and development is given the chance to become deeply rooted and sustainable. Local Learning Partnerships were created. First contacts were made through community leaders who explored the potential relevance of community learning, both to themselves and their community. They then took part in a variety of



learning opportunities, evaluating these and identifying improvements. IT skills were identified as the key to engaging learners. Single Regeneration Budget money was used to develop five computer suites in local community centres. A timetable for delivery of courses was agreed and a suitable tutor appointed. The leaders then encouraged others to use the learning centres.

Each centre has a steering group comprising community members associated with that neighbourhood and representatives of the college and the local council who own the facilities. The committee approves all decisions made at that centre, including courses to be promoted.

At the same time, research was taking place to identify all the organisations involved in the neighbourhood and the learning activities offered by each one. These include awareness raising regarding mental and physical health, recreational opportunities, school enrichment programmes, self-employment training, childcare information volunteering and capacity building. These organisations will then be asked to form a Local Learning Partnership, a collaborative structure which will develop community-based provision which complements rather than competes. A conference for all the organisations and agencies was organised to take place in September 2001. The conference included presentations from keynote speakers and workshops to determine future actions, providing an opportunity for organisations to network.

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### **Southgate College, London.**

Southgate College, Enfield College and Capel Manor Horticultural College & Environmental Centre, all within the same borough, formed a partnership to:

- develop a sustainability audit tool to audit courses in terms of their sustainable development input (based on the government's 15 headline indicators).
- pilot the tool and publish *Best Practice* guide.
- develop a monitoring tool, which will indicate relevant on-course and course exit data – and also economic, environmental, social and curriculum data.
- develop an education module which will be embedded in a variety of courses.
- continue awareness raising of the local community, especially businesses.
- undertake corporation/governor training.

- hold a final dissemination conference.

An initial cross-college audit providing the baseline for measurement of improvement in terms of awareness raising and hard data was undertaken. A course audit tool has developed and used to audit projects submitted for European Social Fund (ESF) funding. It is about to be piloted on courses. Every opportunity has been used to raise awareness of the local community and businesses. ESF and other partnerships have offered a vehicle for this.

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**South West Association for Education and Training (SWAFET) – Taunton Project Group:**

The project is being carried out by a project group consisting of six representatives from FE colleges and one from SWAFET, paying close attention to the South West's regional framework document *A Sustainable Future for the South West*. The project's aim is to produce a 'map' indicating commitment to and active engagement in, sustainability by FE colleges in the South West region.

Project research was undertaken by issuing in-depth questionnaires to all 37 colleges in the SW region and a 59% response rate was achieved. All colleges were contacted in advance of the issue of the questionnaire to identify key contacts and encourage completion.

The results of the questionnaire highlighting examples of good practice were disseminated at a regional conference on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2001. This was followed by the production of an SDE pack for colleges called *Sustaining Success*.

A report will be produced informing all agencies working in this field about levels of engagement in the college sector and it will be offered to the Regional Observatory for Learning and Skills, a Regional Development Agency (RDA) project. Recommendations will be made to take forward this work.

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## **St Helens College**

For the last two years, St Helens College has been in partnership with the Tidy Britain Group and Going for Green through the People and Places initiative. The college has promoted recycling and reduced car usage, participated in the last two 'spring clean' events in partnership with St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council, and provided information on Planet Pledge to all students through the induction programme. A campaign on responsible disposal of chewing gum took place in April 2001. The college is taking part in a national pilot, the EcoCampus scheme, which was regarded as the prime vehicle for the implementation of the college's Policy for Sustainable Development.

The objective of the scheme is to establish an environmental management system within the college. The related SDE project had two main objectives:

- a. the appointment of a sustainable development officer to establish an information system to support the institutional review.
- b. the development of interactive curriculum materials on sustainable development through the Key Skills programme. This would help to embed sustainable development into the curriculum of the majority of full-time students and those undergoing work-based training.

The final products will be available for trial in 2002.

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## **Walford and North Shropshire College**

The project objectives for this principally land-based college were to develop an agricultural version of the CIWEM (Chartered Institute of Water and Environmental Managers) Practical Environmental course (PEM) supported by resource materials. These include:

- a course handbook containing an overview of legislation and policies with signposting to sources of further information and organisations.
- a CD-ROM and video to support and enhance the course and promotional leaflets.

Assessment materials have been developed and standardised. These will be used with the trial course, which will be run at Walford and North Shropshire College and evaluated prior to promoting it within other land-based colleges.

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### **Walsall College of Arts and Technology**

The project identified a number of sustainable development education activities within Walsall and other colleges of the Black Country including Dudley, Sandwell and Wolverhampton. Activities included:

- an increased awareness of health issues through a whole-college (staff, students and nursery children) health promotion plan.
- building confidence through housing interior renovation and restoration, product design for sustainable business, sustainable development for the construction industry.
- the promotion of biodiversity through a college campus ecosystem and the development of citizenship skills with disengaged young people.

Each activity has targets where progress is measured against sustainability indicators. Also included in the project was the active sharing of information to support sub-regional action planning; this was linked very closely to the action plan of the Black Country Regeneration Framework and is expected to add value to the regional economic development strategy. Enhanced partnership working with Local Health Authorities and Social Service providers is expected to be a subsidiary outcome.

The college is a member of the Eco-Campus pilot scheme.

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### **Wigan and Leigh College**

Wigan and Leigh aims to improve environmental performance and introduce sustainable development education into all areas of the college. The LSC Good Practice in SDE project is part of a larger and long-term initiative and included:

- introduction of an environmental management system to reduce energy, water and resource usage. This involved seconded assistance from Groundwork, the production of an environmental review, the development of an action plan to achieve targets to reduce usage, and the auditing of the system and review of the targets to ensure continuous improvement.

- the establishment of sustainability targets for waste and energy minimisation.
- an environmental training programme - the project target is for 30 staff to gain the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health certificate in Environmental Awareness by September 2001. This includes:
  - links with the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV), forestry Enterprise and Groundwork.
  - an action plan to encourage and allow student participation.
  - participation in community activities.
- development of sustainability programmes for local businesses .
- Wigan and Leigh is a member of the EcoCampus pilot scheme. Dissemination will take place through a conference for North Birmingham colleges. A final report will also be written.

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