

# Stepping Up in Sustainability

## Workers' Educational Association case study



<b>Title of project</b>	<b>Big Society Small World: Sustainability Champions</b>	
<b>Lead partner organisation name and address</b>	Workers' Educational Association (WEA) East Midlands Region, 39 Mapperley Road, Nottingham NG3 5AQ	
<b>Names of partner organisations</b>	National project involving all English Regions	
<b>Contact details (lead organisation)</b>	Name Mel Lenehan	
	Email <a href="mailto:mlenehan@wea.org.uk">mlenehan@wea.org.uk</a>	Phone 0115 962 8400
<b>1. Aims of the project</b>	The aim of the project was to encourage and engage sustainability thinking within the WEA using the 3-sphere model of environment, economic and social sustainability.	
<b>2. Situation: Identify the situation or issue that faced you</b>	The project had only a 6-month timescale meaning enthusiasm and interest needed to build quickly. We chose to develop a learning cascade to spread the sustainability message as quickly as possible.	
<b>3. Task: Define the outcomes you needed to achieve</b>	The outcome we sought to achieve was to engage as many staff and members of the WEA as possible to get the organisation talking about sustainability at a grassroots level.	
<b>4. Actions that you took in order to achieve your plan, and your approach</b>	<p>Actions and approach taken to achieve the plan were:</p> <p>Establish a website acting as an accessible virtual project home. This was populated by ideas, hints and tips about sustainability.</p> <p>We then arranged regional and sub-regional workshops to cascade sustainability learning supported by e-learning modules on the website. This public discussion style e-learning allowed for interaction between all members and staff within the WEA. We believe that public discourse has more power than responses within a private virtual learning environment. Whilst this may have discouraged some learners from 'nailing their sustainable colours to the WEA mast' it allowed the website's readership to follow real discussion and engage in ideas sharing from all levels of the organisation.</p>	
<b>5. Results that you obtained including:</b>	<p>The project results included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The website is the most visible achievement of this project. The most tangible achievements can be seen in WEA offices throughout England. This has been backed up by a</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• practical achievements (what's in place)</li> <li>• quantitative change</li> </ul>		

<p>(statistics etc)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>qualitative change (behaviour, culture, thinking, attitudes etc)</b></li> <li>• <b>what the organisation(s) have learned from this</b></li> <li>• <b>what it means for learners</b></li> </ul>	<p>Sustainability Top Ten Tips Sheet that can be downloaded from the website and added to by WEA members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project website has received over 3,000 hits and is read by over an estimated 1,000 readers in 4 months. It is added to on a weekly basis by WEA members and staff, creating a fluid forum for debate on all things sustainable.</li> <li>• The Sustainability Workshops to initiate the learning cascade reached 120 people from every aspect of the WEA; staff, volunteers and managers.</li> <li>• There is an amazing amount of good practice that has come to light within the organisation and this has been extended and encouraged. There is now a demonstrable “can do” attitude towards sustainability within the WEA rather than waiting for “permission”. An example of this “can do” attitude was a recent letter a tutor received from Payroll asking if they could be paid by BACS in the “interest of sustainability”. This was a direct result of attending a Sustainability Workshop.</li> <li>• The WEA has learnt that if they can engage members and staff at a grass roots level then a myriad of positive small changes can be made at local level. This results in a project that is becoming bigger than the sum of its parts. The learners now feel empowered to make a positive change to the running of the WEA, which means that the ideas and changes they make to their organisation will be supported and sustained because they are the originators.</li> <li>• This project is not over- it has barely begun!</li> </ul>
<p><b>6. What made the project a success? What were the key ingredients?</b></p>	<p>Factors in the success of the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The development of the website has been pivotal to the success of this project. It has worked on several levels; as a mouthpiece for the project; as an organisational tool for the sustainability workshops; for a platform for e-learning and as a forum for debate.</li> <li>• The team that delivered the project were key. In the short time that this project ran they managed to devise, develop and engage over a 1,000 people on the subject of sustainability through its 3- sphere model and plant a seed that has only just germinated.</li> </ul>

<b>7. Any resources or tools produced by the project</b>	Resources produced by the project:  The website is the major product of the project. It has a resources page which has downloads to help WEA members with all things sustainable. On this resources page is a “Top Tips” download for a Sustainable WEA.		
<b>8. Total costs of the project</b>	LSIS funding	Match funding	Total funding
	£24,979	£7,200 (actual worker time in kind) – this sum is to date and is expected to exceed £12,000 in kind worker time match in the coming months as the project reaches its target 200 engagements.	Current - £32,179  Target - £36,979



**Funded by LSIS through the Stepping Up in Sustainability Fund**

