

Stepping Up in Sustainability

Walsall College case study



Title of project	Sustainability and Responsible Stewardship – Bringing it all Together	
Lead partner organisation name and address	Walsall College Wisemore Campus Littleton Street West Walsall WS2 8ES	
Names of partner organisations	New Engineering Foundation	
Contact details (lead organisation)	Sue Reynolds Email: sreynolds@walsallcollege.ac.uk	Phone 01922 651174
1. Aims of the project	<p>The project aimed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise the awareness of understanding in a number of diverse groups in relation to their personal contribution to the sustainability agenda. • Enter dialogue with the New Engineering Foundation who will provide data evidencing need, advice and guidance along with on- project support all of which will ensure accuracy and ultimately, project success. • Encourage individuals to make a big difference. <p>Using the title of 'Pass it On' - it was intended that a sharing and raising of awareness would take place across a wider audience.</p>	
2. Situation: Identify the situation or issue that faced you	<p>While many members of the workforce and wider community understand the impacts of global change, it is often difficult to translate concerns into actions. Responding to the multi-faceted challenge of climate change and sustainability can seem daunting to individuals – the challenge seems so huge that it is hard to believe that any single person's contribution would indeed make a difference. This project will empower individuals by allowing them to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • see the benefits in behaviour change at an individual level • understand the cumulative benefits these changes make at a societal level. <p>The project aims to bring the concept of sustainability and</p>	

	<p>responsible stewardship of the earth's resources closer to home so that individuals come to understand that small changes made in their own life will make a big difference. This will Allow them to meet their own needs without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their needs</p>
<p>3. Task: Define the outcomes you needed to achieve</p>	<p>The project aimed to bring the concept of sustainability and responsible stewardship of the earth's resources closer to home so that individuals came to understand that small changes made in their own life will make a big difference.</p> <p>The project attempted to provide an opportunity for a minimum of 100 people to undertake training in 'Raising the Awareness of Sustainability'</p> <p>It was intended that 20 tutors, teachers and trainers, 600 students, 35 housing association residents and 10 building management supervisors would all be targeted to take part in the project. In raising the awareness of the individuals it was intended that they would obtain a carbon life skill that would have a lifelong impact on their behaviour and consumption patterns</p> <p>Trained tutors would continue to act as sustainable champions for the college promoting sustainable behaviour and knowledge transfer. Local retailers, employers, partners and agencies were all to be encouraged to share what strategies they impart in their businesses to support the reduction of carbon emissions as well as providing them with a platform to showcase such strategies to college students.</p> <p>Two dissemination events would be held where the promotion of the sustainability training would be shared with others along with a wider dissemination taking place via the use of an electronic media.</p>

4. Actions that you took in order to achieve your plan, and your approach

Actions and approach taken to achieve the plan included:

Impact Measure 1 – Training and ‘Pass it On’ Sustainability Event

The sustainability project leader created a project group compiled from five members of staff known as The Walsall College Sustainable Champions Group. The focus of the group was to assist the main project worker, outlining the most suitable vehicle to ensure that the ‘Pass it on’ project was successful. The project aim was to have the maximum effect on the students within Walsall College as well as the engagement of a selection of local retailers with the proposal that they would showcase their contribution to improving the community in reducing their carbon footprint. The project group proposed and agreed that a total college approach would have the most effect, a suggestion that was tabled and agreed by the Senior Management Team of the College.

Week beginning the 7th February 2011 (assigned as Green Week in the College calendar) was agreed to be sustainability week and all cluster areas were to engage and contribute in some form or another.

The project group engaged the services of an external environmental/sustainability expert from an environmental organisation known as Marches Energy Agency. The expert worked with the champions providing advice and guidance to the project group as well as expert information and knowledge.

Under the leadership and guidance of the expert, the group produced four Sustainability Learner Packs. The packs introduced and provided the learners with an insight into each of the four selected topics, namely Water, Waste, Energy and Climate Change. Each pack was produced so that in a fun way the learners were encouraged to raise and develop their awareness and understanding around each topic. The use of colour and related images as well as detailed introductions and a summary of the global position encouraged learners to engage with the packs. Each pack supplied a series of thought provoking facts through a ‘Did You Know’ section and learners were encouraged to test their knowledge by completing a mini quiz at the end of each pack.

The sustainability champion group used the content of the learning packs to ‘Pass On’ the knowledge to 20 members of staff

across the college resulting in 26 members of staff being involved. As a group it was agreed that the completion of the learning packs would take place through a series of tutorial sessions, with a minimum of each member of staff passing on the learning to one group of students each culminating in an engagement of 30 students per staff member with a total predicted engagement of 600 people at this stage

Following the production of the learner packs the group converted them into an electronic format where they were housed on the College Moodle space known as GOAL (an internal College page where staff and students are able to interact with each other and any materials housed there). The group created a GOAL sustainability week web page and populated it not only with the learning packs but also with a range of games, related links, competitions, fascinating facts and a tutor PowerPoint presentation that could be used as the introduction within any tutorial session.

To support the launch of the web page a newly branded logo was produced which has now been adopted by the college and has become the noticeable brand that marks all sustainability related information across the college. The web page went live on Monday 7th February and to date has monitored a total of 2,900 hits that have been undertaken by learners.

One tutor undertook an interclass competition with a cohort of Level 1 Public Service students who were set the task of producing a method of marketing Sustainability Week using any media they saw fit. Student Richard Oakley was selected as the competition winner for his production of a DVD that highlighted a range of environmental topics including the excess use of plastic, packaging and water. The excess supply of paper, batteries and local waste all available for recycling were also highlighted which collectively, the judges felt provided a good reflection of the intended message. The DVD was placed on the intranet website which throughout the week and beyond has become the college standard for promoting and advertising the continued environmental and sustainability message.

The main feature of the week was a three-day interactive exhibition that was held in the atrium space of the College. Collaboratively the cluster areas created 15 stalls that students were able to visit completing a variety of tasks all of which raised their knowledge further. To monitor the numbers of students engaging with the activities the project group set up and used a

card scanner capable of scanning student details from their college badge. This provided an accurate measure of the amount of students engaging with the games and interactive stalls throughout the week. In total 1,605 students had their details recorded.

Below is a sample of the activities undertaken throughout the week:

- How do you travel to College? – produced by the local Council liaising with students to identify how they travelled to college, encouraging them to demonstrate a greater awareness of low carbon transport.
- Design a product 'LIVE' – students were engaged to try their hand at designing a sustainable product
- The Fish Fight Back – a raising of awareness following on from the TV documentary conducted by celebrity chef Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall
- Recycling in Fashion – the re-creation of clothing from old products
- Sort out of your bedroom – a pre set mock bedroom where students were asked to identify hot spots in a given time
- How Clean is your Water – water sampling using a wide range of water samples including domestic tap water
- 'Every Can Counts' – can crushing demos and recycling boxes
- 'Snap it off' – photographs identifying hot spots of energy
- Test your memory – cards of Eco Friendly facts testing the memory of how many could be remembered in a given time
- Are you really Green? – self analysis of personal contribution to lowering energy use
- Spot the energy issues in your House – identification of hot spot areas in a pre determined range of domestic properties
- Race to Energy - Bike Activity - using a man-powered bicycle, what energy do you need to expel to light the light bulb attached to the system?
- Sustainability Quiz - 3-section electronic Climate Change Quiz answering questions within a given time
- Susthouse – Design and create a sustainable house electronically
- Thermal imaging

To support the activities above, a video was produced of the

event that continues to be used as a mark of the students' contribution and enthusiasm for such a popular topic.

Initially the project proposed the production of a Podcast. However, this did not materialise but was replaced with a college sustainable Facebook page to encourage a wider sharing of the message throughout the college community. The page has encouraged the students to share information, images and related documentation, news articles, discussion groups, competitions and identified 'Hot Spots' where improvements could be made- all of which were up-loaded and continue to be used. To date 256 people who have viewed the page are now communicating on a regular basis, all with an identified interest in improving their planet.

The final task within the college was for each student to 'Pass On' the message to three members of their social network via an e-mail link. Whilst this started very well a difficulty with the central e-mail (created to measure the volume of e-mails being sent) has resulted in the volume of electronic external engagement proving disappointing. The project group have however produced 3,000 hard copies of the learning packs all of which have been distributed and passed into the local community.

In total the project initially set a target of 1,900 people being engaged through the 'Pass it On' model. However, the final project figure of people engaged as of Friday 25th March is an incredible **5,210** with a continued interest ensuing even as this project comes to an end.

During the practical activity events, the local energy advisor agency provided learners with energy saving (power down) plugs that they will be able to attach to a piece of electrical equipment to help reduce wasted energy generated from electrical devices resulting in a secondary benefit of reducing household electricity bills.

It was intended in the original brief that an analysis of reduced household utility bills would form part of the overall brief as a result of this project. However due to timing constraints and the impact of the wider dissemination within the college that has taken place this aspect has only recently started. As a follow on to the event week the original 5 champions are now working with groups of learners providing more developed knowledge of how to make reductions. This activity will conclude with each of the students involved completing an analysis of savings later in the

	<p>year.</p> <p>Impact Measure 2 – Dissemination</p> <p>The project team set an initial target to disseminate the model to 2 wider groups. Over the period of the project there has been 4 disseminations undertaken in total across a wider range of audiences.</p> <p>The project team were provided with an opportunity to disseminate the project outcome to the National Apprenticeship Service along with a Sector Skills Council as a result of the management team being asked to undertake discussions around their contribution to sustainability in construction.</p> <p>Following initial discussions with one of the local social housing groups engaged with the college, they shared the sustainability information with 600 of their residents, along with a further dissemination having taken place with a secondary local housing group. Both organisations are now requesting secondary meetings to elaborate on the initial dialogue, further enhancing the ‘Pass it On’ Model.</p> <p>Marches Energy Agency has held a sharing event with a wider team of their own staff. The advisory champion who was engaged on the initial project has shared with the main core team the strategies used to disseminate the learning packages. Marches Energy Agency is in fact starting a splinter ‘Pass it On’ using the same resources and methodology to their own client group.</p> <p>As a result of further work and sharing of best practice through another project, the College has disseminated what it has been undertaken within this project with four local FE colleges. The College is now liaising with them to share the full project so that they can also adopt the model.</p>
<p>5. Results that you obtained including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • practical achievements (what’s in place) • quantitative change (statistics etc) • qualitative change (behaviour, culture, 	<p>The project target was to engage 1,900 people through the ‘Pass It On Model’ within the college community and social network of the students – 5210 was the final figure achieved across all forms of engagement!</p> <p>Eleven retailers were targeted to showcase their contribution to the community in reducing their carbon footprint. This proved to be the most disappointing area of the project with only 5 attending the event</p>

<p>thinking, attitudes etc)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what the organisation(s) have learned from this • what it means for learners 	<p>A target of 2 dissemination events were intended - a total of 5 have been undertaken as discussed above with a continued series of networking events still being undertaken. The college has made a commitment for this to continue as interest continues particularly from the wider community of other colleges and local schools.</p> <p>This project has proved to be the catalyst for continued awareness raising. The same project team have continued with their commitment, securing other bid monies including a Cut the Carbon Fund that has provided an opportunity for the college to evaluate its own carbon usage. A wider team including estates staff have conducted a series of tests and trials where they have been able to evaluate and make judgements on how they can reduce the emissions in the college by 10 to 15 %.</p> <p>As a result of this project staff and students alike continue to demonstrate their commitment to improving, and raising awareness through changes in their behaviour. Whilst continued behaviour changes are necessary, the College is observing a greater accuracy in the segregation of the generated waste, a heightened commitment to ensuring the lights in the rooms expire as individuals leave and a greater awareness of the volume of paper that is being used.</p>
<p>6. What made the project a success? What were the key ingredients?</p>	<p>The key drivers accountable for the success were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A whole College commitment and support for the project, particularly the early engagement of the Senior Management Team • Gathering a wide and diverse range of staff • Providing staff with the autonomy and flexibility to make their own contribution particularly in areas where they held an interest • The engagement of an environmental/sustainability expert who could accurately guide and support staff with facts • Ensuring all contributions from the project team were included in the planning and the event • The absolute commitment of a select group of voluntary individuals • The support obtained from our partner, The New Engineering Foundation, who conducted much of the factual qualitative data

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The engagement and enthusiasm demonstrated by the students without whom the whole event would not have been the success it was 		
7. Any resources or tools produced by the project	<p>Tools and resources produced by the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four learning packs Promotional DVD Sustainability Logo Activity DVD used at student events to promote college activities The creation of a sustainability Facebook Page 		
8. Total costs of the project	LSIS funding	Match funding	Total funding
	£24,800	£39,400	£64,200



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