

Small Steps-Big Changes- the Learning for Sustainability dimension of Community Learning and Development

Introduction

The UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) seeks to mobilise the educational resources of the world to help create a more sustainable future. One of the actions from Learning for Change¹, the Scottish Government Action plan for the second half of the decade was to establish a working group to take forward education for sustainable development within the community learning development sector.

This seminar entitled *Small Steps-Big Changes- the Learning for Sustainability dimension of Community learning and Development* was co-delivered by members of the working group and Learning for Sustainability Scotland² on 27 February 2014 (Programme Appendix 1).

The seminar aimed to bring together, and to encourage increased co-working between those with community learning and development (CLD) and learning for sustainability (LFS) experience and expertise.

It was informed by relevant Scottish Government policies, examples of current practice and offered the opportunity to consider how organisations and individuals could further engage with communities and promote learning for sustainability. The event attracted over 60 participants from across Scotland.

The Seminar

Presentations and information about showcase workshops are available on the Learning for Sustainability Scotland website. <http://learningforsustainabilityscotland.org/events/past-events/cld-seminar-27-2-14/>

The event was chaired by the Scotland's UN Decade of ESD CLD Working Group Chair, Colin Ross (CLD Standards Council), who highlighted the common values guiding learning for sustainability and community learning and development.

Aileen Campbell MSP, Minister for Children and Young People set out the policy context. Ms Campbell highlighted the opportunities offered by the Children and Young People's Act, the National Youth Work Strategy, the CLD (Scotland) Regulations, the Community Empowerment Bill and the recent Adult Learning Statement of Ambition. She said that

Learning for Sustainability is a Scottish Government and international priority for every type of learning.

¹ Learning for Change

² Learning for Sustainability Scotland

Professor Pete Higgins, Professor of Outdoor and Environmental Education at the University of Edinburgh and Director of Learning for Sustainability Scotland said

Through learning together we'll ensure that people and communities in Scotland have opportunities to understand more about the sustainable development issues that concern them, and to use their learning to help them shape their future as members of a nation that takes these responsibilities and opportunities seriously.

The One Planet School³ report outlines the importance of the working with the wider community. Phil Denning, Education Scotland, used current inspection findings to illustrate the opportunities offered by Curriculum for Excellence and the importance of intergenerational and family learning.

Anna Boni, Education Scotland, spoke about the wider global community dimension of learning for sustainability highlighting Education Scotland's cooperation agreement with Malawi 2015-2018 to improve education.

Peter Taylor, CLD Managers Scotland and CDAS focussed on the links between community development and community learning, detailing the opportunities for learning for sustainability in the current policy framework. Opportunities included implementation of the CLD Strategic Guidance 2012, the National Youthwork Strategy 2014, the Adult Learning Statement of Ambition 2014 and the forthcoming Community Empowerment Bill.

Participants had the opportunity to discuss the LfS dimension of CLD in action, in workshops detailing inspiring activities. Discussions uncovered why the activities had taken place, what happened and the impact, focussing on what had changed (Appendix 2).

Enhancing the Learning for Sustainability dimension of CLD

Reflecting on the inputs from presentations and showcase workshops participants discussed how the learning for sustainability dimension in community learning and development could be enhanced.

The main points that emerged from discussions were:

- Priority should be given to sharing good practice in the LfS dimension of CLD and providing opportunities for formal and informal networking online, regionally and nationally.

³ Learning for Sustainability

- Good practice in learning for sustainability is good practice in community learning and development. Approaches are likely to be community led, learning by sharing and doing rather than teaching and will involve helping to build capacity in communities.
- The LfS dimension of CLD should be enhanced by: supporting community ownership of land and property; providing resources for the learning component of Climate Challenge Fund and other carbon reduction projects; helping to support existing LfS and CLD initiatives and developing training for CLD practitioners.
- Contact should be made with CLD Managers to discuss how support for the LfS dimension of CLD can be provided in all local authorities.

Next Steps

Participants were asked to identify what they would do and what they thought should happen following the event.

Personal actions to be taken by participants included taking action locally, developing work with young people, making links between school and community, supporting local communities, sharing and developing good practice examples, following up the contacts made and reporting back to colleagues.

In identifying what should happen following the event participants highlighted the importance of increased partnership working, provision of more networking opportunities such as this event and other opportunities to hear about good practice and develop the skills and knowledge of learning for sustainability.

Evaluation of the seminar

The evaluation of the seminar was positive with participants wishing for more occasions bringing together those from CLD and LFS (Appendix 3 Summary Evaluations).

Appendix 1 Seminar Programme

Small Steps - Big Changes? - the Learning for Sustainability dimension of Community Learning and Development

When: 9.30am - 3pm, Thursday 27th February 2014

Where: G21 Paterson's Land, Moray House School of Education, University of Edinburgh, Holyrood Road, Edinburgh EH8 8AQ

Purpose:

There is no doubt that we face unprecedented challenges to our society, environment and economy. In places the fabric of our society has become seriously frayed and there are concerns around inequity and with the ways that we generate energy, produce and consume food, travel and dispose of waste. Learning for Sustainability, is a Scottish Government and international priority for every type of learning.

This seminar aims to:

- set out the supportive government policy context for Learning for Sustainability in relation to community learning and development;
- offer examples of current practice and encourage increased co-working between those with community learning and development (CLD) and sustainable development experience and expertise;
- provide CLD managers and practitioners with a framework to plan for the Learning for Sustainability dimension in all their work and evaluation systems.

Who is it for?

This seminar is for key staff from all organisations working in and with communities, whether in Community Learning and Development, Learning for Sustainability or with an interest in community engagement in public policy decision making.

Programme

09:30am	Registration and refreshments
10:00am	Welcome and introduction from the Chair Colin Ross, Chair UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development CLD Working Group, CLD Standards Council
10:15am	Keynote: Aileen Campbell MSP, Minister for Children and Young People
10:30am	Keynote: Learning for sustainability in CLD - an Education Scotland perspective Phil Denning, HMI, Education Scotland
10:45am	Keynote: Learning to work together for our future Professor Pete Higgins, Director, Learning for Sustainability Scotland

11.00am	Group Discussion- Implications for our practice
11:30am	Showcase- Learning for Sustainability in action Choice of projects from a variety of settings across the age range and across Scotland
12.45pm	LUNCH
1:30pm	Think Global, Act Local Anna Boni , HMI Education Scotland Peter Taylor , Community Learning and Development Managers Scotland and Community Development Alliance Scotland
1:50 pm	Enhancing the Learning for Sustainability dimension of CLD Small group discussions to identify effective ways to plan and evaluate CLD approaches to learning for sustainability. Plenary
2.40 pm	Next steps - Taking this work forward Colin Ross, Chair
3:00 pm	Ends

Appendix 2 LfS and CLD in Action

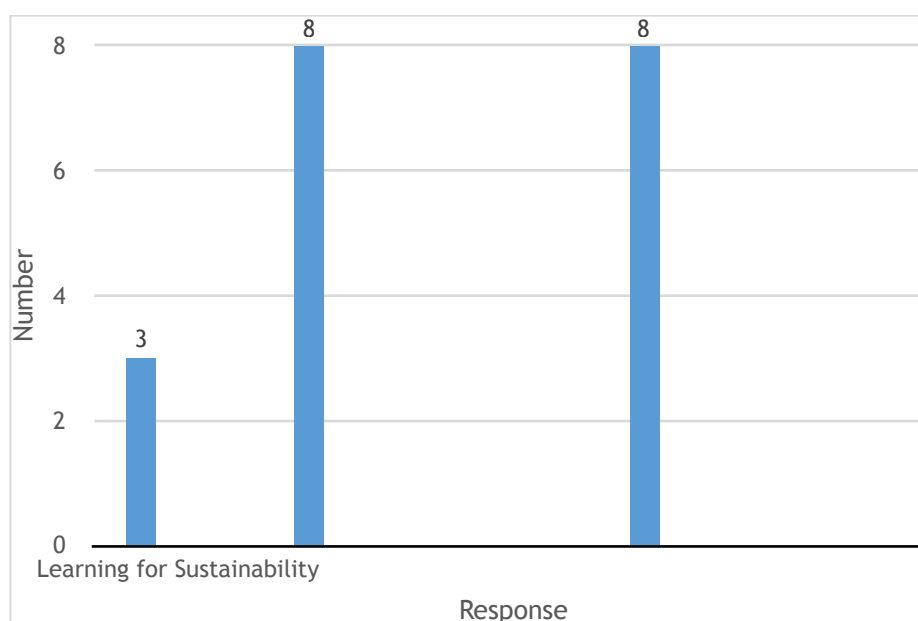
Theme	Contact	Website
Citizen Science	Stevie Jarron Citizen Science Coordinator, The Conservation Volunteers s.jarron@tcv.org.uk	The link to our Citizen Science website is http://www2.tcv.org.uk/display/scotlandcounts
John Muir Trust: engaging communities with Learning for Sustainability	Kim McIntosh John Muir Award Scotland Inclusion Manager Kim.mcintosh@jmt.org	http://www.jmt.org/jmaward-home.asp
Keep Scotland Beautiful Community LfS initiatives	Kathy Hopkin - Development Officer Junior Climate Challenge Fund Kathy.Hopkin@ksbscotland.org.uk Gillian Slider (Clean Up Scotland Campaign Officer) Gillian.Slider@ksbscotland.org.uk	http://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/sustainability-climate-change/climate-challenge-fund/junior-ccf/information/ http://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/environmental-quality/clean-up-scotland/
Dightyconnect Broughty Ferry Environmental Project	Ann Lolley, Project Worker; environ.project@dundeeccity.gov.uk	www.dightyconnect.org
Gorgie City Farm	Laura Moss, Education Officer education@gorgiecityfarm.org.uk	www.gorgiecityfarm.org.uk
Workers Education Association Scotland	Shirley Howitt – Area Organiser S.Howitt@weascotland.org.uk Alison Mclachlan – Numeracy Co- ordinator A.Mclachlan@weascotland.org.uk	www.weascotland.org.uk http://www.aloscotland.com/alo/viewresource.htm?id=432

Carse of Gowrie Sustainability Group	Fiona Ross, Chair, Carse of Gowrie Sustainability Group flross2010@gmail.com	www.carsesus.org
South Perth Community Partnership	Gill Motion, Senior Community Capacity Worker Perth and Kinross Council gmotion@pkc.gov.uk	http://www.southperthcommunitypartnership.co.uk
Worldwise	Helen Patrick, Volunteer Co-ordinator, One World Centre Dundee Helen@oneworldcentre.org.uk	http://www.oneworldcentredundee.org.uk/community/index.shtml

Appendix 3 Summary Evaluation

Participant profile

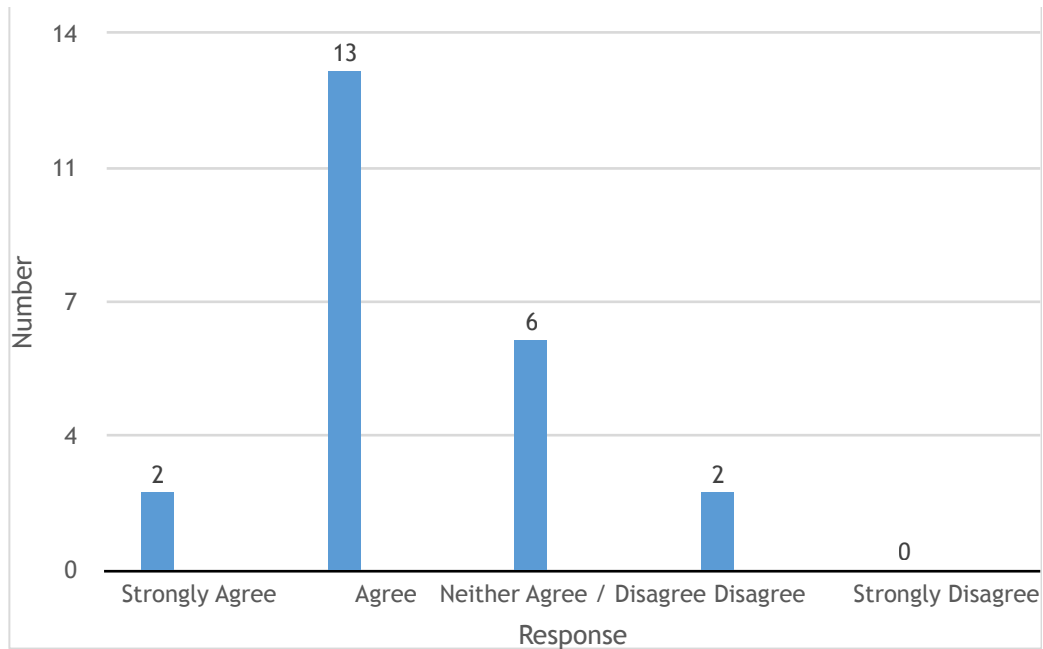
Q1. What term do you consider best represents your current work?



Additional comments

- International Engagement
- Allotment growing which encompasses elements of both & working with students
- Sustainable community measurement & development
- Policy analysis, research, strategy & engagement on developing alternative ways of shaping our economy for greater sustainability & social justice

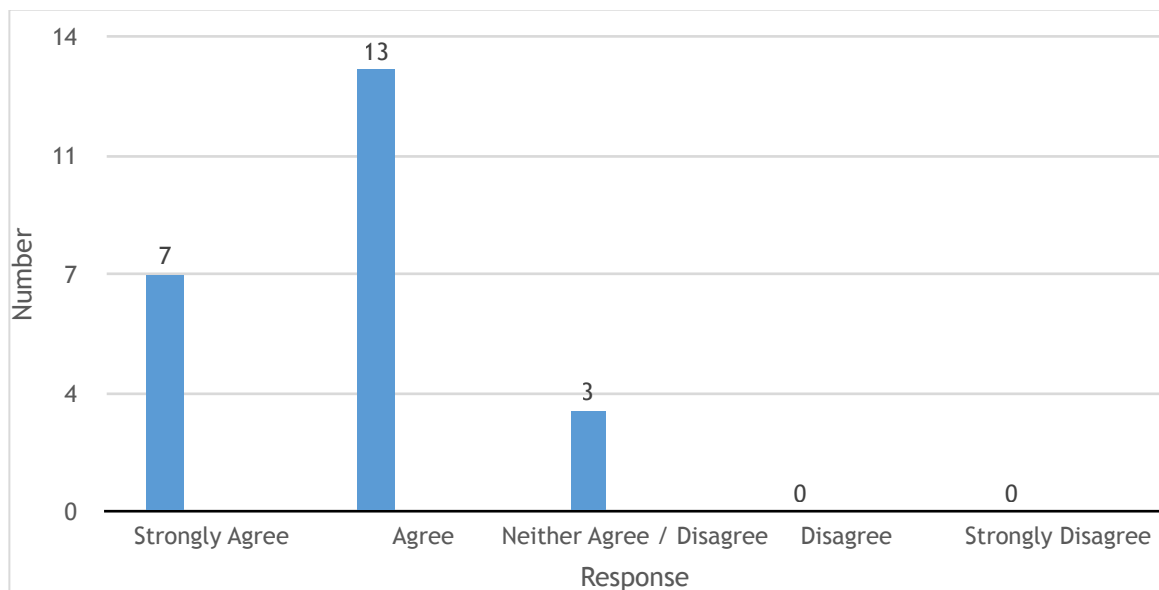
Q2. Overall I considered the keynote talks at the seminar to have been useful:



Summary of comments

- A number of respondents felt the keynote talks were more school oriented that they had been expecting and a greater focus on adult learning and capacity building would have been preferable.
- A few remarked on the disappointment they felt after speakers left following their input and not staying for discussions with delegates.
- Was a feeling that the keynote talks were a little policy led and ‘top down’.
- General feeling that the day was worthwhile and interesting with opportunities to share best practice among organisations.

Q3. Overall I considered the group discussions at the seminar to have been useful:

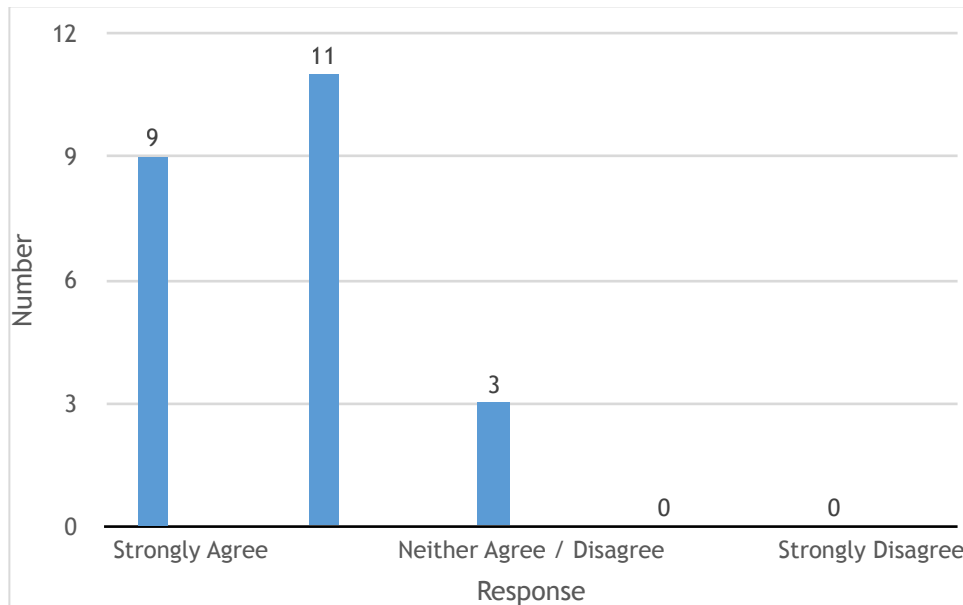


Summary of comments

- A few respondents felt the discussion would have benefited from a sharper focus.
- “Great to share ideas and current work projects with other practitioners”.

- There was a view that it may have been beneficial to discuss how to engage those not already active with this agenda.

Q4. Overall I considered the showcase sessions at the seminar to be useful.



Summary of comments

- Many found the practice sharing valuable and asked for more opportunities like this.
- Others felt that the short duration of the inputs made it more difficult to gain a full understanding of the practice.
- Opportunities to make new contacts arose as a result.

Q5 Please give any further comments that you'd like to make on the seminar that you wish to make:

Summary of comments

- None x 3
- Some delegates reported that they enjoyed the networking opportunity with other practitioners and commented on the diversity of practitioners in attendance, whilst others were of the impression that there were fewer CLD sector representatives than they expected with many spaces taken up by 'presenting practitioners'.
- Was a feeling that attendance by more community representatives would have been positive, and suggestions that this may have been influenced by the way the event was packaged/ promoted.
- Bigger venue to accommodate more delegates next time x 2.
- Is it possible to support the development of more local networks such as e.g. 'Rural Connect'.
- Very enjoyable and informative day x 4
- More sustainable catering policy please e.g. seasonal and local foods x 2
- Q&A session with the key note speakers would have been useful
- A well organised, thought-provoking and inspirational event that I enjoyed very much X 3
- Would be interested in further follow up and collaborative events. X 2
- Some expressed views that the purpose of the day felt confused...Was it sharing best practice or discussing policy and strategy.
- Would be useful to issue a report following the event including presentations.
- There were some suggestions regarding possible improvements in regard to the operational organisation of the event including; i) Use of social media during the day would have increased profile of event/broader agenda; ii) Lack of time for speakers providing overview of projects; iii) Specific project talks should have been signed up to on arrival or even prior to the event to ensure the projects highlighted are of interest to the audience – use breakout rooms in future. iv) Speakers who came to make their input and then left was demoralising.

Q6. Finally, how did you find out about this seminar?

