Playing our Part: A good practice guide for the inclusion of Education for Sustainability and Global Citizenship in Adult Community Learning

OCN Level 0-3 and Equivalents

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Symbiotic and Sustainable Systems Ltd. are committed to the cultural and social change for a sustainable and just world. We promote innovation and critical thinking in our practice with a respect for diversity of cultural worldviews. Since the Rio Summit in 1992, and the decades of protest prior to this summit, we've seen a significant shift in mindset, particularly in the Western modern world, towards an emphasis on the need to reduce our consumptive lifestyles to decrease our ecological and carbon footprints. We have also acknowledged the need to restructure global social and cultural systems to assist with ensuring social justice and human rights prevail worldwide, and moved towards sustainable health practices that focus on whole person approaches to well-being.

The idea to produce a good practice guide on ESGC for Adult Community Learning (ACL) evolved from discussions with Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC) staff on the rhetoric around SGC, and its inherent element of sustainable development. The implementation of which at the grass roots level of ACE appeared often to be lost in translation.

To remedy these concerns requires knowledge of, and access to, information, services and support for efficient and effective implementation of SGC for individual tutors and educators, social groups and the business community. Good practice guides that provide exemplars of activities utilised for the implementation of ESGC are paramount to this process.

Education at a community level is a key feature in education reform for SGC. For local authorities this requires building a clear picture for tutors on how to embed SGC in all tutorials regardless of topic area. What help is available; what common understandings exist for SGC; critical thinking skills; and flexible and diverse approaches to the inclusion of SGC are key aspects of good practice in embedding SGC in ACE tutorial content.

Playing our Part is a Good Practice Guide intended to help local authorities to ‘Play their Part’ in implementing the Welsh Assembly (WAG) and UK government strategies for ESDGC and ESD respectively. This guide is aimed primarily at adult, continuing and community-based education and learning professionals and volunteers. Playing our Part, however, has been written to assist anyone to understand and utilise the exemplars provided at all sectors in society.

RCTCBC Adult Education Service and Symbiotic and Sustainable Systems Ltd. worked together to provide tutors with training, information, resources and support, when required. This is part of a long term vision to move Wales towards a sustainable and just country and a global leader of cultural change for SGC. This guide is an example of Symbiotic and Sustainable Systems Ltd. work in supporting this cultural and social change with policy ideas, examples of good practice and support for local initiatives in SGC. We hope you find the guide an invaluable resource that is clear, practical and beneficial in your educational roles.

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Introduction

This good practice guide is aimed at education and learning professionals and volunteers in ACE. It takes the reader through the elements that need to be included to embed SGC in all tutorial and course content as much as is relevant and practically possible. These exemplars are intended as guidelines to improve teaching and learning. Flexibility and diversity in course design are paramount to ensure that teaching practices do not become prescriptive and in doing so go against the very nature of SGC. Different areas of an organisation will have different ways of implementing good practice and what they develop will depend very much on their students and local circumstances.

In the following sections we will look at the four pillars of SGC. These four pillars are: the foundational pillar of culture along with social, environmental and economic pillars. The pillars have a symbiotic relationship in that the benefit of embedding all four pillars equally into education as a whole is greater than the benefit received by isolating the four pillars separately in educational and curriculum content. In this guide we have attempted to provide several different approaches to good practice that can be used in different kinds of circumstances for ACE. The exemplars can also be used as a guide for anyone wishing to embed education for SGC in their course or training content.

What is taught is as important as how it is taught. We, therefore, attempted to include case studies that provided different examples of learning styles, experiences and environments. ACE should assist local communities to increase their level of education, resulting in an increase in social capital, cultural diversity and ultimately an increase in quality of life and economic regeneration. What better way to start the process of cultural change than in a nurturing social environment, such as a local community centre, through programmes designed by a supportive and enabling county borough council?

Whilst tutors are able to take responsibility for the embedding of SGC in curriculum and course content but they need assistance. County borough council leaders and top level management and administration have the power to shape an education and learning environment that is conducive to good practice in ACE for SGC. This will provide a strong sense of shared purpose; concrete support for implementation of ESGC, adequately allocated funding, policy and procedures developed in line with the purpose and on-going evaluation to ensure that the process of embedding SGC is continually being achieved and enhanced.

How to use this guide

This guide assumes that the main audience will be tutors based in local authorities in Wales who are already skilled in course design, syllabus and assessment development, lesson planning, learner characteristics and teaching techniques and will therefore focus on inclusion of activities for education for SGC in these activities including critical thinking activities. The majority of the content is derived from a training course for tutors delivering level 0-3 OCN’s in RCTCBC therefore many of the exemplars will reflect this education level and can be altered or extended to be utilised in higher levels of education.
We suggest that you work through this guide from beginning to end, compiling your own ideas of how you might embed education on the four pillars of SGC into your course content. Please be aware however, that the exemplars are from a diverse range of ACL courses and therefore may need some alterations prior to being utilised in your own course content to be fit for purpose in your specific discipline or topic area.

This guide is split into four sections following the four pillars of SGC: Cultural, Social, Environmental and Economic. Please remember as you read through this guide that each of these pillars is interconnected to the others and as a result the exemplars we use can often provide examples of content and activities that could be equally relevant to other pillars. In each section you will find examples of different learning styles and environments for a diverse range of learners with different learning experiences many of which draw on the range of multiple intelligences an individual possesses. Therefore we suggest you:

1. Work through each of the sections on the SGC pillars. Each section has two sub-sections; firstly a brief explanation of the pillar not intended to be a definitive explanation but a guide for you to build your own understanding of the topic. The second sub-section provides exemplars of good practice in embedding the pillar of SGC into your course curriculum content.
2. Read through the exemplars to identify those that you may be able to use in your own tutorial content. Use the exemplars to provide a framework for the activities you will design supplementing content with relevant information to your topic area.
3. Next go to the resources provided at the end of the guide to source relevant information and tools that you may be able to use in your course content and design.
4. Once you feel you have covered the four pillars in your content test it. Ask your family, friends or colleagues to read through the content and feedback any aspects that need clarifying, those that may be too difficult to understand or that need further clarification, re-worded or re-designing.

Any sources of information for the exemplars have been included in the list in Section 5: Resources in this guide. Please ensure you acknowledge these sources if you choose to use them.

Please be aware that every tutor’s topic area is very different and there is no ‘right’ way to embed SGC, nor is every learner the same, so learning activities and experiences need to be as diverse as the learners themselves. The best person to establish what topic, activity, level of SGC information and ensuing level of critically reflective debate will be you, the course tutor.

Disclaimer
The ‘good practice’ exemplars featured in this guide were chosen from activities undertaken in a pilot study training programme for ESDGC conducted by Symbiotic and Sustainable Systems Ltd for RCTCBC ACL tutors. The presentation of material throughout this guide do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of Symbiotic and Sustainable Systems Ltd or RCTCBC. While every effort is made to ensure the quality of the information contained in this guide, this implies neither responsibility for, nor approval of future initiatives on the part of Symbiotic and Sustainable Systems Ltd or RCTCBC.
ESGC in Adult Community Learning
Embedding Cultural Sustainability

This section provides exemplars of activities that can be utilised to include educational activities and information on the cultural sustainability pillar in ACE courses. The exemplar looks at sustainability of other cultures that we come in contact with in everyday life and when travelling or working overseas.

Explanation of Cultural Sustainability

The necessity for diversity in SGC prevents any one definition of its pillars to be dominant. However, for purpose of clarity in this guide we discuss culture as a whole system of beliefs, values, attitudes, customs, institutions and social relations. Culture is seen as the foundation pillar of SGC; the glue that holds the social, environmental and economic pillars steadfast (Polistina, 2009). Elements of cultural sustainability include:

- Multidisciplinary approach,
- Incorporation of non-formal, informal and formal education,
- Multiple social / environmental / political / historical and economic aims,
- Minority groups sustain spheres of trust (Bekerman & Kopelowitz, 2008).

Sustaining cultural diversity requires cultural competence – the 'attitudes, practice skills, and system savvy for cross cultural situations' (Chrisman, 2007:69). The central thrust of most cultural competence work involves individuals’ flexibility and capability to properly assess and treat all people respectfully and in a suitable manner appropriate to their culture. When we embed cultural sustainability into our tutorial content we have a space to critically discuss with our learners aspects of our Western and local cultures that either support or prevent the development and maintenance of a global citizenry that is fair and just.
Exemplars of Embedding Cultural Sustainability

Exemplar – Local Cultural Sustainability - Global Cross-Cultural Respect

One element of the cultural pillar that is easily embedded and is often done so without realisation is the sustaining of local cultures. To be able to respect diversity in global cultures people need to be able to respect diversity in local cultures. The activity discussed in this exemplar can be utilised solely for the purpose of acknowledging and sustaining local cultures and subcultures. It can, however, also be utilised to extend further afield to encourage respect and understanding of other local cultures in Wales. From this position then you will be able to move even further afield to national and international cultural sustainability activities.

The learners are able to use whatever resources they have to engage with this activity and in doing so you can enhance their basic and key skills. You will also be able to draw on non-formal and informal expertise in the community as much of the knowledge and information about local cultures resides in the memories of local people.

- Start with a group discussion of what is known about local customs, traditions and events. If you are struggling try prompting discussion by giving examples from other local communities for example:
  - Did you know that Glyn Coch is Welsh for ‘Red Glen’ hence providing the reason the locals are fond of their red leaf symbol for the area?
  - How many local communities do you know of that have cultural music festivals? (Cwmaman and Gwyl Pentre Coll for instance)
  - Which community in Wales still celebrates the tradition of the Bouncing of the Bounds? (Llantrisant of course).
- Then ask them to speak to 3 people they know in their local area about what they know or remember about local customs, traditions and events. This is a good way to include family and intergenerational learning in your activity.
- Once you have enough examples map out a yearly calendar of events that highlight the local culture of the area.
- To extend this activity into higher level skills have each learner then take one of cultural behaviours or events and generate marketing material to promote the activity to others outside of the local community including national and international communities.
- This final element of the activity can be utilised to move into discussions on global cultural sustainability. For example, give the learners the task of trying to find similar traditions, customs and events in other local cultures and attempt to link with them as sister communities.

It does not take long to build a diverse range of examples of local cultural traditions and customs and have enhanced your learners’ awareness and respect for these local cultures.
Examples of how to link to other SGC pillars:

- **Environmental** - From this initial discussion you will be able to expand your course content to more in-depth and critical reflection on our own culture’s use of water.
- **Economic** – Look at how the implementation of Western water supply systems will affect local economies and present future problems in terms of debt for local communities.
The exemplars provided in this section only offer a fragment of plethora of ideas for embedding social sustainability in course. When using these exemplars it is best to identify a social issue that is relevant to your course and therefore one which you are able to easily discuss in tutorial sessions. Use the exemplars then, to develop an activity around this social issue. The exemplar in this section was designed by a basic skills tutor on the course and extended upon by the author for the purposes of this guide. It provides both a local and international aspect to social sustainability and as such there is only one exemplar in this section. Whilst it could easily be used to discuss economic sustainability the issues raised in the activity are, more often than not, social issues in particular social justice. The exemplar addresses ethical consumerism from a general level and in relation to child labour.

**Explanation of Social Sustainability**

As for cultural sustainability, several attempts to explain and define social sustainability exist. However, one explanation that is suitable to local Welsh authorities comes across North Atlantic Ocean from the Vancouver City Council, Canada (2005). They succinctly and effectively explain social sustainability as follows:

For a community to function and be sustainable, the basic needs of its residents must be met. A socially sustainable community must have the ability to maintain and build on its own resources and have the resiliency to prevent and/or address problems in the future.

There are two types or levels of resources in the community that are available to build social sustainability (and, indeed, economic and environmental sustainability) - individual or human capacity, and social or community capacity.

Individual or human capacity refers to the attributes and resources that individuals can contribute to their own well-being and to the well-being of the community as a whole. Such resources include education, skills, health, values and leadership.

Social or community capacity is defined as the relationships, networks and norms that facilitate collective action taken to improve upon quality of life and to ensure that such improvements are sustainable.

To be effective and sustainable, both these individual and community resources need to be developed and used within the context of four guiding principles - equity, social inclusion and interaction, security, and adaptability (npn).

Social sustainability is integral to cultural sustainability as the cultural practices that are important to Cultural Environment Development are undertaken in the social setting. These social activities provide strong identification with a community and in turn this community identity and where you live are major elements of personal identity. This social and personal identity are strong motivating factors for those who participate in community initiatives and can provide a major source of mobilisation of community members (Adamson, Dearden and Castle, 2001). The social sustainability aims of the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) (2009) are:
Social justice and equality are two integral concepts in social sustainability and any topic area relevant to these two concepts are important.

**Exemplars of Embedding Social Sustainability**

**Exemplar – Ethical Consumerism**

For the purpose of this exemplar we are drawing on outlines provided by MakeMoneyMakeSense (2011) for ethical consumerism information, however, there are a number of other organisations that can be approached for similar information for example Citizens Advice Bureau; UNICEF.

- Start by identifying what social sustainability elements you feel would best suit the topic you teach. Some of these are outlined above and others you will find when researching the resources provided at the end of this guide.
- Once you have identified these social sustainability elements look at the questions asked in Figure 1 and 2 and link them to your elements.
- You can develop your own ethical consumerism quiz or ask the learners to select one question each and return to the next session with details on these questions to contribute to the ensuing discussion.

The questions explored for both discussions (general ethical consumerism and child labour) can be altered to suit the type and level of education you are seeking to provide. For example, basic skills in literacy can be enhanced through the need for learners to research written sources for materials or IT skills can be extended through the need to use computers for the international elements of the topic areas. At whatever level or topic area you may be enhancing the common skills being enhanced through this activity will be the learners critical thinking skills – a major skill required for global citizenship and behaviour change for sustainable living.
What is ethical consumerism?

Ethical consumerism is about how you choose to spend your money and what sort of goods you choose to buy.

- What you spend your money on affects other people and the environment.
- Ethical consumers buy things from companies that act ethically. These companies try not to harm the environment or society.
- Trade affects the economies of other countries and groups within society positively and negatively.
- Our consumption also affects the environment.
- Does our prosperity and happiness come at a cost to others?

Child Labour

Children are made to work in many parts of the world. Sometimes they are forced to do this by forms of slavery.

But conditions of extreme poverty mean children have to work to survive. They go without education and are deprived of the kind of upbringing we in the West are used to.

- If you knew products were made through child labour would you buy them?
- If you were on holiday in a foreign country would you buy goods made by children?

For more information visit:
UNICEF www.unicef.org.uk
End Child Exploitation Campaign www.endchildexploitation.org.uk

Examples of how to link to other SGC pillars:

- Cultural – Explore the traditional culture of the countries in which child labour is being employed.
- Economic - Discuss the implementation of economic systems that prevent child labour from being required and look at alternative locally based economic systems (even if this means we don’t get our new iPod).
Three exemplars are provided in this section offer a diversity of activities for embedding environmental sustainability into ACL. The first – an environmental quiz - is a generic activity that can be implemented with any group of learners. The second exemplar is likely to be useful for learners that are comfortable with outdoor activities and the third is a group activity that encourages the use of different learning styles to produce a creative product at the end of the activity.

Explanation of Environmental Sustainability

Essentially sustainability of the environment requires people at all levels of society and in all walks of life to be not only responsible for their actions in a local sense but these actions are extended to their impact on the entire global environment (Walker, 2003). The WAG (2009) stated that we must meet the needs of current and future generations without depleting the resources provided by and upon which we all depend: biodiversity, scenic beauty, cultural heritage, opportunities for access and recreation, natural resources to produce food, fibre, energy and building materials, as well as ecosystems services supplying our drinking water, controlling flooding and storing or releasing carbon (p. 45). A sustainable Wales is one where Wales … lives within its environmental limits, using only its fair share of the earth’s resources so that our ecological footprint is reduced to the global average availability of resources, and we are resilient to the impacts of climate change. (p. 17).

When we look at sustainability of the environment we need to consider that the natural environment is a source of economic resources and from a more holistic quality of life perspective it is a source of enjoyment and inspiration, contributes to physical and mental wellbeing, underpins cultural traditions and customs, and contributes to one’s sense of place and identity (WAG, 2009).
Exemplar – Environmental Quiz

This activity is suitable for any group of learners and can be altered to suit the level of experience and education. It is therefore a suitable introductory activity. It can also be used as a progressive learning tool by increasing the complexity and knowledge level of the questions as you progress through the course. Likewise subsequent discussions can be enhanced with more critical reflection as the course progresses.

1. Provide the learners with an environmental quiz to test their knowledge of topics such as ecological and carbon footprints, world eco-systems or general knowledge of environmental issues.
2. Either externally source the information or develop the environmental quiz yourself. There are many websites that can provide credible knowledge for this and examples are provided in the resources section of this guide.
3. Once completed by the learners ask them to look at the questions they did not know. Then ask them to research this question and develop the answer into a short presentation for the group.
4. Provide the learner with the opportunity to present in a variety of forms for example oral, written, creative or performance.
Exemplar – Walking with a diverse group of learners for environmental sustainability

In any community there will be people from a range of backgrounds, education and socio-economic levels. The level of environmental knowledge that is shared however, in non-formal and informal groups is well-established and a valuable tool for encouraging actions for environmental sustainability. This outdoor activity can be altered to suit people with limited experience in the outdoors through to people who regularly go into the outdoors.

• Co-ordinate a local walk with your group, bearing in mind local and national legislation for outdoor leadership if the walk is to be a paid for by the learners (refer to the Mountain Leader Training Board).
• Prior to the walk survey the sites you will visit and identify unique or interesting aspects of the environment.
• On the walk you can initiate discussion on these aspects with general questions and conversation to prompt critical thinking on the learner’s part. The example provided by the tutor in this instance was that the local trees often appear tired, withered and with brittle bark that often crumbled when touched.
• From here you will be provided with an introduction to issues such as soil pollution from use of pesticides in farming and gardening or carbon emissions from vehicles being absorbed into the atmosphere and descending as acid rain.
• Once the problems are identified solutions that have been identified can be researched with a view to the group developing an action plan to reduce the level of soil pollution in the local area.
• This provided the – soil pollution
Exemplar – Photography course – Potatoes and Plastic

For a photography skills tutor attending the course the use of media to promote environmentally friendly shopping practices was implemented through a group marketing campaign. This activity is beneficial if you require a less time consuming activity as much of the research and creativity for the outcome can be done within the session or in break out groups using internet searches. The learners are asked to generate an advertising campaign to reduce the use of plastic bags in consumer shopping habits. This activity requires the learners to research the impact of plastic bags on the environment utilising important IT, reading, writing and numeric skills for statistical analysis. The activity raises awareness of environmental issues and allows learners to find solutions that can be advertised to a wider audience for cultural behavioural change. One example of what may be developed as a result of this activity is displayed below (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Potatoes and Plastic

I would rather go naked

than wear a bag.

Use a bag for life

Source: RCTCBC - Gareth Morgan

Example of how to link to other SGC pillars:

- Culture – Explore the need for cultural behaviour change and the assertion that Western consumerism is at the heart of the world’s unsustainable living habits.
- Culture/Economic – Use the diverse walking group activity to examine illegal logging in Amazon rainforests.
- Social – One way to link environmental sustainability to the social sustainability agenda is through the importance a healthy natural environment has on our overall well-being.
ESGC in Adult Community Learning
Embedding Economic Sustainability

This final section on the pillars of sustainability will look at economic sustainability from a non-monetary and monetary perspective. The first example in this section is the use of non-monetary economy that continues to assist local economic sustainability. The second looks at the use of sustainable enterprises as a form local economic resilience in times of change.

Explanation of Economic Sustainability

A sustainable economy is resilient to changes in global economy and has a long term economic future secured by achieving the transition to a low carbon, low waste economy (WAG, 2009). In areas that require economic regeneration such as the Welsh Valleys communities, economic sustainability requires engaging local communities, building future infrastructure that is favourable to sustainable ways for living and working and based on sustainable principles.

Exemplars of Embedding Economic Sustainability

Exemplar - Walking and Painting

Although designed for a course on guiding walks this activity can be utilised for any learning group by simply replacing the activity (walking) with any other activity in which your tutorial group participates.

Set a task for the group to look at alternative or non-monetary economic practices. Have the learners plan a weekend walking trip. Have them explore ideas of how they could assist with the local economy of the area they are visiting without the use of money. Start the group discussion by providing an example, for instance one of the tutors on the programme suggested that the walkers could negotiate with the owners of the hotel a reduced rate of accommodation in exchange for providing a service for the hotel.

This could be weeding the garden or assisting with the painting of a room. The types of activities will depend on the number of people in the walking group and the cost of accommodation.
Irrespective of what level of group or topic area you are teaching there are always ways in which you can explore alternative and sustainable economic structures. Working with your group to design innovative sustainable local enterprises provides opportunities for such exploration. Social enterprises are defined as:

“… businesses with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or community, rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for shareholders and owners. This means organisations that trade goods and services and use the majority of their profits for social and environmental goals (Cabinet Office, 2009, npn; Welsh Assembly Government, 2009, npn).

Essentially social enterprises are enterprise oriented, have social aims and ownership (AVOW, 2009, p. 3). What makes a social enterprise a sustainable enterprise is their actions to support the sustainability of not only economic and social pillars but also environmental and cultural pillars. The following exemplar will be more suitable to some learners than others; however, you can design the content of the sessions to be more extensive depending on the education level and life experience of your learners.

It is useful to start this activity with prior research and knowledge of sustainable enterprises from local Welsh communities. You can also draw on international examples and link this with global citizenship education.

- Discuss aspects that make the sustainable enterprises unique – why does it stand out? What makes it successful? Does it have a different style of management or has it come up with an innovative idea for the enterprise?
- Ask the learners to identify the elements of the sustainable enterprise that sustain the local culture, environment, society and economy.
Exemplar – Sustainable Enterprise (cont.)

- Once these are identified the next step is to parallel these aspects and elements with the learner’s own community and surrounding area. Start the process of thinking innovatively about what type of sustainable enterprise would be suitable to them or their local community by asking:
  
  - What is unique about your locale?
  - What would increase the quality of life of people in the area?
  - Who would be involved?
  - Who would benefit and why?
  - How would their enterprise contribute to sustaining the four pillars of SGC?
  - Discuss constraints that they may encounter in setting up this sustainable enterprise?

The diversity of skills and knowledge required to examine sustainable enterprises and subsequently design on provide opportunities to not only develop but extend on the learner’s basic and key skills.

Example of how to link to other SGC pillars:

- Social – Examine the idea that through support for local economies and businesses, local people are provided with a higher quality of life and enhance social capacity and cohesion.
- Environmental – Consider the use of eco-friendly paints by your walking group.
- All – The sustainable enterprise activity can easily be extended to increase learner’s understanding of the other three non-economic pillars of SGC.
ESGC in Adult Community Learning

Resources


http://vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cyclerk/20050524/documents/p1.pdf,


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