

Down to Earth Project – practical approaches to ESDGC, through use of the outdoors (Swansea)

Target group

Mainly 'excluded' young people

One key message

"Base the approaches on solutions and support, not problems and guilt...and keep at it..."

What are we doing?

Down to Earth Project is a social enterprise specialising in Sustainability Education and Natural Building. Based on a beautiful site on the Gower Peninsula, Swansea, we offer a range of groundbreaking programmes for 'disaffected' young people and training programmes for adults in Traditional and Natural Building methods. We specialise in developing vocational training in traditional building skills combined with adventurous activities, wilderness expeditions, and cooking fantastic food.

As a centre for Sustainability Education (ESDGC), we offer educational programmes and training for workers from non-formal and formal educational sectors. Our educational site demonstrates best practice in blending traditional eco-friendly building methods with the most up-to-date technological advances in renewable energy generation, and some lovely rare breed pigs! Our work aims to use innovative and practical approaches to exploring ESDGC, through use of the outdoors.

We get funding from a variety of sources including:

- Big Lottery Fund (Reaching Out) - Wilderness Therapy and Traditional/Natural Building with disaffected young people
- Heritage Lottery Fund (Your Heritage) - Traditional and Natural Building for disadvantaged adults
- Heritage Lottery Fund (Young Roots) - Natural Building for disaffected young people
- WCVA (Volunteer Coordinator Fund) - Community Natural Building
- DFID Mini-grant - ESDGC Training
- Environment Wales (Russell Commission) - Cob building with homeless projects
- Social Risk Fund - Natural Building with community organisations
- Spinout and Finance Wales - Graduate Enterprise Funding

The target groups for our project are:

- Disaffected/excluded young people
- Youth Offending Teams
- Community groups
- School groups
- Youth groups
- Play schemes
- Volunteers

- Businesses

Outcomes?

- Increased self confidence and self esteem
- OCN accreditation in Traditional and Natural Building
- OCN accreditation in ESDGC
- We track all the young people, evaluate and use a wide range of indicators/methods to assess that it's working. Also independent studies have been done into the effectiveness of our work.

Challenges and solutions

Demonstrating that ESDGC can be explored through practical, hands-on approaches.

Next steps

We are planning to develop our programmes further, including with apprenticeships.

Contact

Tel: 01792 369 736; Mobile: 07900077122; Email: info@downtoearthproject.org.uk
www.downtoearthproject.org.uk