

Young People Taking a Lead on Sustainable Development

Welsh Youth Forum for Sustainable Development, WYFSD (All Wales)

Target group

All young people between the ages of 0-25

Some key messages:

- *Don't lecture – make it relevant.*
- *Make it fun and interesting/ normal/ part of every day life.*
- *Aspire to the young people's strengths, interests and passions.*
- *Lots of peer education.*
- *Be informed – know what you're doing – true knowledge!*
- *Share experience.*
- *Knowledge is power!*
- *Make it youth led.*

What do we do?

The WYFSD is a national organisation run by young people, for young people. The main aims of the WYFSD are education, empowerment and action. We strive to empower young people whilst raising awareness in them and others they come into contact with and to be relevant, meaningful and useful to a diverse range of young people who want to create a sustainable future. We do this by young people led group work, co-operative ways of working, educating other young people and using peer education. We also work with similar organisations – partnership working is very important! There are a small number of paid co-ordinators and professional support workers for WYFSD.

Outcomes?

The key achievements of WYFSD are:

- Increased dialogue about sustainable development issues
- Practical solutions to sustainable development
- Raising awareness of environmental issues and sustainable development

All ESDGC themes and concepts are covered within the WYFSD's work. Certain themes and concepts are particularly prominent in work carried out to date including sustainable change, values and perceptions, choices and decisions, consumption and waste and climate change. We know that these outcomes are achieved because:

- Young people are personally achieving / learning / taking action etc.
- We can see lifestyle changes/ visible changes – public transport, ethical consumerism, rubbish recycling etc.

- Continuous verbal and written evaluations (using a variety of different methods).
- Feedback from participants, school teachers and leaders when carrying out peer education.
- Other organisations say “we rock!”

Challenges and solutions

Our main challenges are:

- Defeatism
- Bad self-advertising
- Lack of sufficient funding
- Long distance communication (all our members spread out)
- Time constraints – working with school/ free time
- Confusion of roles
- Structure of organisation
- Disempowerment
- Not enough energy for projects – lack of motivation

We overcome these by:

- Internal training being developed and delivered to enable workers and members to carry out more effective projects.
- Talking through challenges, finding ways that work for those involved with the WYFSD.
- Using a variety of communication methods including regular face to face meetings, teleconferencing, email, newsletters, Skype and website.
- Constantly reviewing the structure of the organisation to make it more effective.

Next steps

Future projects being explored for the coming year include more peer education, a carbon cycle bike ride from Dolgellau to Cardiff, eco-fashion shows, a presence at the Eisteddfod, setting up a youth cafe, building a wind turbine, and a hydro-electric technology practical course.

Quotes from WYFSD members

“I have learnt that the best events come from efficient team work. Our fashion show was a success; we need to build on that from now on.”

“WYFSD has changed my life. It has made me realise that there is hope for the next generation, and that ordinary people like me can make a difference!”

“Building the wind turbine was a very direct and practical way of showing that it is possible for us to build our own solutions that enable a sustainable world.”



A completed wind turbine in action

Contact

Carys Lovering, Support Worker, Welsh Youth Forum on Sustainable Development
Phone: 01792 480200/ 07533317844E-mail: carys@wyfsd.org