

Abstract

Analysis of views on the development of Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship policy in Wales

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This paper is concerned with the strategy for Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC), which has been developed by the Welsh Assembly Government. ESDGC is now, or should be, embedded in both the curriculum and overall management policies of all schools in Wales, and it is part of the inspection process. The paper builds on *ESDGC: a case study in policy development* (Bennell and Norcliffe, 2009). Whilst that paper analysed how ESDGC had developed, this paper is based on interviews with the key participants and explores the different drivers, views, approaches and attitudes which led to ESDGC being adopted. It discusses how participants from a variety of organisations with very different aims came together with a common goal to develop ESDGC and whether this fits with models of constructivist learning such as communities of practice and activity theory. It concludes that there were a range of drivers involved; these included the Welsh Assembly Government's constitutional commitment to sustainability, the drive and enthusiasm of key individuals and the sharing and subsequent modification of different perspectives. It discusses these drivers and sets them in an overall educational context.

Introduction

The development of Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC) in schools in Wales is an interesting case study in policy development. ESDGC is currently a cross-cutting theme in the revised learner-centred and skills-based National Curriculum for Wales (DCELLS, 2008a); it is a topic covered in school inspection (Estyn, 2006b) and schools are expected to develop it through all areas of school life (DCELLS, 2008b). It has not always been so; ESDGC in schools has gone through a rather long period of development. Its implementation has come about as a result of a combination of factors including government policy, lobbying, curriculum reform and the development of a support network. It is particularly interesting in that it has incorporated education for both sustainable development and global citizenship in one policy.

Bennell and Norcliffe (2009), in the first of two papers on this theme, describe the stages of ESDGC development in detail. This paper concentrates on exploring some of the factors in the evolution of ESDGC through first-hand accounts from those involved in its development. This is a story of determination, opportunism, a newly devolved government wishing to make its mark, individuals with the ability to inspire others, competing aims, and teamwork.

Summary of ESDGC development

In 1999 the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) came into being with a constitutional commitment to consider sustainable development in all its activities (Government of Wales Act, 1998). In parallel with these developments, at a UK level the Department for International Development (DFID) was established in 1997 under the new Labour government and published a White Paper, *Eliminating World Poverty: A Challenge for the 21st Century* (DFID, 1997). Within the Curriculum Council for Wales there were already advocates for including global issues and sustainable development and these themes became embedded in the framework for Personal and

Social Education (PSE) (ACCAC, 2000) and attention was drawn to them in several curriculum subject orders.

In 2000 a non-affiliated, like-minded group of people from organisations such as Oxfam, the RSPB (Royal Society for the protection of Birds), *Cyfanfyd* (The Development Education Association for Wales) the Environmental Education Council for Wales and Development Education Centres came together to form a movement called Education for the Future. This group lobbied the WAG for even greater inclusion of education for sustainable development and global citizenship in the curriculum. This led to the WAG setting up the Education for Sustainable Development Panel as a sub-panel of its Sustainable Development Panel. It also set up a Global Citizenship Working Group, convened jointly with the Department for International Development. Members of these two groups came from organisations with different aims and objectives, effectively from different communities of practice. Some were primarily concerned with global injustice, others with nurturing understanding, respect and care for the environment. A third influence came from others who were educationalists concerned with providing effective educational opportunities for pupils. What they had in common was a desire to help children understand the interconnections between places and issues in the world today.

At the outset in 2001, with the separate Global Citizenship Working Group and the Sustainable Development Advisory Panel, ESD and EGC could have continued to be developed through these two separate strands. In that case, Education for Sustainable Development, with its key place in Wales' constitution would have been more likely to take precedence in the curriculum. The key concepts for both issues were similar but there was, and still is in some quarters, the debate about whether sustainable development is a concept of global citizenship as presented in Oxfam's *Curriculum for Global Citizenship* (Oxfam, 1997) and the Development Education Association (DFEE, 2000) or whether global citizenship, or the global dimension as it is referred to by the DEA, is a concept of sustainable development as presented

by the UK Panel for Education for Sustainable Development (1999) The publication of the first ESDGC document (ACCAC, 2002) was the first sign that the two types of education would be considered together in Wales, whereas in many European countries there has been, until recently at least, a tendency to deal with these two strands in separate documents.

The composition of the two initial panels (Appendix 1) reflected the different emphases on environmental education, education for sustainable development and global citizenship. There were, however, some organisations such as the Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales (ACCAC) and the Schools Inspectorate (Estyn) that were represented on both panels and this provided some common ground for later developments.

The two advisory groups were merged to form the ESDGC Panel in 2004 in order to “increase efficiency and effectiveness” (WAG ESDGC Advisory Panel, 2008) and an ESDGC Champion was appointed to develop a new strategy. The changes implemented by this ESDGC Panel have had major implications, not only for schools, but for all sectors of education in Wales, with the production of appropriate sector guidance documents. In the schools sector key documents include *Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship; Why, What, How* (ACCAC, 2002); *Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship: A Strategy for Action* (DELLS, 2006) and *Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship: A Common Understanding for Schools* (DCELLS, 2008b). ESDGC has impacted on, and been affected by, the revised national curriculum, and affected the ways in which schools work from day to day.

This research study was designed to find out more about the way in which these changes came about and how a group of people from very different organisations worked together to enable the changes. We wanted to find out how the organisations came together; what were their initial hopes and expectations; what were the drivers and motivating factors; were there areas

of conflict or disagreement; did those involved feel that the final outcomes were what they had envisaged or hoped for; were there any causes for concern; and could any factors be identified which might be of use to other countries developing similar strategies? To learn more about this, the views were sought from those involved in the development of the original and current strategies promoting Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship in the schools' sector.

Methodology

Interviews

The research was conducted by semi-structured interviews with early members of the Education for Sustainable Development Panel and Global Citizenship Working Group and current members of the ESDGC Panel. The selection criteria were that those interviewed would:

- all have a School or Initial Teacher Education brief;
- have been a member of the Global Citizenship Working Group or the ESD Advisory panel, or the ESDGC Panel or been heavily involved in the development of ESDGC, and would include
 - the WAG ESDGC Champion;
 - those who have continually been members of both early and later groups;
 - some who were only members of the early groups;
 - all members of the current ESDGC panel with a school or ITET brief;
 - representatives who work for the Welsh Assembly Government, Non-governmental organisations, Local Education Authorities and Estyn, the HM Inspectorate in Wales;
 - at least one non-panel member who was commissioned to develop the ESDGC strategy;
 - several of those who contributed to the ESDGC strategy and Common Understanding consultation process.

They numbered fifteen in total. All were adults, a mixture of males (7) and females (8) in the age range 35-60.

The interview schedule can be found in Appendix 2. Potential interviewees were first sent a letter by email, asking for their consent to be interviewed (Appendix 3) and including an interview schedule. This was followed up by a telephone call to fix a suitable interview time. Interviews were mostly carried out in the interviewees' place of work. Fourteen were carried out through the medium of English and one through the medium of Welsh, They lasted for around an hour, were recorded on a tape recorder and later transcribed by the researchers.

Analysis

The use of a specific analysis programme such as Nu'dist was felt to be unnecessary with the small number of interviews so the data was dealt with manually. The full transcripts were first read by both researchers. Although each interview question dealt with a key topic there was inevitably information relating to different categories throughout the transcripts. For each interview this information was first re-sorted under the relevant questions. From there, twelve major and 52 minor categories of topics were initially agreed; these was subsequently reduced to 12 major and 12 minor categories for ease of analysis (Table 1).

The interview material was then coded and sorted into these categories. The findings are discussed below under category headings.

Table 1. Categories for coding interviews

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| <p>HOPES AND EXPECTATIONS Strategy/Policy Wider purpose of Education Prepare for future Actions - Make a difference Promote issues</p> <p>REFLECTIONS ON PANEL MAKE-UP Role Representation Effectiveness</p> <p>WHY HAS IT DEVELOPED IN THIS WAY? Key players Strategy/policy</p> <p>MAJOR INFLUENCES AND DRIVERS</p> <p>TENSIONS</p> | <p>THE PROCESS?</p> <p>ACHIEVED?</p> <p>BEST THINGS</p> <p>IMPACT ON EDUCATION AS A WHOLE</p> <p>POSSIBLE POSITIVE FORCES FOR THE FUTURE OF ESDGC</p> <p>POSSIBLE NEGATIVE FORCES OR OBSTACLES</p> <p>HOW DO YOU SEE IT PROGRESSING? Wales UK World</p> |
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Findings

Reasons for involvement

It was clear that all those involved in the development of ESDGC were committed to the process, but their pathways into this involvement were very different. For some, their involvement arose because they took on a specific job, working for NGOs such as RSPB or Oxfam, or took on a new post in the Welsh Assembly Government and its related agencies. A number were already working in education, many with a geography or science background. Most had had an interest in ESDGC issues for many years and for, for some this has been a lifelong commitment:

“Can’t really remember not being. My concern started with particularly a concern about global poverty. I was reading about this before going on VSO which was in secondary school.”

How do the initial group come together in the first place?

The desire for attention to be paid to the connections between the issues and topics of sustainable development and global citizenship led early developments. Some of the members of the Environmental Education Council for Wales felt that the new global focus on sustainable development was not being sufficiently developed in Wales, with environmental education still much to the fore. Similarly, some working within Development Education were exploring how to draw attention to the global dimension in sustainable development. Several exploratory conversations about the commonalities led to the formation of the like-minded, non-affiliated group led 'Education for the Future'.

"It really was a short period, just pulling people together and it was done on goodwill, with no money and can we all just sign at the bottom?"

"I felt very excited that this new group of people could see the connections. They could see that we were all after skills, attitudes and values and that there was a big joint area and that it was really exciting that we could fit with the Assembly."

"One of the things that cemented it was finding projects that Oxfam and RSPB could join in on that exemplified what it was and that's how we came to produce *Making a Difference* (Brinn *et al*, 2001) and that was how we showed other people what it was about. It was sort of a physical expression of our discussions."

Hopes and expectations

The interviewees were asked about their initial hopes and expectations. Interestingly, the fact that the respondents came via different pathways does not seem to have produced different expectations of the process or reactions to it. They all wanted to see ESDGC becoming fully integrated and embedded in the educational system in Wales.

"I think I hoped that it would become fully integrated and fully supported with an established funding stream to see it through, to make sure that all the work that's been done wasn't just a flash in the pan, that it would become a continuing thing."

A number of them were also concerned about the direction of education

"Back in 1989, 1990 the National Curriculum was drowning out all the good things about education. It was drowning out a holistic approach to education. When I understood that ESDGC was being brought forward in Wales I saw that as an opportunity to reclaim some of that ground, and the kind of things that I think are important in education."

Specifically they appeared to be seeking a broader and more holistic approach to education that prepares students for the future, education that makes a difference. This was the central issue for many of those connected with this process. ESDGC builds on and incorporates a range of educational methodologies (see Bennell and Norcliffe, 2009) that have different names, but are all concerned with changing both the way that children are educated and the methods by which schools are run. In the new Welsh Assembly Government they found people willing to listen. The focus of education in Wales was changing with ongoing discussion of school league tables and formalised testing at 7, 11 and 14 (these were later abolished) and moving towards one of co-operation, collaboration, skills and citizenship (ACCAC, 2000). It was the view of several of the respondents that these differences from England can be overemphasised, but that they do exist and are a result of the Ministers and civil servants in the WAG actually listening to teachers and educational lobbyists. Richardson (2002) remarks on the growing process of interest groups exploiting the opportunities presented by a policy process which is increasingly characterized by multiple opportunity structures. The foundation of the WAG generated precisely such an opportunity which was quickly seized by NGOs such as Amnesty International, Oxfam and the RSPB. This brought a feeling of optimism, hopes were high. As one correspondent commented:

'My hope is that the world would be transformed.'

Influences and drivers

On the question of why the ESDGC policy was perceived as developing successfully in Wales, the respondents identified a range of reasons. They were clear about the major influences and drivers. One of the key drivers was that a commitment to sustainability was embedded in the constitution of

the Welsh Assembly Government from the outset. Wales was the first country to do this and the effects were significant. Every policy that comes before the WAG has to demonstrate to a greater or lesser extent that it is sustainable. Clearly there is a tendency for some to pay lip service to this commitment, but it set a benchmark that made it easier for policies and initiatives to be challenged.

“There was a tacit acceptance across the assembly and in education particularly that sustainability had to be factored into people’s personal and corporate agendas, and whilst initially you weren’t exactly pushing at open doors, you were certainly pushing at doors that did eventually open.”

Specific individuals were mentioned, for example the then Education Minister, Jane Davidson:

“when she came in as minister, with her personal background and experience with her passions it created space for NGOs like Oxfam or RSPB and a few others who were cognisant of that to be able to present a place where Wales could be distinctly different.”

Not only did the WAG have sustainability as a feature of its constitution, but the very fact of the WAG’s existence gave scope for NGOs and others to have an influence. Richardson (2002) remarks on the growing process of interest groups exploiting the opportunities presented by a policy process which is increasingly characterized by multiple opportunity structures. The foundation of the WAG generated precisely such an opportunity which was quickly seized by NGOs such as Amnesty International, Oxfam and the RSPB. One respondent put it succinctly: “I think that Wales is too small to be able to hide a number of educational issues as might happen in England.”

Apart from Jane Davidson, there were a number of key individuals from NGOs, ACCAC (the Curriculum and Assessment Authority), Estyn (the Welsh School’s inspection authority) etc. who made an early contribution. ACCAC’s (and later DCELLS’) role in the work of developing ESDGC was praised “so it’s pretty well embedded in the curriculum now”.

These individuals were crucial. Two respondents referred to the idea of a virus, as one of them stated:

"I've been doing some work recently looking at change management and one of the analogies that come up is that of a virus. You get a few people together who've become infected and who then infect everybody else and when I read about that I thought I can see how that's happened here."

The role of the ESDGC Champion, seconded from RSPB, once appointed, was recognised as being of particular importance, especially her personal attributes of skills, enthusiasm and tenacity.

"She had the skills to bring people together in a non-threatening way."

There were other drivers, for example the commitment of the NGOs generally and the funding which came from the Department for International Development via the Enabling Effective Support Initiative.

Reflections on the composition of the panels

Many respondents admitted that the initial appointments to the early panels and to the new ESDGC Panel were somewhat arbitrary but acknowledged that they later became more strategic. Panel members and some non-panel members were fairly positive about this process and about the mix of people from the voluntary and statutory sectors. Others were aware of adjustments that had taken place:

"Yes, I suppose the initial ESD group, in hindsight the membership could have more representative and somewhat broader to reflect the various sectional interests that exist, but that's part of the iterative process. We reconstituted it then when we embraced global citizenship both to embrace global citizenship interest but also to give us the opportunity to refocus the ESD side."

A number of non-panel members expressed reservations about the composition of the panels, "Well I don't know who chose them or who made those decisions, because it's not a representative group." However, there was awareness that attempts had been made to get a good mix of people, and that there were always going to be problems on a project such as this. There was an awareness that some people had to be involved simply because

of the organisations they represented and that some of these representatives were more interested than others. One respondent referred to “a lot of people who just either didn’t contribute, or didn’t turn up – a waste of chair space really.” Others represented more than one organisation. For instance the person who represented Cyfanfyd, an umbrella organisation of voluntary sector development groups, was from Oxfam:

“So, for me personally, was I there with my Oxfam hat on or with my Cyfanfyd hat on? Not that it made any difference to me, but as far as the organisations were concerned there was a question, was it to do with Oxfam was it to do with *Cyfanfyd*, or was it to do with me.”

There was concern about both specific issues and specific groups being missing on the ESDGC Panel. There was reference to the lack of Black and Minority Ethnic representation, and particular reference to the lack of teachers, both advisory teachers and practising teachers who it was felt could have made a significant contribution to the process. (The reason for the latter is a funding issue; schools have to be compensated if teachers are taken out to attend meetings)

Tensions of bringing ESD and EGC together

One of the problems, and possible benefits, concerning the composition of the panel was the range of different groups who sought to influence the process. There were a number of tensions in bringing ESD and EGC together and the respondents recognised this. Some saw this as a result of misunderstandings. Some put it down to people not sufficiently understanding the issues:

“We think it’s extremely sad that people see tensions in dealing with them because we see that we can’t talk about development issues without talking about climate change and the degradation of the natural environment and vice versa.”

Partisanship was also perceived to have played its part. One respondent (from an environmental organisation) stated:

“I was quite shocked to discover that some environmental organisations just didn’t want to have anything to do with it and just wanted to carry on in the way they were. They really did see things in a very narrow way.”

There was an initial assumption that simply bringing together development education and environmental education would produce an integrated policy, but this was not always the case. What appears to be anomalous is that the question of attitudes and how to change them is central to ESDGC, whilst the whole process of ESDGC is concerned with enabling people to critically assess their attitudes. It is interesting, therefore, that some of those involved in the process of putting this together were unable to 'think outside their own box'. Others perceived this as a product of turf wars with associated competition over funding.

"Oh gosh yes, very much so and I think a lot of it was to do with, if I give a couple of examples. I think in the early days that (some organisations) thought this is an opportunity for us to become THE scheme that delivers ESDGC and so there was... quite a lot of tension early on as people competed for pole position almost."

And these misunderstandings were not simply there at the grassroots.

" I think there has been a lack of understanding by policy makers about what ESDGC is. From our perspective ESD encompasses GC but there seems to have been a confusion that ESD and EGC are different things and that continually comes up with saying that we need to address SD issues with this and GC issues with that."

Although the respondents were aware of the tensions that sometimes appeared, they themselves did not see any tensions between the areas of ESD and EGC. Indeed the bringing together of these two concepts was generally welcomed on the grounds that it made it difficult for people generally and teachers in particular to ignore one or other of the dimensions. It made it clear that it wasn't simply about the environment or bio-diversity but that it also included the human aspects - who makes the decisions, where does the power lie? The only complaint, which was a general one, was that Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship is a convoluted term.

Comments on developing the content of the ESDGC Common Understanding

Respondents were asked their opinion on why the ESDGC Common Understanding had been presented in its current form. Most of the respondents felt that there had been a real need to develop guidance which made clear what ESDGC deals with. This had been supported by the findings of a baseline survey of ESDGC, carried out on behalf of Estyn, the HMS schools inspectorate (Estyn, 2006) which showed a significant disparity of delivery throughout Wales and that: "Teachers and LEA advisers do not have a clear and consistent understanding of the definition and purpose of ESDGC as a broad area of learning that encompasses both issues of sustainability and citizenship at a global scale." (p. 7)

In the original ESDGC document (ACCAC, 2002) ESDGC was based around the nine key concepts: interdependence, citizenship and stewardship, needs and rights, diversity, sustainable change, quality of life, uncertainty and precaution, values and perceptions and conflict. Some involved with ESDGC argued that teachers were struggling with both the operation of and the communication of complex concepts, and that ESDGC would be more successful if teachers were encouraged to use themes such as wealth and poverty and climate change. There were major arguments about this. Some argued that the concepts were well understood and that schools and LEAs were already successfully using them. Others argued that the reason teachers "lacked a clear view of what ESDGC is about" was that the concepts were too far removed from classroom practice. This was countered by others who said that to stop using the concepts was to underestimate the ability of teachers to understand and communicate these concepts. Many, however, agreed with the respondent who said: "I feel the key concepts put people off, very worthy and all that but it wasn't a good communication tool for teachers." Indeed the survey carried out on behalf of Estyn (ESTYN, 2006a) found that:

"Those teachers who are familiar with the concepts do not feel that they are helpful in getting to grips with ESDGC. They find it difficult to establish either

the connection between the definition of ESDGC and the concepts or how to use the concepts to organise ESDGC work and activities.”(p.7)

This debate on whether ESDGC should be introduced through concepts of themes is an important issue, because, although teachers were not heavily involved in the development of ESDGC, they are central to its delivery.

The question of teacher training and the competences that this training produced was also a point of discussion. This debate was reflected in different attitudes to knowledge communication. For many, knowledge communication lies at the heart of education, and some of those involved with ESDGC were of the opinion that, for the ESDGC policy to be successful: “pupils have to understand issues such as climate change. A lot of things depend on having proper knowledge, a lot of attitudes start with proper knowledge”.

The respondents who argued in favour of retaining the concepts were clear that knowledge communication was important, but felt that it was not the whole or even the major part of the solution. For them, the alignment of knowledge with values is absolutely critical.

"We can only drive this [ESDGC] forward if we have a sense of the values underpinning it."

In the end it seemed it was the views on the value of themes and Estyn's evidence against concepts which influenced the ESDGC panel's decision. Ideas for the themes in the *ESDGC: A Common Understanding for Schools* were compiled from a variety of sources including the themes of the UN Decade for Sustainable Development. The final themes selected were: *Wealth and Poverty, Identity and Culture, Choices and Decisions, Health, the Natural Environment, Consumption and Waste, and Climate Change.*

Comments on the *process* of developing the ESDGC Common Understanding

As far as the *process* of developing the Common Understanding was concerned, whilst the respondents were aware that no process is ever going to be perfect some were very positive:

"I think the way that the CU was developed is a cracking case study of how things should be done."

Others were positive about some aspects:

"As far as the Common Understanding is concerned we really liked the first draft of it – it was different to all the other documents we had seen."

On the more general process of developing ESDGC policy, most were aware of problems.

"Having developed strategic documents over many years, and increasingly with the advent of the assembly in the last 10 or 11 years. Sometimes, it can be quite a challenging process. I think the particular challenges as far as ESDGC has been concerned is the plethora of interests involved and sometimes the conflicting or ostensibly conflicting agendas of the groups involved, so it was possibly initially difficult getting consensus... But I think that by simply through the demonstration that all these groups can go together as a jigsaw and that may be an advantage to them, I think has helped. This process has helped rationalise provision and has helped create a structure across Wales that is more fit for purpose."

There were, however, criticisms of the process. A number of the respondents felt that insufficient resources were allocated to it, that other priorities of the WAG, even within education, were allocated significantly greater resources. This was put forward as one of the reasons why teachers were less involved in the process than they should have been because the money was not there to free up their time.

Some felt frustration at the length of time the process took and a number of the non-panel members felt that there were real issues particularly in the production and distribution of documents where it was sometimes unclear which was the most current of the various drafts, and what they perceived as an apparent lack of interest in, or acknowledgement of responses.

Despite there seeming to be a fairly wide consultation process through the ten regional ESDGC Fora, which include teachers, LEA advisers and NGOs, the issue was still raised of the lack of sufficient involvement of teachers and education advisory teams, and some saw it as a top-down process in which the views of those outside the panels were not well acknowledged: "I think the whole process could be a little more open and a little less heavy handed."

Some were very blunt: "The consultation and involvement hasn't worked". In contrast, those on the panel thought that it had worked well.

Comments on achievements

Having noted the criticisms of the process, however, all the respondents were pleased with the achievements. "Well, I think it's been a tremendous achievement." "think it's fantastic, I love it. I love the fact that it exists." "We can't really ask for much more than having it there in the curriculum and so on and so forth, yeah I think we have come a long way."

There was genuine pleasure at the fact that it was in schools, that the teachers had clear guidance, that ESTYN were fully involved, and that, in the words of one correspondent: "it gives people ammunition." There was an acceptance that the Common Understanding was not perfect, and that there was still a long way to go, but many felt that the WAG had put down a marker, a "line in the sand".

"The mindset change is one the most important things to happen... I think encouragingly you are now seeing a generation emerging for who this (climate change) is now a key issue and it's not simply an add on for them... for this emerging generation it will just be natural, like breathing".

Respondents were particularly pleased that there was a focus on whole school operation and not just on the curriculum. This was seen as vital. Many of the respondents pointed out that teachers talking about sustainability and citizenship would be of little value if neither were practised by the teacher or by the school itself. That was why a focus on democracy and sustainability in the school was so important. Many of the respondents saw this as a possible turning point in the way people thought and acted:

"Well, in places where it is really taken on board you can already see that it is having a huge impact on school life, and you know the whole ethos and way of working can be dramatically changed by the adoption of this strategy."

This is a key issue. The question of how to bring about change in attitudes and action is a perplexing one. People who have heart bypass surgery, for

example, are advised to eat less and exercise more, but research has shown that only one out of nine take this advice (Rock and Schwartz, 2006). The respondents were all of the view that changing the *zeitgeist* is absolutely necessary. That this can happen has been demonstrated in the last fifty years with significant changes in attitudes to racism, women and latterly homosexuality, and resultant changes in behaviour. The respondents were clear that a change in the way schools are run and managed is an essential element in the ESDGC process.

Many felt that they were running with the tide, particularly with the new emphasis on skills in the Welsh curriculum (DCELLS, 2008). This is supported by Scott and Gough (2003) who argue that "Learning to learn will fit comfortably within many institutional contexts. It is a skill that many people *want* to acquire. It facilitates learning across literacies and practices. It is appropriate for both collaborative and competitive action. It enables people better to exercise the options inherent in their environments in an adaptive way." (p. 141)

Respondents were clear that not all of the change that has happened is down to the ESDGC policy; some were aware of wider influences on the global stage such as the concern about climate change and terrorism. As has been noted by Scott and Gough (2003): "Learning happens quite independently of the actions of teachers and policy makers, because of a whole range of external factors, including economic policy, social policy, the context of civil society and so on." (p.41)

Another positive aspect in Wales, of course, which is not to do with the Panel, is that Wales has abolished SATS testing and so freed up time for other approaches. This last point was seen as very significant because:

"One of the current positive forces is teachers, because some teachers are absolutely brilliant and they really care about these things."

But many of the respondents were aware there was still had some way to go:

"When I come into England in the last few years and people say: 'Oh things are far ahead of us in Wales aren't they', and I say: 'well they are in certain respects, you've got the top down Assembly government that's behind it far more than you could get from the England and the UK government, but actually if you went into schools and colleges and universities in Wales you wouldn't find a great deal of difference in what going on in England and what's going on in Wales. There are some excellent examples in England and there are some excellent examples in Wales. Lots of places in both areas where people don't know it exists."

There was an acknowledgement that ESDGC was easier to embed in primary schools, where a cross-disciplinary approach is not unusual, than in secondary schools where the focus is on specific subject areas. Yet even in secondary schools it was recognised there was a lot of good work going on and that the revised Curriculum for Wales (DCELLS, 2008) stresses a cross-curricular approach in both sectors.

Thoughts on the future of ESDGC

The respondents were also positive about the future direction of ESDGC. The commitment of the WAG to sustainability was seen as central:

"The statutory requirement on sustainability will be key. We have had all sorts of people from all over the world visiting Wales this is something they always comment on the foresight of the people who created the Welsh Assembly."

There are also other forces at work. Cyfanfyd and the NGOs generally are still pressing the agenda; many of the advisory teachers in schools and ITET Colleges have taken this agenda on board. There was concern about future funding from both the WAG and DFID EES money, but there were also interesting views on the challenges posed.

"I think there's fine balancing act because there are a lot of problems associated with the economic downturn and unemployment all those sorts of issue but it clearly presents an opportunity to say we can't go back to what we were doing before because that's what's driven us to the un-sustainability we find ourselves in. It's clear that what looks like something pretty awful, could be seen as a real opportunity to do something." respondent: "It's here to stay, I'm confident of that – it's in the curriculum and that will mean it stays a focus."

Also, they noted that ESDGC is a focus for the inspection process and, therefore, always on the agenda of head teachers.

"I think that Wales is just about still in the vanguard, because we are a small nation; it is easier for us to do such things here. And people were still intent on driving it forward."

Others pointed to the drivers that could be utilized. These include the fact that the WAG has made ESDGC one of its top 10 overall priorities, which means that those working in all areas of WAG, and particularly those working in the education system, have a legitimacy to promote this agenda. They also pointed to opportunities in the Welsh Baccalaureate and the World Development 'A' level and the opportunity that now exists with the inception of the skills framework, especially the focus on thinking skills.

"It could be massive. ESDGC wants to climb into bed with that skills framework and say 'eh up, if you want to talk about thinking and building active learning into your school and move away from didactic level, particularly at secondary school then ESDGC is a means to do that."

Others are already planning for the new phases.

"I know that the WAG panel was asked what should be the step change for ESDGC, so I said that they need a strategic person for the consortia and then a teacher advisor in the 24 authorities. The strategic person would co-ordinate the work of their 4 or 5 authorities in their consortia and you would have a more coherent model... I think that it's the strategic layer in the middle which seems to have been bypassed and things are driven from the bottom up but not from the top down. And that's why you need someone to work with the whole consortium at the director's level letting the advisors and teachers know, to try and get some coordination there so that we can get the SMTs [School Management Teams] involved which will then help teachers on the ground who are trying to shift it there."

Concerns for the future

Concerns were expressed, as mentioned above, about the impact of financial restraints on future developments. Would a change of government give the same weight to ESDGC; would there be sufficient resources in an already poorly-financed field? Others worried about the pace of change and reflected the views of Scott and Gough (2003):

"First it is noted that practices may possess considerable inertia; that is, practitioners may be resistant to changing the way they go about things even when under very considerable pressure from policy makers and others to do so. This inertia may persist over very long periods of time and as Lundgren (1991:45) notes, 'the closer we come to the teaching situation, the more stable are the processes of education'" (p.58)

Discussion

The analysis has pointed to several reasons for the mode of development of ESDGC in schools in Wales: the WAG constitutional commitment to sustainability; the setting up of the WAG itself which allowed access for a range of NGOs and other organisations into policy preparation; the involvement of key individuals who drove the process forward; the debate between groups with different viewpoints; and the zeitgeist which was conducive to this approach. The general consensus is of satisfaction with the current state of ESDGC although the process of change has not been without tensions.

The role of key players was regarded by all respondents as particularly important. These players could be regarded as policy entrepreneurs (Mintrom and Vergari (1998)). These authors found that policy changes were most likely to happen where policy entrepreneurs were present and that there were several stages on the road from new policy ideas to legislation. In the first stages policy entrepreneurs engage in policy networks where they meet others with similar interests, consolidate their ideas and build a case and arguments for what they are trying to promote. They establish standing and trust and listen carefully to what is happening in the policy area and engage in strategic thinking for how their idea can fit in. They then become integrated into government, or other key policy networks, where 'their' policy proposals are listened to and developed. In the second stage the focus moves from novelty to serious questioning of reliance and viability, including

critiquing by other interest groups from outside of the main consultation team. The forming of the ESD, EGC and ESDGC Panels and subsequent policy developments fit well with these findings, i.e. members of initially separate interest groups engaging in discussion and finding common aims, the inclusion of sustainable development in WAG policy as a key "hook", the development of 'standing' that enabled their voices to be heard, their inclusion in the setting up of the panel, the appointment of one of the original lobbyists as ESDGC Champion, and the subsequent consultation, and conflict, with other interest groups.

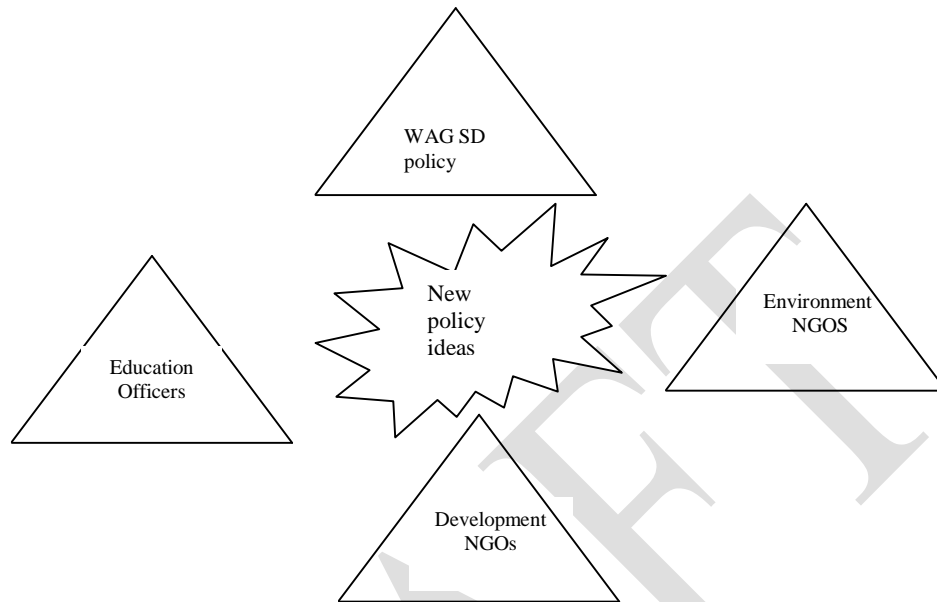
The role of the combination of viewpoints and characters, where individuals from an initially disparate range of organisations, or communities of practice, came together to develop the policy was perceived as one very important factor. The interaction of these individuals reflects a general constructivist effort where views are shared, challenged, reflected upon and sometimes modified. These interactions can be viewed through the lens of either communities of practice or activity theory. Communities of Practice were originally discussed by Lave and Wenger (1991) in relation to a situation where a newcomer, or apprentice, to a group gradually played a greater part in group collaboration as he/she learned with and from others and formulated his/her own ideas. The theory was later developed by Thorpe (2004) to describe "groups that interact to achieve a shared purpose or enterprise" (p.132). This definition is similar to, but significantly different from, the definition of Activity Theory (Engeström, 1987). Engeström used Vygotsky's basic mediational triangle to explain systems which are aiming for a specific product but in which all elements are constantly changing. In an activity system a 'community' works with 'tools', 'rules' and 'division of labour' with the 'subject' and aims for an 'objective' (see Figure 1). The tools carry with them historical remains of their development and influence the nature of interaction between members of the community. Russel (2002) describes an activity system as "a virtual disturbance-and innovation-producing machine"(p. 71).

For Bjørke (2004) the difference between the two is that "Communities of Practice" focus on relations between the participants while "Activity Theory" emphasises goal-directed activities mediated by cultural tools and analysing contradictions and problems." (p. 1) In both cases it is the interactions that are important.

Within the ESDGC developments in Wales, the first interaction of the members of the different groups, with their very different backgrounds could be seen as communities of practice coming together, discussing aims, and comparing, and even challenging, values, to form a new community of practice, the group 'Education for the Future'. They did not know exactly where their activities would lead, although they had ideas about that.

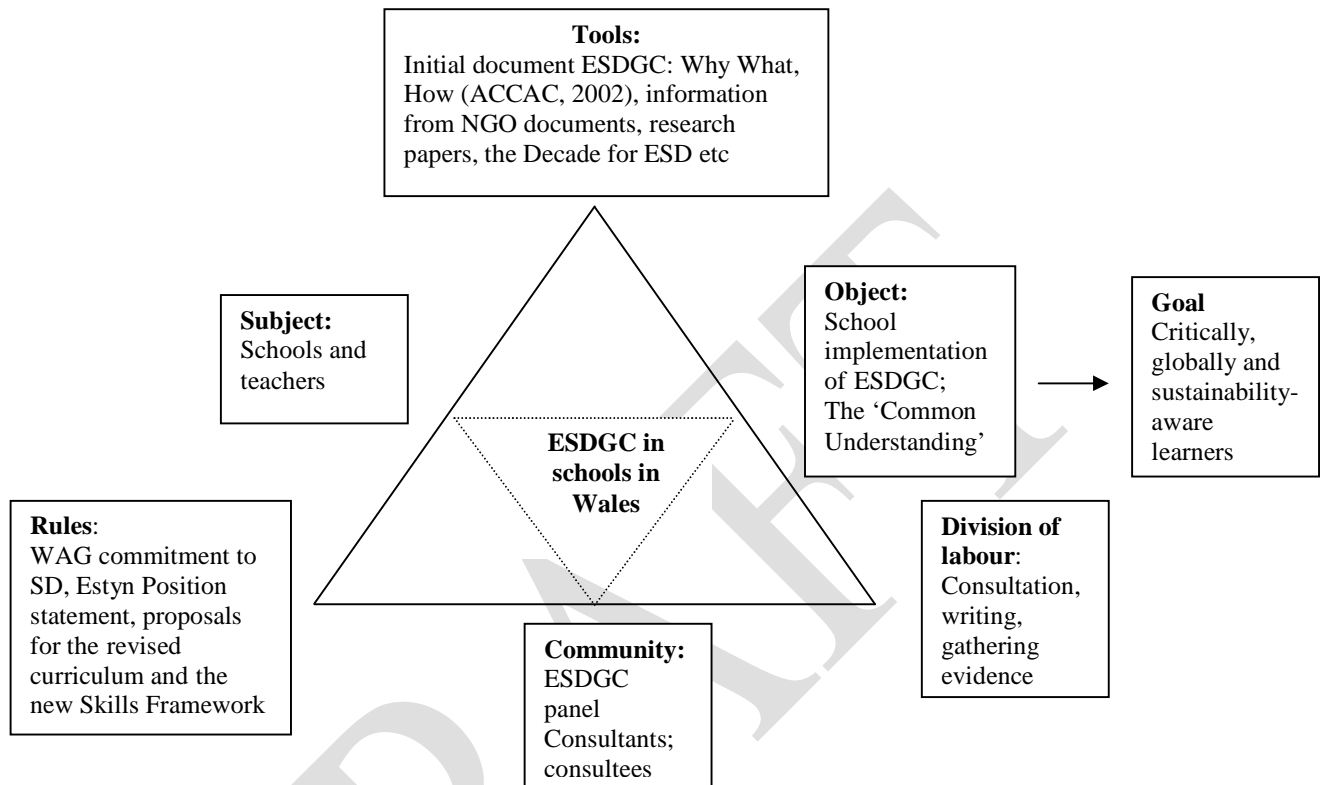
The Welsh Assembly Government, the ESD panel and the Global Citizenship Working Group, and the early stages of the combined ESDGC Panel may have had characteristics of separate activity systems, each with particular, but different, goals at which to aim. Their meeting, with the conflict of values that had to be dealt with, and their subsequent metamorphosis into a fully functioning, more strategic ESDGC Panel could be described in terms of several activity systems meeting. Russell (2002) describes this as third level activity theory where groups "engage in discussion and debate and reflection then learning beyond what was possible within a single activity system becomes possible" (Figure 2), similar to Engestrom's 'expansive learning'. Commonalities and areas of conflict were discussed and there was, for some, a modifying of views, a re-negotiation of meaning. Members of the ESDGC panel had dual identity and possibly dual interests as they continue to also be members of their original activity systems. There were certainly changes in working practice within the groups represented on the Panel. Eco-Schools, for example, introduced a theme of 'global citizenship' to its previously more sustainability-oriented schools' programme. Others began to emphasise environmental aspects of development issues.

Figure 1. Groups in the early stages of ESDGC development as depicted by Level 3 Activity Theory after Russell (2002).



The later stages of the ESDGC Panel, when most members were in agreement about the general direction of development, could perhaps be better described as one (second level) activity system in (Engeström, 1987). In this case the rules would be the WAG commitment to sustainable development, the suggestions in the Estyn ESDGC Position statement (Estyn, 2006), the proposals for the revised curriculum and the new Skills framework. The tools would include the initial ESDGC document (ACCAC, 2002), information from NGO documents, books and research papers on the topics and the Decade for ESD etc) (Figure 2). There were still disagreements, especially during the consultation process but these were argued out to arrive at the ESDGC Common Understanding document which is largely seen as acceptable. Even this, however, is not seen as the ultimate goal. That will occur when all schools have ESDGC fully-integrated and learners are completely engaged. It is likely that it will be some time before the goal of producing critically, globally and sustainability-aware learners is reached.

Figure 2. The later stages of the WAG ESDGC panel represented by Activity Theory



Conclusions

The development of Welsh Assembly Government ESDGC policy has occurred in several stages and involved many players. It has been influenced by the WAG constitutional commitment to sustainability; the involvement of a variety of organisations sharing and modifying their views, the role of key individuals, or policy entrepreneurs, evidence from a research survey on school practice, and the general *zeitgeist* which was conducive to the approach. There is a general consensus that the ESDGC Common Understanding is a very positive move in the right direction. This is certainly reflected in the views of the Panel members with their appraisal of the outcomes as 'remarkable', 'tremendous' and 'fantastic'. It is likely that

differences in the opinions of panel members and those in other organisations will continue to feed and enrich discussion on the continuing development of ESDGC in the coming years. This should be welcomed as a healthy situation and a sign of wide engagement in the process. The views discovered in this study show that ESDGC has the potential to be a significant development, not only within education, but in the wider society in Wales. Although there are concerns, particularly about the financial situation, there is a general belief that this policy will continue and develop. It will be interesting to see if and how this happens .

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Appendix 1: Compositions of the WAG groups and panels (formal sector representatives)

| ESD Panel 2001-03 | EGC Working Group 2001-03 | ESDGC Panel 2004-2008 |
|---|---|---|
| Welsh Assembly Government | Welsh Assembly Government | Welsh Assembly Government including Head of ESDGC |
| Estyn | Estyn | Estyn |
| Qualifications and Curriculum Council (ACCAC) | ACCAC | ACCAC |
| | | Newport City Council |
| | Oxfam | Oxfam |
| | Enabling Effective Support | Enabling Effective Support |
| Eco-Schools | | Eco-Schools |
| | ? British Council | British Council Wales |
| | Cyfanfyd | Cyfanfyd |
| Bangor University (HE) | | UCET-Cymru |
| Countryside Council for Wales | | Countryside Council for Wales |
| | Department for International Development (DFID) | DFID (initially) |
| University of Wales, /Environmental Council for Wales | University of Wales Cardiff Institute | UW Newport |
| | | Higher Education, Further Education, Youth sector representatives |

Appendix 2 Interview schedule

Coleg Addysg a Dysgu Gydol Oes
Safle'r Normal
Ffordd Caergybi
Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 2PZ
01248-383012



College of Education and Lifelong Learning
Normal Site
Holyhead Road
Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 2PZ
01248-383012

Research into the development of ESDGC in the school curriculum in Wales

Interview Schedule

| |
|---|
| Name: |
| Questions |
| You have been involved with ESDGC or related topics for a number of years. 1a) When did you first become involved with this area? |
| 1b) How did you come to work in this area? |
| 1c) Which of the following did you serve on for how long? – ESD panel – GC Working Group – ESDGC panel |
| 2a) What were your hopes at the start? |
| 2b) What were your expectations at the start? |
| The Panel and Working Group were made up of people from a variety of types of organisations |

e.g WAG, Education bodies, NGOs.

2c) Do you have any reflections on this?

3. When you reflect on the development of the current ESDGC policy....

3a) Why do you think it has developed in the way it has?

3b) What do you think were the major influences and drivers for the way in which it developed?

3c) Do you see any tensions in relation to the uniting of the 2 concepts?

3d) What do you feel about the *process* of developing the ESDGC documents?

3e) Did you encounter any tensions in relation to the uniting of the 2 concepts?

3f) What do you feel about what has been achieved?

4. What do you think are the best things to come out of the ESDGC policy?

5. In what way do you think that the current ESDGC information and strategy will make a significant difference to education as a whole?

6a. What do you think may be the current positive forces driving this forward?

6b. What possible challenges and obstacles might slow down the impact?

7. How do you see ESDGC progressing in:

a) Wales

b) UK

c) Globally?

Extra question for those involved in ESDGC in ITET

There have been many initiatives to support ESDGC in ITET, from the work of Hopkins in 1990-91, Cyfanfyd resource exhibitions, meetings with heads of departments prompted by members of the ESD Panel and GC Working group, UCET-Cymru website and training projects, the latest information book and staff workshops.

8) Do you have any comments on this process, or the outcomes?

For example, e.g. your thoughts on the continuity of the process; influence of the individual initiatives; the time it has taken; whether you think ESDGC will finally become an integral part of ITET courses.

Appendix 3

Coleg Addysg a Dysgu Gydol Oes
Safle'r Normal
Ffordd Caergybi
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College of Education and Lifelong Learning
Normal Site
Holyhead Road
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01248-383012

December 10, 2008

Dear ***

Research into the development of ESDGC in the school curriculum in Wales

We are carrying out research into the development of ESDGC in the school curriculum in Wales. There has been a great deal of interest from UK and European education organisations in how ESDGC has developed in Wales. Many countries still have separate Education for Sustainable Development and Global dimension/global responsibility policies. Wales is one of the few countries which have integrated ESD and EGC as a single entity in the curriculum. We would like to investigate the issues which have arisen during this development and find out if the people involved can shed light on any drivers, obstacles, tensions of the process and any perceived disadvantages or benefits of the outcomes. An understanding of these factors could be of benefit to other countries undergoing a similar development of these issues.

To do this we would like to interview early members of the ESD Panel and GC Working Group and current members of the ESDGC Panel who have a School or Initial Teacher Education brief. In addition we would also like to interview some other key people who have had an input into the development of ESDGC.

We would be very grateful if you would consent to being interviewed. Any information you give will be treated confidentially and your name and organisation's name will not be associated with any of the findings. The interview should take just under an hour. A tape

recorder will be used to record the full interview. The tape will be kept securely and then destroyed at the end of the study. We will send you a copy of the transcription. It is likely that the findings will be presented as an academic paper at an international conference and possibly included in a doctoral dissertation. You have the right to withdraw your observations and your participation at any time. Any complaints or grievances should be addressed to Dr David Sullivan (d.sullivan@bangor.ac.uk), Chair of the Ethics Task Group, College of Education and Lifelong Learning, Bangor University or Dr Shirley Egley (shirley.egley@newport.ac.uk), Chair of the Ethics Task Group, School of Education, University of Wales, Newport.

We would be grateful if you could send us an email to confirm whether or not you would be happy to be interviewed. This can be sent either to david.norcliffe@newport.ac.uk or to s.bennell@bangor.ac.uk. We will also ask you to sign the consent form below when we visit you.

We will also follow up this letter with a phone call to confirm that you are happy to be interviewed and, if so, to arrange a suitable time and place for the interview. Ideally we would like to conduct the interviews between December and February. We are attaching a draft interview schedule.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

David Norcliffe

Sheila Bennell

David Norcliffe
Sheila Bennell
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University of Wales, Newport
Lifelong Learning,
Caerleon Campus, Newport
Tel. 01633 432267

World Education Centre
College of Education and
Bangor University.
Tel 01248 383728

Research into the development of ESDGC in the school curriculum in Wales

I agree to be interviewed for this research and I am happy with the conditions outlined above for sharing the data.

Name _____ Organisation

Please return to:

Sheila Bennell
World Education Centre
CELL, Bangor University
Normal Site Library
Holyhead Road, Bangor LL57 2PX (s.bennell@bangor.ac.uk)