

EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Ros Wade outlines the emergence of education for sustainability (EfS) as a concept and reflects on its potential to generate an international movement for change. The article considers key questions for education practitioners and theorists and offer possible signposts for the future. It reflects experience gained through directing the EfS international Masters' programme at London South Bank University, as associate director of LSBU's Education Research Centre, and as a researcher and writer on EfS. It offers a personal perspective, although at the same time, it is also greatly enriched by the ideas and work of students, alumni, colleagues and fellow EfS commentators.

Introduction

Since the Earth Summit in 1992, there has been a growing awareness of the need to address issues of sustainability and the terrain subsequently seems to have become more favourable towards education for sustainability (EfS). Governments were very slow to take the initiative on EfS after the first Earth Summit with this role largely taken up by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and committed activists. Their work tended to have two strands: the first comprising support, in the form of training and awareness raising for educational practitioners, and the second concerning advocacy and lobbying for policy change. The EfS programme at London South Bank University (LSBU) was itself a result of this engagement when, in 1993, a consortium of environmental and development NGOs came together to design a course which would support practitioners and activists across the UK. One of its key aims was to support participants in becoming effective agents for change through education.

Since 1992, NGOs have, of course, been actively seeking to strategically influence the national political landscape with regard to EfS and have established alliances in order to navigate the difficult terrain of government policy and practice. In the UK, for example, the Development Education Association (DEA) and Council for Environmental Education (CEE) have had some success in influencing the government, for example

through the Commission for Sustainable Development. More specific approaches have also had results, such as Oxfam, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and World Wildlife Fund (WWF) in Wales working toward the incorporation of EfS into statutory educational requirements. However, NGOs and activists have not been the only drivers for change in EfS. The dynamics of change are far more complex than that and, indeed, many NGOs and activists are highly critical of the current understanding of sustainability encapsulated in the more mainstream concept of education for sustainable development (ESD).

Notwithstanding differences over terminology and understandings therein, the policy and practice framework for EfS has developed considerably and in many countries there is now government policy in place in all areas of the formal education sector, from schools to higher education. In addition, national legal requirements on sustainable development in relation to other sectors, such as the built environment, have created space and demand for training at a range of levels. At the international level, education was further endorsed at the second World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) which took place in Johannesburg in 2002 and also attempted to make links between EfS and Education for All (EFA: basic education as a requirement for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals on poverty reduction). Since UNESCO has been given the task of taking the lead internationally in both EfS and EFA, it made very good sense to bring them together. These efforts have been further supported by the Japanese government's successful lobbying for education for sustainable development to be given the status of a UN Decade from 2005 to 2014. Education is therefore now viewed as a prime lever for social change, described by UNESCO in the implementation plan for the Decade in the following way: 'It means education that enables people to foresee, face up to and solve the problems that threaten life on our planet' (UNESCO, 2005).

Although the terrain seems more promising now for EfS, there are concerns from many EfS commentators, such as David Orr and Stephen Sterling, that progress is too slow and does not go far enough. In fact, Sterling feels that no less than a complete shift in the overall paradigm of education (and by implication society) will result in sustainability. For Sterling, education itself is often part of the problem: 'Far from being an agent of change, education often underpins individualism, unsustainable lifestyles and patterns of consumption, directly or by default' (Sterling, 2005:10).

A common language?

The EfS journey has taken us into uncharted territories with new ideas and

concepts, which, in turn, meant the need for a new vocabulary and may eventually require a new language. New ideas are always contested and so debates about terminology have been a key feature of this field from the outset. Sometimes these ideas can seem obscurantist rather than enlightening but they can engender reflection and discussion from very different perspectives and points of view. The term ‘education for sustainability’ (EfS) was specifically chosen by our LSBU programme team rather than the more mainstream ‘education for sustainable development’ (ESD), both to critique the very Western-dominated discourse on development and to reflect an openness to alternative perspectives and radical viewpoints encompassed in education for sustainability. EfS also readily facilitates an interpretation of sustainability within a range of scales from the personal and psychological to the organisational, local, national and global. In addition, it shows a willingness to explore the methods and purpose of education and to undertake value commitments openly – education *for* sustainability – that can bring about sustainable change.

Other terms like ‘sustainability education’ or ‘sustainable education’ (Sterling, 2006) are also part of the discourse and need to be acknowledged. Sterling believes that ‘sustainability’ indicates the need for a change of educational paradigm as a whole, rather than a modification of the existing paradigm, hence the notion of ‘sustainable education, where the emphasis is on the nature of educational thinking, policy and practice as a whole’.

Some educators regard the term ‘sustainable development’ as the process towards an end point of ‘sustainability’ just as ‘sustainable education’ could also perhaps be seen as an end point, with ESD as the process towards it. Within this scenario, EfS could be regarded as possessing both the *process towards* and the *vision of* sustainability. The proliferation of terms and interpretations related to sustainability arguably reflects a strength and richness in education that we should value. It would be disingenuous to say that terminology is not important but, at the same time, it is essential not to become too caught up in such discussions to the detriment of the development of EfS itself. While bearing these issues in mind, I will use the term EfS in the course of this article.

Pathways to EfS

Although many educators feel that the ground is now more fertile for EfS, some consider its development to have been rather patchy. According to Lescek Iwaskow, Ofsted Inspector with responsibility for ESD in England and Wales, ‘[I]f you were to look down on England from above you would probably see a relative desert for ESD. If you homed in there would be some

oases of some excellent practice’ (Environmental Audit Committee, 2005: 30). Like most complex ideas, the concept of EfS is contested by an array of constituencies, each with its own strong views. This is not really surprising when we consider its history.

Agenda 21 called for environmental education (EE) and development education (DE) to be cross-cutting themes in all education policies and practice (United Nations, 1992:221) with the implication that from this synergy the concept of education for sustainability would somehow emerge. Agenda 21 was the result of a lengthy negotiation involving more than 178 different countries and related power blocks. It was, in its own way, a remarkable achievement as it provided a basis for educators and policy makers to start to develop a more coherent understanding and practice of EfS.

Chapter 36 of Agenda 21 attempted to bring the two existing constituencies of EE and DE into a relationship by brokering the new inclusive concept of EfS. These constituencies undoubtedly have their roots in Western countries which perhaps makes the process less relevant (or not relevant at all) to other parts of the globe. In many Southern and emerging countries, EE and DE issues are very obviously interconnected and not regarded as separate constituencies. In South Africa, for example, Lotz-Sisitka points out that, ‘environmental education is strongly focused on the social, political, economic and biophysical dimensions’ (Lotz-Sisitka, 2004:67). She sees, therefore, no perceived dichotomy between social justice and environmental protection. However, this viewpoint is not necessarily always translated into practice. For example, in a review of progress towards Agenda 21 in Kenya, Dorcas Otieno suggests that ‘the environment has been looked at in great detail from the biophysical view but with less emphasis on economic and social perspectives’ (Otieno, 2005).

The separation of DE and EE in the global North illustrates the Western perspective that divides the human and the natural world which many feel is one of the major obstacles to EfS. Therefore, those of us who have been brought up in a Western educational/academic setting may have more to unlearn than those who have not! However, we have to recognise that the dominant paradigm operating in the world today is a Western one and this colours policy at both national and international levels. Moreover, this construction of EfS has been quite strong and has provided both opportunities and constraints.

Nonetheless, over the last decade it has become clear that EfS required a radical re-think of both EE and DE rather than their simple addition and integration. This was never going to be straightforward as there are too many potential contradictions and conflicts of interest. The starting points for Western conceptions of EE and DE can be summarised as below:

Figure 1

Environmental Education	Development Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Conservation of the natural world is the priority;-People can sometimes be the problem;-Development issues and poverty eradication are secondary to this.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-People come first;-Poverty reduction, social justice and development is the main priority;-Environmental and conservation issues are secondary to this.

It was perhaps rather naïve to believe that two movements, coming from very different starting points could just somehow start to collaborate and work together without difficulty. The starting point for DE was the human and for EE was the natural world, and both concepts operated with contrasting priorities. In addition, in the West there was no history of the development and environmental constituencies working together but rather a degree of mistrust between them. But EfS is surely much more than the sum of DE and EE, and perhaps one of the key constraints to progress is the fact that many people are more concerned with environmental or development issues rather than embracing sustainability as a broad concept encompassing the need to support both nature and humanity. EfS may therefore need to free itself from its EE and DE origins in order to embrace more fully other elements which contribute to EfS, such as sustainable design, alternative energy, earth education, human rights education, conflict resolution, futures education, anti-racist and inter-cultural education. We need to move towards a clearer, more conceptualised and integrated form of EfS which builds on a range of perspectives and can, in turn, become a catalyst for study across a range of fields and disciplines.

To this end, some have preferred not to take the route of enquiring into the potential of EE and DE for EfS, but have rather enquired into what kind of education might mirror, explore and debate the relationship between environment and society. Some NGOs, such as Oxfam, developed the concept of ‘global citizenship’ (Oxfam, 1997) in order to integrate the dimensions of EfS from the standpoint of individual rights and responsibilities (Wade, 2001). This is an ethical standpoint based on both local and global mutuality in relation to basic rights, social justice and environmental justice. Some consider this concept too anthropocentric and that it underplays our human dependence on the biosphere and the earth’s finite resources. However, since

EfS requires and makes central the *agency* of human beings, this concept can be very helpful in constructing an ethical framework for action (Dower, 2003).

A focus on the nature of education and of sustainability may help us to move beyond the constraints illustrated above. For example, what kind of education is required if we wish to live sustainably? Certainly, current educational practices have been found wanting. According to David Orr:

“Education is no guarantee of decency, prudence or wisdom. Much of the same kind of education will only compound our problems. This is not an argument for ignorance but rather a statement that the worth of education must now be measured against the standards of decency and human survival – the issues now looming so large before us in the twenty first century. It is not education but education of a certain kind that will save us” (Orr, 2004:8).

Some commentators go so far as to say that education itself is a negative idea which merely divides us by creating ‘two classes of people everywhere: the educated and the uneducated or undereducated’ (Esteva, et al, 2005:20). They feel that education is often a new means of colonisation of the mind and that it denigrates local and indigenous knowledge and skills. To them, even Paulo Freire’s concept of education for transformation implies a certain level of arrogance and hence oppression. They prefer the idea of ‘learning’ which implies a more active and ‘autonomous capacity for building creative relationships with others and with nature, relationships that generate knowing and wisdom’ (ibid:28). Others, however, like Maiteny argue that it is not education that is the problem but the *methods* of education that are used. Maiteny maintains that indigenous people also have educational systems but perhaps ‘not that we would recognise as the methods are so different’ (comments on a draft).

Education as presently constructed can be broadly divided into three orientations: the vocational/neo-classical, the liberal progressive and the socially critical. Practitioners of EfS tend to position themselves mainly within ‘socially critical’ education (Fien, 1993:20) where ‘the teacher is a co-ordinator with emancipatory aims; involves students in negotiation about common tasks and projects; emphasises commonality of concerns; and works through conflicts of interest in terms of social justice and ecological sustainability’. However, this orientation tends to portray knowledge as mainly socially constructed and its critics suggest that it fails to give enough weight to the learning needed to live within the set biophysical boundaries of our world. In addressing some of the issues relating to the politics of

knowledge, Janse Van Rensburg identifies one key challenge for educators:

“...to find and use theoretical frameworks which enable the acknowledgement of wider ways of knowing – in ways which open up greater possibilities in the re-conceptualisation of socially and ecologically appropriate development processes” (Van Rensburg, 1999:18).

Van Rensburg sees EfS in South Africa as very much a process which both recognises the importance of indigenous knowledge, while also recognising that it is not unproblematic (ibid:16). Although EfS is still a contested term, there is considerable consensus that the EfS process offers a ‘holistic approach through recognising the complex, interconnected nature of all aspects of the world around us from an individual to a global level’ (Sterling, 2005:23). This is also called a systems or relational approach and it emphasises contexts and connections in order to build up whole pictures of phenomena rather than breaking things into individual parts. It is a way of seeing which focuses on processes, patterns and dynamics and, as such, can open up possibilities to look at EfS from outside of the constructs of EE and DE. For example, the EfS programme at LSBU has used the diagram below to explain and explore the relationships between EfS and wider social and ecological systems.

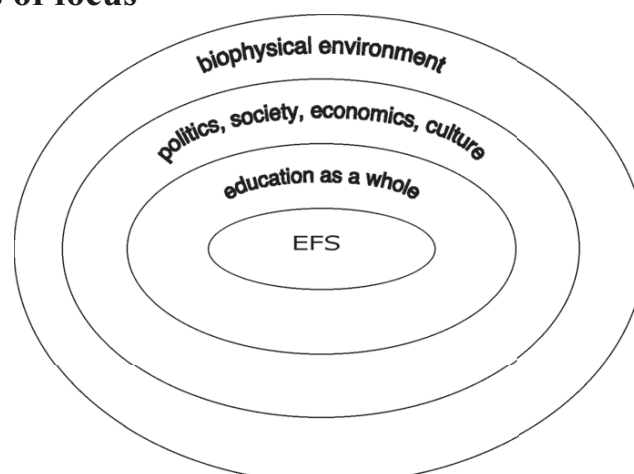
Focus 1 - At the centre is education for sustainability

Focus 2 - The context of Focus 1 is education as a whole

Focus 3 - The context of Focus 2 is the social, economic and cultural environment

Focus 4 - The overall context is the biophysical environment as evidenced in the view of the Earth from space (Sterling, 2000).

Figure 2 Levels of focus



EfS provides the opportunity (and necessity) to bring together different disciplines. An EfS framework can offer a vehicle for different disciplines to contribute to an understanding of sustainability and, in doing so, translates EfS into terms which they own and understand whilst also drawing on other disciplines as necessary. EfS is about engendering this process of inter-disciplinary learning and is also the interface between theory and practice which underpins the development of education for sustainability as a meaningful and challenging field. UNESCO, using the term ‘education for sustainable development’, summarises it as follows:

“ESD is facilitated through participatory and reflective approaches and is characterised by the following:

- 1) is based on the principles of intergenerational equity, social justice, fair distribution of resources and community participation, which underlie sustainable development;
- 2) promotes a shift in mental models which inform our environmental, social and economic decisions;
- 3) is locally relevant and culturally appropriate;
- 4) is based on local needs, perceptions and conditions, but acknowledges that fulfilling local needs often has international effects and consequences;
- 5) engages formal, non-formal and informal education;
- 6) accommodates the evolving nature of the concept of sustainability;
- 7) promotes lifelong learning;
- 8) addresses content, taking into account context, global issues and local priorities;
- 9) builds civil capacity for community-based decision-making, social tolerance, environmental stewardship, adaptable workforce and quality of life;
- 10) is cross disciplinary. No one discipline can claim ESD as its own, but all disciplines can contribute to ESD;
- 11) uses a variety of pedagogical techniques that promote participatory learning and critical reflective skills” (UNESCO, 2007).

For the last decade the international EfS learning community at LSBU has been actively contributing to a growing understanding of EfS and, interestingly, many in this learning community do not come from EE or DE backgrounds, but from other disciplines such as peace education, trades union education, health education and business education. The UN Decade of ESD will provide an opportunity for different elements of EfS to come

together in a more joined-up approach to influence educational and social change. This is an immense challenge for educators but it is essential for EfS that we step out of our comfort zones and re-think the fundamental questions in new ways:

- What kind of society do we want or need in order to achieve sustainability?
- What kind of economic and political system could allow this?
- What kind of education system do we need to achieve this?

Drawing from over 15 years of experience working in EfS, I will outline some key elements which may help to answer these questions by providing opportunities for new ways of thinking towards a new paradigm of education.

Developing EfS: essential elements

A) Cross-sectoral and inter-disciplinary approaches

The EfS programme at LSBU was founded on the principle of cross-sectoral and inter-disciplinary collaboration that involves bringing together a team working in different disciplines and sectors, including higher education, schools, community education, NGOs and business. While EfS forums and networks operating at a local level are particularly supportive of cross-sectoral learning, NGOs can be a catalyst for this approach as they often work across sectors. At government and policy level, sectors (as well as departments) are often very isolated from each other so local examples of successful EfS initiatives can often provide a catalyst for central government policy.

With regard to inter-disciplinarity, commentators such as Sayer and Maiteny argue that it is particularly important for social scientists and their natural science counterparts to enter into dialogue. ‘Science or the production of any kind of knowledge is a social practice. For better or worse (not just worse) the conditions and social relations of the production of knowledge influence its content’ (Sayer, 1992:6). Maiteny emphasises the importance of *methods* in relation to EfS and goes on to stress that the understanding of such relationships and phenomena ‘can be enhanced by using an essentially scientific method – i.e. by devising hypotheses and then testing them out through observation and experience’ (Maiteny, 2002:25).

For EfS to be most effective, structures need to be reconfigured to allow cross-sectoral and joined-up thinking. This is one of the greatest

challenges for EfS, as structures in formal education especially often fail to support inter-disciplinarity and sometimes actively work against it. This is not to denigrate specialist knowledge, rather to recognise that the challenge of sustainability requires new thinking and synergy across current subject specialties.

B) Sharing diverse perspectives

In a world dominated by neo-liberal perspectives, it is important for alternative voices and perspectives to be heard, especially those which challenge the current hegemony. This is not to be negative about all Western perspectives (or even all neo-liberal ones) but we do need to be wary about allowing the dominant discourse which has led us to our current unsustainable lifestyles to drown out other voices. At the same time, we should not forget that some of the strongest critiques of current neo-liberal and neo-conservative policies come, in fact, from Western thought and commentators. However, learning our way out of unsustainability requires open-mindedness in approaching new (and sometimes old) ways of thinking, for example, from local and indigenous knowledge and diverse philosophical perspectives.

C) Broadening the concept of education

EfS, as currently aligned, tends to focus too much on the formal statutory education sector and on training and curriculum development. The formal education sector will always be under the strong influence and control of government and, while EfS practitioners have made significant inroads into these agendas, they are arguably still dominated by the perceived demands of the economy and current dominant neo-liberal perspectives. Education outside the formal sector, such as youth and community education, NGO education, business education, and civil service education, may offer more opportunities for the study and development of EfS. While more and more time today is spent in formal education, it is clearly becoming increasingly important for EfS practitioners to be able to influence agendas in non-formal as well as formal education. If we accept that EfS is a lifelong process, then there are many entry points at which we can begin to engage with sustainability issues. We are also influenced by an ever-widening range of communication channels that can stimulate our interest in EfS beyond formal education and professional development.

D) Linking the personal and professional

Many of us lead lives which are divided into very separate realms: we think we hold certain values but do not always put them into practice, not always consciously or deliberately, but sometimes out of habit, inertia or inhibiting structures. Kumar and Selby argue that the psychological or spiritual dimensions of change are just as important or perhaps more important than the political dimension because our core values form the basis for our actions. 'The real impetus for ecological sustainability and social justice stems from ethical, aesthetic and spiritual visions' (Kumar, 2005). He adds that 'the problem is not matter but materialism...The moment we encapsulate an idea or a thought into an 'ism' we lay the foundations of dualistic thought. The universe is uni-verse, one song, one poem, one verse' (Kumar, 2005).

Kumar and others regard our Western dualistic contradictions between mind and body as being responsible for many of our present problems of unsustainability. For example, at a very basic level we may know in our heads that our behaviour is contributing to the increase in greenhouse gases but unless we really believe and feel at an *affective* level that it is important to address this problem, we will not act to change. At a recent workshop that I ran for MA Education students in Chichester, they were asked to identify three events or experiences which influenced their personal journeys towards an interest in EFS. Some students felt that this had been a very gradual process and cited their upbringing and backgrounds, others mentioned books or films, and some could even trace their development to a particular critical moment when their whole awareness changed. Sustainable living demands nothing less than a complete change in our relationship with others and the world, a change in our way of being, something we might call an ontological epiphany (Wade, 2006).

This is not easy when the structures we live in encourage us to live unsustainably. We therefore need to be convinced at the deepest level if we are to try to change, otherwise any change that does occur tends to be first order or superficial rather than substantive. When values become shared at an affective level, the possibilities for social change increase exponentially. As Maiteny suggests:

“Shared belief and meaning is a sort of cultural glue that makes sense of experience and relationships. It is vital to the process of social cohesion and sustainability and personal responsibility for one’s role within the social context” (Maiteny, 2002:352).

E) Understanding the complex processes of change

Understanding some of the dynamics of change is essential for EfS practitioners who aspire to be agents of change. The development of motivational and leadership skills in oral, visual and written communication (such as report writing, strategic thinking and planning) needs to be part of a broad portfolio. The most effective change is never top-down or bottom-up but a mixture of the two and, in effecting positive change, we can also learn from business and management analyses where organisations have to adapt constantly to changing conditions or go under. ‘Organisations are not just organisms, evolving and adapting as environments change. They are made up of people: thinking, conscious, able to make choices about what they do’ (Binney & Williams, 1997:158).

‘Leadership’ is not a word that educationalists are always comfortable with because of some negative associations with didacticism and directorial management. However, leadership is something that we need to embrace if EfS is to be effective; a form of leadership which supports and promotes values of sustainability, involves a strong commitment to participation and collaboration but does not hide behind these commitments when it is appropriate to take a lead.

In a discussion at a recent EfS conference, there was a strong feeling that EfS practitioners too often shy away from acting as leaders or spokespersons and surrender the field of leadership to a small (often self-appointed) but well-connected group of individuals who have the confidence to put themselves forward. Sometimes this can be advantageous if they can articulate and inspire interest in EfS, but this needs to be backed up with commitments to participation and democratic involvement.

F) A lifelong learning process

We need to work from the premise that EfS is an affirmative, lifelong learning process, where much of our learning will take place outside the formal sector. If we invite formal, statutory education processes to embed learning for sustainability we could wait indefinitely to develop a society with the capacity to live sustainably. Moreover, the formal curriculum, as currently construed, does not seem to be the most effective conduit for this kind of sustainable learning. For example, a survey among secondary school pupils in the UK discovered that they were turned off by learning about environmental issues in citizenship lessons (Oxfam, 2006:6). This probably says more about the way these young people were being taught than the content as the same survey suggested that students wanted issues tackled in

‘more depth’ and ‘to discuss more in smaller groups’ (ibid:7).

Further research by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) in the UK indicates that committed and motivated teachers, combined with a supportive school ethos, made a huge difference to pupils’ attitudes to environmental issues (Morris & Schagen, 1995). There are, of course, dangers in seeing lifelong learning and formal education as a panacea for sustainability. Indeed, many argue that formal education is currently dominated by the technical/vocational model of education and its main rationale is ‘to raise skill levels and enhance the knowledge base of individuals so that they may operate more effectively in a fluctuating labour market’ (Blewitt, 2005:27).

More opportunity for EfS perhaps lies within non-formal processes where there is potential for a lifelong learning for sustainability which is critical and, emancipatory. Such processes emerge ‘from a reflexive relationship between thinking about priorities and the actual experience of living in the world, of making a living and protecting the prospects of the next generation during a period of change’ (ibid:36). Blewitt cites as examples the work in developing sustainable neighbourhoods and social inclusivity by organisations such as the Community Development Foundation and Groundwork in the UK. ‘The informal learning opportunities that these initiatives created are profoundly important aspects of non-formal lifelong learning’ (ibid:34).

The lifelong learner for sustainability needs to be part of a learning community and ‘an active and creative explorer of the world; a reflexive agent; a self-actualising agent and an integrator of learning’ (Medel-Anonuevo, Ohsako & Mauch in Blewitt, 2005:26). EfS requires a concept of lifelong learning which recognises the imperative of learning for sustainability as a shared human project in a rapidly changing world where none of us has all the answers. Opportunities for learning are all around us; as educators perhaps our main responsibility is to recognise them.

G) Making EfS an international movement

Encouragingly, some commentators such as David Orr and Andres Edwards already sense the beginnings of paradigm change in a ‘sustainability revolution’ which is taking place ‘below the radar screen and outside the cultural buzz’ (Orr, 2005:xiv in Edwards, 2005):

“It is happening first at the periphery of power and wealth, where revolutions often start. It is evident in farmers beginning to mimic natural systems in order to reserve their soil and land...It is evident

in the burgeoning interest in green building, green architecture, green engineering...It is evident in a new religious sensibility across the full spectrum, of faith traditions that regard stewardship of the Earth as obligatory...It is evident in education and the emergence of new ways to think about the human role in nature that stretch our perspective to whole systems and out to the far horizon of imagination” (Orr, 2005: xiv).

Edwards presents evidence for a growing movement of sustainability advocates across the globe and identifies five characteristics of this ‘revolution’:

- Remarkable similarities among sustainability groups in overall intentions and objectives;
- A large and diverse number of such groups;
- A wide range of issues addressed by these groups;
- Leadership by a group of decentralised visionaries rather than a single charismatic figurehead;
- Varying modes of action – oppositional and alternative (Edwards, 2005:7).

Some educationalists have had difficulties with the idea of being part of a movement as they felt that it had implications of being partisan and ideologically biased. Yet engagement with EfS necessarily involves working toward a more equitable and environmentally sustainable society. However, it is important to recognise that this is a process where no one group, ideology, sector or country has all the answers. Therefore it is perfectly possible, indeed, I would argue, essential to be part of an open-minded movement which is advocating as well as seeking change.

Conclusion

Many people and organisations across the world see the broad framework of EfS as an opportunity to place themselves and their work in the context of a movement. There is much to be gained from this, including a sense of solidarity, the potential for sharing ideas and learning from different global perspectives. The UN Decade for ESD can assist by providing a framework for network building, events and initiatives. The internet too provides a powerful tool for communication and building networks, such as the ‘E-learning community’ of students and alumni which forms part of LSBU’s EfS programme. Building a movement takes time but with the growing

awareness of the effects of climate change, the core enthusiasts of EfS may suddenly find themselves in demand as leaders of a rapidly expanding movement.

To some extent this is happening already with an increasing demand for courses and awareness raising on issues of sustainability from a wide range of sectors. It is becoming clear that we will need to raise our game over the next decade if EfS is to become a dynamic process which can enable us all to learn to live sustainably. Human beings are very adaptive and intelligent beings who have learned to live unsustainably in rather a short space of time. Time is of the essence as it has become clear that some of the effects of climate change are already unstoppable. Our challenge for the future well-being of the planet and of human life is to learn – very quickly – how to live sustainably.

(This article is a condensed version of chapter one from a forthcoming publication by the EfS programme at London South Bank University *Journeys around EfS* edited by Jenneth Parker and Ros Wade. Visit www.lsbu.ac.uk/efs.)

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