

European & External Affairs Committee

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Date: 25 October 2006

Time: 09.00 - 12.25

Venue: Committee Rooms 1 & 2, Senedd, Cardiff Bay

Title: Oxfam Cymru

In Wales we have Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC). Wales is justifiably proud of its decision to develop its ESDGC strategy. It is ambitious, visionary, is not without its challenges but reflects Wales' desire to completely transform the mindset of future Welsh generations.

The world in which we live is the only one that we have – its resources are finite. To live sustainably and to be globally aware of the impact of our own lifestyle is, therefore not an option but a necessity.

Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship – A Strategy for Action 2006 (WAG)

Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship

Oxfam has worked with strategic partners (including latterly as part of the ESDGC panel *) across Wales for over fifteen years to promote the principles and good practice of Education for Global Citizenship. We warmly welcome the significant commitment over recent years shown by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG), Wales Qualification and Advisory Authority (ACCAC) and the Welsh Inspectorate (Estyn).

In Wales those involved in the implementation and delivery of ESDGC are guided by three key documents

- Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship Guidance Document 2002
- Sustainable Development Action Plan - 2004-2007
- Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship – A Strategy for Action 2006

In ESDGC democracy or political literacy is not taught in isolation, as a discreet unit but as part of the underlying principles and key concepts of ESDGC.

Principles of Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship

- The links between society, economy and environment and between our own lives and those of people throughout the world.
- The needs and rights of both present and future generations

- The relationships between power, resources and human rights
- The local and global implications of everything we do and the actions that individuals and organisations can take in response to local and global issues

It would be naïve to believe that principles three and four above could be examined without an understanding of the democratic and/or undemocratic process. Simplistically the following statements could encourage lines of enquiry centring around an examination of democracy whether good or bad

- The relationships between power, resources and human rights

Who has the power? > How do these people achieve power? > How is that power used? > Who benefits from that power? > Who fails to benefit from that power?

The local and global implications of everything we do and the actions that individuals and organisations can take in response to local and global issues

Who has the power? > How can we state our views/concerns so that those in power listen? > How does change happen in a democratic society?

* ESDGC panel is an advisory panel that provides guidance to the Minister.

The European and External Affairs Committee have identified the following key questions as issues for consideration in relation to a review of Global and European Citizenship Education. Answers to the committee's questions are based on my knowledge and understanding of ESDGC within Wales.

1. To what extent and how far is awareness of EU and global citizenship taught in schools

ESDGC is currently being delivered inconsistently in schools in Wales. There are examples of excellence and areas where little is happening. Mostly involvement is reliant on enthusiastic individual teachers or visionary Headteachers.

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Achievements

Recognition – Understanding that ESDGC should cut across all curriculum subjects and be integrated into all aspects of school life > component of QTS > inspected

Pedagogical change – Curriculum Development - Foundation Stage, Critical thinking activities, Participatory activities, Reflective thinking, Philosophy for Children, Decision-making strategies within the classroom, Peer/paired/Cooperative working, Developing pupils' opinions > Hidden electorate

Curriculum Review – Vital that ESDGC considered by all curriculum working groups not just ‘the usual suspects - R.E. PSE, Geography > Development of Welsh BAC and WJEC World Development A/S and A2, 14-19 Learning Pathways

2. The impact of citizenship education and how this is measured

- How do we know that ESDGC produces better, more informed and more tolerant citizens?

Educationalists know that education is far more than just an acquisition of knowledge but that all learning should be framed within a development of skills and an appreciation of attitudes and values. Evidence from Estyn Inspection reports indicate that ESDGC is enabling pupils to be more informed about global issues and global communities and that this can lead to greater tolerance

- Which indices do you use to measure ESDGC?

Evidence of a more informed Wales society > Increased media representation of global issues > Increased knowledge of global poverty and how our lives impact on the lives of others (Make Poverty History campaign), Greater understanding of sustainable livelihoods > revenue of Fairtrade products, Increased numbers of people acting sustainably > recycling numbers

- How, if at all, it is ESDGC addressed in primary schools and the potential for introducing it?

Appreciation of Diversity > Fairtrade > Poverty > Healthy Eating > Water > Rights Education - Children’s rights > multicultural representation e.g. reading schemes, texts, posters, newspapers, photographs, images etc

Knowledge of democratic process - School Councils > Decision making

Eco-schools > Recycling > Waste Management > Pollution > Conservation > Water > Procurement > ecological footprints

School Ethos and Management, (policy and implementation) – Equal opportunities policy, ESDGC policy, behaviour policy, anti-racist policy, Anti Bullying policy, buddy system, reward systems,

3. What are the obstacles from the teacher’s perspective (for example, teacher training and availability of appropriate teaching materials?)

Current evidence indicates that the majority of schools embarking on ESDGC are tackling the ‘green’ elements (ESD) and then finding it difficult to expand their actions and consider the full range of ESDGC.

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Knowledge – ESDGC concepts appear complex > global issues can be complex > relationship

between ESD and EGC and how they relate to each other requires clarification and simplification > Schools are covering more than they believe > What is essential is continued recognition of good practice, continued commitment to initial teacher training and continuing professional development, ESDGC criteria already integrated into QTS status > Middle Management and Headteachers qualification, revised Inspection criteria, resourcing requirements analysed, ESDGC website, quality marks, ESDGC school frameworks.

Trust – How do schools know that ESDGC is a long-term commitment that will stand the ravages of educational change? > Commitment by WAG > ESDGC is ambitious > Policy documentation is one thing but turning policy into practice involves financial commitment and training > Schools need to see ESDGC as long term > they will build it into school development plans and In-service Training/CPD.

4. To what extent do schools in Wales engage in cultural or educational exchanges with schools in Europe and beyond and how?

Not an area that Oxfam has been involved in.

School Linking – Oxfam’s view is that school linking is to be encouraged where it benefits the schools, teachers, pupils and communities in both Wales and the developing country. Oxfam would endorse linking initiatives in which schools, teachers, pupils and communities in the developing country, benefited as much from the link as those in Wales and where the learning involved, enriched both curriculum and school life for all involved.

5. What barriers are there to ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils to get involved in such activities?

Primary v Secondary schools – Greater involvement in primary school than secondary – 10% of primary schools involved in some ESDGC initiatives. Less than 10% of secondary schools involved in any ESDGC initiatives. ESDGC more effectively planned within primary school – cross-curricular rather than modular subject specific.

6. What barriers are there to effective co-operation between schools and organisations, which provide information about or promote Europe?

ESDGC of course has a wider remit than an examination of European countries and citizens.

Uniformity/Clarity – Ensure all organisations share a common understanding of ESDGC principles and concepts > effective communication > consistent messaging > common frameworks

7. How consistent is this approach to citizenship across Wales? Are opportunities for engaging in more innovative ways with European or global citizenship initiatives, such as the Youth European parliament, accessible to all schools?

In Wales we have

- One ESDGC
- One ESDGC strategy
- One ESDGC panel with representatives from key educational stakeholders

We are working towards

One consistent approach

Joined up thinking between ESD and EGC stakeholders within the ESDGC framework