



# Sustainability in action: involving the local community

"Uplands is talking less these days about 'the environment' and more about working towards sustainability in their school community and home environments."

*East Sussex County Council Environment Officer*



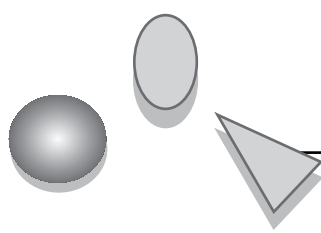
The school and surrounding area

## Spreading the message

This case study gives two practical examples of how a community college has involved the community in its work on sustainable development, which they believe can be replicated in other schools. The first example shows how they developed an 'Energy Day' for partner primary schools, working with Year 8 students. The second example is a student-generated project to create a sustainable garden.

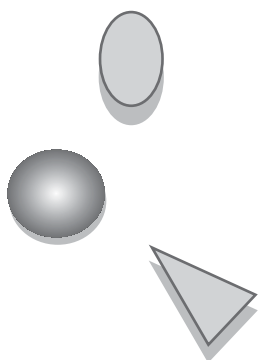
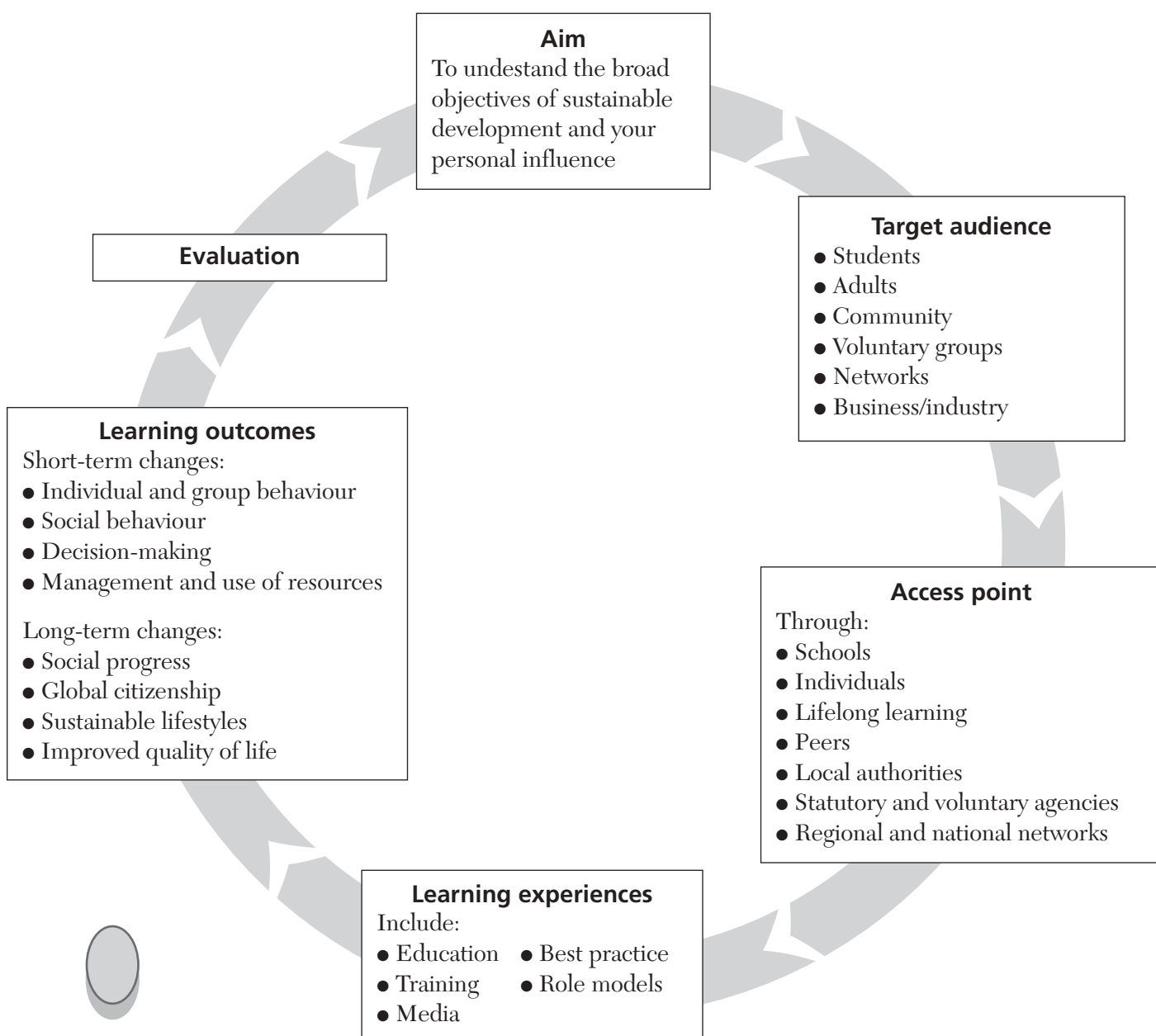
## Background

Uplands Community Technology College is an 11 to 18 school for just over 1,000 students, which also runs an Adult Education and Youth Service. It serves a predominantly rural area of East Sussex, and lies close to Kent (Tunbridge Wells is 10 km away). Students at Uplands belong to a school at the heart of an active community. They are proud of their environment awards and enthusiastic about encouraging sustainability with community partners. Our commitment to lifelong learning is recognised in partner primary schools and by the local farmers learning ICT skills in rural Sussex villages through the 'UK Online' initiative.



Like many other secondary schools, our students are involved in recycling, improvements in the school grounds, energy and water conservation, litter and transport. They have also had a significant input over a period of years through the European Eco-schools initiative. However, we wanted to move the school beyond an Eco-School focus to a wider Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) approach. WWF's 'Making it Happen' scheme helped us in this aspiration, offering funding, training and consultancy to support us in our ESD journey.

### The strategic framework for education for sustainable development within our school



## Energising an energy focus

### An 'Energy Day' for partner primary schools

Uplands initially hosted an introduction to *Energy Matters* (published by CSE, CREATE, Shell Education) for its own staff and other schools. Following this, interested staff were invited to discuss the merits of a whole day devoted to sustainable energy organised by the College ESD Coordinator. The ideas were then brought to the ESD Steering Group for further discussion before being presented to the Primary Liaison Group, which meets half-termly. A date was fixed and notified to all partner primary schools, and rooms booked at Uplands. The link Senior Manager, the College Vice-Principal, was involved throughout. His role was important in making sure Senior Management endorsed the day and that rooms were made available for the event.

Entries from all partner primary schools were encouraged via a competition for Years 5 and 6, devised by a member of the Science department and based on material in *Energy Matters*. There were 15 places allocated for each primary school, plus a member of staff. The children were asked to complete a survey of energy use in their homes and to bring the results with them on the day.

It was decided that Uplands' Year 8 students should host the day and act as 'buddies' to the primary children. These students registered the primary visitors in the College reception area and each participant was allocated to one of five groups – 'Tidal Barrages', 'Solar Panels', 'Wind Turbines', 'Hydro Generators' and 'Geothermals' – each made up of one Year 8 student supporting two primary children.

The day began in the main hall with a welcome and introduction by the ESD Coordinator, before the circus of activities began! The activities chosen were either those which could be run by our own staff or those 'owned' by external agencies. Communicating the outcomes of the day was seen to be of vital importance, so at the end of the afternoon everyone gathered in the hall again and each group prepared a display. These were judged by visiting experts from CREATE, Seeboard and Wealden District Council and prizes awarded. All children received an energy-saving light bulb and information to take home on how to use energy more sustainably.

From the start, Uplands saw ESD as needing to be securely rooted in the community. Regular environmental assemblies using external speakers take place to broaden the knowledge of students. The 'Energy Matters' day gave us an opportunity to involve members of the wider community in the work of the school. The support of these 'experts' was a vital element of the day, giving specialist



One of our energy activities

technical input and enabling students to work in small groups in which they were more able to contribute actively. The experts were also able to bring along additional resources and equipment not normally available to the students.

The whole event was judged to have been a success and will be repeated in two years time with new Years 5, 6 and 8.

### The timetable for the day

'Energy Matters' uses the home energy use survey as a starting point for consideration of ways to reduce consumption. 'Hot houses' uses a model linked to data processing equipment to show the efficiency of energy-saving building materials.

TIME	WIND TURBINES	SOLAR PANELS	TIDAL BARRAGES	GEO THERMALS	HYDRO GENERATORS
<b>09.15 - 09.30</b> REGISTRATION IN MAIN RECEPTION					
<b>09.30 - 10.00</b> WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION IN MAIN HALL					
<b>10.00 - 10.45</b>	ENERGY BUS	SOLAR CARS	ENERGY MATTERS	HOT HOUSES	LIGHTING SURVEY
<b>SESSION 1</b>	Outside	Outside / Hall	MCR	Lab 8	M1
<b>10.45 - 11.00</b> BREAK IN DINING HALL					
<b>11.00 - 11.45**</b>	LIGHTING SURVEY	ENERGY BUS	SOLAR CARS	ENERGY MATTERS	HOT HOUSES
<b>SESSION 2</b>	M1	Outside	Outside / Hall	MCR	Lab 8
<b>11.45 - 12.30</b>	HOT HOUSES	LIGHTING SURVEY	ENERGY BUS	SOLAR CARS	ENERGY MATTERS
<b>SESSION 3</b>	Lab 8	M1	Outside	Outside / Hall	MCR
<b>12.30 - 1.00</b> LUNCH IN DINING HALL					
<b>1.00 - 1.45**</b>	ENERGY MATTERS	HOT HOUSES	LIGHTING SURVEY	ENERGY BUS	SOLAR CARS
<b>SESSION 4</b>	MCR	Lab 8	M1	Outside	Outside / 6CR
<b>1.45 - 2.30**</b>	SOLAR CARS	ENERGY MATTERS	HOT HOUSES	LIGHTING SURVEY	ENERGY BUS
<b>SESSION 5</b>		6CR / Outside	MCR	Lab 8	M1 Outside
<b>2.30 - 3.00</b> BREAK AND PRESENTATION PREPARATION IN DINING HALL (MCR / 6CR)					
<b>3.00 - 3.30</b> CLOSING SESSION IN DINING HALL AND PRESENTATION OF EAST SUSSEX CONSERVATION CUP					

Notes:

\*\* = A session which overlaps with a College break or lunch

MCR = Maths Computer Room

6CR = 6th Form Business Computer Room

The lighting survey was designed by CREATE (Centre for Research, Education and Training in Energy). Seeboard provided the model 'Hot House' and worksheets.

East Sussex County Council brought along their new LPG car used by the chairman for official functions







## What's this got to do with Education for Sustainable Development?

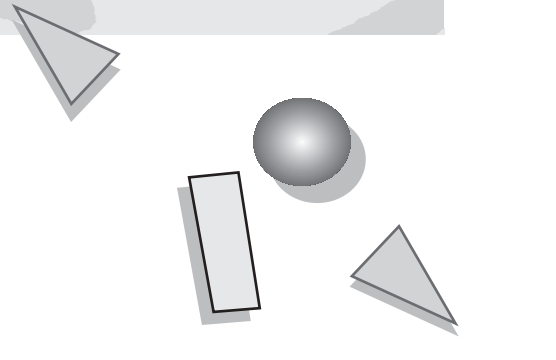
### Values and attitudes

- a belief that, working with others, people can make a difference
- a willingness to act as a responsible citizen
- empathy and awareness of the points of view of others
- respect for and valuing of human and biological diversity
- an understanding of the place of individual and collective rights and responsibilities
- a belief in a positive future.

### Skills

- cooperative working
- critical thinking
- negotiation
- reasoned debate; the ability to argue effectively
- problem solving
- informed decision-making
- creativity – an ability to put forward alternatives
- research, data handling and communication.

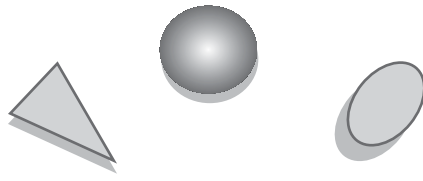
### Knowledge and understanding

- how biological systems operate, support life and are affected by human activity
  - how the processes of decision-making work, and how to take part in them
  - how students' own lives and actions connect with the environment and with the lives and actions of others
  - what is involved in different methods of providing for human needs and wants (raw materials, energy, human input, environmental impact).
  - how school, home and community can be managed more sustainably.
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## Key success factors

- Try to ensure that ESD is securely rooted in the community – including the involvement of external 'experts' in assemblies and activities, and invitations to other schools and organisations to join in activities or benefit from facilities.
- A link person in senior management is vital in securing support and facilitating organisational issues.
- 'Buddying' secondary and primary children on projects benefits both pupils and project.

"Gaining three environmental awards is a fantastic achievement for Uplands, and we want to encourage others to work towards the same high standards." *Sussex Environment Agency Planning Officer*



## Resources/where to go for help

**CREATE, Centre for Research, Education and Training in Energy. Visit [www.create.org.uk](http://www.create.org.uk)**

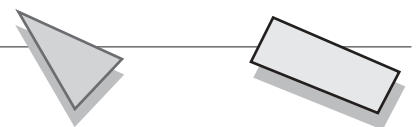
**NEF, National Energy Foundation. Visit [www.natenergy.org.uk](http://www.natenergy.org.uk)**

**Local and district council environment and recycling officers and regional energy companies are also useful sources of information and help, and most have an education officer.**

## The WWF Schools' Case Studies Series

**This case study forms part of a series designed to capture the work of schools as they journey towards Education for Sustainable Development. The case studies come from schools working at all levels – from Early Years to Secondary, but we hope that the principles and ideas are transferable. Free copies of all the case studies are available from WWF Education at the address below, or you can download them from the Resource Bank: Case Studies section of our dedicated ESD site, [www.wwflearning.co.uk](http://www.wwflearning.co.uk)**

**WWF-UK, Education and Awareness, Panda House, Weyside Park, Godalming, Surrey GU7 1XR**



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