Education for Sustainable Development

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Introduction


'The overall goal of the DESD is to integrate the principles, values, and practices of sustainable development into all aspects of education and learning. This educational effort will encourage changes in behaviour that will create a more sustainable future in terms of environmental integrity, economic viability, and a just society for present and future generations' (UN DES).

This initiative has encouraged individuals and organizations across the globe, involved in both formal and informal educational contexts, to reflect upon and to begin to implement appropriate mechanisms for integrating the topic of 'sustainable development' into their teaching and learning strategies. Since 2005, the HE Academy Subject Centres have been carrying out initial explorations on the theme of 'Education for Sustainable Development' with respect to the current state of the various disciplines in terms of teaching activity and research. One aim of this work is to contribute towards enabling graduates to become 'sustainability literate' as both an employability skill but also from
the recognition that individuals need to take responsibility for living their lives more 'sustainably'.

Funding

There is currently a call for applications for small grants. Download the information about the call for bids, and the application form, for more details.

What is sustainable development?

While understandings of sustainable development are much contested and discussed, the definition presented in the 1987 Brundtland report is widely used: 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. The following links provide information about ways of defining and thinking about sustainable development:

Definitions of Sustainable Development

UN Decade for Education for Sustainable Development (2005-214)

Department of Education and Skills: Sustainable Development

World Bank: What is Sustainable Development?

What does ESD mean for PRS subject areas?

In 2010 Katja Stuerzenhofecker, Rebecca O'Loughlin and Simon Smith contributed a chapter, 'Sustainability in the Theology Curriculum', available in Sustainability Education: Perspectives and Practice across Higher Education, edited by Paula Jones, David Selby and Stephen Sterling, Earthscan, London, which is available at www.earthscan.co.uk. This chapter is available to read on our website by following the link above.

Part of the challenge of thinking about ESD within the subject areas of Philosophy, Theology and Religious Studies, is to reflect upon the ways in which these disciplines might approach and define sustainable development. One of the important contributions that ESD in Higher Education can make towards the sustainability debate is to enable a focused analysis of the various contributions that different disciplines bring to understanding and defining 'sustainable development'. The following quotation, sums up some of the considerations that arguably ought to guide the introduction of ESD in Higher Education:

"Perhaps educators have four kinds of responsibility: one, to help learners understand why the idea of sustainable development ought to be of interest to them; two, to help learners gain plural perspectives on issues from a range of cultural stances; three, to provide opportunities for an active consideration of issues through appropriate pedagogies which, for example, might begin from learners’ and teachers’ different interests, helping pupils understand what they are learning and its significance; and four, to encourage pupils to continue to think about what to do, individually and socially, and to keep their own and other people's options open. Doing less than this seems neglectful; doing much more runs the risk of indoctrination. Government agencies and NGOs walk a tightrope when they attempt guidance in such matters because of their need to stimulate without prescribing, and our need to see conceptual frameworks as scaffolding to build learning around, rather than as barriers to new ideas and creativity."

While 'sustainable development' is not an 'essential' topic of study for PRS, there is already a strong tradition of teaching and research in this area within Philosophy, Theology and Religious Studies. Within these disciplines, students are encouraged to engage in critical thinking, to challenge their assumptions and to become aware of different cultural perspectives. For instance, whereas in Philosophy one might find modules on environmental ethics, business ethics or development ethics, in Religious Studies the emphasis would rest upon the ways in which the
teachings and practices of different world religions intersect with sustainability concerns. Theology, by contrast, would generally focus upon the Christian tradition.

This online resource aims to provide links to websites that will assist colleagues working in Philosophy, Theology and Religious Studies who are interested in the relationship of their subject to ESD and who may wish to integrate sustainability into the curriculum. Although Philosophy, Theology and Religious Studies are all dealt with by a single Higher Education Academy Subject Centre, it is acknowledged that each is an academic discipline in its own right with a distinctive history, set of methodological tools and pedagogical approaches. Within the PRS subject centre it is common practice to engage with Philosophy separately from Theology and Religious Studies, and a clear distinction is also made in much of the Subject Centre's work between the latter two areas. The work that the Subject Centre does recognizes the value of interdisciplinary work, yet also the importance of maintaining disciplinary identities to preserve the unique perspective that each subject area can bring to the complex questions facing today's global society (such as sustainability issues).

Aim of this resource:

- To raise awareness within our own disciplines, as well as other subject communities, of the contribution that Philosophy, Theology and Religious Studies can make to ESD;
- To provide a resource for students interested in this area (e.g. links to relevant sites, course details etc.);
- To provide an outline of the ways in which Philosophy, Theology and Religious Studies are already engaging with ESD (e.g. through courses, on-line publications etc.) and to begin to compile a catalogue of existing learning and teaching resources;
- To identify relevant non-HE bodies/organisations working in the ESD area that have a philosophical and/or religious studies approach.

Extras:

- People will also be able to sign up to an 'experts' list where they can enter their research and teaching interests. This list will act as resource to enable networking and the sharing of ideas and information;
- The website will provide the opportunity to advertise up-coming events (eg seminars, conferences, publication of relevant texts etc).

1. General resources on Education for Sustainable Development

The following links will provide general background information on:

- **Education for sustainable development** - This site includes links to useful 'education for sustainable development' websites for young people and links to useful 'education for sustainable development' for teachers.
- **WSSD (World Summit on Sustainable Development) (2002), WSSD Plan of Implementation**
- **DfES (2003), Sustainable Development Action Plan for Education and Skills**
- **UNESCO, Higher Education for Sustainable Development, ESD Information Brief**
2. Courses

Philosophy

The study of environmental philosophy and environmental ethics are well-established philosophical sub-disciplines and are widely taught at both undergraduate and masters level, particularly in the USA. Because these courses are quite numerous, only UK courses have been listed. This in not a comprehensive list, and we wish to encourage people to submit details of courses in this area.

- MA Values and the Environment (MAVE) at the University of Central Lancashire. "The MA Values and Environment (MAVE) provides an opportunity for students to deepen their understanding of how the values that have shaped our view of the world have emerged, what alternative approaches are being developed (or revived), and how these alternatives might be put to work to shape our global future." There is no detailed course information available on the website but there are contact details. http://www.uclan.ac.uk/facs/health/ethics/courses/ma_values.htm

- Environmental Politics and Philosophy, a distance-learning module at the University of Exeter. It aims: "to study the historical development and current status of environmentalism and green political thought; to explore the philosophical foundations of different perspectives on the environment; to examine politics and the global environment." http://www.education.ex.ac.uk/dll/details.php?code=LLN2082D

- Environmental Philosophy, an undergraduate module at the University of Hull, taught by Dr Steve Burwood: "this module explores a relatively new area of concern in philosophy and examines the philosophical (metaphysical, ethical, applied ethical) issues that arise in the environmental debate." Hull also offers MA level study of 'values and the environment' as part of its programme in applied ethics. http://www.hull.ac.uk/philosophy/Undergraduates/Modules/27317.html

- Outdoor Philosophy: this 'non-academic', experience-based course "combines careful, critical thinking about the environment and our impact on it, with the emotional engagement necessary for change." The out-of-doors courses can be 'tailor made' to suit the needs of particular groups and are run by two academics based at St Martins College, Lancaster: Dr Kate Rawls and Chris Loynes. http://www.outdoorphilosophy.co.uk/index.html

- Environmental Philosophy module as part of MA programme in Practical Philosophy at the University of York, it "explores philosophical issues arising out of reflection on the value of nature." http://www.york.ac.uk/depts/phil/gsp/ma_pracethics.html

- Environmental Ethics undergraduate module at the University of Glasgow: "this unique course approaches environmental ethics from a very practical perspective. It takes a series of highly controversial issues, e.g. nuclear power, landfill sites, pollution, desertification and climate change, and assesses how these are tackled on a personal, community and governmental level." http://www.cc.gla.ac.uk

- Centre for the Study of Global Ethics, University of Birmingham: founded in 2001, CSGE was set up to address key ethical issues of our time and is the first of its kind in the UK. They run an MA module on Development Ethics. http://www.globalethics.bham.ac.uk/Introductory/whatis.htm

- Environmental Ethics undergraduate module at the University of Leeds http://www.philosophy.leeds.ac.uk/PhilosophyUndergraduate/Level2/PHIL2725.htm

Theology and Religious Studies

Compared to the study of environmental ethics or environmental philosophy, issues to do with sustainable development have been addressed to a lesser extent within theology and religious studies. For this reason, I have listed some courses in the USA (where it has received more attention) as well as the UK. Again, we seek input from
'Religion, Culture, and Sustainable Development': Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, Princeton University. The following pdf file provides a course outline with readings.
http://www.wws.princeton.edu/courses/syllabi_f04/wws571b.pdf

'Religion and Development': The Heller School for Social Policy and Management, Brandeis University. There is no detailed course outline or readings here but interested parties could contact the department for further information. The course: "Explores the connections between religion and development from theoretical, activist (engaged religious), and practitioner (faith-based NGO) perspectives. Considers (1) basic social-science perspectives on the connections of religious cosmology, beliefs, and practices to social and cultural identity, solidarity, and ideas about human dignity, social inequalities, and the desirability or inevitability of social change and (2) notions of religious obligations and the role of religion as a motivating force or barrier to social transformation and sustainable development. This module seeks to build a positive understanding of the potential contributions of religious forces, with attention to peace-building and economic-development activities".
http://heller.brandeis.edu/welcome/courses_sustainable_international_development_program.asp

UNESCO's 'Teaching and Learning for a Sustainable Future' is a "multimedia teacher education programme...It contains 100 hours (divided into 25 modules) of professional development for use in pre-service teacher courses as well as the in-service education of teachers, curriculum developers, education policy makers, and authors of educational materials." It includes two themes, in particular, that are of interest to teachers in PRS: 'culture and religion for a sustainable future' and 'indigenous knowledge and sustainability'. Use the left hand tool bar to navigate different sections of the site: getting started; curriculum rationale; curriculum themes; and teaching and learning strategies. http://www.unesco.org/education/tlsf/

Religion and the Environment, syllabi and teaching resources. A website from the Wabash Centre bringing together course outlines (from the USA and Canada). It includes other links of interest, e.g. to organisations interested in ESD-relevant activities. http://www.wabashcenter.wabash.edu/Internet/environment.htm


'Liberating God: Green and Feminist Theologies' (undergraduate module at Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education) http://www.glos.ac.uk/subjectsandcourses/undergraduatefields/th/descriptors/th216.cfm

'Ecology, Globalisation, Media, Public Life' (MTh in Theological Ethics: Edinburgh University). "By the end of the course participants should be able to do the following: demonstrate and appraise the way in which accounts of, and attempts to resolve, the ecological problematicate shape, and are shaped by, particular moral visions and narratives of God, creation, humanity and church; articulate and discriminate between competing philosophical, scientific and theological approaches to ecological ethics; and describe and evaluate case studies of the interaction between ecology, religion and culture in history.
http://www.div.ed.ac.uk/theoleth.html

'Attitudes to the Environment and to Animals' (undergraduate module at University of Greenwhich). Taught by Dr Sally Alsford http://www.gre.ac.uk/~am03/theo/sally.html

'Religion, Theology and Development' (MA programme, Department of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Leeds). The programme will provide postgraduate students with an opportunity to study at an advanced level the engagement between theology, religion and development studies; enable students to develop expertise and skills within the varied professional disciplines of development studies; and foster critical reflection on the scriptural, theological, ethical and philosophical implications of development for human
flourishing, as well the as socio-cultural and politico dimensions of religion in terms of its implications for development and human flourishing. Taught by Dr Kevin Ward
http://www.leeds.ac.uk/trs/staff/kevin_ward.htm and Dr Emma Tomalin
http://www.leeds.ac.uk/trs/staff/emma_tomalin.htm.

- 'Religion and Development' (undergraduate module at SOAS). Taught by Professor Ian Linden. "This course will cover themes like the following: Religion and modernization theory, the development of human rights language and common good language and their compatibility, the relation of religion to these discourses, liberation theology as an ideology of development, the Iranian Revolution and Ali Shariati, issues of development in Christian social teaching, the World Bank, Christian NGOs and the Jubilee Campaign, a case study of religious influence on economic development in Northern Nigeria". http://www.soas.ac.uk/Religions/BA/158000127.htm.

- Schumacher College: "founded in 1991 on the conviction that a new vision is needed for society, its values and its relationship to the earth". Runs short courses as well as an accredited MSc programme (with the University of Plymouth) in 'Holistic Science'. http://www.schumachercollege.org.uk/prospect/about.html.

3. Organisations

Philosophy

- International Association for Environmental Philosophy (based in the USA): "IAEP embraces a broad understanding of environmental philosophy, including not only environmental ethics, but also environmental aesthetics, ontology, and theology, the philosophy of science, ecofeminism, and the philosophy of technology."
  The website offers links to relevant websites as well as details on how to become a member http://www.environmentalphilosophy.org/

- International Society for Environmental Ethics (based in the USA): on this website you can read about the history and aims of the organisation. There are also links to other relevant sites, reading lists and the organisation's newsletter. http://www.cep.unt.edu/ISEE.html

- Environmental Ethics - a directory: this resource provides a list of individuals working in the area of environmental ethics. http://gadfly.igc.org/ee-list.htm

- International Development Ethics Association (IDEA):"The International Development Ethics Association is a cross-cultural group of philosophers, social scientists, and practitioners who apply ethical reflection to global development goals and strategies and to North/South relations." The website includes links to information on the history of the organization, conference details, membership details and the organisation's newsletter. http://gadfly.igc.org/ee-list.htm

Theology and Religious Studies

- 'Alliance for Religion and Conservation': Established in 1995, and based in Manchester, ARC is a "secular body that helps the major religions of the world to develop their own environmental programmes, based on their own core teachings, beliefs and practices." ARC works with the World Bank as advisors and also provides funds to support projects around the theme of religion and environmental sustainability. The website provides information of projects, as well as short papers on faith traditions and ecology. http://www.arcworld.org/

- 'World Faith's Development Dialogue': Established in 1998, WFDD was set up by the then president of the World Bank, James D. Wolfensohn, and Lord Carey, then Archbishop of Canterbury, to encourage dialogue between religious traditions in the South and international development institutions. Its website provides
information on faith traditions and development, case studies of religious organisations involved in
development activities as well as material relating to the relationship between WFDD and the World Bank (e.g.
documents outlining faith perspectives on the World Bank's annual 'Development Reports'.
http://www.wfdd.org.uk/

- 'Harvard Forum on Religion and Ecology': the website states that "the Forum on Religion and Ecology is the
largest international multireligious project of its kind. With its conferences, publications, and website it is
engaged in exploring religious worldviews, texts, and ethics in order to broaden understanding of the complex
nature of current environmental concerns...The Forum recognizes that religions need to be in dialogue with
other disciplines (e.g., science, ethics, economics, education, public policy, gender) in seeking comprehensive
solutions to both global and local environmental problems." This is a huge resource that includes overviews of
different religious perspectives on the environment; bibliographies; resources for educators; and lists of events.
http://environment.harvard.edu/religion/

- 'US Partnership, Decade for Education for Sustainable Development, United Nations Decade (2005-2014) -
Faith Resources': "The US Partnership consists of individuals, organizations and institutions in the United
States dedicated to education for sustainable development (ESD). It acts as a convener, catalyst, and
communicator working across all sectors of American society." The 'faith resources' section of this website
includes a list of ESD relevant resources listed by 'religious tradition' (e.g. Bah'ai, Buddhism, Christianity,
Judaism, Interfaith), as well as faith sector news and events. http://www.uspartnership.org

4. Information, discussion and publications

Philosophy

- The Centre for Environmental Philosophy, University of North Texas: "This World Wide Web server is
dedicated to providing access to Internet resources throughout the world which pertain to or focus on
environmental ethics and environmental philosophy." http://www.cep.unt.edu/

- International Development Ethics paper by David Crocker:
http://www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/OApp/OAppCroc.htm

Theology and Religious Studies

- Soka Gakkai International: "Soka Gakkai International (SGI) is a Buddhist association with more than 12
million members in 190 countries and territories worldwide. For SGI members, Buddhism is a practical
philosophy of individual empowerment and inner transformation that enables people to develop themselves
and take responsibility for their lives." The ‘SGI Quarterly: Buddhist Perspectives on Peace, Culture and
Education’ (number 38, October, 2004) has a series of articles on 'The UN Decade of Education for
Sustainable Development'. http://www.sgi.org/english/Features/quarterly/0410/index0410.htm

- 'Religion and the Environment': a website offering resources (e.g. links to organisations, publications etc.)
around the theme of religion and environmentalism. It is divided into headings relating to different traditions.
http://daphne.palomar.edu/calenvironment/religion.htm

- 'Baha'i International Community issues statement to the World Summit on Sustainable Development': an
article investigating links between religion and development from a Baha'I perspective.
http://news.bahai.org/story/169

- South Asia Research Institute for Religion and Development: religion and development in general: provides
"links to web articles, forums, projects and other resources concerned with the interaction between religious
belief systems and components of sustainable development such as education, governance, conflict
resolution, technology and the environment.” [http://www.sarid.net/religious-dimension/general.htm](http://www.sarid.net/religious-dimension/general.htm)


## 5. Online bibliographies

**Philosophy**

- International Society for Environmental Ethics Bibliography: [http://www.cep.unt.edu/bib/index.htm](http://www.cep.unt.edu/bib/index.htm)

**Theology and Religious Studies**

- Religion and Development bibliography: [http://environment.harvard.edu/religion/disciplines/economics/bibliography/noyce_index.html](http://environment.harvard.edu/religion/disciplines/economics/bibliography/noyce_index.html)
- Religion and Development - A bibliography: [http://www.eldis.org/static/DOC5739.htm](http://www.eldis.org/static/DOC5739.htm)
- The Environmental Crisis and Western Civilization: The Lynn White Controversy: [http://ecoethics.net/bib/1997/enca-001.htm](http://ecoethics.net/bib/1997/enca-001.htm)

## 6. Refereed Journals

**Philosophy**

- Environmental Ethics (USA based): "An Interdisciplinary Journal Dedicated to the Philosophical Aspects of Environmental Problems."

- Environmental Values (UK based): "Environmental Values is concerned with the basis and justification of environmental policy. It aims to bring together contributions from philosophy, law, economics and other disciplines, which relate to the present and future environment of humans and other species; and to clarify the relationship between practical policy issues and more fundamental underlying principles or assumptions.” [http://www.ericademon.co.uk/EV.html](http://www.ericademon.co.uk/EV.html)

**Theology and Religious Studies**

- Worldviews: culture, environment, religion: "It aims to publish work that explores different conjunctions, constructions and perceptions of environment, culture and religion. It aims to change the way we look at our world. The journal adopts a wide, multi- and interdisciplinary scope. Papers may discuss major world religious traditions (such as Islam, Buddhism or Christianity); the traditions of indigenous peoples; new religious
movements; philosophical belief systems (such as pantheism), nature spiritualities and other religious and cultural worldviews in relation to the environment.”

- Ecotheology: the Journal of Religion, Nature and the Environment “focuses on the nexus of interrelationships between religion and nature, particularly in the light of environmental and ecological concerns. It welcomes articles that are either from a theological perspective, including those from within a particular religious tradition, or from a religious studies perspective. The journal seeks to locate such discussion in the context of a multidisciplinary approach, including, for example, historical, philosophical, ecofeminist, sociological or anthropological analysis where relevant. It also seeks to include articles that stimulate discussion across different fields, such as that between science and religion, or ethics and policy making.” This journal is about to be renamed: Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture.