

Sustainable College Assistants Project (08/09)

Project Report, March 2009



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1 Introduction

The second year of StudentForce for Sustainability's Sustainable College Assistants Project (SCA Project) ran from August 2008 to March 2009 with two colleges - Wyggeston and Queen Elizabeth I College (WQEI) and Chesterfield College extending for three months until the end of June 2009. The project aimed to promote and extend education for sustainable development (ESD) in further education (FE) colleges in the East Midlands. This report outlines the approach and describes the different mini-projects undertaken to achieve this aim.

Mini-projects were primarily based upon the needs of the colleges as well as the Learning and Skills Council's (LSC's) 2005 sustainable development strategy, 'From Here to Sustainability'. The strategy contains recommendations for a series of four key actions relating to: buildings and estate; the curriculum; community engagement, and positioning the sector.

Recommendations for 'positioning the sector' are primarily aimed at the LSC itself and strategic partners such as Ofsted. As such the SCA project was not in a position to deliver on most of these recommendations, with the exception of the identification of champions for sustainable development, which was met in part by the formation of college 'Green groups' and Sustainability forums and groups in various colleges.

The mini-projects were categorised under the first three key actions of From Here to Sustainability - buildings and estate, the curriculum, and community engagement. To address the additional needs of the colleges, mini-projects were also categorised under Leadership and Management and Institutional Culture.

2 Sustainable Colleges Assistants

Three European volunteers were recruited through the European Union's Youth in Action (YiA), European Voluntary Service (EVS) programme. These volunteer Sustainable College Assistants (SCAs) were seconded to two FE colleges each for two days a week. A fourth European volunteer was taken on independently and worked at one college for two days a week, another for one and a half days and a third for a half a day a week. A list of the nine colleges that hosted the SCAs can be found in Appendix I.



Sustainable College Assistants, from left: Elisa Garcia, Florian Babeau, Jan Kronberger, Thomas Denis

SCAs were line-managed jointly by StudentForce and by a staff member in each of the colleges in which the Assistant worked. Further day to day support was provided in most of the colleges by a more junior member of staff than the line manager.

Identification of the work focus for the SCAs was led by the colleges. StudentForce provided a list of potential mini-projects that the SCAs could undertake. College representatives then prioritised areas where they felt the college could most benefit from assistance. StudentForce agreed to run between four and eight mini-projects in each of the colleges.

StudentForce and each partner college also signed a Partnership Agreement as a memorandum of understanding defining the working relationship and outlining roles and responsibilities. Regular review meetings were held between StudentForce, each college and the Assistant working for that college, to measure progress, troubleshoot and plan ahead.

3 Mini-projects Undertaken

This section contains brief information about each of the 41 mini-projects undertaken through the Sustainable College Assistants Project. Some of the most interesting or innovative of these have been chosen for further expansion in Sections 4 and 5.

Key Area	Mini-project	Description
Buildings and estate	Travel planning	The SCA at Portland College played a vital role in the formation of the college's Travel Plan. Please see Section 5.1 for details.
		The SCA at West Nottinghamshire College assisted in the development of the college's Travel Plan for their new build through the formulation, distribution and analysis of a staff and student survey.
		At Gateway College the SCA assisted in the development of the college's Travel Plan for their new build by researching current bus, cycling and walking paths providing access to the college.
		The SCAs at Linkage and Chesterfield College formulated, distributed and analysed travel surveys to determine actions to encourage the use of sustainable transport. At Linkage College the SCA also conducted a 'Green Travel Competition' while at Chesterfield the SCA produced a sustainable transport information leaflet and invited guests to promote cycling at the college during the Every Learner Matters (ELM) week.
	Waste and recycling audits	The SCA at Gateway College conducted a waste audit to determine the recycling performance and relative amounts of waste produced at the college in order to make recommendations and decisions.
		The SCA at Chesterfield College helped the college's Foundation Degree students conduct a waste audit to determine the recycling performance of the college. The SCA analysed the results and gave recommendations to the College's Environment Group which were then acted upon.
		The SCA at Portland College investigated how the different departments recycled to assist in the formation of a formal recycling procedure.
		The SCA at Chesterfield College developed information leaflets and posters to facilitate recycling. The SCA also promoted recycling and reusing at a stall during the Fresher's Fayre. During the college's ELM week the SCA invited the Derbyshire City Council's waste vehicle and staff to educate and entertain college staff and students.
		The SCA at RNIB College worked with a class of students to review the current recycling procedure in their halls of residence. Results indicated a need for a new three-bin system. The students researched and recommended suitable bins that were subsequently purchased. The class also made informative posters to facilitate recycling.
		The SCAs at New College Stamford and West Nottinghamshire College reviewed the provision of recycling bins on campus and helped place them in more appropriate positions. Recycling posters were designed and displayed to facilitate recycling.
		The SCAs at Linkage and Chesterfield College reviewed the provision of recycling bins on campus and helped place them in more appropriate positions. Recycling posters were designed and displayed to facilitate recycling.
	Energy usage and conservation	The SCA at Linkage College developed an energy conservation presentation and organised an 'Energy Saving Competition' between the residential houses. Data was used to determine which areas to focus on to decrease energy wastage.
		The SCA at RNIB College facilitated an Energy Usage Survey conducted by a class of students. See Section 5.1 for details.
The SCA at Portland College summarised the findings and recommendations of the Carbon Trust Audit to assist the college in determining priority actions.		

		The feasibility of new thin client servers over standard computers at Gateway College was investigated by measuring and comparing energy consumption and production costs.
		The SCA at West Nottinghamshire College researched the feasibility of the college buying a converter to convert kitchen oil into a fuel for cars.
	Healthy Colleges	The SCA at WQEI collected data and evidence to help achieve the Kirklees Healthy Colleges Standard.
	Benchmarking	The SCA at West Nottinghamshire College used eMandate to benchmark the college within the sector in terms of sustainable campus management. Recommendations were made to management.
Curriculum	Curriculum audit	The SCA at New College Stamford presented a plan for a proposed sustainability curriculum audit at New College Stamford, as a way of consulting with the Heads of Departments about its aims and value at the beginning of the College's Green Week at the end of April 2009.
		The SCA at Chesterfield College conducted a curriculum audit. See Section 4.1 for details.
	Inclusion in the curriculum	The SCA at Chesterfield College developed two presentations about sustainability to be delivered during tutorial sessions.
		The SCA at WQEI College led a group of students in their Sustainability enrichment course. See Section 5.3 for details.
Resources	The SCA at Loughborough College researched and recommended sustainability related books which were consequently purchased.	
Community	Public relations	The SCA at Loughborough College was featured in the Loughborough Echo to improve the college's image of sustainable development to the wider community.
		The SCAs at WQEI, New College Stamford and Loughborough College included information on sustainability on the colleges' websites.
		The SCA at WQEI College wrote an article for the EAUC's December issue of EARTH and helped produce a case study on the college's Sustainability related activities for the EAUC's 'SORTED' database.
Leadership and management	Including sustainability in induction procedures	The SCA at Chesterfield College included the college's sustainability vision, features and expectations in the student's induction handbook and on the intranet.
		The SCA and HR department at West Nottinghamshire College decided to include a sustainability section in the staff induction procedures.
	Assisting in Sustainability Forums	All the SCAs contributed to their college's Sustainability Forums. The SCA at New College Stamford played an active role in organising and setting the agenda for the college's Environmental Group Meetings.
	Learner and staff baseline survey	The SCA at West Nottinghamshire College developed a baseline survey. See Section 4.2 for details.
	Student conference	At Chesterfield College's student conference the SCA discussed a list of potential sustainability related ideas, activities and improvements that were voted on by the students in order to be adopted by the college.
	Develop Sustainability Policy and Action Plan	The SCA at RNIB College drafted a Sustainability Policy and Action Plan which was ratified by the college's Sustainability Committee. The SCA also provided Loughborough College with resources to help them develop their own policy and action plan.
Institutional Culture	Staff and student awareness raising and engagement	The SCA at Linkage College conducted a series of competitions between the residential houses. See Section 5.2 for details. The SCA also encouraged the reuse of old materials through workshops held during the college's Green Week. Students made wallets out of tetra packs and belts from old bicycle tyres.
		The SCA at Gateway College assisted a group of students entered into the National Youth Parliament Competition. See section 5.2 for details.

	<p>The SCA at Loughborough College set up a sustainability stall during the college's Fresher's Bazaar and first Green Week. During the college's second Green Week the SCA organised workshops encouraging the reuse of old materials. Students made wallets from tetra packs and belts from old bicycle tyres. To promote recycling and energy saving the SCA helped develop a competition in the Halls of Residence. To date the competition has been run three times and is planned to run each half term after the SCA has left. The results will be used as a valuable monitoring tool.</p>
	<p>The SCA at RNIB College helped a class of students investigate the college's recycling and energy performance (see above) and took them to Leicester's Eco-House during the college's first ever Green Week.</p>
	<p>The SCA at New College Stamford organised a Swop Shop just before Christmas to highlight the ease and usefulness of reusing old belongings. The SCA also produced a Christmas consumerism leaflet with tips and alternatives for a more sustainable Christmas. This was discussed during the student's tutorial sessions. The SCA also helped plan the college's Green Week.</p>
	<p>The SCA at West Nottinghamshire College helped raise awareness about consumerism by encouraging students to write their Christmas messages on homemade decorations on sale at the college. The decorations were placed on Christmas trees all around the college and money raised went to charity. The Christmas trees were then recycled in exchange for oak saplings that were planted in Sherwood Forest as part of Nottingham County Council's A Legacy for Future Generations Campaign.</p>
	<p>The SCAs at Chesterfield, Loughborough, WQEI and Linkage College developed materials to go onto the college's intranets.</p>
	<p>The SCAs at New College Stamford and Loughborough College had regular input into the college staff and student newsletters</p>
	<p>The SCAs at Linkage, Loughborough and Chesterfield College developed a green notice board displaying general information on sustainability as well as news on what the college itself was doing.</p>
Whole college Sustainability Forum	<p>The SCA at Portland College assisted in the formation of the college's first college-wide Sustainability Forum.</p>

4 Reviewing Education for Sustainable Development

4.1 Curriculum

Curriculum Audit at Chesterfield College

A curriculum audit was carried out in Chesterfield College. This college shared a common trait with many partner colleges. Senior managers did not know how much sustainability content was already in the formal curriculum, where it was, in what form, what had prompted it, what drivers staff identified to facilitate inclusion of sustainability and what barriers staff felt prohibited them from including it.

The curriculum audit took the form of a survey. It was designed to gain a deeper understanding of the presence of sustainability across curricula and to determine what actions the college could take to ensure a greater inclusion of social, economic and environmental responsibility within the curriculum.

The SCA met with the Heads of Learning from each Directorate and discussed the importance of including sustainability in the curriculum and the value of the audit. The survey was met with a positive response and replies from all five directorates were compiled into a report along with recommendations on the

steps the college could take to assist and promote the inclusion of sustainability in the curriculum.



An SCA engaging a class in sustainability matters at RNIB college Loughborough

4.2 Leadership and management

West Nottinghamshire College baseline survey

The senior management team at West Nottinghamshire College wanted to determine the level of awareness of sustainability issues amongst students and staff. A baseline survey was issued covering a great range of fields from the general environment, climate change and healthy living to consumerism and poverty.

Not only did the results give a clear picture as to where the college is now but what actions the college could take to increase awareness of sustainability. The survey will be issued annually to track how staff and student awareness and values are changing and if the actions taken by the college are meeting their aim.

Exerpt from the West Nottinghamshire College baseline survey

HEALTH, FOOD CONSUMPTION

13. How would you like to change the way you eat?

	Eat more	Eat less	Don't know
Sugary or salty food			
Fruit and vegetables			
Fried or fatty foods			
High fibre foods			
Red meat			

14. Should the College make an effort to purchase local/organic/fair trade products or products for ethical reasons?

- yes
- no
- don't know

15. Would you be willing to pay more for such products?

- yes
- no
- don't know

5 Promoting Education for Sustainable Development

5.1 Buildings and Estate

Student led energy wastage survey at RNIB College, Loughborough

Senior managers at RNIB College, Loughborough wanted to determine whether energy was being wasted within the college classrooms and offices, and if so, how much. A class of students conducted a trial energy survey by inspecting random offices and classrooms and noting how many lights were left on when no-one was in the room, the number of monitors and computers that were left on while nobody was using them and noting the level at which the heating was set. After the trial, the energy survey form was developed and given to the Eco Committee. This student based committee will perform the survey on a regular basis in order to produce statistics, raise awareness, note changes and promote the results.



Conducting a waste audit at Gateway College

Portland College Travel Plan

As with many colleges, there is a high demand for parking spaces at Portland College. The college wanted to investigate why the demand was so high and if it could be decreased by the uptake of alternative and more sustainable means of transport. The senior management team also wanted to determine how staff and students travelled to/from the college to have a more accurate estimate of the college's carbon footprint.

A site audit was conducted to determine the current status with regards to campus facilities such as the number of bicycle racks and the provision of showers and drying rooms. The audit also gathered information on public transport routes, timetables and waiting facilities as well as walking and cycling paths connecting the college to surrounding residential areas.

Staff, residential and non-residential students were invited to participate in a travel survey. The survey looked at current means of transport, the willingness and possibility to use more sustainable means and the barriers preventing the uptake of such modes of transport.

Results from the site audit and travel plan were compiled into a report. Both the report and a summarized version were made available to the college staff and students. The results were also presented to the college's Sustainable Development Forum along with a proposed Travel Action Plan including objectives, targets and measures. The action plan was discussed, adjusted and agreed upon with set timelines and responsibilities by the Forum. The findings remain confidential, but some of the questions are listed below.

Excerpt from the Portland College Non-Residential Staff and Student Travel Survey

13 If you are travelling directly between your home and College, how easy or difficult do you think it is to travel by the following means?

	Very easy	Quite easy	Quite difficult	Very difficult	Not possible
Walk					
Cycle					
Bus					
Train					
Coach					
Car, shared with other(s)					

14 If you normally drive to and from College on your own, would you be willing to walk, cycle, use public transport or car-share some of the time?

	Yes	No
Walk		
Cycle		
Bus		
Train		
Coach		
Car, shared with other(s)		

15 If you answered No/Quite difficult/Very difficult/Not possible to questions 13 and/or 14, are there any particular barriers that make it difficult for you to use the corresponding means of transport? If so, please specify:

.....

.....

.....

5.2 Institutional Culture

Entry into National Youth Parliament competition by Gateway College Students

The SCA at Gateway College assisted a group of students with their entry into the National Youth Parliament competition. Students needed to submit a filmed parliamentary debate surrounding a proposed law. The students were not very interested in environmental or sustainability related issues and chose to debate the banning of alcohol. However the students welcomed the sustainability based arguments and advice given by the SCA during the practice debates. So far the filmed debate has been submitted and is waiting results.

Gateway College students participating in the National Youth Parliament Competition



Sustainability competitions at Linkage College

A series of competitions were held between the residential houses at Linkage College to help promote energy conservation, recycling and sustainable transport. During the first two competitions, the tutors monitored the students. The third competition had a bit of a twist with the students monitoring the tutors and how they travelled to and from the college. The winners each received a battery-free wind-up head torch or a fair trade goodie bag.

Results from the energy competition were analysed to determine where most of the energy is wasted within the houses and which areas must be focused on in order to conserve energy to reduce the college's energy bill and carbon footprint.

Check list used during the Linkage College Energy Saving Competition

	11-Nov	12-Nov	13-Nov	14-Nov	15-Nov
	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
TV on stand-by					
TV left on with no-one watching					
Tumble dryer in use in sunny day					
Tumble dryer not full					
Tumble dryer running longer than necessary					
Washing machine not full					
Washing machine temperature higher than 30°C					
Heating more than 20 °C					
Windows open when the heating is on					
Computers and monitors left on with nobody using them					
Lights left on					
Batteries and chargers in stand-by or plugged in without anything connected					
Fridge door left open					
Kettle overfilled					
Radio and other appliances left on or on stand-by					
Pots without lids when cooking					

5.3 Curriculum

Sustainability Enrichment Course at Wyggeston and Queen Elizabeth I College

During the 07/08 Sustainable College's Project Wyggeston and Queen Elizabeth I College formed a sustainability focused group that students could join on a voluntary basis. This Green Group was continued into the 2008/2009 year but this time as an enrichment course.

The course consisted of interactive lectures run by the SCA as well as outside speakers. Lessons were also spent preparing for forthcoming events such as the college fashion show where they modelled clothes they had made from used materials. Members of the Green Group also manned a stall during the college's open day on the 29th November 2008 and hosted a Green Day on 9th February 2009 during the college's Health Week. During the Green Day, reusing was promoted through workshops where students could make their own wallets from old tetra packs and belts from used bicycle tyres. Recycling was promoted through interactive games and information stalls. People & Planet, a student-led NGO, were also invited to help raise general awareness regarding climate change and other sustainability issues.



Belt making workshop at WQEI Green Day

6 The future

A new partnership with the Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges has developed the Colleges and Universities Sustainability Placements (CUSP) project which was launched at the recent EAUC conference in April 2009.

Appendix I: List of partner colleges

Chesterfield College Chesterfield College originated in 1841 as the Chesterfield and Brampton Mechanics' Institute. It now comprises of three campuses and provides over 40 higher and professional qualifications.

@ Chesterfield College
LearningMatters

Gateway College Gateway is a sixth-form college based in Leicester. In August 2009 the college will move into it's new sustainable building.



Linkage College Linkage was established in 1976 and provides high quality education, care and employment services to enable people with learning difficulties and other disabilities to realise their full potential.



New College Stamford New College Stamford provides sixth-form and higher education courses. The college is currently planning an exciting new sustainable building.



Portland College Portland College is a national specialist residential college for a wide range of people with physical disabilities. It is one of the foremost colleges of its type in the UK, providing first class education and vocational training



**RNIB College,
Loughborough**

RNIB College Loughborough supports young people and adults who are blind, partially sighted or/and have other disabilities, to develop the skills and personal qualities needed to progress in life.

www.rnibcollege.ac.uk



**Loughborough
College**

Loughborough College was originally established in 1909 and is now a leading provider of education and training in North Leicestershire.

www.loucoll.ac.uk



**West
Nottinghamshire
College**

West Nottinghamshire College offers a wide choice of courses from GCSEs and A Levels to vocational qualifications.

www.wnc.ac.uk



**Wyggeston and
Queen Elizabeth
I College**

WQEI is a sixth-form college based in Leicester specialising in the education of young people between the ages of 16 and 19. This is the second year that the college is involved in the SCA Project.

www.wqeic.ac.uk



WYGGESTON & QUEEN
ELIZABETH I COLLEGE