

# Stepping Up in Sustainability

## Sussex Downs College case study



<b>Title of project</b>	<b>Eco Pledge Project</b>	
<b>Lead partner organisation name and address</b>	Sussex Downs College Cross Levels Way Eastbourne BN21 2UF	
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<b>1. Aims of the project</b>	The aims of the project were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To measure and embed sustainable practices working towards a zero waste strategy within several college areas.</li><li>• Activities throughout the college to influence and raise understanding of climate change impact in our organisation and amongst other learning partners. Simultaneously new curriculum delivery addressed skills gaps in emerging employability areas.</li></ul>	
<b>2. Situation: Identify the situation or issue that faced you</b>	The situation and issues we faced included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A large College with a total number of 7,000 staff and students need to reduce their overall carbon footprint in areas of waste, energy, water and purchasing.</li><li>• To review the impact of climate change both within our organisation and our learning partners and instil sustainable practices</li><li>• The need to address required changes to the curriculum offer as a result of emerging employability areas and the new workforce skills required.</li></ul>	
<b>3. Task: Define the outcomes you needed to achieve</b>	The project outcomes we wanted to achieve were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Measure the carbon footprint of the college community</li><li>• Raise awareness of climate change and sustainable practices</li><li>• Achieve cross -college buy-in to implementing sustainable procedures both at college and at home.</li><li>• Introduce climate change courses within the curriculum</li><li>• Revisit curriculum delivery to ensure that as a college we are able to offer training for emerging employability areas</li><li>• A survey to be undertaken a second time by respondents so as to capture a shift in behaviour.</li></ul>	

**4. Actions that you took in order to achieve your plan, and your approach**

Actions and approach taken to achieve our plan:

- In order to publicise the project extensively to all our three campuses and our large staff and student numbers we decided to run an internal eco competition side by side with an online survey which allowed individuals to measure their carbon footprint. We pioneered a very successful model that entailed using the LSIS funding to set up an internal tendering process for eco projects.
- The steering group set up initially to activate the LSIS Sustainability Project was particularly supportive of the ideas around engagement across college campuses and significantly were most proactive in ensuring this was a standing agenda item at all departmental and management meetings.
- The instructions on the bidding document stated what we were hoping to achieve as a college:  
“Seek to reduce our overall carbon footprint; Will raise awareness and embed sustainable practice across staff, students and stakeholders; Impact on our use of water, waste, energy and purchasing”
- The document also requested information on the following;  
“Aims and outcomes needed to address the areas of change that they hoped to achieve and the benefits of learning that will happen as a result and any planned outputs”
- We also ensured that expectations were managed at the start of this competition, thus:  
“ Please be aware this project funding may only pump prime your ideas; in the majority of cases it will not fully fund your ideas. We hope though it will help you to form alliances with other stakeholders including environmental charities and agencies”
- Mentoring support was also provided to all winners to ensure that any difficulties faced by the departments in rolling out the projects were dealt with quickly.
- These clear instructions enabled the return of a large number of high quality bids. We also attributed this to the methods we used e.g. the prize draw- the prizes to winners and runners up to incentivise learners, colleagues and other stakeholders to take active part. Finally with the support of our Marketing and Communications team we ensured that all achievements were publicised on the college website and at events such as the University and College Union (UCU) conference in London
- The user friendly online survey was adapted significantly from the original REAP Petite tool to take into account the college community and their particular needs.
- The survey was introduced to the staff and students on the

	<p>intranet and also on I-learn. This ensured that all could access the link and prompts were sent periodically for them to complete this survey. In order to motivate them further we organised a prize draw of £50 each which was very well received!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The majority of funding awarded to us by LSIS was used to fund the local projects across all our campuses; we set up a Green Room (for curriculum activities and Green Induction); reduce carbon emissions and encourage people to think of the effect of their actions both at college and at home and thereby improve our 'eco friendliness' as a community.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Results that you obtained including:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>practical achievements (what's in place)</b></li> <li>• <b>quantitative change (statistics etc)</b></li> <li>• <b>qualitative change (behaviour, culture, thinking, attitudes etc)</b></li> <li>• <b>what the organisation(s) have learned from this</b></li> <li>• <b>what it means for learners</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eight departments have received LSIS funding to further develop their winning competition entries.</li> <li>• The two main winners include; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of Smartphone apps to capture carbon footprints and which can be used as a portal for tips and suggestions to improve one's own footprint</li> <li>• A digital pen is being piloted which helps to revolutionise the current workflow for field based operations. The pen enables the College to complete enrolment forms remotely in free text which it then translates to data which arrives in to the College, instantly reducing our carbon footprint and reducing waste</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Other entries were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0% timber to landfill: Carpentry Department</li> <li>• Carbon offset and reduction scheme i.e. tree plantation and construction of sustainable fuel stoves in Uganda: Geography Department</li> <li>• Energy audit by an external agency of one of our buildings and additional energy efficiency measures have been organised to take place during Green Awareness Week in May: Business Department</li> <li>• Carbon Emission Reduction Week in May to be held with the promotion of bike usage rather than car usage: Business Department</li> <li>• IBuy Solo: an online cross college swap shop: Business Department</li> <li>• Wildlife corridor and outdoor classroom working in collaboration with outside voluntary agency South Downs Joint Committee and local businesses such as AVS Fencing: Horticulture Department</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<p>Effects on Curriculum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caused further integration of sustainability into a wider variety of subject areas that had not engaged previously</li> <li>• Helped raise awareness with more student groups and as a result possibly caused some behaviour change amongst those students. We will be introducing Green Induction in the new academic year</li> <li>• Created openings for the future development of courses that will help address the skills gap i.e. sharing resources will affect courses to be developed during June/ July for the next academic year</li> <li>• Additional Green bursary schemes will be introduced throughout the college in the future. All departments will be able to access these. Our Eco competition demonstrated that this model was an excellent way to engage, motivate and raise interest thereby leading to a culture shift.</li> <li>• Our main external dissemination event- Eco Day - was held on World Water Day and coincided with Climate Change Week. Professor Stephen Martin, who is well known in the sustainability field, was our guest speaker. He brought significant insight to the meeting from other businesses/HE/different parts of the country on the practicalities of developing sustainable practices countrywide.</li> </ul>
<p><b>6. What made the project a success? What were the key ingredients?</b></p>	<p>Key success indicators included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The College was fortunate in being able to move the project forward rapidly with the support and commitment of our dedicated environmental coordinator. Prior to the LSIS project the College was actively involved in regular participation at the UCU conference and publishing details of our sustainable activities not only on our website but also on EAUC's SORTED website. As a result of us having been awarded LSIS funds to support raising awareness and sustainable activities and the resulting momentum the college was approached to further disseminate their knowledge at the external UCU conference in London and to publish our methodology in various related publications such as Earth Matters.</li> <li>• Engagement on the project by senior members of staff. Their encouragement helped move the project rapidly to its successful conclusion.</li> <li>• The Eco competition- the breadth and depth of the entries surprised and encouraged us. Our departments have already started to think ahead in terms of effects of climate change and global warming and ultimately educating the masses.</li> <li>• Prize draw encouraged a good response to the survey.</li> <li>• The guest speaker at our Eco event drew attendance from</li> </ul>

	many colleagues in the FE sector in the South East who were keen to hear not only about the developments at our college but also benefited from the overall picture described by Professor Stephen Martin.		
<b>7. Any resources or tools produced by the project</b>	Resources and tools produced by the project: Mobile Apps: Smartphone application developed by Sussex Downs College students. This allows users to calculate their current carbon footprint, view carbon saving tips and submit their own energy saving ideas. The application is now live and available on <a href="http://www.co2nara.co.uk">www.co2nara.co.uk</a>		
<b>8. Total costs of the project</b>	LSIS funding	Match funding	Total funding
	£25,000		£25,000



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