

1. Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship: a case study in policy formation

Sheila Bennell and David Norcliffe

Abstract

All schools in Wales are statutorily required to have a whole-school policy covering ESDGC. It is a compulsory component within the curriculum and has to be addressed within school improvement plans, where it influences such diverse areas as overall school management, estates, transport and catering. Estyn inspection reports address how ESDGC is being integrated into schools' teaching and practice, and the standards set for aspiring teachers to achieve Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) stipulate that they need 'to be able to integrate ESDGC into classroom practice'. In addition, it is included as one of WAG's ten overall priorities. This paper analyses how ESDGC has become a strong focus in the Welsh education system. Starting from the requirement placed on WAG within its constitution to consider sustainable development in all its activities (Government of Wales Act, 1998) and the obligations that this imposes on the various educational bodies within Wales, it also identifies the pressures applied by various Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and the role of key individuals. Finally, it discusses how the current embodiment of ESDGC in Wales, together with the revised school curriculum, reflects forms of transformative education.

1. Introduction

From its birth on 1 July 1999 WAG has had a statutory duty to incorporate sustainability within all its activities. As part of this commitment, within the sphere of education it has regularly promoted the development of guidance on ESDGC, based initially on an early statement by ACCAC that ESDGC has a strong focus on understanding interdependence and deals with:

- the links between society, economy and environment and between our own lives and those of people throughout the world

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- 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 (ACCAC, 2002: 6).

In a later document, WAG states simply that ESDGC is about:

... the things that we do every day. It is about the big issues in the world – such as climate change, trade, resource and environmental depletion, human rights, conflict and democracy – and about how they relate to each other and to us. It is about how we treat the earth and about how we treat each other, no matter how far apart we live. It is about how we prepare for the future. Every one of us has a part to play (WAG, 2008c: 4).

The focus of ESDGC is on the development of a range of skills, values and attitudes. Guidance on its implementation stresses the importance of research, critically considering evidence, seeking patterns, making connections, thinking laterally, forming opinions, respecting others and the world around us and taking action. In its current form it is approached in the classroom through attention to seven themes: wealth and poverty, identity and culture, choices and decisions, health, the natural environment, consumption and waste, and climate change.

ESDGC is one of WAG's ten overall priorities and all schools in Wales are statutorily required to have a whole-school policy covering ESDGC. It is a compulsory component within many curriculum orders and has to be addressed within school improvement plans, where it influences such diverse areas as overall school management, estates, transport, catering and school partnerships. Estyn inspection reports address how ESDGC is being integrated into schools' teaching and practice (Estyn, 2006b, 2010), and the standards set for aspiring teachers to achieve QTS incorporate the expectation for trainees 'to take appropriate opportunities to promote

education for sustainable development and global citizenship in all relevant aspects of their teaching' (WAG, 2008c: 10).

In practice ESDGC offers many classroom opportunities. The following example is offered to illustrate its potential. Through following a set of democratic procedures a class of secondary pupils are considering the topic of 'air miles'. They are examining not simply questions around carbon footprints, but also issues of poverty, the impact on livelihoods, economic development and trade. They are seeking to formulate a solution that takes all of these issues into account through a process involving research, discussion and critical thinking with the teacher acting as a facilitator. They may then, through the school council, go on to consider action to change methods of procurement used by the school. This could include suggestions for growing their own vegetables in the school garden and buying ethically-traded fruits that cannot be grown locally.

The development of ESDGC in schools in Wales has followed an interesting and, some would say, complex route. It provides an example of how a variety of organisations – national and regional government, educational bodies and NGOs – can significantly influence the status of what had previously been a relatively minor component of school life.

The implementation of ESDGC has not been a straightforward change of policy, with associated changes to practice, although that has played a part. There have been many stages in its development and many influences on that development, and ESDGC has gradually assumed greater and greater importance within the curriculum. It is a particularly interesting case study in that it has incorporated education for both sustainable development and global citizenship in one policy. This paper first discusses the development of ESDGC in the school curriculum in Wales and explores how its status has changed over the last fifteen or so years. It then examines some of the key driving factors, at a Welsh and UK level, that have encouraged these changes. Finally it discusses whether ESDGC, and indeed the whole revised curriculum in Wales, has the potential to transform society.

2. The origins of ESDGC

The development of ESDGC has been influenced by a range of theories and perspectives on education, most of which focus on the local-global dimensions of contemporary issues. Many of them have their roots in progressive education, from the World Education Fellowship in the 1920s to the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (UNCED, 1992). Examples include: global education, world studies, development education, peace education, anti-racist education, environmental education, human rights education, multicultural education, futures education, and more recently, education for global citizenship, education for sustainable development, education for sustainability and citizenship education. Reviews of the relationships between these 'educations' include: Hicks (2003, 2004) on global, development education and peace education; O'Riordan (1988), Adams (1991), Osborn-Jones (1994) and Huckle (1996) on the origins of education for sustainability; Osler and Starkey (1996) on the relationship between development, human rights and the teaching of values; Lindberg (2001) on global education; and Osler and Vincent (2002) on development education. Key influences in the UK have included Richardson (1976), Fisher and Hicks (1985), Pike and Selby (1988, 1998), and Huckle and Sterling (1996).

The pedagogies promoted by these educational perspectives emphasise skills, values and attitudes, and they focus on collaborative learning approaches. They include democratic, constructivist, reflective, participative, experiential and holistic methodologies. Rather than emphasising knowledge, importance is placed equally on skills such as critical and creative thinking, communication, co-operation and collaboration, and the ability to make connections so that an understanding of how the world works can be discovered rather than learned. Early influences can be traced to the work of, for example, Dewey (1916), Montessori (1949), Freire (1972), Richardson (1976), Lipman, Sharp and Oscanyan (1980), McCarthy (1981), Rogers (1983) and Kolb (1984). Breiting, Mayer and Mogensen (2005) note how effective such approaches are in helping students both to confront challenges and to clarify their own values. They also give students a

justification for going beyond theory and involving themselves in action and participation. As a result, they become active participants in the process of change (Tilbury and Wortman, 2004). This is very significant because, while content is important, the development of values is central to ESDGC.

Although all of these educational perspectives have the potential, if fully implemented, to effect a major change in society, none has yet succeeded in doing so. There has long been discussion about the types of education needed for change, exemplified by the debates on whether education should be about or for the environment (Gough, 1987; Huckle, 1988; Orr, 1992; Fien, 1993), or whether it should be an even more integral part of the sustainability process itself (Sterling, 2001). In a later publication, Sterling (2004) discusses three levels of educational change. He describes the first level as that in which people learn *about* sustainability and policies remain unchallenged. The second level is concerned more about learning *for* sustainability with an emphasis on values and concepts; policy and practice is reoriented but he suggests 'change is likely to be piecemeal and there are tensions with dominant norms' between governmental and educational values. Sterling points to the need for a further, third-level transformative response that could bring about 'a change in worldview and ethos ... towards an ecological postmodern worldview which is appropriate to the deeply systemic nature of the world' (Sterling, 2004: 70). This draws on transformation theory (Mezirow, 1994), which has perspective change at its core. We shall discuss whether ESDGC and the current government and education systems in Wales have the potential to bring about this type of change.

3. The early development of ESDGC in Wales

For many years NGOs such as Oxfam, Christian Aid and Cafod and the Development Education Centres in Wales had been striving to embed issues related to global education and sustainable development education into the curriculum in Wales. Parallel groups such as the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), the Environmental Council for Wales, and the Countryside Council for Wales had also been promoting environmental education. Individual members of

Local Authorities (LAs), ITET institutions (Hopkin, 1991), the Curriculum Council for Wales (CCW) and the schools inspectorate also shared these aims. However it was not until the late 1980s that these issues began to have an impact on the content of the school curriculum.

In 1988 the National Curriculum for Wales introduced, for the first time, the requirement for children to learn about environmental issues and about contrasting localities in distant places. This was to be achieved mainly through subjects such as Geography, which took the lead on environmental education, and through cross-curricular themes such as Environmental Education and Community Understanding.

The CCW's advisory paper on Environmental Education (CCW, 1992), produced in collaboration with the Countryside Council for Wales, the Field Studies Council, the Prince of Wales Committee and the RSPB, highlights the importance of economic, social, political and ecological interdependence, the role of knowledge and understanding, skills and attitudes and the benefits of a whole-school approach. The sister publication on Community Understanding (CCW, 1991) includes components of active citizenship, human rights, participation in decision making, order, conflict and change, and values and beliefs. It approaches community understanding through a model ranging from family through school, and from Wales through Europe to global awareness. While these themes were advisory and only reported on by the school inspectorate through the observation of opportunities for social and moral development (SCAA, 1995), they nevertheless laid firm foundations for the later development of ESDGC and established a continuing trend for a collaborative method of curriculum development.

In 1998 the UK Government passed the Government of Wales Act, which led to the devolution of responsibility for a range of policies, including economic development, agriculture, education and the environment to the National Assembly for Wales, the Welsh parliament, the executive arm of which is WAG. In practice this means, for example, that WAG has responsibility for setting the content of the National Curriculum for Wales. Significantly the Act also placed a requirement in WAG's constitution to consider sustainable development in all

its activities. This has been acknowledged, both by those who have been directly involved in ESDGC and those who have reviewed the process externally, as a critical driver. While lip service can sometimes be paid to such statements, the fact that all sections of WAG are constitutionally required to take sustainability into account provides both a check for those who are less committed and a lever for those who are more committed. The process was aided considerably by the strong commitment to this agenda shown by Jane Davidson, WAG's Education Minister at the time.

In parallel with these developments, at a UK level the Department for International Development (DFID) was established in 1997 under a new Labour government and published a White Paper, *Eliminating World Poverty: A Challenge for the 21st Century* (DFID, 1997). Section 4.4 of the White paper, *Building Support for Development*, outlines the need for development education and the importance of a global dimension in learning. It was followed in 1999 by a strategy paper, *Building Support for Development* (DFID, 1999). Other contemporaneous influences included the publication by Oxfam of its *Curriculum for Global Citizenship* (Oxfam, 1997) and the formation of the Environmental Education Council for Wales. These developments continued the drive to include global issues and concerns regarding sustainable development within the Welsh education system, and promoted a series of interconnected initiatives that helped to develop ESDGC.

Within the CCW there were already advocates for including global issues and sustainable development. *Curriculum 2000* replaced cross-curricular themes with a framework for PSE that became statutory in the basic curriculum in 2004. The framework incorporates a significant emphasis on the global dimension and on sustainable development. Its aims include:

To equip pupils to be personally and socially effective by providing learning experiences in which pupils can develop skills, explore attitudes, values and personal qualities, and acquire, evaluate and apply appropriate knowledge and understanding; develop pupils' self esteem and personal responsibility; ... empower pupils to participate in their

communities as active citizens and to develop a global perspective; ... foster and encourage positive attitudes and behaviour towards stewardship and the principles of sustainable development locally, nationally and globally (ACCAC, 2000: 4).

The PSE framework also lists knowledge and understanding, attitudes and values and skills appropriate to each Key Stage (ACCAC, 2000). In doing so, it links back to the tradition of World Studies, Global Education and Development Education, which recognised that these were important components of education for change.

Cyfanfyd, the Development Education Association for Wales, saw in PSE an opportunity to raise the profile of global citizenship in the curriculum and published *Global Citizenship and PSE* (Cyfanfyd, 2001), a booklet that was widely distributed to curriculum bodies, schools, LAs and ITET establishments.

Within *Curriculum 2000*, global citizenship and sustainable development are also referred to in the Geography curriculum, are strongly suggested in Religious Education, and references to multicultural aspects are made in English, Music and Art. Science also includes several areas of study relevant to sustainable development, although that particular term is not used. ESDGC gained further prominence in a later revision of the curriculum:

A Curriculum Cymreig [the curriculum in and for Wales] ... also helps to foster in pupils an understanding of an outward-looking and international Wales, promoting global citizenship and concern for sustainable development (ACCAC, 2003: 2).

The inclusion of sustainable development in WAG's constitution and the accompanying changes in the curriculum were seen as an opportunity for groups lobbying for further change in this area. In 2000 a non-affiliated, like-minded group of people from groups such as Oxfam, RSPB, Cyfanfyd, the Environmental Council for Wales and Development Education Centres came together to form a group calling itself Education for the Future. This group lobbied WAG for even greater inclusion of ESDGC in the curriculum. WAG responded positively and set up an Education for Sustainable

Development Panel as a sub-panel of its Sustainable Development Panel. It also set up a Global Citizenship Working Group, convened jointly with DFID. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Education for Global Citizenship (EGC) became well-worn terms.

The membership of both groups included representatives from WAG, ACCAC, Estyn, LAs, ITET establishments, higher education, the British Council, the Countryside Council for Wales, eco-schools and NGOs such as Oxfam, RSPB and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF-UK). DFID representatives were also included on the Global Citizenship Working Group. Both groups adopted a set of concepts relevant to their part of education (ESD and EGC, respectively) and several of these were common to both areas.

The setting up of these groups also coincided with the publication of *The Learning Country* (WAG, 2001) in which WAG sets out its intentions for future education in Wales. This was a significant document, not simply in terms of ESDGC, but for education as a whole in Wales. It includes commitments to:

- realise sustainability
 - tackle social disadvantage – especially in our most deprived communities
 - promote equality of opportunity
 - sustain an environment that celebrates diversity.
- (WAG, 2001: 8)

As a result of the work of the ESD and EGC groups, in 2002 WAG and ACCAC jointly published the first ESDGC curriculum guidance document *Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship* (ACCAC, 2002), a seminal document that provides definitions of key terms, a set of nine basic concepts, and a number of exemplifying case studies. It quotes from the work of a UK panel that education for sustainable development:

enables people to develop the knowledge, values and skills to participate in decisions about the way we do things individually and collectively, both locally and globally, that will improve the

quality of life now without damaging the planet for the future (ACCAC, 2002: 6).

It describes education for global citizenship as education that:

enables people to understand the global forces which shape their lives and to acquire the knowledge, skills and values that will equip them to participate in decision making, both locally and globally, which promotes a more equitable and sustainable world (ACCAC, 2002: 6).

The nine key concepts identified in the document are: interdependence, citizenship and stewardship, needs and rights, diversity, sustainable change, quality of life, uncertainty and precaution, values and perceptions, and conflict resolution. These concepts are similar to those of the Global Dimension in England (DfEE, 2000), Sustainable Development in England and those in Oxfam's Curriculum for Global Citizenship (Oxfam, 1997). The ESDGC guidance was accepted by key decision makers in WAG and, as a result, developed significant momentum.

A curriculum mapping document, initiated by the EGC group, was published in 2005 (ACCAC, 2005). This contains links to both ESD and Education for Race Equality.

The EGC and ESD groups were merged to form the ESDGC Panel in 2004 in order 'to increase efficiency and effectiveness' and an ESDGC 'champion' appointed to develop a new strategy. This panel still exists, its membership including specialists drawn from key national organisations and from each phase of education. It 'provides specialist advice on initiatives which promote and support development of education for sustainable development and global citizenship in all Welsh education sectors and makes recommendations on sustainable development and global citizenship issues to the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills' (WAG ESDGC Advisory Panel, 2008: 10). It delegates discrete activities to task and finish groups in all areas of the sustainable development and global citizenship remit.

As will be seen in the next section, the influence of this panel and of the ESDGC champion have been considerable. Panel members have gained significant personal satisfaction

from the panel's work and have been particularly pleased, if not astonished, at how much has been achieved on very little funding (Norcliffe and Bennell, 2009). This is attributed to the dedication and persistence of the individuals involved and is helped by the combined expertise of representatives from a wide range of organisations.

Other notable contemporaneous developments that promoted ESDGC in schools and ITET include the introduction of a common inspection framework that made it a requirement for all school inspection reports to comment on ESDGC (Estyn, 2004) and the publication of guidance and questions about ESDGC for schools to consider (Estyn, 2005). The Enabling Effective Support Initiative, a UK-wide DFID initiative, supported by WAG, was set up in 2004 and provides regional support to schools in developing ESDGC.

A Sustainable Development Action Plan for Wales was published in 2005 (WAG, 2004). This includes the requirement that all educational institutions in Wales have a duty to promote and pursue sustainable development and global citizenship in both their curriculum and their activities. The plan was influenced by the work of the ESDGC Panel but also reinforced by the findings of a survey by the Welsh Consumer Council (Bibbings, 2003), which found that 81 per cent of 16–24 year olds were unaware of the concept of sustainable development.

The ESDGC Strategy for Wales was developed and published in 2006 and set targets for all phases of education from the Foundation Phase to Life Long Learning (WAG, 2006). It committed WAG to:

- make sustainable development and global citizenship a mandatory feature of whole-school policies
- undertake to include sustainable development and global citizenship in the review of future requirements for educational strategic plans (ESPs) and School Improvement Plans
- review the place of sustainable development and global citizenship in the curriculum as part of ACCAC's curriculum review

- introduce sustainable development and global citizenship into initial and induction training opportunities for teachers and develop specific Continuing Professional Development training.

A number of pilot projects across different sectors have been funded by the ESDGC Panel to help inform future developments. These include projects in the schools sector and in ITET (Brinn et al., 2001; Bennell, 2004; Norcliffe, 2007).

Consequent on the adoption of the ESDGC strategy, WAG commissioned Estyn to develop a position statement on ESDGC in schools and further education colleges. A baseline survey for this statement carried out on behalf of Estyn showed a significant disparity of delivery throughout Wales. Where schools were not engaging with the ESDGC agenda, the main stumbling block seemed to be the lack of 'a clear and consistent understanding of the definition, purpose and benefits of ESDGC' (Estyn, 2006a: 3). In particular it found an imbalance between how the environmental and global dimensions were being addressed. As a result, Estyn revised its schools' guidance to emphasise the importance of this balance (Estyn, 2006b).

4. Recent developments in ESDGC

Ironically, and perhaps reflecting the reasons why many teachers have not yet grasped the central concepts of ESDGC, the development of the ESDGC common understanding document proved to be a complex process. This was due partly to a debate about the best method to approach all the aspects under consideration as well as to the practical issue that it had both to inform and also to reflect the curriculum changes in a revised National Curriculum for Wales that was being developed during the same period. Specifically, those most closely involved in the process report that there was a constructive debate about whether to keep to the existing nine concepts, or to use key themes as a way of presenting the breadth of ESDGC (Norcliffe and Bennell, 2009).

Although Estyn found that many teachers had found it difficult fully to come to terms with the concepts, many LAs

had by then spent a considerable amount of time developing training based around them. In addition, several of those consulted felt that it was important to help teachers understand the concepts, however difficult they may initially seem (Norcliffe and Bennell, 2009). This was particularly true for those who had previously been involved with Development Education and Environmental Education, where concepts were accepted as important tools for curriculum planning. However, it was also argued that using themes would make it easier to demonstrate how existing, and thriving, school schemes such as eco-schools, healthy schools and international schools contributed to ESDGC and to show how none of them covered ESDGC in its entirety. In addition, it was perceived that themes were easier to grasp than concepts. Balancing these various arguments, the ESDGC Panel finally decided in favour of using themes and, drawing on a variety of sources including the themes of the UN Decade for Sustainable Development, agreed the following list: wealth and poverty, identity and culture, choices and decisions, health, the natural environment, consumption and waste, and climate change (WAG, 2008b: 14).

The panel did, however, continue to emphasise how the original concepts still underpinned ESDGC and suggested that LAs and schools could continue using this approach if they wished. (Interestingly, British Council schemes for school partnerships use the concepts in the form in which they were developed in England, and schools across the UK applying for British Council grants must still demonstrate how their work will link with those concepts.)

The common understanding document was developed in two stages. The first draft version was shared with LA advisers and those working on a revised National Curriculum for Wales, thus enabling curriculum developers to incorporate some of the features of the document into the curriculum. The second, and final, draft of the document was, in turn, influenced by the content of the revised curriculum and published in 2008 as *ESDGC: a common understanding for schools* (WAG, 2008b).

The 2008 document uses the same descriptive definition of ESDGC as in the first ESDGC document (ACCAC, 2002),

described earlier in this paper, but adds that ESDGC is 'education that will prepare young people for life in the 21st century' (WAG, 2008b: 4). Five common areas are identified as being key to the implementation of ESDGC, namely commitment and leadership, learning and teaching, school management, partnerships and community, and research and monitoring. For each Key Stage it lists skills that should be developed, set out under the headings of the Skills Framework (WAG, 2008e). These skills include asking questions, thinking logically and seeking patterns, considering evidence, information and ideas, thinking about cause and effect and making inferences, forming opinions, making decisions, lateral thinking, and communicating ideas and emotions.

In its final form the values that underpin the ESDGC document mirror many of the values common to the perspectives on education discussed earlier and have similar implications. Notably the implementation of ESDGC requires a whole-school approach, its ethos permeating styles of management as well as teaching practices. For example, such a school has a pleasant and stimulating environment for learning, inclusive, valuing and respecting all, and intolerant of racial discrimination. It shows respect for rights and freedoms, non-violence and social responsibility, environmental consciousness, and sustainable practice such as in its procurement policies and its maintenance of the school grounds. It values opinions, allows opportunities for true participation, listens to students' voices and has a fully functional school council. In such a school, ESDGC is integrated within all subjects and themes; it builds critical thinking skills, the ability to make connections and to formulate well-reasoned decisions; it encourages the active participation of pupils in the school and community.

By comparison with the original ACCAC document (2002), the ESDGC 2008 document covers most of the same issues, with perhaps less emphasis on conflict resolution. There is also a focus on the discussion of values, though this receives more attention in the companion document for trainee teachers, which states that 'learners need opportunities to develop their own values through investigating and assessing evidence, discussing and reasoning, and becoming aware of

their own values in relation to those of others' (WAG, 2008c: 14). This document suggests that teachers should be facilitators of learning while being aware of their own potential as role models, for example by developing democratic procedures in the classroom. It also urges teachers and pupils to discuss the kind of strategies a school would need to develop the necessary skills and values.

5. The revised curriculum for Wales

If the ethos promoted by ESDGC is to change society it needs to be more than an aspect of education: it needs to be part of the ethos promoted by the whole education system. Remarkably, this appears to be happening in Wales. The methodologies advocated and championed by World Studies, Global Education and Development Education movements for over forty years and now embodied within ESDGC have fundamentally changed pedagogical models: an emphasis on skills and pupil-centred learning is at the heart of curricular revisions in Wales. These encompass the revised National Curriculum subject orders, the frameworks for the Foundation Phase, PSE, careers and the world of work, the non-statutory skills framework and the national exemplar framework for Religious Education.

The revised curriculum aims to:

- focus on the learner
- ensure that appropriate skills development is woven throughout the curriculum
- focus on continuity and progression 3–19
- offer reduced subject content with an increased focus on skills
- be flexible
- be relevant to the twenty-first century
- support Government policy including: bilingualism; Curriculum Cymreig; Wales, Europe and the World; equal opportunities; food and fitness; education for sustainable development and global citizenship; and the world of work and entrepreneurship (WAG, 2008a: 3).

It stresses that schools are encouraged to organise and deliver the curriculum in the way that best suits their circumstances and needs and suggests that one way of doing this could be to adopt a thematic or topic approach. This type of approach can be particularly beneficial for ESDGC where the linking of ideas, topics and subjects, as encapsulated within the seven themes, can help pupils gain a holistic understanding of the complexity of interconnections in their lives.

In addition, WAG has strengthened its policies in relation to pupil participation in school decision-making (WAG, 2010). This is now a statutory requirement and is included within Estyn's school inspection framework. This is a natural development following on from an earlier National Assembly for Wales document (NAfW, 2000), itself founded on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 and the Human Rights Act 1998. It aims to 'ensure a new approach to the planning and delivery of services for children and young people so that ... they respond effectively to the needs of all children and young people, taking into account as appropriate considerations of gender, social deprivation, ethnicity, religion and culture, disability and sexual orientation' (NAfW, 2000: 7).

The ESDGC common understanding document provides only guidance for schools and colleges but ESDGC gains its statutory status through its inclusion in PSE. The 2008 statutory framework for PSE (WAG, 2008f) takes a broad, balanced and holistic approach to PSE that highlights a range of experiences to promote the personal and social development and well-being of learners, including planned learning experiences and other opportunities that are features of the ethos and community life of the school or college. 'Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship' is one of the five themes of PSE, as is 'Active Citizenship', which encourages students to develop successful relationships and to participate in their local and global community. It also gives them a practical understanding of their rights and of the links between political decisions and their own lives. All the revised National Curriculum subject orders contain opportunities for ESDGC; it is particularly prominent within PSE but is also highlighted in Science, Design and Technology, and Geography.

The Welsh Baccalaureate, which is gradually being rolled out to all schools and colleges in Wales, includes many opportunities for ESDGC within its module on *Wales, Europe and the World*, in PSE (which specifically includes sustainable development), and in *Work-related Education* (WJEC: 2010).

The *Foundation Phase Framework for Children's Learning for 3 to 7-year-olds in Wales* (WAG, 2008d) also offers many opportunities for developing ESDGC. It encourages experiential learning and co-operative play and places emphasis on the holistic development of children and their skills across the curriculum. The document states that children's views and opinions should be valued, and that they are to be given opportunities to discuss their own experiences and ideas about their lives and their futures. It urges the promotion of equality of opportunity and values, and celebrates diversity. The emphasis on outdoor play offers the opportunity for children to develop an appreciation of the natural world, to learn to play co-operatively and to make decisions. The aspect of 'Knowledge and Understanding of the World' can be used as the starting point for learning experientially about people and places and for exploring similarities and differences. 'Creative Development' can enhance pupils' ability to communicate and express their creative ideas.

As discussed at the beginning of this paper, the development of skills is seen as an essential element of ESDGC. In order to achieve WAG's aim of integrating ESDGC into the life of Wales and ensuring that the necessary skills are acquired, 'a firm foundation must be laid down in schools to ensure both their early and systematic learning' (Heater, 2004: 343). It can be argued that a marked increase in the emphasis on skills in the revised curriculum in Wales, indeed the shift to a skills-based curriculum, alongside the introduction of the Skills Framework (WAG, 2008e), has come at an opportune time for ESDGC. Emphasising the importance of skills, all of which underpin the underlying ethos of ESDGC, may assist schools to embrace the critical thinking element of ESDGC.

In summary, ESDGC is now one of the cross-cutting themes in the curriculum, one of five themes in PSE, clearly

highlighted in Science, Design and Technology, and Geography, and implicit in all other subjects through PSE. It is also strongly implicit in the new Foundation Phase (WAG, 2008d) and in the Welsh Baccalaureate (WJEC, 2010). It features in the standards for newly qualified teachers (WAG, 2009a) and in a guidance document for teacher trainees and new teachers (WAG, 2008c). The extent to which the parallel development of ESDGC and the new curriculum influenced each other cannot be fully quantified. However, interview data (Norcliffe and Bennell, 2009) suggests that influential individuals within ACCAC shared a vision that encompassed a strong belief in the importance of ESDGC and were also in a position to influence the development of both ESDGC and the revised curriculum.

6. What kind of curriculum is the revised curriculum for Wales?

It has been suggested that the involvement of government bodies in mainstreaming educational initiatives such as ESDGC can have its dangers. The Development Education Commission (DEC) suggests that, although institutionalisation is vital, 'established systems have a tendency to absorb change rather than take on its challenges' (DEC, 1999: 38). However, for real transformative change to happen it may be argued that both government and education policy have to be built in to the change.

It is legitimate to ask if the current form of ESDGC and the revised curriculum for Wales are together sufficiently radical to be transformative and to promote a different world view of the needs of society. Will they enable future generations substantially to remodel society and re-examine their values to meet the needs of sustainability or are they an attempt to enact change while trying to maintain dominant norms? This is a key concern of the statutory guidance on pupil participation at all levels within schools, which aims to 'encourage a change of culture, where pupil participation becomes part and parcel of everything the school does, including teaching and learning, thus benefiting all pupils' (WAG, 2010: para. 5). This is reflected in the requirement for all schools to have a school council and for associate pupil

governors to be appointed in secondary schools. Websites for children in Wales, notably *Funky Dragon*¹ and *Pupil Voice Wales*², also reflect this changing emphasis.

These changes may produce conflicts, for example, between encouraging pupils to succeed in a society dominated by economic growth and encouraging them to change their world view completely to encompass sustainability. This, however, is exactly the kind of debate that promotes the critical thinking that is central to transformative change.

The revised National Curriculum for Wales (WAG, 2008a) embodies a number of potentially strong change factors: the focus on the learner and pupil participation, on valuing all, on equal opportunities and respecting diversity; the loosening of tight curricular restraints with the encouragement for schools to be able to find their own pathways through cross-curricular and theme-based learning; the inclusion of ESDGC as a cross-cutting theme, and the pedagogies promoted through the Skills Framework. Taken together these factors have the potential for education in Wales, in theory at least, to be transformative rather than transmissive (Sterling, 2001: 38).

This approach has been reinforced by the focus in ESDGC on interdependence and the emphasis on the holistic approaches detailed above across all aspects of education. The authors would suggest, however, that ESDGC, although some way along the continuum towards being transformative, is not yet quite there. While interconnections and interdependence are heavily stressed, the presentation of the separate themes does not guarantee a systemic viewpoint. The approach to values also appears to have a dichotomy at its heart, as it both promotes certain values and, at the same time, emphasises the importance of young people having opportunities to develop their own values. This potential contradiction undoubtedly occurs because of WAG's obligation to promote certain values in order to work towards sustainable development and the need to strike an appropriate balance with the contrasting imperatives of a skills-based curriculum.

¹ *Funky Dragon* website at <http://www.funkydragon.org/>, accessed 13 September 2010.

² *Pupil Voice Wales* website at <http://www.pupilvoicewales.org.uk/>, accessed 13 September 2010.

In order to be truly transformative, WAG may have to take even more risks with the curriculum, increasing flexibility, trusting learners to develop their own values and encouraging a wholly systemic view in which the interactions between society, the economy and the environment are always considered together.

The introduction of the Schools Effectiveness Framework (WAG, 2008g), based on a tri-level systems approach to education encompassing all elements of the education system, and which emphasises the need to concentrate on the child's experience, will provide a further basis for the improved well-being of children in Wales, for the development of young people as citizens of the world and perhaps for a further step towards a transformed, sustainable society.

7. Future developments

During 2010 the ESDGC strategy was subject to further consultation as it had by then reached the end of its five-year plan. In Wales, a number of factors suggest that political support for ESDGC is unlikely to be reversed with a change of Government, as has happened in some other countries. The promotion of sustainable development remains statutorily at the heart of WAG's work, a commitment that resulted in the publication of *One Wales: One Planet* (WAG, 2009b). This all-encompassing document takes a wide and connected view of sustainable development in all sectors of government and society. Within education, it commits WAG to developing further training and resources for ESDGC, promoting additional support and training and continuing work to ensure that links are made between eco-schools, global schools partnerships, healthy schools, forest schools and fair trade schools. Only the actions of future generations of young people will be the true test of how transformative the curriculum has been.

While there has always been a tradition in Wales of looking out to the wider world there is now a clear move to view Wales as part of that world, to see it as a nation among nations, as part of Europe and the regions, and her people as global citizens. This is underpinned by Wales' membership of the network of regional governments for sustainable development and WAG's commitment both to contribute to the

work of the network and to learn from other regional governments facing identical or similar challenges (WAG, 2009b: 10).

This cross-party commonality of approach has ensured that the four main political parties in Wales – the Conservative Party, the Labour Party, the Liberal Democrats and Plaid Cymru (the Party of Wales) – all purport to support the ESDGC agenda. This is highly significant because, as Flynn and Morgan point out, 'while sustainable development policy is largely *designed* at the national and supra-national scales, it is actually *delivered* at the sub-national-scales' (Flynn and Morgan, 2004). However, the political reality is that the impact of any future funding cuts would certainly test WAG's priorities.

To summarise, the development of ESDGC has been a process in which the outcomes appear to have exceeded the initial expectations of most of those involved. It has been driven forward by a combination of two main factors: firstly, the establishment of WAG contemporaneous with a shift in the zeitgeist that propelled sustainability and the global dimension to greater prominence and, secondly, the involvement of key players both as organisations, such as Oxfam and RSPB, and as individuals (Norcliffe and Bennell, 2009). One of the lessons to be drawn is that, under favourable conditions, determined groups and individuals can make a significant difference to policy development, particularly in a relatively small country like Wales. WAG's promotion of ESDGC can be characterised as an organisational institution (WAG) promoting a cultural institution (ESDGC) (MacIntyre, 1981: 181). In the context of sustainable development it appears that such a phenomenon is unprecedented (Scott and Gough, 2004: 59). If this really is the case, the implications for Wales could be highly significant.

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