

## ShowCase

### Community Learning and Action for Sustainable Living (CLASL)

**Topic:** Sustainability

**Organisation:** World Wildlife Fund UK

**Location:** Surrey (South East Coast)

**Dates:** March 2005 to April 2008

**Budget:** £10,000 per pilot group per year

**Contact:** Niamh Carey

**Email:** [ncarey@wwf.org.uk](mailto:ncarey@wwf.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 01483 426 444



### Overview

The World Wildlife Fund UK (WWF-UK) Community Learning and Action for Sustainable Living (CLASL) project aimed to develop an innovative methodology to enable local communities to define and work towards new patterns of sustainable living.

Funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' Environmental Action Fund and by World Wildlife Fund UK, the three-year project used a mix of conventional research, extensive reflection and learning, as well as development and support work with four existing community groups in Surrey.

Four community groups were supported by a project support worker through a seven-stage development process, where they scoped, planned, implemented and reflected on activities of their choosing. Examples include: conducting an energy audit of the church, installing recycling and compost bins, and 'swap it' events where people could bring and exchange products and goods.

### Results

Two of the community groups made significant practical environmental improvements at the church and school they were associated with. They also developed their own skills and confidence as group members, allowing sustainable ongoing growth of the initiative.

## 1. BEHAVIOUR

For people in the pilot communities to:

- Have changed their behaviour to live more 'sustainably'
- Have engaged with other bodies (especially local government) to change attitudes and behaviours
- Become 'ambassadors' for sustainable living locally and wider

## 2. CUSTOMER ORIENTATION

- Literature review to inform early programme development
- Ongoing community consultation
- Benchmarking exercise and ecological footprint quizzes – To establish attitudes, values, behaviour and knowledge

## 3. THEORY

- **Social learning** is an important factor for encouraging behaviour and value change
  - **Action learning:** Learning by doing and reflecting on experiences as a group
  - **Action research:** Generating knowledge about an issue at the same time as trying to change it
  - **Monitoring and evaluation:** Reviewing and reflecting are essential to social learning processes
- **Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky)** – People may be 'nearly ready' to demonstrate new understanding but need 'scaffolding' to help bridge the gap

## 4. INSIGHT

- Individual and collective changes are required to progress towards sustainable lifestyles
- Close social relationships reinforce social learning
- Encouragement of collective action is important
- 'Sustainable living' needs defining by the communities

## 5. EXCHANGE

### Barriers:

- Perceived lack of time and cost
- Lack of understanding and know-how

### Responses:

- Knowledge building and promotion of benefits (including empowerment and skills acquisition)

## 6. COMPETITION

- Not enough time to do more
- Other competing initiatives already taking place within the communities

## 7. SEGMENTATION

- Four dissimilar community groups
- Each group already in existence for another purpose
- Groups should not have sustainability or environmental issues as their core purpose
- At least one group to be from an affluent area

## 8. METHODS MIX

### Seven-stage facilitated process:

1. Set-Up – Identify and engage community groups
2. Levelling and motivation
3. Understanding – Take knowledge from previous stages and develop this into deep understanding
4. Planning – Use gathered information to identify what the group wants to tackle, create a working plan and agree specific activities (manageably spaced)
5. Action
6. Review and reflection
7. Exit