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Case Study: Engaging creatively with your Sustainability Leadership

An event for Sheffield University's Green Impact programme
April 22nd 2015

Green Impact is an environmental accreditation and awards scheme developed by the NUS that runs in universities, colleges and community organisations across the UK. This event is a strand of the SusSEd professional skills programme (Sustainability skills and education) to support sustainability champions and all staff and students at the University of Sheffield.

Summary

In a highly participative way the session identified the range of abilities we can draw on in relating sustainability to our organisations – our Sustain Abilities - helping us maximise our personal and organisational resourcefulness in response.

The interactive workshop was great as it enabled staff and students to recognise their skills and how these could be used as strengths in relation to sustainability. created a supportive environment to share personal reflection and highlighted participants key transferable skills and the conditions in which these skills might be utilised.

Jessica Naylor , Sheffield University Green Impact Manager

The approach recognises that we may already have many of the abilities we need for effective response, but they are scattered across our work and lives, and provides a framework that brings these fragments together into a coherent whole. The workshop helped participants shift perspective through different contexts, each one offering different possible responses. The process enabled self identification of skills and audit of gaps at individual and team levels.



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Learning objectives:

1. **Explore** different perspectives from which to see these changes and different abilities we may use to respond to them.
2. **Orientate** participants' own abilities in relation to the challenges, bringing the personal to the professional by relating our world within to our world without.
3. **Identify** how individual abilities relate to those of others and map individual, team and organisational abilities. The process can inform skills development needs; identifying strengths and weaknesses and mapping development action at all levels.
4. **Practice:** adoption of this simple framework to aid coherency and literacy in how we relate to sustainability which in turn can inform strategies and activity programming.

The process created a particular 'safe' space to grapple with what sustainability challenges mean for the organisation and the kind of abilities that be called on, providing a mechanism to rehearse for change.

The framework has been generated through creative practice with over 200 cultural leaders and artists (as part of the Case for Optimism events programme), with a public of over 4000 (as part of Encounters arts creative engagement programme), through an Artists' Lab (funded by Artists Planet Earth) and with guidance from the Institute of Work Psychology at Sheffield University's Management School.

"Great focus on challenges and turning that around to what skills do we need/have".

"Bringing all the skills together and thinking about my own department."

"I Hadn't realised How transferable our skills are., and I got to understanding peoples different strengths ."

Participant feedback