ESD and Multi-level Governance: A Case Study from Scotland

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Purpose of this Paper

• Explain why multi-level governance (MLG) may be a useful framing concept for ESD developments;
• Case study approach: unravelling the layers of governance that apply to ESD in one school;
• Stimulate discussion around MLG across the LTN in the context of the Global Action Plan.
How does change in ESD happen?
What is multi-level governance?

A situation where:

“authority and policy-making influence are shared across multiple levels of government - subnational, national, and supranational”

What is multi-level governance?

- Arises out of the complexity of contemporary policy-making in a globalised context.
- Nation State no longer always dominant.
- Supra-national organisations proliferate.
The Need for MLG in ESD

http://www.triplepundit.com/
The 5 Global Action Plan areas: MLG in action

1. Advancing policy;
2. Integrating sustainability practices into education and training environments (whole-institution approaches);
3. Increasing the capacity of educators and trainers;
4. Empowering and mobilizing youth;
5. Encouraging local communities and municipal authorities to develop community-based ESD programmes.
Key question:

In relation to Sustainable Development, can MLG help to overcome the ‘hard-wired’ challenges [e.g. infrastructure, renewable technology; food security] alongside a ‘soft-wiring of society’ [e.g. education, consumer behaviours]

(See Stoker, 2006)
The Scottish aspiration

“Our aim is that by 2014 people in Scotland will have developed the knowledge, understanding, skills and values to live more sustainable lives.”

“The aim of sustainable development is ‘to enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life without compromising the quality of life of future generations’.”

(Scottish Government, 2006)
Referendum Result (18th September 2014)

Should Scotland be an independent country?

YES: 45%
NO: 55%

Turnout: 84.5%
Multi-level Governance of ESD in Scotland

- Global (e.g. UNESCO)
- Regional (EU)
- National (UK) & (Scotland)
- Local/municipal
- Schools
Case Study: One Scottish School transforms landscape and learning for ESD

Before the developments...

Images courtesy of Rachel Allen

www.learningteacher.eu
Multi-level governance: subsidiarity and social capital

Parent helpers

Recycled materials
Interdisciplinary pedagogy and practices for ESD

Planting an orchard

An outdoor classroom

Images courtesy of Rachel Allen
Subsidiarity in action

Recycling with the community
Growing food on site

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Who/what drives change in the School?
The MLG perspective

- The Children (voice, agency, empowerment);
- Some staff enthusiasts (2 teachers especially: curriculum activism);
- Head Teacher (leadership);
- Parents and Community (fundraising; expertise; ‘welly days’) (social capital);
- NGOs: Grounds for Learning and Scottish Natural Heritage (capacity building);
- Municipality/Local Government (provides formal permission);
- National Government (Scotland) (creates curriculum framework, and validates success & change).
- UNESCO (provides overarching rationale; influences national government).
Subsidiarity in ESD requires:

- Shared understanding of SD goals at multiple levels
- Localism plus accountability
- Children’s Voices
- Literacies of sustainability
- Social capital and capacity building
PS: A New Project in ESD

- ‘Don’t Waste Our Future’. EuropeAid funded.
- Scotland annually discards more than half a million tonnes of food waste every year.
- Partner organisations from Italy, Spain, Scotland, France, Belgium, Portugal, and Cyprus.
- Main goal is to create a common European framework on food waste reduction and to promote learning and actions around global food security.
- Further details from Alan!

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