



Irish Aid

Department of Foreign Affairs
An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha

Ubuntu Network: Teacher Education for Sustainable Development

Background Information

(Draft – July '07)

For further information, please contact
Deirdre Hogan, Ubuntu Network Coordinator

T: +353 61 233 289

E: deirdre.hogan@ul.ie

Or see the Network website at www.ubuntu.ie

The Ubuntu Network was set up to support teacher educators to integrate Development Education (DE) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) into post primary Initial Teacher Education in Ireland. Both DE and ESD are concerned with building knowledge and understanding, skills and capacities, and attitudes and values necessary to enable individuals to critically examine the world, its development and its interdependencies and to act, both locally and globally, to make it a more just, equitable and sustainable place.

Ubuntu Network Aim

The aim of the Network is to enhance the capacity of teacher educators to effectively integrate DE/ESD principles into their professional practice.

Ubuntu Network Objectives

1. To generate **interest and enthusiasm** for DE/ESD among the post primary teacher education community and thus create a disposition towards engagement with the issues.
2. To support teacher educators to design, deliver and evaluate **DE/ESD based interventions** within their professional practice, and to ensure that an **action research** element is included where possible.
3. To establish and maintain a **collaborative environment** in which network members share and discuss knowledge and experience of DE/ESD issues and methodologies, and work together on collaborative DE/ESD based initiatives.

In doing this, the Ubuntu Network will also endeavour to

- Create **subgroups** in specific areas of interest e.g. subject pedagogics, subject areas.
- Develop **resources** appropriate to support the integration of DE/ESD into post primary initial teacher education.
- Establish a body of academic **researchers** and writers on DE/ESD practice and further contribute to the development of the sector.
- Implement a web-based **virtual network** that provides continuous online communication and support to network members and associates.



The Ubuntu Network comprises **teacher educators and educational researchers** from post primary Initial Teacher Education Institutions - College of Art and Design (LIT), Mater Dei Institute of Education, National College of Art and Design (NCAD), National University of Ireland Maynooth (NUIM), National University of Ireland Galway (NUIG), St. Angela's College of Education, Trinity College Dublin (TCD), University College Cork (UCC), University College Dublin (UCD) and University of Limerick (UL).

It is supported by **NGOs** - Trócaire, Amnesty, Just Forests and Eco-UNESCO who provide a valuable insight into the educational work of NGOs and the development of relevant resources and campaigns. They act to inform the resource development process in their organisation, thus ensuring its relevance to post primary teacher education. In addition they communicate an understanding of the Ubuntu Network research and outputs to other NGOs through the Development Education Group (DEG) in Dóchas and EENGO, thus providing a basis for the creation of links between NGOs and teacher educators.

The Ubuntu Network benefits from the input of **Development Education practitioners** from the primary education sector, including DICE (Development and Intercultural Education) and Mary Immaculate College. **It is funded by Irish Aid.**

A Network Steering Committee, which includes representatives from member institutions and organisation, controls strategic and operational aspects of the Network. Current members are, **Eithne Brennan**, Trócaire; **Dr. Audrey Bryan**, UCD; **Maria Campbell**, St. Angela's College of Education, Sligo; **Dr. Marie Clarke**, UCD; **Dr. Paul Conway**, UCC; **Mella Cusack**, CDVEC CDU; **Dr. Matthias Fiedler**, DICE; **Ann Fitzgibbon**, Trinity College Dublin; **Ruth Gallagher**, Amnesty Int; **Tom Geary**, UL; **Dr. Jim Gleeson**, UL; **Gerry Jeffers**, NUIM; **Elaine Keane**, NUIG; **Dr. Claire Lyons**, MIC; **Dr. Rose Malone**,



Figure 1 - Ubuntu Network Structure

NUIM; **Kieran Meagher**, College of Art & Design, LIT; **Tom Murphy**, NCAD; **Elaine Nevin**, Eco-UNESCO; **Ruth O'Doherty**, Irish Aid; **Barbara Raftery**, Presentation Convent; **Dr. Ethna Regan**, Mater Dei Institute of Education; **Tom Roche**, Just Forests, **Dr. Roland Tormey**, UL. The Network has a full time Project Coordinator, **Deirdre Hogan**, and Research Associate, **Mags Liddy**.

Development Education/Education for Sustainable Development (DE/ESD) is an educational process with a number of defining characteristics, in particular

- It addresses social, economic and environmental development issues,
- It builds higher order thinking skills e.g. problem solving and critical thinking,
- It engenders attitudes such as tolerance, empathy, respect and awareness,
- It examines social relationships and interdependencies at local and global levels,
- It leads to social action towards a more equitable, just and sustainable world,
- It advocates active and participatory learning,
- It is relevant to formal, informal and non-formal education.

It requires that educators and students work together in 'acts of cognition, rather than transferrals of information¹. It uses constructivist theory whereby knowledge is actively constructed by the learner, not passively received and where coming to know is a process of adaptation based on and constantly modified by a learners' experience of the world². The Methodologies associated with DE/ESD do not seek to 'understand that world, organize it in the most rational way possible and present it to the learner'³, rather they enable the learner to individually and socially construct meaning and understanding of the world from their experiences.

DE/ESD learning is experiential – learners are involved intellectually, emotionally, socially and/or physically with the task, the process involves taking initiative, enquiry, making decisions and actively analysing and reflecting on outcomes. It is holistic – learners are engaged both cognitively (through knowledge, understanding and enquiry skills), and affectively (by the personal, social and emotional). It is participative - learners are encouraged to become actively involved in the experience and to share responsibility for it. It is reflective – learners are encouraged to return to the experience; attune into feelings; and evaluate learning⁴.

¹ Paulo Freire (1972), *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, London: Penguin Books, p. 54

² Jaworski, B. 1996. Constructivism and Teaching - The socio-cultural context
<http://www.grout.demon.co.uk/Barbara/chreods.htm> accessed 10-01-07

³ Hein, G. (1991) *Constructivist Learning Theory*

<http://www.exploratorium.edu/ifi/resources/constructivistlearning.html> accessed on 13-12-06

⁴ Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (2005). http://www.esd-wales.org.uk/english/Teacher_Education/teaching_learning/#hol Accessed on 01-12-06

The integration or inclusion of DE/ESD in post primary initial teacher education is relatively new and set in the context of an already challenging and full schedule. To better understand the process and effective approaches, members of the Ubuntu Network use an **action research** methodology. By definition, action research involves the addition of a small-scale intervention in the functioning of the real world and a close examining of the effects of such an intervention⁵. The process follows a similar pattern to that of Kolb’s model of experiential learning. A problem/opportunity relating to the integration of DE/ESD into the teacher education programme is identified. An intervention to address this is designed and delivered. Data is obtained through qualitative (including techniques such as observation and interview) and/or quantitative (through questionnaires) methods. Data analysis gives rise to results and conclusions that inform future approaches taken. The research, where possible, is carried out in collaboration with peers both within and between educational institutions.



Figure 2 - Ubuntu Network Work Structure

In the academic year 2006-2007, a total of 16 action research projects were undertaken.

- **5 were Subject Specific** – examined ways of integrating DE/ESD into the teaching of home economics, English, art and design, religious education and Physical Education (PE)
- **8 were Methodology Specific** – looked at specific approaches to integrating DE/ESD experiences e.g. through workshops, resources, ICT, teaching practice.
- **3 focused on Capacity Building (of educators)** – explored means of developing knowledge and understanding of DE/ESD through peer activity.

In the academic year 2007-2008, greater emphasis is being placed on collaborative projects and the formation of specialist groups.

⁵ Cohen, L. and Manion, H., (1994) *Research Methods in Education*, Routledge

The Ubuntu Network supports action research projects in a number of ways, in particular through,

- Minimal Financial support
- Assistance in the design of research instruments, data collection and data analysis
- Administration and project management.

A second essential element to the Ubuntu Network is the **sharing of experience and learning in relation to DE/ESD**.

Information on project processes and outputs is provided to members and non-members electronically through the newsletter and website. The outputs of action research projects from Year 2 (Academic Year 2006-2007) will be showcased during an open event in February 2008 (date and location to be confirmed).

A planning workshop for year 3 action research projects is planned for 11th September 2007 (see http://www.ubuntu.ie/Index1_Workshop.html for more details).

The meaning of 'UBUNTU'...

Ubuntu (Zulu) is a Sub-Saharan philosophy and way of life that emphasises co-operation, compassion, community and concern for the interests of the collective, for others and respect for the dignity of personhood. Roughly translated into English, it means, 'humanity towards others' or 'I am because we are, and we are because I am'.

"A person with Ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed" - *Archbishop Desmond Tutu*.

Members of the Network chose to use the name 'Ubuntu' to reflect its cooperative nature.

- **Subject Specific Projects**

- **Exploring Ethical Consumerism in Home Economics**

Project Leaders: Amanda McCloat, Helen Maguire (St. Angela's College of Education)

Aim: To explore the concept of ethical consumerism with pre service Home Economics teachers through the use of a cross curricular educational interventions. To inform attitudes, knowledge and behaviour, thus ensuring that students experience a holistic perspective on consumerism.

- **Promoting Critical Awareness of Global and Social Justice in Theology and Religious Education**

Project Leaders: Gareth Byrne, Dr. Ethna Regan, Barry McEntee, Elaine McDonald, PJ Sexton (Mater Dei Institute of Education)

Aim: To develop understanding of the themes central to DE/ESD; to research how these themes emerge and are specifically addressed within Theology and Religious Education (RE); to clarify how Theology and RE contribute to a vision of Global and Social Justice; and to develop resources.

- **Integrating DE/ESD Issues and Concepts into Art and Design**

Project Leaders: Kieran Meagher, Paul Gardiner, Maria Finucane, Susan Halvay (College of Art and Design, LIT)

Aim: To integrate DE/ESD themes (e.g. Similarity and Difference of Culture) into aspects of Art and Design including imagery, textiles, graphics and architecture. The approach taken will include workshops, Teaching Practice, debriefing and qualitative data collection and analysis.

- **Exploring Productive Pedagogy in the Teaching of Physical Education**

Project Leaders: Dr. Joanne Moles, Laura Purdy (UL)

Aim: To use Productive Pedagogy theory (ref. Queensland School Report Longitudinal Study 2001) to explore the role of Physical Education and its potential to develop skills and attitudes of inclusiveness and interdependence in student teachers, thus enriching student teachers' experience. This project will examine the teaching of PE in the context of i) intellectual quality, ii) connectedness, iii) inclusiveness and iv) recognition of difference.

- **DE/ESD and English Pedagogy**

Project Leader: Carmel Hinchion (UL)

Aim: To investigate how DE/ESD themes can be integrated into the teaching of English and English Pedagogy with a particular attention to the teaching of novels, drama and film.

- **Methodology Specific Projects**

- **A forum for Exploring Intercultural and DE issues in Secondary Schools**

Project Leaders: Dr. Anne Rath, Dr. Fiachra Long (UCC)

Aim: (1) To provide a support structure in the PDE (Post Graduate Diploma in Education) programme for student teachers to explore and make links with DE/ESD and multicultural issues in their pre-service professional education programme. (2) To build links with schools who are involved in DE/ESD projects in order to build cooperative and sustainable DE/ESD structures. (3) To build a shared understanding of these issues with Teacher Education Staff in conjunction with Ubuntu themes.

- **Provision of DE Presentations and Media Through the Web**

Project Leaders: Ann Fitzgibbon, Dr. Dylan Sutherland (TCD)

Aim: To further integrate Development Education materials into Trinity College's Development Studies web site and thus into teacher education. This will help to provide improved services to the current Development Education students and increase the amount of resources currently provided.

- **A Study of Student Teachers' Perspectives on the UCD DE Programme**

Project Leaders: Dr. Marie Clarke, Prof. Sheelagh Drudy, Dr. Audrey Bryan (UCD)

Aim: To explore students' knowledge and understanding of the complex relationships between development and education through classroom praxis. To explore students use of a range of active learning methodologies to facilitate their own pupils in understanding in development education. To compare attitudes of this cohort with a previous cohort surveyed in 2001/2002.

- **A Review of DE Resources in Teaching**

Project Leader: Angela Rickard (NUIM)

Aim: To establish a process and platform on which the effectiveness of up-to-date DE/ESD resources can be reviewed in the context of specific lesson plans.

- **An Introduction to Teaching ESD Issues and Concepts: Teach Zero and Primary School Experience**

Project Leaders: Deirdre Henchy, Janet Moody (UL)

Aim: To support first year student teachers to teach and review a DE/ESD topic of choice in within microteaching sessions and to further extend the focus into their first year primary school experience. Research will determine attitudes and views of student teachers towards DE/ESD issues and report the outcomes of their teaching experiences.

- **Emotional Intelligence and Teacher Education**

Project Leaders: Dr. Roland Tormey, Roisin Corcoran (UL)

Aim: To explore the concept of Emotional Intelligence within the context of teacher education. The research will provide useful insights into the role of emotion in engaging with global issues.

- **Exploring DE/ESD Active Learning Methodologies**

Project Leaders: Dr. Jim Gleeson, Orla McCormack, Joanne O'Flaherty (UL)

Aim: To develop students' understanding and appreciation of the effectiveness of active learning methodologies and to support them develop active learning strategies that they will use on TP. In order to do this, 3 workshop sessions will be run: 1. DE Concepts and Methodologies 2. DE speakers 3. Active Learning strategies for Teaching Practice.

- **Exploring Development of Problem Solving Skills in Student Teachers**

Project Leaders: Maria Campbell (St. Angela's), Dr. Niamh Hourigan (UCC)

Aim: Drawing on socio-cultural theory and more specifically activity theory, this project will focus on active student engagement through problem solving approaches. Two institutional teaching cultures will be compared by piloting a jointly developed problem solving task sequence to two development education cohorts: final year students of the Sociology programme in University College Cork and final year B. Ed Degree student teachers in the Development Education module at St. Angela's College, Sligo.

- **Developing Capacity Projects**

- **A Forum for Sharing DE-Related Knowledge within UCC**

Project Leaders: Dr. Paul Conway, Dr. Ursula Kilkelly (UCC)

Aim: (1) To provide a support structure for PDE staff to draw on expertise of other departments and staff in UCC whose work involves development education and sustainability (2) To develop a website/webpages (potentially off the Ubuntu site). (3) To undertake a series of seminars on development education for sustainable development focused around Ubuntu themes, To draw upon insights from the two other aspects of UCC Education Department's Ubuntu work during 2006, namely, the Book/Video Club and Multi-cultural initiatives, and to (4) Further enhance links between PDE staff and UCC's Globalisation Research Group.

- **Developing Capacity Through Engagement with a DE/ESD Book/Film Club**

Project Leaders: Dr. Paul Conway, Dr. Anne Rath, Sr. Bernadette Collins, John Mulcahy (UCC)

Aim: To provide a professional development forum for part- and full-time PDE staff involved in tutoring student teachers in order to support development of professional knowledge that will enhance PDE tutors' capacity to integrate development education into work with PDE students.

- **Building an Appreciation of DE/ESD Among Teaching Practice tutors**

Project Leader: Geraldine Mooney Simmie (UL)

Aim: To run a half-day workshop with (~90) TP tutors in conjunction with a CPD event scheduled for Feb '07.