

Evaluation Report on the PP4SD Project

The research for this evaluation was carried out at the end of Phase 2 of the PP4SD Project in the summer of 2005

Background to PP4SD

The idea for the PP4SD Project emerged from a workshop held in 1998 to explore inter-professional learning on sustainable development. Following a successful application to the Environmental Action Fund, PP4SD was established as a partnership project managed by a group of representatives from the project partners.

The current Project Partners are:

- The Environment Agency
- The Institution of Environmental Sciences
- The Natural Step
- The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

Previous partners include the Council for Environmental Education and WWF-UK

The PP4SD Project has received two grants from the Environmental Action Fund; each grant has covered a three year period. This has been the main source of funding from 1999 to 2005. Additional financial support has come from WWF-UK, the RSPB and the Environment Agency. All the project partners have contributed support in kind and the total value of this in kind support has reached £180,000. Additional monies have come into the Project as a result of PP4SD running training courses.

The main aims of Phase 1 of the Project were as follows.

- Engage with the professional institutions.
- Promote inter-professional dialogue.
- Research the needs of professionals with regard to CPD in sustainable development.
- Produce a training package in collaboration with the professional institutions to meet the identified needs of professionals.
- Deliver “train the trainers” courses to enable the training package to be delivered to members of the professional institutions.

The following professional institutions were actively involved in phase 1 of the Project.

Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers
Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management
Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply
Chartered Institute of Waste Management
Institute of Energy
Institution of Chemical Engineers
Institution of Civil Engineers
Institution of Environmental Sciences
Institution of Mechanical Engineers
Royal Institute of British Architects
Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
Royal Society of Chemistry
Royal Town Planning Institute

The main aims of phase 2 of the Project were as follows.

- Continue to maintain inter-professional dialogue through events.
- Develop a website and newsletter to continue to disseminate information on CPD on sustainable development and to promote the achievements of the PP4SD Project.
- Extend the reach of the Project by engaging professionals in the land-based sector and the financial services sector.
- Develop training packages for the land-based sector and the financial services sector.

Links were maintained with the professional institutions from phase 1 of the Project and the following institutions and organisations were engaged during phase 2 of the Project.

The Institute of Financial Services
The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales
The FORGE Group
The Financial Services Association
British Institute of Agricultural Consultants
DEFRA
The Institute of Horticulture
The Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group
Forestry Commission
Henry Doubleday Research Association
LANTRA
The National Trust
Pershore Group of Colleges

Summary of achievements of the PP4SD Project

In working towards the target outputs for the Project one of the main achievements has been the development of a process of engagement with the sectors in which the Project has been active. This process has included an extended dialogue through workshops and testing of materials to insure that the output of training materials met the needs of the sector and were seen as relevant by the professionals in that sector.

Summary of direct outputs from the Project:

- a) Preparing a one day Foundation Course in sustainable development.
- b) Providing sustainable development training courses for all the participating professional bodies and a range of other organisations.
- c) Publishing the one-day Foundation Course as a training manual.
- d) Publishing a booklet presenting the 'business' case for sustainable development to chief executives of professional bodies.
- e) Publishing a booklet for the training section within a professional body, introducing the concept of sustainable development and describing some of the training tools available.
- f) Publishing a Newsletter.
- g) Establishing a web-site to provide news and other information about the project.
- h) Organising inter-professional learning events.
- i) Developing a training package for the financial services sector and making the materials available on the PP4SD website.
- j) Developing a training package for the land-based sector and making the materials available on the PP4SD website.

It was the aim of the Project to for any training materials that were produced to be taken on and used by professional institutions and trainers generally. There is a record of the materials having been used in the following contexts:

- a) Barclays Bank Business Leadership Programme
- b) The Wembley Stadium construction site
- c) Pershore Group of Colleges
- d) East Midlands Regional Development Agency
- e) James Brown Construction
- f) Terminal 5 Heathrow
- g) The Thames Gateway

Because the materials are freely available in the public domain and as a result of the train the trainer courses held to disseminate the materials there may be many other examples of PP4SD being incorporated into training of which the Project has no record.

Some of the unplanned achievements resulting from the activities of the Project include:

- a) Supporting the establishment of the Sustainability Alliance.
- b) Developing a close relationship with the Society for the Environment.
- c) Delivering a training programme to lecturers in land-based colleges.
- d) Contributing to the LSC strategy on sustainable development.
- e) Working on a sustainable development research project with the LSDA.
- f) Responding to Government consultations on sustainable development and giving evidence to the Environmental Audit Committee.

Evaluation Methodology

The main research tool for this evaluation was a structured interview questionnaire. The sample of interviewees was selected from a range of people who had either direct contact with the project, or people who had knowledge of the project and would be able to comment on the impact of the project beyond those who had had immediate involvement. The sample included project partners and members of the project management group; members of professional institutions which had been involved in the project; and members of professional institutions which had not been directly involved in the project, but who had an interest in sustainable development.

The questionnaire was sent to interviewees in advance and then the interview was carried out over the telephone and the responses recorded and written-up after the interview. In one or two instances interviewees returned written responses. A total of fourteen people were approached to take part in the structured interview and eight people actually completed the interview. Of those that did not take part, one felt that they did not have enough knowledge of the project and others simply failed to respond to emails and telephone calls.

Summary of results from the structured interviews

Although some of the questions asked for a quantitative response, the sample is so small that quantitative results would lack significance. Therefore a qualitative summary is provided of the responses to each of the questions.

Question 1: On a scale of 1-10, how important is sustainable development perceived to be by your institution? (1 = not at all, 10 = extremely important)

Respondents were asked to rate how important their institution perceives sustainable development on a scale of 1 – 10. All but one respondent rated it as extremely important, either 8 or 10.

Question 2: Please summarise the contact that you or your institution has had with the PP4SD Project or the knowledge you have of the Project?

The sample of interviewees covered both the length and depth of involvement. Some had been involved in the working groups that developed and tested the materials in phase 1, while others had joined in phase 2. Some were full project partners while others simply attended PP4SD events and received newsletters and documents.

Question 3: On a scale of 1-10, how important has the PP4SD Project been as a driver in promoting sustainable development in your professional institution? (1 = not at all, 10 = extremely important)

Respondents were again asked to rate this on a scale of 1 – 10. Responses varied between 3 and 8. Lower responses were qualified by comments relating to the fact that the institutions were committed to sustainable development prior to becoming involved with the PP4SD Project.

Question 4: What are the other drivers promoting sustainable development in your professional institution? How important are they compared to PP4SD?

Other drivers included:

- Demands from the membership
- Senior management staff with commitment to sustainable development
- Legislation relating to the professions
- Government policy and DfES Action Plan
- Demands from staff
- “Keeping up” with other institutions
- Internal management systems
- Demands from employers
- Changes to qualifications

Question 5: Does your professional institution offer CPD in sustainable development? Does the CPD incorporate any PP4SD material?

This question resulted in a very diverse range of responses from “no CPD being offered” to “CPD programme which fully integrates PP4SD material”. Some of the professional institutions do not offer CPD, but rather they accredit courses and course providers.

Question 6: How important is inter-professional dialogue perceived to be as a means of achieving sustainable development in practice? Have the PP4SD events contributed to inter-professional dialogue?

Without exception all respondents considered inter-professional dialogue to be extremely important, two used the phrase “of critical importance”, albeit that there is generally a lack of inter-professional activity and a lack importance given to this area. PP4SD was considered by the respondents to have made a significant contribution in this area, with the event involving Baroness Young being identified as excellent.

Question 7: Comments on the usefulness of the PP4SD Newsletter, website and other activities.

The respondents were equally split between those who felt the newsletter and the website were excellent and useful and those who felt they received too many email

newsletters and did not have time to look at the website. One respondent felt the newsletter needed a “makeover” and that the website needed more active management.

All agreed on the benefit of the events that had been arranged by PP4SD and one respondent commented on the usefulness of the land-based workshops. PP4SD’s involvement with the LSDA (through the CoVE project) and the LSC were praised.

Questions 8: Additional comments.

The range of comments received are listed below, some positive, some neutral and some critical.

- “PP4SD has been responsive to the professional sectors and institutions that have traditionally been difficult to tackle.”
- “PP4SD has moved away from responding directly to the needs of professional bodies. It has taken on a life of its own.”
- “PP4SD is punching above its weight. Its funding is small and inadequate.”
- “PP4SD has been more help and a bigger influence at LSC than the big organisations.”
- “PP4SD has been tremendously helpful in developing the (LSC) Strategy. The holistic, philosophical approach of the Strategy was brought by PP4SD.”
- “The achievements of PP4SD are not clear. PP4SD needs to be less modest.”
- “PP4SD needs to engage at policy level.”
- “A great deal of work has been done and materials produced, but the impact is limited outside those directly involved.”

Question 9: Suggestions for future actions.

The diverse list of suggestions received are listed below.

- The SD agenda has caught up but delivery has not. There is a role for PP4SD to promote delivery.
- Regional seminars for people who would not normally come to London based ones.
- Keep up with the training.
- Better promotion of opportunities to engage with the programme and a better promotion of results.
- Become higher profile.
- Continue to offer training for FE and training professionals.
- A conference devoted to policy.
- Work with SMEs.
- Present PP4SD to the Soc Env Board and have a link to the Soc Env website for enquiries on training.
- Construction sector would be a good area to develop if PP4SD can find a niche that reflects the needs of professionals.

Interpretation of the results from the structured interviews

Although the results indicate that the institutions perceive sustainable development as important we have to bear in mind that the interviewees are all strongly committed to sustainable development as individuals and that the institutions are publicly committed. The insight from the responses reveals that the perceived importance of sustainable development varies across individuals and departments within the

institutions. However, on balance the sustainable development agenda is strong and appears to be growing stronger.

There is no evidence of a correlation between the level of involvement by an institution in the PP4SD Project and the importance of PP4SD as a driver for sustainable development in the institution. PP4SD has been a driver even where engagement with the project has been minimal, but where the institution has been looking for support with sustainable development and open to that support. This is best illustrated by the work which the PP4SD Project carried out with Barclays Bank, where sustainability and corporate social responsibility became embedded in their Graduate training Programme. Extracts from the evaluation of this particular course are attached to this evaluation as Appendix 1.

For some of the professional institutions which were involved in Phase 1 of the Project, PP4SD has acted as a driver. However, more often PP4SD has been used as part of the response to the other drivers listed under question 4 above.

From the responses collected from this small sample there is an indication that CPD in sustainable development is somewhat limited and that PP4SD is now seen as a potential provider rather than a developmental project.

The cascade effect of the PP4SD training materials through the professional institutions appears to be less than might have been hoped for in phase 1 of the Project. However, where the materials have been implemented the depth of the impact has been significant and the approach promoted by PP4SD has been valued and has influenced future thinking.

There is a variety in the media through which individuals prefer to receive information on sustainable development. While the Newsletter and the website meet the needs of a significant proportion, inter-professional events seem to be valued by the majority.

PP4SD has carried out valuable developmental work and produced materials that have been well received by those who have engaged with the Project. But in the main, given the level of its achievements PP4SD has failed to publicise and promote itself sufficiently.

Conclusions and recommendations emerging from this evaluation

PP4SD has met all the minimum targets set out by its funders as requirements for receiving the grants to run the Project. However, PP4SD had and still has aspirations which go well beyond these minimum requirements. It wished to influence CPD provision in various professional sectors to the extent that sustainable development would be embedded in all courses leading to a shift towards a more sustainable professional practice in those sectors. While these greater aspirations have not been fully realised there is evidence that the Project has influenced a shift in thinking and practice within parts of certain sectors, for example in the financial services sector.

The impact of PP4SD as a driver is limited, but it can be a very useful vehicle for implementing sustainable development in an institution where other drivers have created a need for change.

Sustainable development is recognised as being of importance, and probably of increasing importance, by professionals and professional institutions. There is a gap between the need to build capacity in sustainable development within the professions and the level of provision of CPD and the level of support that is currently available. The demand for delivery may be encouraging people to look to PP4SD as a training provider rather than a development project.

Recommendations (Not prioritised)

1. The project management group to debate whether PP4SD should concentrate more on providing courses, rather than research and development. This would need to be a commercial operation and has implications for the management of this partnership project.
2. Maintain the Newsletter and website as long as funds allow.
3. Consider raising funds to provide a series of inter-professional events.
4. Develop a strategy for further promotion and dissemination of the existing PP4SD materials. This could include using Soc Env as a vehicle and pursuing opportunities through government departments, particularly DfES.
5. Develop a strategy for building on the established success in the learning and skills sector.

Glenn Strachan
September 2005

Appendix 1

Executive summary of the Evaluation of the PP4SD course delivered to the Business Leadership Programme at Barclays PLC.

Barclays Plc runs a Business Leadership Programme for graduate entrants each year. As part of this programme, a Sustainable Development Workshop has been developed by the Professional Partnerships for Sustainable Development project (PP4SD), a partnership of 14 professional institutions, the Environment Agency, the Institute of Environmental Sciences, the Natural Step and RSPB. 38 Graduate Management Trainees from Barclays attended one-day workshops held on the 12th December 2003. The purpose of the workshops was for the trainees to gain a high level understanding of the principles of sustainability and how these principles might apply to Barclays Plc.

At the end of the workshop:

- 100% (88%)* of the trainees felt that they were leaving the workshop with an improved understanding of sustainability issues.
- 97% (87%) felt they had improved their ability to make decisions within the context of sustainable development.
- 90% (93%) felt they had improved their understanding of sustainability issues and how they relate to Barclays.
- 88% (87%) of delegates scored 7 or above when asked to rate the overall course content
- 97% (94%) of delegates scored 7 or above when asked to rate the facilitators
- **85% (86%) of delegates gave 7 or above when asked to rate the course overall.**

The evaluation of delegates' responses demonstrates:

- A highly motivated response to the CSR/sustainability agenda
- A readiness to put the concepts into action
- A willingness to incorporate the principles of sustainability into both personal and professional practice
- A recognition that the *whole* organisation needs to address the agenda at all levels and in all forms of decision making
- A need for even greater in-depth analysis of how a bank can contribute positively to this agenda
- A recognition that inquiry through dialogue is a positive approach to this agenda for both internal and external stakeholders
- An awareness of the range and scale of the environmental and social impacts of the bank and a willingness to contribute to their resolution
- A realisation that the 5 capitals model is a helpful framework for decision making

* Scores in brackets show 2002 results