



EASE Evidence Alliance for Sustainability Education

SEEd enables schools and individuals to have access to practice, evidence and thinking in sustainability education so that they can create their own effective and lasting programmes.

The issues:

a) Sustainability and environmental education covers a wide range of approaches, content and settings from in-classroom, to outdoors, to formal or informal. Different organisations have different foci – e.g. climate change, biodiversity, species, birds, poverty, equality, global citizenship. In a challenging funding climate they are competing for funding and are often required to evaluate according to the rules of the funder, which can vary considerably.

b) It is hard to even estimate how many schools, for example, are actively and deliberately focussing on environment or sustainability. This is especially true since 2015 as it has been removed from the national curriculum and requires schools now to make linkages and look for opportunities that they struggle to find the time and legitimacy to do.

c) All education struggles to tell a story about impact if only SMART objectives are used. The goal of ESD is to enable young people to develop skills, knowledge and values (i.e. competencies and dispositions to feel they can participate in a sustainable future).

d) Funders and UN agencies (e.g. UNESCO) are becoming more and more interested in embedding and scaling up and moving away from pilots and endless new programmes.

The result is there is no coherent story we can tell yet that shows the impact and effectiveness of environmental education and education for sustainability. This is despite EE having been around since the 1960's and ESD since the 1990's. The second impact is that as a sector we are not yet ready to understand how to use evidence, or scale up. This is especially true at the grassroots level where the turnover of young staff and lack of professional development means that lessons learned and best practice disappear from each generation involved.

This is where SEEd comes in!

There is evidence – SEEd has gathered 100 documents and there are plenty more! A meta-review needs to be conducted and the capacity of the EE and ESD sector needs to be built. Finally understanding how to use evidence to influence and persuade is required. This project will be unique in that the focus is the grass roots but with academic and expert partners to ensure rigour. The Output is not primarily academic papers but accessible and trusted evidence, policy documents and capacity building

A specific example:

SEEd has been at the forefront of promoting **whole school approaches**. SEEd leads an alliance, the Sustainable Schools Alliance (SSA) to support the work currently and have enabled (through dissemination or workshops) other countries to adapt their own whole school frameworks e.g. Canada, Australia, Mexico, Columbia, Cyprus, Japan, Brazil, and Greece.

The evidence shows whole school approaches to sustainability deliver increased student engagement, better learning outcomes across all subjects, more motivated students, support for the school from the wider community, and a sustained programme.

EASE – Evidence Alliance for Sustainability Education

This Alliance will build on the success of the SSA and we will invite organisations to join SEEd and pay a premium to be part of EASE. We are looking for 60 EASEE members all at £100 each (this pays for coordination, meetings and newsletters at £6000/pa). The EASE members will be divided into interest groups based on age and approaches, with local networks for peer-to-peer learning (e.g. London Environmental Educators Forum – LEEF)

The cost:

In addition to the cost of running the alliance (£6K), which eventually will be self-sustaining through collaboration and membership fees, we will need to conduct an initial meta-review of evaluations conducted so far. SEEd has begun this work through gathering reports and evidence documents and creating a framework to categorise. We have also run events (training and a policy forum) to test the need and framework.

Our estimation of the cost of a meta-review would be £50,000 as it will probably involve a university.

The goal would be to continue to add evidence as they are generated or found by the alliance and then every 5 years or so add to the meta-review.

If you would like to be a part of EASE, please contact: ann.finlayson@se-ed.org.uk