RESEARCH ON ESD

SESSION C

WORKSHOP TASK: DEVELOPING A SMALL SCALE ESD RESEARCH PROJECT

OBJECTIVES

- To plan and design a research project promoting sustainable development involving teacher educators, school mentors, student trainees and pupils.

- To identify an ESD priority area into which research is both relevant and necessary.

- To apply and coordinate knowledge, skills and attitudes gained from the present workshop where desirable, that will provide a research plan that will be both effective and relevant.

- To make decisions on the most appropriate research model/s to apply to the ESD research area chosen.

- To make use of international resources and ideas emerging from this workshop.

- To consider the type of training and preparation needed for those implementing the research.

- To attempt to match objectives to outcomes.

TASK DETAILS

1. Select a priority ESD area giving your reasons.

2. Define the scope of the project eg school, community, location, educational stage/levels, time scale, costs etc.
3 What specific problem/s will you be addressing and why?

4 Give details of the sample composition, size and how representative it will be (if applicable)?

5 What research model/s will you be using and why?

6 Give more details about 5 above.

7 Do you have a research design for the project, if so briefly specify?

8 What type of data will you be collecting and how do you intend to treat it?

9 How do you intend to present and communicate your findings?

10 What and who are the potential targets of the research project?

11 Assuming the project is a success, to what extent would you anticipate further “follow up” activities. Stipulate the nature of these activities?

TASK ORGANISATION

Working groups of between more than 7 - 10 persons.

Each group needs to select a chairperson and rapporteur.

Presentation for each group should use Power Point and /or OHP.

E. Thomas / IEUL 2009
THE CONTEXT OF THE TASK

The country called Pan-Sustaina, has been ranked by OECD as an middle income-emerging economy. It has a quasi-democratic form of government with an elected President. The country gained its independence 50 years ago,
but has close links with its former Western colonial government, especially in the fields of education, health, agriculture, business, financial institutions and legal framework. The census carried out in 2008, showed that Pan-Sustainia had a population of just over 25 million people, with a land size approximating that of Malaysia. The country has a mixed economy, of which agriculture is about 45%.

To date, the main exports are agricultural products, financial services, the export of tropical woods, computers and car assembly. In a few of the coastal areas, oil exploration has revealed substantial reserves and deposits, which have promising export potential. The population is 95% literate and there is a growing semi-skilled, skilled and professional labour force. There is one main national language, but two international languages are also used by certain members of the population. English is however the main international language. Pan-Sustania is a pluralistic, multi religious society, of which 75% of the population belong to one ethnic group.

Sustainia City is the smallest of four main cities and Sustainia University College is located near the centre of Sustainia City. The city has a population of 1 million people. Sustania University College is a well established seat of learning, having a student population of 5000, and a full time staff of over 400 well qualified persons. The college awards professional diplomas, first degrees in Science and the Humanities as well as degrees in Social Science and Education. It has specializations in Environmental and Earth Sciences. A special Centre for Sustainability and the Environment was set up in 2005, the work of which is to train specialists in Sustainable Development. It is envisaged that the Centre’s work could
interlink with other disciplines offered at the College. The college also has a small but growing number of higher degree students scattered around the various subjects offered at the college. There are strong links between the college and the local community especially in Science and Education. Some industrial and commercial firms are also involved with course development in the applied science and business education departments.

The college has four college annexes located in rural areas which act as in service centres for serving teachers, health workers and environmental government officers. These centres offer upgrading opportunities for primary and secondary school teachers, primary health workers and personnel involved with land use and water installations. All of the centres have recently been requested by the government to run familiarity sessions for those in the community eager to take part in sustainable development at the local level. The college centre for Sustainability and the Environment mentioned above, is likely to have a key role in promoting SD at the local level.

The Education Department is amongst the largest in Sustainia University College. It provides pre-service diploma and degree courses for primary and secondary schools for all taught school subjects as well as the main education disciplines. There is a post graduate education training course for graduates from disciplines other than Education who wish to enter the teaching profession. Since 2003, there are a growing number of teachers enrolling for Post graduate Degree course in Education. At present, there are no free standing ESD courses as such, but environmental science, geography
and biological sciences provide optional study units. No other disciplines address sustainability issues in their courses to date.

The government has decided that from 2009, the training curriculum for all new entrants to the teaching profession should be exposed to sustainability issues, either in the form of a free standing discipline called “Education for Sustainable Development” or an “ESD- Incorporated Discipline” in which key principles and concepts are introduced into existing curriculum courses eg Humanities, Art and Design, Geography. It is also planned that after 2010, there will be a country wide drive to provide in service training in ESD, or an “ESD -Incorporated discipline” for existing teachers.