The Role and Future Perspectives of Community-Based Learning for Sustainability

Arjen Wals
UNESCO Chair Social Learning & Sustainable Development
Outline

- Doing the things we do better or doing better things?
- Living in unusual times and the role of science
- Creating vital coalitions
- Ecologies of learning
- Key points
The Magic of Marketing

Green Skyscrapers
Green Aircraft
Green Power
Green Waste Disposal
Green Cars
Green Packaging

It's too much... but is it enough?
Based on Kropff, 2012
Four possible approaches

- Societal developments
  - Transition
  - Incremental

- Technological developments
  - Transition
  - Incremental

- Promote eco-literacy
- Blue revolution
- Aquaculture
- Healthy food
- Circular economy
- Protein alternatives
- Accessibility

- Increase resource use
- Efficiency
- Reducing waste
- GMO agriculture

- Metropolitan agriculture
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Erosion of trust in science?

- GMO-foods are inevitable...
- Runaway (?) climate change...
- Calcium supplements for women...
- Should men >50 be tested for prostate cancer?
- Is ‘organic’ sustainable and ‘locally grown’ better?
- Are vegetables grown in cities healthy?
- ....
'We are drowning in information while starving for wisdom.'

E.O. Wilson, 1998, p. 300
Living in unusual times...

- Complexity
- Uncertainty and indeterminacy
- Contestation and controversy – extinction of ‘truth’ & erosion of ‘trust” (fact free science, fact free politics, science as opinion)
- Hyper-connectivity induced shallowness – erosion of meaning
- Need for continuous learning
A clear problem with a clear solution

Predictable
Straightforward
Obvious

The problem and the solution are not clear but can be understood with time

Many familiar elements
Hidden root courses
Non-linear
Inter-operating parts affect
Each other

Problem and solution not understood and keep shifting when we try to define them

Ambiguous, chaotic
Many stakeholders with Conflicting perspectives
Many elements are hidden
And unknown
No right/wrong solution
Not-quantifiable
No precedents

Source: Rob Gibson, 2013
Co-creating 'sustainability'
Culemborg – Eva-Lanxmeer

- New community, co-designed with a sustainability focus
- Municipality hands-over control to the inhabitants, but remains a stakeholder in the design process
- Much attention for ‘process’ – collaborative learning
Questions from the Community Team

- What kind of learning process has been taking place?
  - Phases?
  - Stakeholders/roles?
  - Conflict?
  - Facilitation?
  - Critical incidents?
  - Conditions/support/governance?
  - Transferability?

www.livingknowledge.org
T.1 Commitment from the management

T.2 Divergence and overcoming resistance

T.3 Joint baseline assessment

T.4 Appreciation of use of nature

T.5 Planting of willow-huts

Level of transition

Resilience level

Tipping points

Time

2008
2009
2010

Sol and Wals, 2014
Sustain “ability”

- Understanding sustainable development
- Systems thinking
- Adopting an integral view

- Questioning hegemony and routines
- Analysing normativity
- Considering ethics

- Leadership, agency and entrepreneurship
- Unlocking creativity, utilizing diversity
- Appreciating chaos & complexity
- Fostering collective change

Dynamics of SD

Critical dimension

Change & Innovation
School Development Through Whole School Approaches to Sustainability Education

Environmental management
Participatory decision-making
Innovative teaching and learning
Vocational and applied learning
Entrepreneurship
School & community gardening
Backyard biodiversity

Solar Panels
School Council
Group Learning
Bicycle Repair
Compost Heap
Greenhouse
Wild Life Area
Adapted from Siemens, G. (2005)
Key Points

- Sustainability requires space for systems thinking, integrative design, place & identity, and multiple ways of knowing.
- Sustainability and a green *society* require new competencies also for facilitators/educators/administrators.
- Blurring the boundaries between institutional, community-based and workplace learning is essential (hybrid learning in vital coalitions).
- Critical thinking (e.g. questioning taken-for-granted values, behaviours and systems), diversity and participation, and ‘unlearning’ are essential components of sustainability.
- Sustainability can become a catalyst of educational innovation towards meaningful learning with people and planet in mind.
8th World Environmental Education Congress, WEEC

Gothenburg, Sweden - June 29 to July 2, 2015

www.weec2015.org