

Saving the Planet One School at a Time

Introduction

In December 2015 the Paris Agreement was signed, ultimately by every country in the world. A compromise between the science and what is politically possible to achieve, it sets out the path for a rapid transition to a carbon negative global economy over 30 years. Subsequent studies have advised we have two decades not three to hit these targets. What has become clearly apparent is that the coming decade will set the course for the future, failing to act now means we will not catch up, this is the last chance. The collective actions of humans over the coming decade will shape the next 10,000 years.

The consequences of this reality bring in to question all our economic models as well as the educational processes that are steering the next generation towards a future that will not exist. Saving the Planet One School at a Time instantly realised that talking about Climate as an issue is no longer enough, we must bring this theme centrally into the curriculum and link it to action that is meaningful and proportionate. Work, assessments and ambitions will need to be in line with this extraordinary challenge and pupils will need to be empowered with concepts and personal confidence to realise they can rise to this challenge.

Challenge

Schools are slow to change, they are intense battle grounds for political, resource and directional changes and teachers are largely tired and demoralised by the constantly shifting sands of education. The project also realised that school and community are intrinsically linked and the values of one need to be reflected in the other. To bring about change effectively and in the time scales suggested then the work needs to use the school as a pathway in to community and community as a pathway into school. We had no idea how to achieve this but the potential and importance to explore these potentials.

Outputs

- 1) Cae Bodfach heritage orchard and herb garden. This also includes a willow coppice trial and many other additions.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uV0EQ7ATNZ4> (4 mins tour summer 2019)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PnyLyTCHVAo&t=474s> 90slides of several years of work with school and community in the orchard
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vbddn57zqo> Mayday! A community event in Cae Bodfach in collaboration with Arts Connection and Treflach Farm

Cae Bodfach is a collaboration between Sector39/ Llanfyllin Town Council/ Bodfach trust/ Welsh Cider and Perry society/ Llanfyllin community/ MENCAP and Llanfyllin High School.

It contains 100 varieties of heritage fruit trees, as well as many support trees of local provenance. There is an herb garden with many pollinator plants, herbs, dyes and once common wildflowers. The garden is a demonstration of biodiversity, landscape regeneration, community action and more. It is designed to reduce flooding by increasing infiltration of rainwater, transpiration and soil improvement, to provide wildlife corridors and areas of habitat that might create niches for keystone species.

The work with school and community on this project has covered the whole three years of the project, with much groundwork having been done in the preceding 2 or 3 years, mainly voluntarily.

- 2) Land based studies GCSE.
The strongest ties we were able to make with Llanfyllin high school and curricular areas was with the land based studies GCSE class. This also hinged on a very keen a pro-active teacher, in contrast to our wider experience. We anticipate this link will extend far into the future beyond the project.
- 3) Welsh baccalaureate community project.
- 4) Project Podcast. <http://llanfyllin.sector39.co.uk/podcast/>
As a way to capture the experience of the project and to disseminate the project experience we recorded and shared 21 podcasts across our project network.
- 5) Publications: the project published two texts documenting the project experience in years 1 and 2. This included commentaries on the motivation and objectives of the work as well as capturing the experiences and outcomes of work with both school and community groups. These have been submitted
- 6) Small and Slow Solutions. The project used permaculture design as a methodology for mobilising school and community into responses in line with the objectives of the Paris Agreement and science that underpins it. This publication, 100 pages/ full colour/ 200 images, is designed as a resource to aid the practical understanding and application of permaculture design principles. The book draws on 5 years of relevant local case studies here in Wales as well as with our Ugandan partners at Busoga high school, Kamuli.

We published 400 copies for local distribution, to community members, councillors, town and community leaders, teachers, educators, parents, community groups and individuals. It is already proving a powerful tool for developing ideas and has been well received. (See endorsement form Welsh Assembly)

The Office of the Future Generations Commissioner has endorsed the publication and will be recommending it in their second annual report, which



goes to all their stakeholder including **all the schools in Wales**. OSOP has created a lower res PDF of the handbook for easy online distribution

http://www.permaculture.sector39.co.uk/?page_id=2334

Additionally the Southern Africa Youth Forum want to distribute the electronic version to all the member schools in SADC union of nations.

- 7) BRACE. The project convened a series of open meetings, a community conversation on the theme of Climate emergency. This mirrored the Welsh Assembly's declaration of emergency as well as many other town and regional councils. Building Resilience to Climate Emergency is the self-named group that evolved from those meetings. One School One Planet team have continued to convene and chair what has become a bi-monthly evening meeting in the community space in Llanfyllin, the Cross Keys. Meetings regularly attract 30+ people and we alternate between functional meetings and talks/ workshops on relevant themes. The group will continue beyond OSOP and the momentum is still growing. Activities so far include holding *repair café's* in Llanfyllin and Oswestry and developing a local active group and linking to the nearest neighbouring one. BRACE initiated a community compost initiative and have begun engaging across the community at local events, farm shows, and much more with talks, information stands and informal chat.
- 8) Llanfyllin horticulture hub.
An output from building a strong relationship with community stakeholders is that the opportunity to start a community growing hub has come about using the land behind and the facilities of the public institute which is currently underused. The group behind this will take on managing the Cae Bodfach orchard and herb garden as well as developing the institute as a community growing hub, from where we can garden and manage the edge spaces in and around Llanfyllin for wildlife and biodiversity

Benefit

The project outputs are directly in-line the Welsh Assembly's targets for the Wellbeing of Future Generations commission, from whom we have received a commendation. We have significantly contributed to local action to address key issues within their target areas of concern. The 2 major concerns in Wales identified by surveys carried out by the commission are climate change and social isolation. We have outlined ways to make landscape more resilient, to accommodate more wildlife, to protect biodiversity and to be more climate resilient. Furthermore, OSOP is offering ways to achieve that in a way that creates opportunities for learning, socialisation, personal development both formally and informally



Result

The big lesson for us has been that our assumption on the outset of the project was back to front. Working with school being the key to accessing the surrounding community. For a range of reasons, it turned out to be the other way around. The way to access the school, in our case here anyway is via the community that surrounds it. Meaning the timetabled day at school is too tight to fit in anything other than something almost perfectly overlaps existing work plans. Even then it is difficult to co-ordinate unless you have a very flexible and adaptive teacher as we did with Mr Jones in land-based studies.

Inversely the project made great inroads into the community and found many ways to reach all ages, school age children included by working through community groups including young offenders, cubs and scouts, parents and toddler, general volunteer days etc.

As a project conclusion we thought long and hard about how to pass on the momentum we have created. We had the intention of creating some kind of textbook from the outset but it wasn't clear how we were going to do this until half way through year 2. When we wrote the first half of the book in draft form which we published a few copies of for feedback and evaluation. *Small and Slow Solutions* was then produced in a complete review in the last three months of the project. This gave us the whole archive of experiences to reflect and draw on.

Via the welsh assembly's endorsement, we have the potential to get a copy of this to every school in Wales and we only hope it can help inspire a wave of positive action in response this very real and present climate emergency that we face.

Project Contact Details

For more information please contact Steven Jones on Steven.jones@sector39.co.uk or visit one of the websites below:-

- <http://llanfyllin.sector39.co.uk/>
- <http://brace.cymru>

Partners/Match Funders Logos



Projects Details

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Leader	

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Match Funding	£18,950.00

