

## **Education for Sustainable Development: Graduates as Global Citizens, Conference Summary**

Conference delegates (70-80) came from 32 different HEIs including representation from Ireland, Scotland, Canada and Australia. This was in part what made the conference so successful and dynamic: its diversity. Universities represented included Bradford, Bristol, Liverpool, Scotland, Middlesex, Manchester, Royal Holloway, Exeter, Plymouth, Salford, Brighton, Reading, Northumbria, Cambridge and Leicester to name but a few!

The range of subject area backgrounds included: Technology, Sustainable Rural Development, Geography, Teaching and Learning, Nursing, Design, Accounting & Finance, Environmental Studies, Management, Media and Education. The roles of delegates also varied, there were researchers and lecturers from these subject areas but also a Curriculum Development Officer, Chaplains, Post-graduate students, a Pro Vice Chancellor, policy analysts, environment officers, Heads of School and International Officers and a Head of Research.

Organisations also participated from HEFCE, DEED, DEA, Bournemouth Learning and Skills Council, Royal Geographical Society and Earthscan.

Doug Bourn from the DEA spoke on the first day and set the policy context and the work of the DEA in developing this agenda. He was clear in highlighting that BU was a leader in this area. Doug and our other key note speaker for the first day Stephen Sterling, are both well known in their fields.

Ron Barnett presented the conceptual challenge on the second day highlighting the 'tricky ground' and 'hard intellectual work' that needs to be undertaken to develop the theoretical foundation for these emerging concepts.

The initial comments we have received from the conference so far are that it was a tremendous success and that the conference should be viewed as the beginning of a series of dialogue and debate. Jenny Lunn, the Research Project Officer for the Royal Geographical Society said 'there was such a positive atmosphere and a real sense of people exploring the complex issues together in an open and supportive environment. And I felt that your (Chris Shiel) personal infectious enthusiasm really inspired and encouraged people who often feel like lone voices in their own institutions.'

An online discussion is currently being initiated in response to the conference outcomes and interest expressed in engaging further on issues about sustainable development and global citizenship. The conference highlighted the necessity of an interdisciplinary approach to the conference themes and the complexity of issues that naturally arise from this interdisciplinary approach. At the end of the second day, delegates were inspired and ready to engage, reflect, cooperate and act.

Preparing students to deal with 'complexity and contradiction' was a recurrent theme. It is important to ensure that the 'routinisation' of learning and teaching does not drive out challenging modules and risky/different types of assessment.