

Community Education

When the Community is the Classroom

Chair: Elaine Andrews

Flip Charts

Key Challenges:

- **When is Community based ed effective?**
- **When is education important?**
- **Who are the people that can assure community-based ed occurs?**
- **How to ensure authentic commitment to participate in community ed by NGOS, agencies, key actors?**
- **How to ensure that leaders have appropriate training for this work?**
- **How can community based education be evaluated?**

Outcome to key implementers:

- **Brief set of recommendations for improving the scientific basis for decision making about community ed**
- **How to develop and advance an agenda of ed for environment and sustainability**

Introduction to the Topic

Everyone brings knowledge to a situation, how do you bring it all together?

Education goes beyond the exchange of information to a transformation...

Taking new ideas, new information, new skills and changing in some way. Some people don't agree with it, but can be a positive and is what com ed is all about.

Two handouts.

1. Diffusion of innovation
2. Social marketing, strategy of understanding what your target audience is interested and how they think about them, where strengths and barriers are so you can build on them... see handouts

Handout #8, Building capacity diagram (community doesn't and case study #3 example)

Chris. EPA program... issues associated with non point source pollution, how to accomplish goals with few regulatory tools. Demand in communities by local watershed groups. Convened groups in regional watershed roundtables. Developing regional solutions to regional problems. Tried to replicate it across the country. Provided seed money to nonprofits in thirteen regions. Roundtables provided a forum for dialogue to identify barriers that local watershed groups were finding and trying to advance their interest in protecting community water resources. Offered training while groups were there in how to fund local watershed projects, restoration techniques etc. Regional

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roundtables not just comprised of watershed groups... also included state government agencies, local government agency personnel, tribes. Characteristics of groups are nonprofit and run by volunteer staff that have almost no time and money. Basis for the National Watershed Forum. 500 Delegates... Citizen-based Watershed orgs, business, environmental groups, states and tribes, local government and utilities, academia/research, foundations, 13 federal agencies. Development of recs on watershed protection efforts. Lots had to deal with capacity building of those groups. Over 3,000 watershed groups identified.

Recs from the Watershed Forum:

- Need Coordinated Delivery Systems for:

Hands-on/Technical Assistance

Training

Information and data systems

Outreach and Education

Financing

- Asked federal government to define WHAT a healthy watershed IS, evaluation methods for success.
- Want experiential learning, hands-on assistance (like what was said by Lynn Scarlett)
 - Create boards
 - Work with federal agencies
 - Business planning
 - Access funds
 - Sustain membership
 - Work w/ media and press
 - How to do events (to recruit volunteers/future members)
 - How to navigate political system
 - Conflict resolution/mediation
 - Credible monitoring program, how do you write a watershed plan, what are the most effective strategies for carrying out the plan? (Engineering techniques)
- **THEY WANT TO LEARN THROUGH Hands-on Experience**
- Recommendations on how to provide hands-on experience:
 - Getting fed/state agencies and nonprofits to collaborate and provide multidisciplinary SWAT-teams that goes around the state and gives assistance to those communities. (come to us, because problems may be unique to a watershed, customized education).
 - Circuit-rider. One person assigned to a geographic area to help build the capacity of these groups, federal or state employee to work with local watershed groups in efforts. Along w/ that position/notion, is they would like to see more VISTA and Americorps volunteers and getting them placed w/ nonprofit groups to help them.
 - Colleges and universities are a huge resource of diverse skills, and those institutions could provide expertise... another way to form SWAT-teams

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- Training future watershed leaders through service learning programs in association with colleges and universities (there is one at Penn State and a few others, but not too many across the country)
- Comprehensive watershed institute
- Peer to Peer learning networks
- If you can't give us training, at least give us one-stop shopping for information on the suite of skills you're looking for (federal, state, and local should all be there). Gotta have someone you can CALL (hotline), because these people have full-time jobs. No discretionary time.
- Need for education and training for public at large and government officials. Felt that a national media campaign to educate the public on how water impacts their quality of life... similar to "got milk" commercial. Also dearth of education of local elected officials so they can make smart decisions when they have to. Nonpoint source education from the extension as something that should be expanded
- Funding... how to fundraise? Ability to have paid staff. Lots of money for on the ground projects, difficult to pay staff to manage those projects.

Chris' report is on the web. www.epa.gov/owow/forum

Claudia. Developing a resource center to be a clearing house of information to the general public in terms of regional and environmental issues. Database of all environmental orgs that are able to contribute whatever kind of assistance there is so if you are an individual who wants to get this information... also have trained staff.

Chris. Can work, but what they really want is for you to go to them... etc.

Jonathan B-Z. Public libraries do that...

Chris. A group at EPA wants to work with libraries to get them trained.

Jon can make that connection

Robert Wingfield. Website is a very valuable tool for the education process

Hank. Capacity building not the mandate of the agency... how do you deal with that?

Chris. EPA has env. Finance centers... EPA is diverse and has different perspectives, speaking for herself, it is EPA's responsibility to help people find the money to do environmental protection and to help communities make better decisions.

Larry. How is the stuff ordered? Do we all know each other's mission, and are we going to be accountable for this mission? If you want the public to understand, you have to understand yourself.

John Moore. People didn't have good publications... AGI has launched a series of publications, "Groundwater, a Primer" and are coming out with one on surface water and the environment, soils, etc. and are well-done. He wrote the Groundwater one. UNESCO also puts out nice publications

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Lauren. Universities lack a mission to apply the research... they are working on problems in a city and don't know other researchers doing the same thing. Sometimes there is a disconnect.

Courtney. Trying to capacity build for forestry related nonprofits. AZA does that, NAAEE does it. Capacity building comes up a lot iwht nonprofits. How can those groups pull together... not just watersheds or trees... need complete networks. One stop shopping isn't necessarily site-specific.

Laurie. What do they do after they are an organization, and what are the programs, what are they doing to educate the people? She's had a lot of learning about how to do those nuts and bolts thing, but how do you educate the public.

Chris. Groups good on on the ground projects but can't continue to do them without being a stable group. To get that stability, they need nonprofit status and they need funding to apy staff to manage the outreach projects, manage the other projects. To get to that point Laurie talks about, they say they need what she just said and a variety of expertise and development of a board (w/ scientist, lawyer, etc). Making organization strong makes the group able to carry out the outreach and everything else.

Halle. Throughout building process of nonprofit, they get a more focused program base.

Break, now Recommendations!

(The first expected outcome was kind of confusing to the participants. Daniel said when Elaine said the statement, John and he both went "huh?" And went back to Elaine's write-up. Talking points earlier were what he could relate to, not the outcome statement. Need to decide what recommendations are going to be about... concentrated on the second one, with a word inserted... How to develop and advance an agenda for COMMUNITY education for environmental and sustainability).

1. What is needed.
2. Identify Key Implementer.

John Moore. One thing that is missing... whole thing is geared toward UN? Multiple comments on that... identified UN as a key implementer.

Recommendations.

Robert Wingfeld. Develop culturally sensitive approaches to community education, awareness, and capacity building.

Chris. Colleges and Universities should have public service as their mission and create multi-disciplinary service centers that will provide communities with techincal experties to become sustainable/assist communities in their quest for sustianability.

Richard C. Murphy. Encourage middle and secondary school programs in sustainability and community service. The sooner we get kids involved in thinking

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about these things and their own future, the more likely they will be able to implement and become responsible citizens.

Courtney. Making sure community members are truly involved, that they are asked what is wanted or needed, so the process is active and not passive.... In implementing communities' recommendations.

Jennifer. Think about international models of information clearinghouses, ACBI, etc. that are basically volunteer expert banks and send volunteers to int'l projects to work for three weeks to help groups with various things. To have something like that in the US. Create a community volunteer expert bank.

Lisa. Providing a how-to guide or manual to groups or individuals that want to initiate a community education project (get something started, how to proceed or call a town meeting). Make it a SHORT guide. Where literacy rates are down, must be understandable by 8th grade reading level.

Halle. Also put that sort of thing onto a CD rom.

Gray. Thinking that there needs to be some gage as to whether this type of is working or not, a set of indicators should be created to determine the success or failure of the steps that the community is taking. Taking the perspective of a municipal employee, to show that you are moving in that direction at the LOCAL LEVEL.

Laurie. Pass.

Claudia. Complement what Chris said, establishment of multi-disciplinary service centers with staff trained in certain areas (social marketing, fundraising, conflict resolution, etc.).

Elan. Frame the last comment in a shorter way—use community sustainability indicators to evaluate effectiveness of education programs.

Gray. As make recommendations, make sure indicators are being included.

Elan. Universities and government agencies seek out successful existing projects and examples in their region, and support the members of those projects to be teaching guides. Support them FINANCIALLY. Fund members to be teaching members to go throughout the region to help.

Laurie. Earlier this morning talking about people only having 24 hrs a day and not having time to deal with environmental concerns. If ed programs incorporated into people's daily lives, they would be more successful. Examples are: workplace, how you spend vacation time, so whatever the env. Program is that it isn't just one more thing to add onto the plate.

Carol. Pass.

Halle. Support for multi-generational learning. Facilitated community projects that are going on... incorporating that into learning with parents and students although that is something additional to add onto the schedule. Also, working w/ fed agencies in connecting public lands education with communities with schools. Establish a team that works together well, but eventually the land agency individual moves so soon from place to place to place, too much transience. Keep public land agencies in the community for a longer time.

Christina. (Tina). Leaving workshops, people don't know what they can do even though their attitude has changed. Make sure they know what they can do to help. Elan? Community education is focused on action. Training process doesn't end w/

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Develop educational materials that don't exist, and then test them.

Jonathan. EPA or some other appropriate national agency should develop and maintain a service for community sustainability educators to share ideas and resources among themselves with the capability to respond to individual questions and requests for guidance.

John. Video tape of such a thing in Mazoula, MT.

Maitland. Universities and agencies should deliver to the public the science needed to inform public choices and tools to evaluate that science.

_____. What do you mean by deliver?

Maitland. Sci. community does not perceive it as their role or responsibility to complete the circle, close the circle and deliver the information to the people who need it. Least of all, those at the community or 8th grade level who need it. Can do it with many tools, but needs to be active and aggressive.

Hank. Question about an amendment... add public policy issues.

Carol. Need for means of coordination to maximize distribution of coverage to media, community programs, in order to maximize public value and understanding within its normal 24-hour day.

Terrie. Comment on EPA or some other agency... great concerns about any regulatory agency being in charge of that. People will not call the government out of distrust. Persistent mistrust and fear of the government and regulators. Service should be maintained through a third party.

Robert. Readily available public and private financial support to underserved communities for community education and capacity building to address environmental concerns and seek needed environmental improvement.

Claudia. Need to make the public aware of environmental issues and the need to educate them, neither one of those attains change of behavior. Need to have a change of behavior. Identifying barriers and incentives to change behaviors... is that enough? To make the principles of social marketing widely available to action-oriented groups. Make the principles of social marketing widely available to inform information, awareness and education processes to ensure that behavioral change occurs.

Hank. Specific one on Jonathan's about the EPA or some appropriate agency... maintain a service, so include there build an interagency library of interagency modules and tools to Build an interagency library of inexpensive modules and tools to support adult hands-on education on sustainability.

Elan. Next task not to pick ones we like but see patterns that connect. They're all related, how do you think about them?

Choosing recommendations.

Lisa Sorenson wants a copy of these notes, if allowed.

Dan says that this is too many people for a workshop, there should be around 6 people.

I think that recommendations should be typed up on the laptop and projected onto a screen at the end of the room so recommendations are legible, paper isn't wasted, and the recommendations can be grouped together more easily.

Participants were rushed at the end.

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New Recommendation created.

Create place-based multidisciplinary service centers (as an overarching thing). Not government created, but should be government funding.

Final Recommendations.

Create place-based, multidisciplinary service centers utilizing public library and university resources so community members and groups can access individuals with expertise in social marketing, fundraising, conflict resolution, facilitation, etc. in their quest for sustainability (funded by public and private sources).

Universities need to see community education as integral to their mission, training researchers in methodologies of participatory action research, and encouraging researchers to communicate research to diverse groups (the public, NGOs, etc.)

Universities and agencies should seek out successful projects and models, develop case studies to disseminate broadly, and fund teaching mentors.

Develop culturally sensitive approaches to community education, making sure that community members are involved in recommendations and implementation.

Provide education programs which engage citizens who are not already engaged in sustainability, identifying and providing incentives and strategies for them to implement sustainable practices in their daily lives.

Encourage k-12 education institutions to address sustainability by implementing standards, encouraging development of links to the community (including multigenerational activities), and finding and filling gaps in sustainability education materials.

Develop a set of indicators to determine success or failure of sustainability implementation at the local level.

Make action-oriented outcomes a priority in community education, in part by making the principles of social marketing widely available to community education groups.

Create partnerships with businesses within the community to increase buy-in with local and regional projects and to help develop programs that build the communities' perspectives for including environmental values and costs in economic decisions.