Teacher Education for Sustainability: WWF-UK's *Reaching Out* programme

It was in Europe that modernity, that distinct and unique form of social life which characterises modern societies, was born. It began to emerge from about the fiteenth century but did not exist in any developed form until the idea of 'the modern' was given decisive shape in the Englightenment of the eigtheenth century. In the nineteenth century modernity became identifed with industrialism and the sweeping economic, social, and cultural changes this set in motion. In the twentieth century it has become a progressively global phenomenon with some suggesting that the accelerated pace and scale of globalization, or the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by geographically distant events and visa versa, now has such profound impacts that we are witnessing a break with modernity and the rise of postmodernity.

The theme of this paper is that radical environmental educators in Europe should recognize that those modern forms of social organisation and development which have dominated western and eastern Europe for the past fifty years have failed but that emerging postmodern forms offer some prospect of more diverse, democratic and sustainable futures. The key challenge we face is to assist the peoples of Europe to acknowledge the failure of social democratic forms of capitalism in the west and of state socialism in the east; to assess the nature, potential and threats of postmodernity; and adapt the theory and practice of socialism to new realities. The background to this challenge will be explored before examining WWF-UK's teacher education programme *Reaching Out* as one response. After outlining *Reaching Out's* rationale and contents, the paper concludes by suggesting how it might be expanded to incorporate a stronger European dimension.

Modernity and the environment

Modernity was constituted by the articulation of a number of different historical processes working together in unique historical and geographical settings. These processes were economic (the rise of global capitalist economy), political (the rise of the secular state and polity), social (formation of classes and an advanced sexual and social division of labour), and cultural (the transition from a religious to a secular culture). They operated at a range of scales and shaped a cluster of institutions each with its own pattern of change and development. Such institutions include a dynamic and expansionist capitalist economy based on private property; the nation state and international system of states; industrialism; large scale administrative and bureaucratic systems of social organisation and regulation; and the dominance of secular, materialistic, rationalist and individualist cultural values. Capitalist social relations continue to provide modernity with its economic dynamic of growth and expansion and industrial capitalism characteristically involves social inequality and environmental degradation. As modernity changes and develops it creates new social divisions and interests and new political and social movements addressing issues of social and environmental injustice in different ways.

The rise of modernity was associated with industrialism and materials and energy intensive technologies which changed our ways of living with non-human nature. The accumulation of economic and political power depended on the transformation of more and more of its elements into commodities for sale in the market and this was justified by modern worldview which suggests that nature and society are autonomous spheres; that nature is best viewed in a mechanical and reductionist way; and that applying instrumental reason to the transformation of nature, via science and technology, holds out the best prospects for human progress.

Such a basic outline of the development and characteristics of modernity is necessary to remind some environmental educators that our environmental predicament has complex causes. While we may be living beyond the limits of those resources and services which non-human nature can provide on a sustainable basis, we should remember that non-sustainable forms of development are shaped by (and in turn shape) all the social structures and processes of modernity and that our very constructs of 'nature' and 'natural limits', 'environment' and 'environmental issues', and 'sustainability' and 'sustainable development', are socially produced. The impacts of industrialism and globalization are now so pervasive that non-human nature is everywhere socialized and the construction of 'nature' and 'natural limits' by economic, political and cultural processes takes new and radical forms. It is prudent to care for non-human nature in a way which enables rather than constrains our development, but we should be extremely suspect of those who talk of absolute limits or suggest that we can find in 'nature' a new or rediscovered ethic on which to base human affairs.

The crisis of modernity in Europe

Modernity reached its peak in western Europe during the 'long boom' from 1945 to the mid 1970s when Fordism, a model of development based on a distincitive labour process, regime of accumulation, and mode or regulation, committed firms, governments and workers to a treadmill of mass production and consumption which had profound implications for the environment (Seabrook, 1990). The material and institutional conditions which enabled the boom were eventually exhausted and by the 1970s European capital faced growing supply and demand side crises. Fordist labour processes and modes of regulation where unable to sustain rising levels of labour productivity, product quality, and technological innovation and there was surplus capacity as European leaders were reluctant to pursue greater economic and political integration and thereby establish forms of supranational regulation which could prevent economic paralysis and competitive stagnation (Lipietz, 1992).

While Fordist modes of regulation provided new forms of welfare, which included environmental protection, management and planning, the scope of these was limited by the imperatives of capital accumulation. The dominant insitutions of modern western European societies (capitalism, liberal democracy, and the administrative state) are pervaded by instrumental logic and are seriously flawed as vehicles for a transition to more sustainable futures (Drysek, 1992). They adopt too narrow a view of wealth and economic accounting, restrict power and influence to privileged minorities, and find it difficult to act in the 'common' interest. The resulting social and environmental problems contribute to a legitimation crisis as people lose faith in modern institutions and either opt out of mainstream society altogether or focus their attention and action on the alternative public sphere of civil society which lies beyond these dominant institutions.

It was protest movements in civil society which eventually produced the collapse of modern societies in eastern Europe in 1989/90. These state socialist societies had followed their own versions of Fordism but inflexible state planning and a corruptible state system, meant that they were unable to adapt their modes of regulation to allow a transition from extensive to more intensive forms of development. Like social democracy in the west state socialism took a variety of forms, but it generally failed to deliver what it promised. As far as the environment was concerned it failed to price environmental resources and services adequately and it adopted over-rigid production norms which were generally realized at the expense of the environment. Technologies were increasingly old and dirty and lax law enforcement, together with mismangement and apathy, also contributed to pollution and waste. Successive attempts at reform resulted in growing debt and dependency, while secrecy and a lack of democracy discouraged environmental protest. The 'velvet' revolutions of eastern Europe were the result of legitimation crises more severe than those in the west but it now seems increasingly unlikely that these societies will be able to 'leapfrog' the west and move directly to more sustainable forms of development (Carter & Turnock, 1993).

The rise of postmodernity

The prospect of creating more just, democratic and sustainable European societies beyond modernity is raised by the profound restructuring of social life which gathered pace in the 1980s. To overcome its supply side crisis and restore levels of profitability European capital engineered a shift to a new post-Fordist model of development which uses new technologies to obtain greater flexibility with respect to production, labour, and markets, and quicken rates of innovation and capital circulation. Post-Fordism involves a vast array of new products and services and a degree of decentralization and economic democratization as firms re-organize spatially and adopt new forms of labour relations. It creates new landscapes and environments in the midst of the old and its emergent structures re-shape the ways in which we use and think about 'nature' (Hall, Held & McGrew, 1992).

More flexible and diverse forms of work, production and consumption are reflected in political, social and cultural change. Post-Fordism fractures society bringing new status and class divisions along with new interests and insecurities. Consequently the old forms of politics and identity related to work and economic production decline and new forms emerge in which issues of consumption take on greater significance. While post-Fordism fragments and decentralizes, trends towards global interdependence and integration continue. The new social movements reflect issues and problems which globalization intensifies and highlights while the increased significance of locality, local issues, and local politics, reflects the desire of individuals to find some stability and security in a profoundly disorientating world. Lifestyle, like locality, also becomes an important site for politics and self expression with the retailing and cultural industries offering a vast range of new products.

The cultural impact of post-Fordism is to produce new aesthetic, cultural and intellectual forms and practices

which are labelled 'post-modernism' to distinquish them from the cultural styles and movements which dominated the first half of the twentieth century. Post-modernism reflects and shapes an economy in which knowledge is power and a bewildering array of knowledge and cultural forms are the key to new and unusual commodities which can be sold for profit. It revels in fragmentation, ephemerality, and discontinuity; brings a new sensitivity to difference and subjectivity; replaces high brow culture with popular culture and consumerism; and suggests that there are no metalanguages, theories, or grand narratives via which all things can be connected, represented, or explained (Layder, 1994).

Postmodernity as disorganized capitalism

Lash and Urry (1994) suggest that these changes amount to a disorganization of capitalism which results from the processes and flows listed in Figure 1. Capital now circulates over longer routes at greater velocities and increasingly takes the form of post-industrial information goods with a cognitive content (eg. a software program) and post-modern goods with primarily aesthetic content (eg. a pop video). They argue that in the emerging economies of signs and space, global information and communication structures are displacing other social structures as the prime determinants of social life. This results in a loss of the previously existing meanings of objects and subjects and of the spatio-temporal contexts in which they are found, and prompts a growing number of individuals to take advantage of increased access to cultural competences to create their own meanings; monitor and organize their own individual life narratives; and attempt to reshape society itself. The de-traditionalization and enhanced individualization promoted by disorganized capitalism sets individuals free to be self-monitoring or reflexive and the resulting transfer of powers, from structure to agency, mirrors the self-monitoring workers and more reflexive processes of accumulation with characterise the post-Fordist economy.

As structural change requires people to take on powers that previously lay in structures, they employ judgement to monitor themselves in relation to their society and environment (cognitive reflexivity) and intuition to interpret themselves and their lifeworld (aesthetic reflexivity). Cognitive reflexivity carried out by individuals and institutions means that knowledge provided by the social sciences is fed back into a society which itself becomes reflexive and self-constituting. Aesthetic reflexivity is a central feature of consumer societies and plays a key role in the creation of those meanings which sustain such new social movements as the environmental or ecology movement. Stuctured flows and accumulations of information are the basis of cognitive reflexivity in disorganized capitalist societies while

Figure 1

The process and flows which usher in disorganized capitalism:

- the flowing of capital and technologies to 170 of so individual 'self-govnerning' capitalist countries each concerned to defend its territory;
- time-space compression in financial markets and the development of a system of global cities;
- the growth in importance of intenational producer services;
- the generalization of risks which know no national boundaries and of the fear of such risks;
- the putative globalizing of culture and communication structures partly breaking free of territories;
- the proliferation of forms of reflexivity, individual and insitutionalized, cognitive and especially aesthetic;
- huge increases in personal mobility across the globe;
- the development of a service class with cosmopolitan tastes especially for endlessly 'fashionable' consumer services provided by one or other category of migrant;
- the declining effectivity and legitimacy of nation-states which are unable to control such disorganized capitalist flows;
- the emergence of 'neo-worlds', the kinds of socially and regionally re-engineered cultural spaces which are the typical homelands for cosmopolitan post-modern individuals, eg the art world, the financial world, the drug world, the advertising world, the academic world.

Source: *Economies of Signs and Space*, S Lash & J Urry, 1994, p. 323

structured flows and accumulations of images and expressive symbols are the condition for growing aesthetic reflexivity.

The impact of disorganized capitalism on western Europe is spatially uneven and its form is strongly dependent on the policies of national governments. The most prosperous regions have successfully introduced reflexive production and so solved supply side problems, but there remain many areas of decaying Fordism where the social structures of organised capitalism (eg. family networks, social welfare institutions, trade unions) are disappearing and the new information and communication structures have not yet arrived. The poverty and social problems seen in these areas also characterize the former Fordist communist regions of eastern Europe and in these conditions such ideologies as fascism, racism, nationalism, ecologism, and democratic socialism can find growing support.

Postmodernity, disorganized capitalism, and the environment

The decline of Fordism and the rise of post-Fordism has resulted in both promise and threats as far as the environment is concerned. Many of the old centres of mass production and pollution have closed down and the new cultural and 'sunrise' industries are generally cleaner and less materials and energy intensive. In those parts of western Europe where social democracy and strong regulation prevail the environmental impact of restructuring has often been for the good. In other places with new Right governments, areas of decaying Fordism show environmental dereliction and decline while emerging areas of post-Fordism often display new forms of congestion, conspicuous consumption, and waste. Western European societies remain heavily dependent on goods produced elsewhere in the world and there is a real danger that eastern Europe will be restructured as a dependent zone of largely Fordist production with low standards for wages, welfare, and environmental quality (Manser, 1993).

Postmodernity or disorganised capitalism prompts renewed sensitivity to the environment which stems from both globalization and localization. The global spread of industrialism creates new global risks, such as climate change and the erosion of biodiversity, and information and images relating to these risks are increasingly available to reflexive individuals via global economies of signs and space. Such developments as green consumerism and holistic therapies seek to answer the resulting insecurities by reconstructing 'nature' and 'envionmental issues' in ways which pose no real threat to the status-quo, but increased reflexivity also prompts some to embrace more radical forms of environmentalism. These challenge the prevaiing modern culture of 'nature' and suggest that we should use our increased reflexivity to reshape our understanding and use of non-human nature along with our perceptions of science, progress, and reason. They represent the contemporary expression of a countercultural current within modernity which has existed from the start and which emphasises its destructiveness, questions its notion of progress, and draws attention to how it demeans and downplays other cultures, value systems, and points of view. The affinities of the green movement and green with postmodernity are outlined in Figure 2. Pepper (1993) regards green postmodernism as essentially relativist and reactionary. It tends to place all social conflict in the cultural domain and distracts attention from that in the economic and political domains which in his opinion, and that of other green socialists, is central to the realization of more just, democratic and sustainable futures.

The major barriers to such futures are the lack of regulation at national and international levels and people's selfish behaviour. More sustainable forms of development require strong international agreements and programmes supported by all nation states, and local action by altruistic individuals and communities who are prepared to act in the interests of temporally or geographically distant populations. The *Agenda 21* process (Quarrie, 1992) recognizes these requirements but it perhaps fails to acknowledge the readiness of nation states to 'free ride' on the presumed actions of others and the difficulties of realizing a consensus on sustainable development in any locality. Globalization and reflexivity prompt localization, or an increased awareness of locality and its role in providing meaning and security, but people's commitments to and interests in their locality are varied and complex and this seriously affects the chances of developing a viable and acceptable local *Agenda 21*. National governments are increasingly squeezed between globalisation and localisation as political power is passed upwards to international bodies and devolved downwards to local governments. This, together with the changed nature of power, calls for new multi-level and multi-dimensional forms of citizenship which can accommodate the demands for more radical forms of democracy made by green socialists and others (Lynch, 1992).

Green socialism

The failure of social democracy in western Europe and state socialism in eastern Europe to deliver economic and political democracy, has led some socialists to advocate an alternative third way to socialism which involves a radical

Figure 2

THE GREEN MOVEMENT AND POSTMODERNITY

The green movement is in tune with postmodernity or New Times because it offers a new vision of progress; an alternative to the modern project which is increasingly seen to have failed.

The green movement appeals to our intuitive sense of the unity of the biosphere and our awareness of our intimate interdependence with the earth. It counters the reductionism and desacralisation of nature which were products of modernity and the Englightenment project.

The green movement is in tune with Post-Fordism and an economy where information rather than material becomes the measure of economic power. It offers less physical, less quantitative and less instrumental ideas of productivity, efficiency and progress.

The green movement is about the future - about what we will leave our children. To envision a sustainable society, It reaches back into the past and forwards into the future. It provides a sense of continuity, stability and identity at a time when these are threatened by postmodernity. It creates a new sense of belonging and collective interest.

The green movement is in tune with postmodernity in its emphasis on cultural politics or the notion that people can change themselves and their world through how they live and what they consume.

The green movement advocates new forms of international humanism while recognizing the importance of locality and local democracy. It pre-figures new types of global solidarity and co-operation and reconciles the local and the global at a time of increasing globalisation and time/space compression.

extension of popular democracy aided by new technologies which also allow decentralisation and emancipation from work rather than emancipation in work. A planned and regulated mixed economy would steer production in socially useful and sustainable directions and a redivision of labour, together with developments in the cultural sphere, would lessen the attractions of wasteful consumerism (Ryle, 1988). Gorz (1989) suggests that red green politics is essentially a politics of time. Green socialists should use the opportunities offered by new technology to campaign for more work sharing and a shorter working week, without loss of pay, so that people can rediscover a world of autonomy and security where they can define themselves in association with others and engage in play and self directed labour.

Such green socialism reflects the radical potential of postmodernity or disorganized capitalism and offers a revised vision of progress and a revised counter culture. These stress less quantitative and instrumental ideas of production, efficiency and progress; urge inter-generational equity as well as new forms of international humanism; and recognize the importance of diversity, subjectivity and locality to a contemporary politics which should embrace culture and lifestyle. Green socialism gives radical expression to postmodern sensibilities and attitudes, allowing its hedonism to be translated into genuinely easier going forms of life. Bauman (1990) explains how liberty, equality and fraternity, the core values of socialism, were distorted under social democracy and state socialism and argues that postmodernism represents modern development coming to terms with its impossibility. Socialists should take account of the emerging social values of liberty, diversity, and tolerance, and ensure that these are turned in progressive directions.

The prospects of a green socialist Europe depend on the future form and policies of the European Union. Only a democratic and federal Europe has the power to shape the processes and flows of disorganized capitalism and it could regulate economies and environments in ways which encourage virtuous spirals or sustainable reconstruction and renewal while allowing a considerable amount of local and regional autonomy (Palmer, 1992, Collins, 1993). Within the context of extended membership of the European Union this reconstruction is likely to entail a midway convergence between the social systems of east and west, and both Swift (1993) and Ekins (1992) have begun to provide blueprints of what it might involve.

The alternative to a green socialist Europe is a future which is neither ecologically nor socially sustainable. Collapsing empires, imploding states, ungovernable cities, zones contaminated with toxic waste, new forms of surveillance and control, rising facism and nationalisms, a growing underclass, drug related crime, declining levels of welfare, ... these are just some of the threats and problems which are already apparent and which could worsen if Europe is unable to democratically regulate its affairs and so provide an example to the rest of the world.

Critical social theory

To understand and forecast the prospects for the European environment we do then have to understand modernity and its futures. Such a goal remains the aim of much social theory but it is particularly critical social theory which is concerned with human freedom or emancipation and the ways it which is has been curtailed through forms of domination and social repression in the modern world. The work of the Frankfurt School sought to diagnose the ills of modern society (the things that prevented people's fulfillment) and identify the nature of those social changes that were necesary in order to produce a just and democratic society. Habermas continues to develop his ideas within the Frankfurt tradition but sets out to reconstitute critical theory by reconstructing the work of classical writers like Marx, Weber, and Durkheim (White, 1988),

Habermas develops the kind of grand and 'totalising' theory that is rejected by Foucault and other post-structuralist and postmodernist thinkers. Unlike them he does not reject out of hand the Enlightenment project of reason and believes that rationality, freed from the domination of technical and bureaucratic rationality, continues to hold the key to enlightenment and social emancipation. His theories of legitimation crisis, knowledge constitutive interests, communicative action, and the colonisaion of the lifeworld, seek to reveal the nature of the modern crisis and link the elimination of inequality and domination, and the securing of an enhanced quality of ife and the safeguarding of the environment, to the reclamation of the lifeworld and the exercise of communicative reason within radical or discursive democracies. Because subsystems of society and many of its steering mechanisms have become detached from the lifeworld, or the domain of everyday assumptions, rational debate and popular control, many people will be unaware of the workings of these sytems and therefore social theories which depend solely on the views of individuals are significantly flawed. Once subsystems like money and power, or the economy and the state, have become separated from the lifeworld they then recolonize it by occupying whole areas of everyday life such as education and personal relations which are best governed by communicative reason. The modern crisis thus represents a triumph of techical and utilitarian values over moral and practical values but Habermas is optimistic and believes that systemic elements can be forced out of the lifeworld or made to submit to normative and moral demands. Democratising the capitalist economy, liberal democracy, and administrative state is the common goal of the new social movements and it is not surprising that green socialists and radical environmental educators have been much influenced by Habermas' critical theory.

Amongst those who have applied Habermas' ideas to education and teacher education are Gibson (1986). Grundy (1987), Carr and Kemmis (1986) and Young (1989). His ideas have very influential in shaping critical theories of environmental education (Fien, 1993, Huckle, 1993, Robottom and Hart, 1993) and his theory of colonisation of the lifeworld has considerable potential for helping us to adopt a sympathetic but critical approach to the writings of those green postmodern educators who advocate an environmental education underpinned by holistic ethics (Sterling, 1993), a global education based on an holistic worldview (Greig, Pike & Selby,1989), or an education designed to foster ecological literacy (Orr, 1992). Our earlier consideration of modernity and its futures suggests that we should perhaps not base a critical theory of environmental education solely on one social theory. Marxist theory such as that developed in the journal *Capitalism, Socialism and Nature;* Gidden's structuration theory and his ideas about modernity and self identity (Giddens, 1991); Beck's theory of risk society (Beck, 1992); Dicken's green social thoory based on realism; (Dickson, 1992) various theories of ecofemism and social ecology (Merchant, 1992); all have potential which is largely unexplored and there is some value in following Giroux's call for an eclectic approach to theory which combines elements of modernism, postmodernism, feminism, and ecologism (Giroux, 1992). That presents us with a major challenge but the strength of the analysis provided by such as writers Lash and Urry, convinces this writer that a critical theory of environmental education which draws strongly on Marxist political economy is our best prospect. By examining *Reaching Out* we can see how such theories have shaped one programme of teacher education.

Reaching Out

The World Wide Fund for Nature evaluated its educational work in the UK in the early 1980s. Peter Martin, its newly appointed education officer, decided that a wildlife club and a visiting speaker scheme for schools were having a

limited impact and that they should be closed down. Resources were switched to the development of curriculum materials and by the early 1990s the education department had a sixty five page cataloque listing materials which enable environmental education to be introduced through most school subjects to pupils of all ages. These materials were developed and written by an expanding network of teachers, consultants and writers, and by the late 1980s, curriculum management and teacher education materials were being added to the list. WWF-UK's education department now has a national and international reputation in the field of environmental education and its work has done much to sustain such education in the UK during a period in which it has been a low priority in the Government's programme of educational reform.

The publication of the revised world conservation stragegy, *Caring fot the Earth,* and the lead up to the Earth Summit in Rio, caused the education officers at WWF-UK re-assess their aims and strategies. Education for sustainable development, or education for sustainability (Martin, 1993, Sterling, 1992), provided a sharper and more demanding focus than environmental education, with the actions promoted in *Caring for the Earth* and *Agenda 21* clearly pointing to a greater emphasis on community and citizenship education. Having established a presence in schools with curriculum materials, the new challenge was to educate teachers and schools to use these and other materials in ways which encourage social change towards more sustainable ways of living. Resources were therefore re-directed to the professional development of teachers and the support of innovative schools. A teacher education officer, Phil Champain, was appointed in 1991 and he invited a team of writers to prepare an in-service teacher education programme. While there are currently some other inservice initiatives in environmental education, notably by the Council for Environmental Education, teacher education for the environment continues to be largely neglected by the UK Government. Britain is not a member of UNESCO and therefore has few links with its internation environmental education programme and England has not participated in the CERI/OECD project *Environment and Schools Initiative* (CERI/OECD, 1991).

Reaching Out is the main vehicle for WWF-UK's current teacher education strategy. It consists of a set of workshop materials, in three parts, which make up a comprehensive course in the theory and practice of education for sustainability. It draws on existing WWF materials and is designed to support a wide range of courses from a one hour in-service session in school to a thirty hour module which contributes to a certificate, diploma or higher degree. The materials enable teacher educators to introduce teachers to the literature of environmentalism, sustainable development and environmental education, and to examine the ways in which this and other factors have influenced curriculum development. A common core of sessions in Parts 1 and 3 introduces education for sustainabiity and its implementation in schools and the wider community, while different routes in Part 2 cater for primary school teachers and for a range of secondary subject specialists (English, geography, science, and technology). The objectives of *Reaching Out* and the titles of the sessions in Parts 1 and 3 are listed in Figure 3 and while the programme is designed for delivery in fifteen, two hour sessions, supported by follow-up study, two booklets, *Lets Reach Out (Primary)* and *Lets Reach Out (Secondary)* suggest how the materials can be adapted for use in shorter courses and conferences. Short *Reaching Out* courses have already been held in several parts of England and Wales and longer accredited courses are planned for 1994/5.

Reaching Out's theoretical rationale

While *Reaching Out* seeks to encourage teachers and pupils to become agents of the transition to sustainable development outlined in *Caring for the Earth* and *Agenda 21,* it encourages a critical response to these agendas and the ways in which they might be implemented in communities and localities. The workshop activities, tutors' background notes, and extension study activities, link education for sustainability to the crisis of modernity and the potentials opened up by postmodernity, and suggest that action research, guided by critical theory, is the key to recognizing the crisis and realizing the potentials. Critical action research provides appropriate forms of pedagogy, professional development, and community development, and it is the process of testing critical ideas in action which unites what the teachers do in *Reaching Out* workshops with what they do in their schools and classrooms, in their professional lives, and in their local communities. Part 2 of the longer accredited course is designed to be school based and tutor supported and it provides an opportunity for a significant action research project linked to some aspect of curriculum and/or professional renewal.

In the first part of *Reaching Out* teachers are encouraged to link the double crisis of environment and development to the nature of modernity and recognize the ideologies and utopias which shape notions of sustainable development. Different classroom activities on global warming are used to help them recognize the different kinds of knowledge which contribute to environmental education, and the importance of critical theory to education for

Figure 3

Reaching Out: education for sustainability
WWF-UK's teacher education programme

The Programme's Objectives

On completing Reaching Our, teachers should be more able to:

- outline and justify a professional perspective on environmental education and education for sustainability;
- draw on a rnage of appropriate knowledge, materials and classroom techniques to educate for sustainability in the classroom and local community;
- employ action research techniques to improve their delivery of education for sustainability;
- use national curriculum frameworks to educate for sustainability;
- help colleagues to formulate and realize whole-school policies on environmental education;
- link education for sustainability within their school and community to other relevant initiatives, locally, nationally and globally.

The ten sessions in Parts 1 & 3

1 *Caring for the Earth*
2 Towards a critical environmental education
3 Education for sustaiability as socially critical pedagogy
4 Environmental education and the national curriculum
5 An introduction to action research
11 Towards a whole school policy on environmental education
12 Linking with the community
13 Linking with the wider world
14 Keeping it all under review
15 Where do we go from here?

sustainability is stressed by drawing attention to the limited philosophical foundations of education for environmental management and control and education for environmental awareness and interpretation. These first two sessions are underpinned by Habermas' theories of legitimation crisis and knowledge constitutive interests, while a third session on socially critical pedagogy draws on his theory of communicative action. It encourages teachers to engage in critical action research with their pupils and seeks to demonstrate that such a pedagogy has inbuilt safeguards against indocrination. Session 4 examines the potential for education for sustainabiity within the national curriculum frameworks for England and Wales and invites teachers to rewrite the case studies in the English curriculum guidance document on environmental education with reference to the more enabling Welsh guidance. Session 5 introduces critical action research as a means of professional development in environmental education and encourages teachers to recognize that much action research is uncritical and unlikely to close the theory-practice gaps which Robottom (1987) describes.

Part 2 of *Reaching Out* encourages individuals or groups of teachers to apply the insights they have gained from Part 1 to their own subject teaching in school. Workshops are provided to encourage the identification of action research topics and Sessions 9 and 10 link the teacher's subject specialism/s to others and to cross-curricular themes and dimensions. By the time teachers complete Part 2 they should have a clearer understanding of how their subject might contribute to education for sustainability; how subjects can link together; and how education for sustainability can benefit by drawing upon such cross-curricular themes and dimensions as citizenship education and equal opportunities.

In Part 3 teachers begin by sharing the outcomes of Part 2 as an introduction to Session 11 on greening the school. This examines the implications of sustainability for the whole life of the school and links with Session 12 which introduces the local *Agenda 21* process and the ways in which teachers can co-operate on greening initiatives with local government departments, community groups, and local businesses. Session 13 explores ways of linking with communities elsewhere in the world before Session 12 returns to the theme of the management and evaluation of education for sustainability in the self-managing school. The final session encourages teachers to speculate about postmodern futures and their implications for education. The proposals in Hargreave's recent *The Mosaic of Learning: Schools and Teachers for the Next Century* (Hargreaves, 1994) provide one focus for discussion while an article by Orr (1993) provides another. There are perhaps fewer theoretical insights and foundations in Part 3 but the teachers are encouraged to acknowledge and confront the obstacles to realizing a more sustainable school, community and world.

Experience with *Reaching Out* to date.

In 1993-4 *Reaching Out* provided the framework for a number of short courses each attended by around forty teachers. The majority of these courses were programmed as two weekends, largely filled with workshops, with an interval of time between for action research and curriculum development. The lesson ideas and curriculum units presented by the teachers on the second weekends showed that they had understood and accepted the theory and practice of education for sustainability to varying extents. Some of their presentations were most encouraging but others understandably revealed the continuing dominance of environmental education informed by technical and practical interests. The successful introduction of education for sustainability is likely to be a long process in which learners should have much opportunity for reading, discussion, and reflection on action. Longer accredited courses may therefore prove to be much more effective and some ot these should begin in 1994-5.

WWF-UK's education department has not found it to be as easy to interest teachers, schools and local education authorities in *Reaching Out* as it had anticipated. A radical restructuring of education has taken place in Britain in the past fifteen years and this has left many teachers exhausted, disillusioned, and reluctant to take part in any inservice education which is not perceived to be directly relevant to their classroom work or to their career prospects. Educational policies recast in the mould of economic liberalism have been designed to tighten the correspondence between education and the needs of an emerging postFordist economy and assist the state resolve its legimation crisis (Whitty, 1992, Ball, 1990) and they continue to alter the funding and nature of preservice and inservice teacher education. Progressive and critical approaches based on social and educational theory are attached on the grounds that they failed in the past, are too expensive and time consuming, and are not technically efficient. A new climate of pragmatism and competency training pervades teacher education and it is not difficult to see this as an attempt to deskill and deprofessionalize teachers and prevent the very kinds of critical reflection and action which *Reaching Out* seeks to encourage.

While pragmatism and instrumental reason have incrasingly invaded the lifeworld of teachers and teaching in recent years, Hartley (1991) reminds us that education and teacher education answer the contradictory needs of capital accumulation and legitimation. Teachers recent opposition to national curriculum testing together with the reluctance of a growing number of parents to take their children's schools out of local government control, are signs of a growing recognition that the pursuit of capital accumulation and technical efficiency at the expense of democracy and equality can go too far. The Government's policies and actions have distanced themselves so obviously from tenets of democracy and social justice that a crisis of motivation and legitimacy now effects a growing number of pupils, teachers and teacher educators who are seeking to reclaim their lifeworlds. There are some signs that the pent-up energies of radical teachers and teacher educators could be in demand in the 1990s but this will depend on the creation of a wider radical politics and their ability to give terms such as efficiency, standards, and competency, the new and attractive meanings that they take on when re-cast within the theory and practice of education for sustainability.

The contradictions of the Government's current policies can also be seen in its determination that schools become self managing institutions which are regularly inspected. Giving schools control of their own budgets, encouraging them to opt out of local government control, and giving far more attention to regular inspection related to a wider range of school policies and performace, can encourage more reflective teachers and more democratic schools. Not all schools will use local control and the requirements of the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) to enable them to create a more just, democratic and sustainable institution which is taking a leading rolel in helping the surrounding community to formulate and realize its local *Agenda 21*, but this is a possibility which WWF-UK and *Reaching Out* seeks to encourage. OFSTED inspectors have spoken at *Reaching Out* seminars and the programme is promoted as a means of realizing high quality education as defined in the 1988 Education Reform Act.

While *Reaching Out* can make progress in difficult times, real progress requires a government committed to sustainable development and the type of policies for teacher education outlined by Hill (1991). These would encourage continuing professional development for all teachers which engages them in reflection and action at the technical, practical, and critical levels and so increases their knowledge, skills and commitments as transformative intellectuals (Giroux, 1985) capable of assisting the transition to sustainable development. Zeichner (1993) reminds us that much that passes as critical reflection in teacher education is neither critical nor empowering and suggests that their is an urgent need for programmes like *Reaching Out* which connect teacher education with the wider struggle for social justice, democracy and sustainability.

A European extension

While the future well being of Europe's citizens will be largely determined by social structures and proceses operating at scales beyond the local and national, *Reaching Out* currently gives little attention to the European dimension. The first part of this paper suggests that Europe's environmental educators should understand the rise of modernity, the form it has taken in different parts of western and eastern Europe in the recent past, the various attempts taken by political and civil institutions to ameliorate or solve its problems; and the current prospects for realizing a midway convergence betwen east and west based on sustainable development. They should be able to critically reflect and act on Europe's economic, social and environmental problems and potentials and this means relating teacher education to the critical reflection and action which is needed to implement *Towards 2000* and national and local *Agenda 21s*. Environmental educators should have a critical and practical understanding of Europe's economy, environment and institutions; its politics and culture; its environmental policies and programmes; and its links with the wider world. They should be critical and active European citizens and should be able to educate for European citizenship in ways which explore a range of European futures. This is a demanding agenda and the challenge for teacher educators is to implement it in ways which teachers and others find relevant, enabling and empowering.

Reaching Out does then ideally need an extension to provide the European dimension. It might be collaboratively written and trialled by a team of environmental educators from eastern and western Europe and it might use the *Agenda 21* process and the European Union's fifth envionmental action programme *Towards Sustainability* as is focus. On completion it could be used with teachers throughout Europe to encourage solidarity and commitment to more international, democratic and sustainable futures and to sustain a network of environmental educators interested in its continual improvement and updating. WWF-UK is currently considering such an extension and members of the ATEE working group may wish to be involved in various ways.

Denitch (1990) suggests that it is in Europe that socialist energies, projects and politics are most likely to be revived. While mass social democratic parties have suffered major setbacks due largely to their failure to update their theory and practice for 'new times' (Perryman, 1994), a strong commitment to democracy and strong civil institutions remain. The end of the cold war offers new possibilities and the challenge now is to engineer a convergent transition to sustainable development which allows for diversity and proceeds beyond social democracy to a genuinely new and radical kinds of green socialism. We have seen that programmes of teacher education for sustainability can help to meet that challenge. The modern project began here in Europe and it is here and now that it should be turned in sustainable directions.

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