

Welcome!

Hello! Welcome to the second Science for Sustainability (s4s) newsletter. We hope you find this informative!

Attitudes towards SD

As mentioned in the first edition of *Mikasa*, a survey was designed to assess local school pupils' attitudes toward Sustainability. The results of the survey are encouraging, with over 83% of respondents demonstrating awareness of the term 'sustainable development' (SD) and over 74% 'agreeing strongly' that "science plays an important role in the development of SD practices". More from the school pupils to follow...

The competition!

Following the development of the '**Big Chief**' scenario, a game designed to illustrate the complexities of Sustainability by modelling ecosystems processes, the s4s team held a competition involving University of Leicester (UoL) Physics students.

The aim of the competition was to design a game that 'best' illustrates complex systems and sustainability, whilst remaining engaging and fun to play. Four teams of 3 students participated, each producing a written report of their experience and a copy of the game design they came up with.

A Virtual Learning Environment (www.moodle.org), as well as face-to-face meetings, were used to run the competition over the Easter vacation. A panel of 3 judges (each on different continents!) then assessed the final reports.

The results...

Tim Barker hosted a presentation held at the university on the 7th June to announce the competition winners.



Tim with some of the students

Emily Perkins, a Physics teacher at Wreake Valley Community College and one of the 3 judges, presented the results of the competition and awarded each team their very own tree in Leicestershire's Normanton Wood as a gesture of Sustainability!

Congratulations to '**Team Rab**' who were the (close!) victors at the end of the day. The competition proved to be a real success - thanks go to all four teams who worked hard and impressed us with their intelligent designs.

Dr. David Harper, whose fieldwork around Lake Naivasha inspired the ecosystems-based approach to designing the games, gave a talk to the students addressing how they may stay involved in Sustainability in the future. Exciting plans are now underway to launch a two-week 'Science for Sustainability' field course in Kenya, to be made available to UoL students interested in sustainable development.



David Harper with members of Team Rab

The presentation proved a valuable experience which saw many of the project's key players together in the same place for the first time; the meeting of many minds is, after all, fundamental to the success of SD practices!

Back to the schools...

The games designed by UoL students are soon to be 'play-tested' by sixth form pupils who will assess their suitability for use as educational tools.

The s4s team will be visiting **Wreake Valley Community College (WVCC)** and **Leicester Grammar School (LGS)** this week. Our aim here is to introduce the concept of the games and how they may relate to the complexities of SD.

The same pupils who completed the attitude surveys (mentioned above) will then have an opportunity to play the games in small teams. Towards the end of the visit we shall be asking the pupils for their responses to the games by answering a second survey.

In this way, we shall have an indication of the effectiveness of using games to illustrate the importance of **Science to Sustainability**. Moreover, we will be better able to address our primary research question: can Physics be made more attractive to students through its alignment with the Sustainability agenda?

Out of Africa

We remain in touch with the African Virtual University (AVU) thanks to Amanda Hopkins, an AVU Learning Technologist and one of the 3 competition judges.

It is hoped that the final s4s methods and learning materials will form a '**toolkit**' to be disseminated via the 'Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA) Project' (see www.tessaprogramme.org) as a component of one of its science modules.

Latest news...

Now that the project is well and truly underway, the third (and possibly final!) edition of *Mikasa* will be produced towards the end of July; until then, please feel free to check out our 'news and events' available via our website at:

www.science4sustainability.org

Thanks for your interest and good luck with your own sustainability work!

The s4s team.