

The Project Process

Key questions addressed by this section

<u>What is the purpose of this section?</u>	12
<u>What was this project trying to achieve?</u>	12
<u>What were the timeframes and stages of this project?</u>	12
<u>What was mentoring in the context of this project?</u>	13
<u>What was the structure of the mentoring process in this project?</u>	15
<u>Why mentoring as a tool for Education for Sustainability?</u>	16
<u>How was this project evaluated?</u>	18
<u>Where is the research in this project?</u>	19
<u>What is the journal and what is its purpose?</u>	20
<u>What was the Learning Contract?</u>	20
<u>Where to after this?</u>	21
<u>Where can I find out more?</u>	23
<u>References</u>	24

*For this project, mentoring was a peer relationship. It was non-expert led.
The mentor acted as a facilitator, whose responsibility was to facilitate the learning
of the mentoree by providing support and encouraging continual critical reflection.*

What is the purpose of this section?

To introduce:

- the aim and objectives of the project
- the timeframes, stages and key dates for the project
- the purpose and value of the mentoring methodology used for the project
- the commitments to the project
- the journal and the learning contract.

What was this project trying to achieve?

The **aim** of this project was to build local governments' capacity to use Education for Sustainability and learning-based strategies for change towards sustainability.

In order to achieve this, the Mentoring Local Government in Education for Sustainability project had a number of **objectives**:

- to enable local government staff to consider how education and learning can assist in planning and implementing sustainability policies and programs at the local level
- to use mentoring strategies to build capacity of local government staff in Education for Sustainability and support its implementation with a focus on achieving practical sustainability outcomes
- to develop a resource to support the mentoring and facilitation component of the project and which can be used by others who wish to replicate this project
- to use the skills of project partners as well as build upon existing local council networks to extend the learnings and outcomes of the project beyond the immediate participants.

What were the timeframes and stages of this project?

Table 1 outlines the proposed timeframe and the associated components of the Mentoring Local Government in Education for Sustainability project..

After the initial one-day introductory workshop in August the workplace mentoring and seminars alternated on a monthly basis. On-going email and telephone support was available from the introductory workshop through until the final mentoring session.

Table 1: Timeframe of Mentoring Local Government in EfS Project

2006/7	Project Component	Location
24 th August 2006	Introductory Workshop	Powerhouse Museum, Sydney
Week 11-15 th September	Workplace mentoring 1	In each of the 9 council workplaces
19 th October	Seminar 1	Melbourne
Week 6 – 10 th November	Workplace mentoring 2	In each of the 9 council workplaces
7 th December	Seminar 2	State Library, Sydney
Week 29 Jan – 2 nd February 2007	Workplace mentoring 3	In each of the 9 council workplaces
22 nd February 2007	Seminar 3 & Formal Evaluation	Melbourne
Beginning March 2007	Receive stories/write-ups from participants for inclusion in handbook	-
End March/April 2007	Draft handbook published & distributed to all participants, KIG and project partners	-

What was mentoring in the context of this project?

... Learning is the fundamental process, purpose and product of mentoring
 Dr Lois J Zachary, Principal, Leadership Development Services, Arizona

... help by one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work or thinking
 Clutterbuck, D & Megginson, D, Mentoring Executives and Directors (1999)
 page 3

Mentoring is a relationship concerned with learning. The process of mentoring is not new and can be found in many indigenous systems including the elder system of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people¹.

Mentoring is a Learning process, the Mentor is the Facilitator.

There are many different types of mentoring programs but essentially most programs can be identified as falling into two main areas:

- professional development mentoring within the workplace – generally ‘expert’ led, the mentor being another employee with greater experience or an externally trained mentor.
- community development, in particular aimed at ‘at risk’ or disadvantaged groups such as youth, indigenous peoples, migrants, refugees, women or people with disabilities. Community mentoring programs are normally either ‘expert’ led, peer led or often, particularly in the case of youth mentoring, the mentor could be a retired or older community member.

Some writers have suggested that mentoring programs should not attempt to rigidly specify the mentoring roles,² rather they should be fluid and flexible relationships to allow for growth and change. This project is based upon this premise; however, it is important to have some clarity of the roles within this project and an understanding of how we see the mentoring relationship.

Key tenets of this mentoring project

Effective mentoring programs and relationships are premised on the belief that the learner controls, and is responsible for, his or her own learning; and that meaning is constructed by the individual learner. Furthermore the learner must possess the motivation to learn and a capacity to learn. The mentor's role in the mentoring relationship is to establish and nurture the conditions for this learning.

Effective mentoring practice incorporates principles of self-directed learning:

- *Learning is an active process by which individuals make meaning from information and experience.*
- *An individual's prior knowledge, beliefs and feelings influence this process.*
- *Learners continually monitor and evaluate their own thinking and restructure their prior knowledge.*
- *Individuals are natural learners and enjoy learning in the absence of feelings of insecurity.*
- *Self-esteem and motivation are heightened when individuals are in situations where they are accepted and valued.*

NSW Department of Education and Training *A review of the literature and an exploration of mentoring practices* www.schools.nsw.edu.au/edu_leadership/prof_read/mentoring/

For the purposes of this project, ***mentoring was identified as being a peer relationship, that is, it was non-expert led.*** The mentor (in this case ARIES) acted as a *facilitator*, whose responsibility was to facilitate the learning of the mentoree (in this case, local government participants) by encouraging continual critical reflection. This was done by posing appropriate strategic questions and by offering time and space to reflect.

What was the structure of the mentoring process in this project?

The structure and style of mentoring programs vary greatly. Mentoring can be carried out on a 'one to one' basis, a 'one to many' basis or a networking basis. There are advantages and disadvantages to all three depending on the target group and the aims and objectives of the program. For example, one to one mentoring is generally very high in resource needs, and both labour and time intensive, but has the ability to address highly targeted and tailored information, and to be very flexible to the needs of the particular individuals and their individual scenarios. In contrast, networking-based mentoring programs have lower resource, labour and time requirements and offer excellent opportunities for collaborative learning and the formation of partnerships, but are much less targeted to individual needs.³

An example of a 'one to many' mentoring style program is the City of Charles Sturt Business Energy Partnership Program where a larger business provided mentoring in energy reduction methods for smaller businesses across different industries⁴. This program was highlighted for its innovative partnership approach between local government and private sector industry.

This Mentoring Local Government in Education for Sustainability project integrates a combination of the 'one to one', 'one to many' and networking-based approaches.

One to one

One to one mentoring was undertaken through workplace visits, i.e. individual visits to the local council offices. This part of the project delivered highly targeted support to each council and was very flexible to the particular needs of the participants. In this project we used a mentoree partnership approach, i.e. two people within each council were jointly mentored. The aim was that the two mentorees within each council could provide support for each other and together generate greater impact within council for change.

One to many

This was undertaken through the workshop and seminars. The aim was to share knowledge and learnings between everyone and to jointly reflect on the way forward.

Networking

Again, this was undertaken through the seminars. We offered this time and space as an opportunity for networking, to jointly discuss and reflect on ways to perpetuate this program at the end of the project, and to develop ongoing support networks.



Through the mentoring process, participants were asked to identify a mentoring focus for their project, and from this, to develop an action plan to implement this change. This formed the basis for the mentoring process.

Examples of previous mentoring focuses have included:

- **the reorientation of a community engagement program to encourage greater ownership of the process by the stakeholders**
- **changes to community consultation methods for council development and planning approvals process**
- **engagement of stakeholders in developing a shared vision for the development of a community garden**
- **the evaluation of an existing community education project using EfS principles to identify key success factors and lessons learnt for achieving change.**

Throughout the mentoring process, with their mentoring partner and the mentor, participants were asked to continually act upon and critically reflect on their action plan.

Why mentoring as a tool for Education for Sustainability?

Throughout Australia and internationally, mentoring is increasingly being seen as a useful tool for community development, and increasingly it is being innovatively used as a tool for moves towards sustainability. Also within local government here in Australia, mentoring is already being used as a professional development tool.

Macquarie University has undertaken a number of mentoring projects in collaboration with various local government and community partners. These projects typically used both 'one to one' and 'one to many' mentoring approaches, within the participants' workplaces and at focus groups, and they focused on the integration of Education for Sustainability techniques within existing education or community engagement programs. Evaluation of these programs highlighted the value-adding nature of mentoring as an effective tool for providing support for, and building the capacity of, the mentorees in the planning, design, development and execution of their education and community engagement projects.

Table 2 gives examples of mentoring programs being undertaken specifically in these areas, as well as examples of workplace-development mentoring that is currently occurring within local government. Each project is referenced so that you may investigate further if you are interested.

Table 2: Examples of mentoring programs targeting local government or with specific Education for Sustainability aims

Mentoring Program	Initiated By	Program Aims	Target Group	Type of Mentoring
Local Government Peer Support Program, Victoria ⁵	Centre for Organisational Development (CFOD)	Professional Development	Local government	On-line support and matching of mentors and mentorees
EcoSteps, Australia ⁶	Helping Hands	Skills in sustainability	Varied	As required from one-on-one to workshops
Community Action 2020, UK ⁷	UK Government	Community action for sustainability	Community	Community mentors
Young Leaders project, international ⁸	Leadership for Environment and Development	Develop young leaders for sustainable development	Youth	Work placement with projects in developing countries alongside tailored mentoring programs
Future Environmental Leaders Program, Victoria ⁹	Monash University	Train and equip university students to become effective leaders for a sustainable world	University students	Series of workshops, residential retreat, sustainability projects and one-on-one mentoring by a leader in the environmental field
Mentoring Program for Councillors, Tasmania ¹⁰	Local Government Association Tasmania	Support, guidance in various areas such as governance, planning and finance	Local government councillors	One-on-one, mentors are other elected members of local government
Sustainable Leaders Tri-Mentoring Program, Canada ¹¹	University of British Columbia	Capacity building of university students to develop future sustainability leaders	Both junior and senior students	Mentoring triad between a junior student, a senior student and a professional
Clarence Valley Action Learning and Mentoring Program, NSW ¹²	Macquarie University	Capacity building in design, development and assessment of community education programs	Local government project leaders	One-on-one, on-line and telephone support and workshops
Cooks River Action Learning and Mentoring Program, NSW ¹³	Macquarie University	Capacity building in design, development and assessment of community education programs	Local government project leaders	One-on-one, on-line and telephone support and workshops
It's a Living Thing EfS Professional Development Program, NSW ¹⁴	Macquarie University & AAEE, NSW	Building the capacity of the person in the workplace/community to reorient their educational programs towards EFS processes and principles	Educators	One-on-one, on-line and telephone support and workshops
Reducing Energy use through Partnerships, Cities for Climate Protection Program, South Australia ¹⁵	City of Charles Sturt, South Australia	Assisting businesses to reduce their energy use and greenhouse gas emissions	Local businesses	Mentoring by more experienced companies

How was this project evaluated?

The program will be evaluated using both formative and summative evaluation techniques.

Formative and Summative Evaluation

'When the cook tastes the soup, that's formative evaluation; when the guest tastes it, that's summative evaluation' (Michael Scriven, Associate Director, The Evaluation Centre)

In other words, **formative evaluation** produces information that is fed back during the course of a program to improve it. **Summative evaluation** is done after the program is finished, and provides information about its

Formative evaluation was carried out throughout the mentoring process. After each workshop and one-on-one mentoring session participants were asked to provide feedback both informally and formally. This was both verbal and written and the information was used to review the project and adjust it accordingly.

? Participants are involved with the design of the project in that they, as the mentorees, drive the mentoring process. In the case of the seminars we asked for input into the agenda before each meeting so that we could ensure that the seminars were targeted to the programs and areas of need.

Summative evaluation was carried out at the final seminar which was a feedback and evaluation seminar.

? At the final seminar participants were asked to complete a confidential questionnaire and to consider the outcomes of the Mentoring Local Government in Education for Sustainability project (see Section 7 for more information about evaluation). These questionnaires were collated and evaluated by an independent evaluation professional. There was also plenty of opportunity for informal feedback.

The final evaluation findings were then added to the draft handbook. In addition to this written evaluation, we also asked for stories – short written summaries with any information at all that they wished to share about their discovery journey in Education for Sustainability, be it at work, home or wherever. This could be taken from their journal for example (see the section below). These summaries formed a critical part of the summative evaluation process. In addition, we asked for information that could help to document the changes that occurred during the project.

To summarise, key evaluation data collection points for the project were as follows:

Formative

- feedback after each workshop/seminar
- feedback via email after each mentoring session
- on-going feedback via email/telephone during the project
- participant input to agendas for workshops and mentoring.

Summative

- written questionnaire at start of project
- written questionnaire at project completion
- participant summaries from journals.

Where is the research in this project?

ARIES undertakes research into Education for Sustainability. The research context of this project posed the following question:

Q. Is the mentoring approach an effective method for:

- developing the understanding and skill of participants in Education for Sustainability processes
- developing the capacity of participants to reorientate their programs towards an Education for Sustainability approach
- generating longer term organisational change for sustainability within local government?

These research questions were addressed through the evaluation of the project.

What is the journal and what is its purpose?

? One of the commitments to this project was the development of a journal. It was intended that the journal form a collection of thoughts, comments, questions and critical reflections, which arose throughout:

- the process of understanding and reflecting on Education for Sustainability during the workshop sessions, the mentoring sessions, and in the workplace and community
- the development and implementation of Education for Sustainability programs in the workplace or community
- the integration of Education for Sustainability into existing programs in the workplace or community.

The journal could include any sources including personal comments and reflections, cartoons, quotes, newspaper cuttings, photos, print-outs from websites, whatever material was considered relevant to Education for Sustainability. It could also take any form (e.g. loose sheets of paper added to the draft handbook or a separate exercise book).

Participants were asked to develop their journal during, in between and after the workshops and mentoring sessions.

It was intended that the journal involve them in a process of considering how Education for Sustainability may confront their own assumptions as well as their professional knowledge. It was also used to inform the mentoring sessions.

As mentioned above, a further commitment was that they write a short summary or story, summarising any changes that had occurred during the project. This could be a summary from their journal.

What was the Learning Contract?

? As part of this project, participants were required to sign a **Learning Contract with ARIES**. It served to form a basis for our mentoring relationships and identified time commitments and concrete deliverables for both mentors and mentorees. *See below.*

Where to after this?

Once the handbook was published, a **Dissemination Plan** was developed based on what we learnt from this project, and offering suggestions on ways to disseminate the learnings and outcomes. The idea was that the plan would discuss ways to widen the reach and further the learnings of this project by continuing to develop and strengthen networks and partnerships across Local Government.



THE LEARNING CONTRACT

Welcome to the Mentoring Local Government in Education for Sustainability project. This project is funded by the Australian Government Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts and delivered by the Australian Research Institute in Education for Sustainability at Macquarie University.

This learning contract outlines the responsibilities of the project deliverers and participants.

Our Commitments

- Deliver 1 workshop, 3 seminars and 3 workplace visits for each mentoree
- Provide support for your project throughout the process
- Be open and honest at all times
- Be available via email or telephone throughout the project
- Provide a draft handbook to all mentorees and at completion of the project a final handbook complete with your stories and reflections.
- Provide other resource materials, including 2 key publications.

Your Commitments

- Attend 1 workshop, 3 seminars and 3 workplace visits
- Identify and commit fully to a change action within your project (we can help you identify this)
- Prepare, update and act on Action Plans developed during the workplace visits
- Work collaboratively with your mentoring partner
- Develop a journal outlining your reflections and thoughts during the project
- Engage with the project enthusiastically and be open and honest at all times
- Provide feedback for evaluation as required
- At the end of the project, provide a journal summary containing anecdotes about your journey through the project and reflections about Education for Sustainability
- Provide input into the Dissemination Plan and, if interested, become involved in the continuation of the project.

I _____ (print name) agree to the above conditions of the Learning Contract.

Signed _____

Date _____

We, the Team, agree to the above conditions of the Learning Contract

Signed _____

Date _____

Where can I find out more?

Mentoring

Australian Mentor Centre

www.australianmentorcentre.com.au

Dusselldorf Skills Forum: Mentoring

www.dsf.org.au/themes/10.htm

Lots of information on mentoring best practice and benchmarking. This site also contains Mentoring Australia, Australia's national mentoring association.

ILT Team (2004) 'Mentoring as a tool for workplace change: outcomes and lessons learnt from the It's a Living Thing Education for Sustainability Professional Development Program', Paper presented by Henderson, Garlick and Calvert to the *Effective Sustainability Education: What works? Why? Where to next? – Linking Research and Practice Conference*, University of Sydney, 18th – 20th February 2004

www.epa.nsw.gov.au/cee/confpocceed.htm

Coaching and Mentoring Network

www.coachingnetwork.org.uk/

National Environmental Education & Training Foundation *The Mentoring Handbook: A Guide to Environmental Mentoring for Companies, Non-profits and Regulators*

www.mentor-center.org

The International Mentoring Association

www.mentoring-association.org/

Includes a section on key questions to ask to develop an effective mentoring program.

The Mentor Directory

www.mentors.ca/mentor.html

Good information on mentoring including mentoring program tips and stories on mentoring relationships as well as a large database on mentoring resources.

Tilbury D & Bowdler L (2003a)

Education for Sustainability in Clarence Valley Councils: Action Research, Learning and Mentoring
Sydney, Macquarie University
www.livingthing.net.au/PP_Proj_6.htm

Tilbury, D. and Bowdler, L. (2003b)
Education for Sustainability in Cooks River Local Councils: Action Learning and Mentoring in Stormwater Community Education, Sydney: Macquarie University
www.livingthing.net.au/PP_Proj_6.htm

Partnerships

(See also 'Where can I find out more?' in the EfS – What is it? section of this handbook.)

Tilbury, D. and Wortman, D. (2004). *Engaging People in Sustainability*. p75, IUCN, Gland, Switzerland. Available for download from www.aries.mq.edu.au

Wilcox D (2002) A short guide to partnerships Available at www.partnerships.org.uk

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- ¹ NSW Premier's Department Public Employment Office (2004) *Mentoring Made Easy A Practical Guide*
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- ³ NEETF The Mentoring Handbook p14
- ⁴ City of Charles Sturt Business Energy Partnership Program <http://www.charlessturt.sa.gov.au/Default.aspx?tabid=247> [Accessed 3 May 2006]
- ⁵ Centre for Organisational Development *Local Government Peer Support Program*, Victoria www.cfod.com.au/jsp/default.jsp?actionid=local_gov_peer&page=home [Accessed 19 April 2006]
- ⁶ Ecostepsi *Helping Hands Coaching and Mentoring Service* www.ecosteps.com.au/static/ecs/services/coachingandmentoring.htm [Accessed 19 April 2006]
- ⁷ UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, (2006) *Community Action 2020 Community Support Programme Overview document for inviting Expressions of Interest*
- ⁸ LEAD International *Young Leaders Project* <http://youngleaders.lead.org/> [Accessed 19 April 2006]
- ⁹ Monash University Future Environmental Leaders www.fel.monash.edu.au [Accessed 19 April 2006]
- ¹⁰ Local Government Association of Tasmania, *Mentoring Programme for Councillors* www.lgat.tas.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=371 [Accessed 19 April 2006]
- ¹¹ University of British Columbia *Sustainable Leaders Tri-Mentoring Program*, <http://students.ubc.ca/leadership/involvement.cfm?page=tri> [Accessed 19 April 2006]
- ¹² Tilbury, D. and Bowdler, L. (2003a) *Education for Sustainability in Clarence Valley Councils: Action Research, Learning and Mentoring*, Sydney: Macquarie University Available at www.gse.mq.edu.au/Research/staff/daniella_tilbury.shtml [Accessed 19 April 2006]
- ¹³ Tilbury, D. and Bowdler, L. (2003b) *Education for Sustainability in Cooks River Local Councils: Action Learning and Mentoring in Stormwater Community Education*, Sydney: Macquarie University
- ¹⁴ ILT Team (2004) 'Mentoring as a tool for workplace change: outcomes and lessons learnt from the It's a Living Thing Education for Sustainability Professional Development Program', Paper presented by Henderson, Garlick and Calvert to the *Effective Sustainability Education: What works? Why? Where to next? – Linking Research and Practice Conference*, University of Sydney, 18th – 20th February 2004
- ¹⁵ ICLEI Cities for Climate Protection *City of Charles Sturt Business Energy Partnership Program* www.charlessturt.sa.gov.au/Default.aspx?tabid=247 [Accessed 19 April 2006]

[Chapter 4: Sustainability – What is it? >](#)