

*'As the world becomes increasingly interdependent and fragile (...) we have much to learn from the ongoing collaborative search for truth and wisdom.'*

(The Earth Charter)

## **Are we there yet? Developing Global Perspectives at Bournemouth University**

This paper provides some context for 'Global Vision, Local Action', the fourth 'Education for Sustainable Development: Graduates as Global Citizens' (ESDGC) conference held at Bournemouth University (BU), September 2011 and is presented to share learning. It offers an update on developments at BU, a summary of previous conferences and reflections on a journey which began in 1998, when a group of staff got together to create a global vision for BU.

### **Back ground and update on developments at BU**

As part of the founding work, a formal document a 'Global Vision for Bournemouth University' was developed, which highlighted an opportunity:

*'As we enter the new millennium, the 'real world' is one of globalisation. ... Globalisation means that, in the future, Bournemouth University graduates will have worldwide career opportunities at their feet. Globalisation insists that the successful graduate of the future will need to possess the skills, knowledge and self-awareness to adapt to the dynamic international business environment and to a wide range of cultural circumstances that they will encounter personally and professionally. The inclusion and valuing of global perspectives in all Bournemouth University courses is a forward looking, empowering step that will contribute to the development of graduates who are highly employable in this twenty-first century international scenario' (Global Vision for Bournemouth University, 1999, p. 1).*

The vision document was endorsed by Senate and was central to the work of the Global Perspectives Group at BU, between 2000 and 2005. Initial progress was focused on the extra-curricular sphere: a range of activities was organised to highlight global issues, global processes and the need for sustainable development; workshops focused on developing cross-cultural sensitivity. At the same time, the idea that all courses might incorporate global perspectives was promulgated through staff development workshops and meetings with senior management. Eventually, working through the Learning and Teaching Development Committee, approval was gained to include global perspectives and sustainable development within BU's Curriculum Development Guidelines.

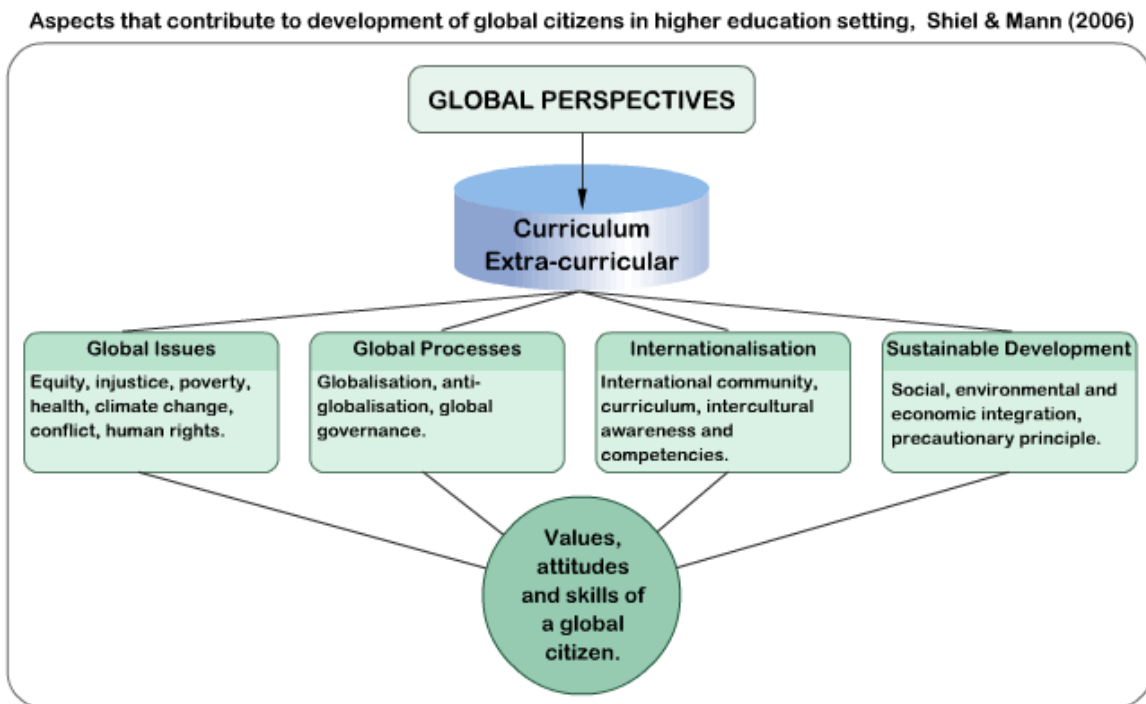
The journey has consumed a substantial amount of energy and required perseverance. The rewards have included a number of successful projects (many externally funded) along the way, including the 'Skills for Life' project undertaken in partnership with Development Education in Dorset (DEED); the Global University Project in partnership with Think Global (formerly the DEA) and more recently a Higher Education Funding Council, Leadership Governance and Management project which is enabling Board Members and senior management within universities, to consider leadership for sustainable development.

The greatest impetus came from a Leadership Foundation Fellowship awarded in 2005; outputs included a new strategy for developing Global Perspectives and Education for Sustainable Development, and the first ESDGC conference, in 2005. The strategy outlined a holistic approach to the agenda (see Shiel 2007, pp158-173) embracing three themes:

- Corporate Responsibility and behaviour – the university as a global citizen

- Curricula and pedagogy – embedding global perspectives and sustainable development
- Extra-curricular activities to support citizenship and internationalisation

The development of global perspectives at BU has been outlined in a number of publications (Shiel 2006; Bourne, McKenzie and Shiel 2006; Shiel 2007). Early work drew upon the terminology of development education and the work of Oxfam (1997) relating to global citizenship. A number of devices were used to explain the terminology and a diagram was developed to serve as a guiding framework (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.**

The diagram continues to serve a purpose and global perspectives continues to be considered in a holistic way.

Developing understanding of the concepts has been important, but of equal importance, has been the articulation of various rationales to explain how, and why, this work relates to university activity. The need to justify, continually demonstrate ‘value added’, and to show alignment with and enhancement of, other university agendas has been vital but time consuming. The compatibility with the employability agenda including the link with developing graduate skills was articulated from the outset (see Shiel, Williams & Mann 2005). The link to employability has become even more pertinent over time, as research has continued to highlight the changing needs of employers in the context of globalisation.

Similarly, alignment with the internationalisation agenda has been at the heart of BU developments, with the goal of developing graduates who have global awareness, cross-cultural skills and international experience (which then further enhances employability). Reinforcing the connection between developing global perspectives and the University’s International Strategy seemed not only appropriate but was relatively easy to justify, in a context where a increasing numbers of publications criticised the economic focus and ‘marketisation discourse’ which dominated internationalisation within higher education (for example, Caruana and Spurling 2007). It was a desire to be ahead of the sector, in relation to internationalisation and to respond to research which suggested the need for more

coherent leadership of internationalisation (Middlehurst 2006; Middlehurst and Woodfield 2007), which lent support to the endorsement of a proposal to establish the Centre for Global Perspectives (CGP), in 2008. The proposal established that the Centre would play a leading role in internationalisation, address 'internationalisation at home' and contribute to enhancing the experience of International and UK students (through global perspectives). The timing coincided with a plan to restructure BU's International Office, repositioning overseas recruitment within Marketing and Communications. The idea of a 'centre' however, (which would work across Schools and Professional services) had been mooted much earlier (2000), and had been formally proposed in the 2005 strategy, evidencing just how challenging, these things can be to progress.

Petford and Shiel (2008) describe the approach adopted at BU and how different concepts (global, international, sustainable development) have been drawn together as part of a 'work in progress' in setting up the Centre to function as a hub at BU. The aim '*to develop cross-disciplinary research and activities to support the development of global perspectives and sustainable development across the University*' is broad; the need for '*political support*' to '*challenge institutional hurdles*' is highlighted. Looking back, the journey has seemed a tortuous route to travel a very short distance: the 'institutional hurdles' have been frequent and sometimes high, there have been several dead ends along the way. However tenacity and a belief that higher education should make a contribution to global citizenship and sustainable development have yielded some successes, not least the publication *The Global University: the role of senior managers*, which went to every Vice-Chancellor in England.

Since 2008, the Centre has been successful in contributing to a broader vision of internationalisation and 'global perspectives' has been a key aspect of the International Strategy. However, the 'working model' described by Petford and Shiel (2008) which aimed to combine the 'academic with the non-academic' to enhance internationalisation, has proved difficult to maintain within University structures. One year after set-up, a review of Professional Services resulted in those staff responsible for the 'non academic' elements of internationalisation within the Centre, being absorbed by Student Services. This has resulted in a lesser role for the Centre in terms of engagement with overseas students and a weakening of the Centre's envisaged role, in developing International partnerships. The changes not only reflect a backward step in terms of the literature on internationalisation but have also fragmented internationalisation activity. Unfortunately, in parallel, following leadership changes, the focus on the economic aspects of internationalisation and a marketisation discourse, has started to creep back.

Although some aspects of the original agenda for internationalisation have not been realised progress has been made on curriculum development and in relation to student mobility. Research has identified the institutional barriers to mobility and surfaced students' concerns; further partnership opportunities have been explored, and the Global Citizen Awards Scheme was launched in 2010. To date, this has not had a significant impact on the numbers of UK students studying abroad but the number undertaking overseas work placements, engaging in Summer Schools and exploring volunteering opportunities, appears to be increasing. Unfortunately the main institutional barriers to mobility (accommodation, curriculum structure and fees), have not been fully addressed and expanding overseas partnership opportunities, has been impeded by an insistence that overseas partners comply with UK legislation. 'Shifting the paradigm,' to a more collaborative view of partnerships (Luker 2008) remains a challenge.

The curriculum guidelines (developed in 2005 and since revised) have been particularly helpful in influencing curriculum change. All course teams have to consider global perspectives and sustainable development at Course Validation and Review. This does not mean that all teams incorporate the themes equally well, but it does place an expectation that omission will be challenged by validation panels. Course teams have been supported in

this, by the Centre through provision of workshops, resources and support in developing appropriate Learning Outcomes. Staff development has been ongoing with formal inputs given to staff induction and the PG Certificate in Higher Education. Workshops have been open to all disciplines and tailored to the needs of particular Schools; the number of staff visiting the Centre, to develop ideas and borrow resources, has increased as a result.

Evaluation through a student survey in 2009 evidences considerable progress made since 2005, with students demonstrating a better understanding of global citizenship and environmental concerns (Shiel 2009). A staff survey, undertaken in 2010, also evidences staff showing an increased understanding of the concepts. Staff responses confirm that a high percentage of BU students will understand global issues, global processes, sustainable development and ethics at graduation; although far fewer will have developed cross-cultural skills. The results suggest progress overall but also flag the need for some caution, as some anomalies are revealed. When asked about the extent to which these concepts are included in learning and teaching and assessment, staff responses indicate that inclusion is not always high and is almost entirely absent from assessment. This is in contradiction to the results which suggest that BU students have extensive knowledge and understanding when they leave, raising the question: where is this acquisition of learning taking place, and how do staff know it has been acquired, if it is rarely assessed?

Focus groups also suggest that sustainable development is covered less in the curriculum than global issues and internationalisation. Workshops within Schools confirm that some staff have only recently tackled 'internationalisation of the curriculum' but have not yet had time to consider sustainability; some are still unsure of how it relates to their discipline. This might be the result of an over emphasis on 'global' and 'international' at the expense of the environmental aspects of sustainable development; planning is underway to remedy this.

The extra-curricular sphere continues to offer an important space to take initiatives forward, within the limitation of resource stretch. Global Cinema (set up in 2005) continues to feature films that address global issues, environmental concerns and which often reflect different cultural viewpoints. The organisation of the programme is now led by students. The Global Learning Seminar series was launched in 2010 to engage staff and students in a range of themes. External speakers have delivered sessions on topics as diverse as human trafficking, Multi-cultural Britain, Transition Towns, FairTrade, etc.; BU academics have contributed their research on global issues. Support has also been given to a variety of student-led projects, often focused on fund raising and campaigning.

Taking forward activity in relation to sustainability outside of the curriculum has been very successful and is down in large measure, to the excellent leadership of the Environment and Energy Manager and the wider work of the Estates team. Partnership working with these colleagues has been rewarding and is an example of how an academic/ non-academic partnership can yield exciting results. Contributions have been made to the Environmental Strategy Group, the Carbon Management Programme group, the Fairtrade Committee and the group responsible for the Universities that Count Benchmarking exercise. Collaborative working has contributed to the Eco Campus Gold Award, the Green League table (a rise to 5<sup>th</sup>), short-listed for a Green Gowns Award and short listed for a Times Higher Award. The most recent partnership initiative involves the BU Environment Manager and the Environment Manager at the University of Sussex, working with the Centre to deliver a Higher Education Funding Council, Leadership Governance and Management project. The project is currently engaging Board Members and senior management teams in an exploration of leadership behaviours for SD and carbon reduction.

Expanding activity within the local community has also been rewarding. This has included work with local schools (citizenship days, for example) and with Bournemouth Borough Council (BBC). BBC is the first local Borough to have endorsed the Earth Charter; the

Centre has worked with colleagues (at BBC) to support implementation of the Earth Charter and contributed to subsequent activities which have emerged. The first Symposium to debate the Bournemouth Air Festival, in the context of sustainability and the Earth Charter involved a unique process and was a highly successful event, bringing together stakeholders with radically different perspectives, to explore the inherent tensions within sustainable development. An outcome established a group (which the Centre is supporting) with the express goal of 'greening' the Air Festival. Another Earth Charter event involved working in partnership with Bournemouth 2026 Partnership to host a seminar with the Speaker of the House of Commons. Youth and community representatives had the opportunity to hear the Speaker and consider participation in democracy. An event that considers local, organic, animal friendly and Fair Trade food in Bournemouth is under consideration for 2012.

### **Looking back over the BU conferences**

Preparing for the 2011, 'Global Vision, Local Action' conference has been a challenging activity over the last year, with the possibility (as ever) that this might be the last. On reflection, the conferences (BU Conference 2005, 2007, 2009) have had a significant impact, on momentum within BU, in developing the external network, and also spurring activities across the sector.

The 2005 conference was loosely themed to draw together participants who came at the topic from various starting points: some with roots in environmental education; some from internationalisation; others development education. Stephen Sterling suggested the characteristics of education for sustainable development and how universities might align agendas, envision a different future and engage in culture change. Doug Bourn outlined the challenge of the 'global dimension' for higher education suggesting how education might better equip learners to address global issues, including sustainable development. Professor Ron Barnett as an expert in education (but not in the concepts), posed some important and challenging questions, putting the concepts under scrutiny. His thesis explored whether sustainability (S) and global citizenship (C) are distinct themes, or whether they share connections which overlap, such as: concern for justice, fairness, participation and concern for others. Explicit in his conceptual examination was the theme of universality (how universal are the claims of S and C); implicit was the theme of 'authenticity' (of individuals wresting themselves from dogmas to come into 'new modes of being'). In drawing tentative conclusions, he proposed that the primary educational hold of sustainability is epistemological, whereas global citizenship with its aim of changing persons, relates to the ontological concerns. Powerful in his conclusion was the reminder that for S and C to be justified within higher education, the concepts themselves have to be open to critical examination; 'otherwise dogmas would give way to (new) dogmas'. He reinforced the challenge of the '*difficult intellectual spade work*' ahead, suggesting that if S and C are exposed to critical treatment, then in the process they '*may just become new vehicles for the realization of the traditional ideals of the university itself.*'

Several presenters in 2005, focused on a critique of internationalisation within higher education (Lewis 2005; Grant 2005; Caruana and Hanstock 2005) linking this to globalisation and the emerging concept of global perspectives. Lewis in her conclusion, based on case study research at several HEIs, concluded: '*It is, however, encouraging to note that the global perspectives agenda (incorporating social, cultural and academic elements) is playing a significant role for some institutions and that there are examples of good practice to be shared amongst those wishing to embrace this alternative*' (Lewis 2005). Other presenters, also promoting holistic institutional approaches (Collins et al 2005, for example) embraced environmental sustainability and Fairtrade certification within their change strategies, explaining how universities could embrace a 'multi-faceted approach' which moved beyond a single theme.

In 2007, the overarching aim was to build on the themes established by continuing to focus on curriculum development but also to extend participation to include those working on the environmental aspects of university management. The themes (curriculum, extra-curricular, Corporate Responsibility and behaviour) were explored from many discipline perspectives including literature, religion, health and business. Poetry, film and game theory served as innovative vehicles to engage participants and offer new insights. As key notes Steve Egan (Deputy Chief of the Higher Education Funding Council) highlighted HEFCE's interests, explaining that their definition of SD was not just about carbon reduction. He outlined some of the broader global issues which have to be tackled, including world poverty and commented that '*HE should not ignore the role it could play.*' He reinforced HEFCE's strong commitment to SD.

An Australian perspective on developing a curriculum which enables students to develop a global outlook and social responsibility was described by Betty Leask. It was refreshing to hear how academics 'down under' are grappling with similar issues and making excellent progress, particularly in adopting such exciting Learning Outcomes to ensure that the concepts are embedded in the curriculum. She emphasised that in order to progress a global perspectives and SD agenda, more work needs to happen '*where the rubber hits the road*' i.e. within the curriculum and across disciplines.'

The 2009 conference covered the themes illustrated in Figure 1 more broadly, placed a greater emphasis on the 'inter-connectedness' between the global and the local and emphasised the importance of the student voice. Student-led initiatives featured prominently and the power of student volunteering to effect change was demonstrated by Espen Berg (a former BU student). A highlight of the event was the 'African Live Link' where delegates were brought in real time to Kenya, to interact with staff and students from BU taking part in a Sports for Development Expedition initiative. The audience also had the privilege of witnessing local children from four Kenyan schools enjoying the launch of a fun run, co-ordinated by students.

Other noticeable features of the conference were that delegates came from further afield (Australia, America, Canada and Ireland), participants from the UK, represented a more diverse range of UK universities, and more 'other organisations' than previously (UYDO, Engineers without Borders, StudentForce for Sustainability, Earth Charter UK, Global Action Plan) attended.

Keynote speakers in 2009 again made an important contribution to critiquing and elaborating on the themes: Stephen Sterling, offered a critical review of sustainable development within higher education and explored the tensions; David Killick offered a theoretical consideration of global citizenship in relation to self-identification and urged educators to help learners '*find their global souls*'; Ann Finlayson shared her perspectives from a life experience of working in SD and particularly her work as a Sustainable Development Commissioner.

Interesting to note, going back through the lists of participants over the years, is that many have continued to lead this agenda within their own institutions; several continue to make contributions nationally, and internationally. Sometimes approaches adopted have been influenced by the champion's academic background; others have been determined and adapted according to what will be accepted within a particular institutional cultural context. Only a handful of champions has managed to take forward a holistic agenda, which pulls

together what might be considered discreet themes, into a coherent university-wide approach.

On reflection, has the intellectual spadework suggested by Ron Barnett (2005) supported change? Are the concepts any clearer? Barnett's thesis suggested that sustainability might be about 'ways of knowing' and thus, curricula (which gives rise to issues about its scope); global citizenship suggests 'modes of being; of self and society' and thus, a relationship with pedagogy. It is this pedagogical connection which suggests that the notion of GC has the potential to be inherently more universal than S. However, the veracity of the statement has to be entirely dependent on how S, is defined. Barnett's thesis, while cogently argued, was also not popular with SD champions, until many realised that his starting point, was in essence, an anti-thesis, intentionally provocative. Subsequent conference presentations have sought to develop the concepts further and respond to Barnett's challenge however, it continues to be the case, that identifying the precise epistemological concerns of SD is not an easy task. This is hardly surprising given that definitions of sustainable development are often highly abstract and the concept embraces consideration of the future, which is in itself uncertain. Identifying the qualities of 'being' (in terms of global citizenship) has been a somewhat easier task, but only if notions of political agendas and nation states can be held in abeyance.

The approach at Bournemouth has been to explain the development of citizens who understand the need for SD, as akin to developing 'critical beings' (Barnett 1997) who might address 'super-complexity' (SD) (Barnett 2000). Bill Scott's work (2005) and Vare and Scott's (2007) have also offered a useful contribution to explanations, through the proposal that ESD 1 develops skills which enable 'reading the world' opening eyes to a 'world of facts, processes, arguments and connections' thus providing the text; ESD 2 develops 'critical literacy' including motivation and the self-confidence to develop as lifelong learners who have the capacity to take action.

The 'intellectual spadework' is by no means complete and there is still much work to be done. The 2011 conference offers a further opportunity to learn collaboratively and engage further. Bournemouth's contribution lies largely in the area of leading institutional change, holistic approaches to global; perspectives and the leadership necessary for sustainable development and Internationalisation.

### **Insights from leading institutional change**

In drawing this paper to a close, it seems important to offer just a few insights from the journey:

- Holistic approaches are extremely difficult and need continued senior management support;
- Alignment with other agendas is logical and increases the chances of success but is difficult in HE, where silo mentality may be reinforced by university structures;
- In trying to develop new ways of working to align agendas, never underestimate the power of vested interests, the ways these manifest and the political behaviour that may result;
- Working with the Environment Manager and the Estates Team creates synergies;
- Never assume one approach will continue to work, be prepared to change tack frequently; learn to dance on a shifting carpet (Moss Kanter 1990);
- The most painful and challenging conversations often result in better outcomes; the easy wins do not necessarily mean progress;

- Securing external funding and awards contributes to sustainability and enhances credibility (as do publications);
- Building internal alliances and external networks is important to sustain momentum;
- Developing resources for academic staff, being professional and always available enhances perceptions;
- Working in the community and with external stakeholders is not only rewarding but brings returns;
- Student energy and enthusiasm should not be under-estimated; it is important to counter deficit thinking, particularly deficit models of International students;
- Avoid developing a capstone unit and/or challenging the funding model.

At this point it is difficult to predict the future of the Centre. It is unclear whether it will continue to exist outside of the traditional academic structure however, what is clear, is that work in developing global perspectives has to be taken forward across all disciplines and will continue. BU has recently published a new Vision and Values 2018, following extensive collaboration and consultation. The document includes values which demonstrate a commitment to global perspectives, the environment and sustainability and the very clear statement:

*'With a continual sharing of ideas, cultures and knowledge our staff, students and alumni will gain a global perspective and participate as global citizens in addressing societal challenges and shaping society.'*

This bodes well. As Bourn and Shiel suggested in 2009, although *'some can see the ways that global perspectives might offer a unifying theme for taking forward internationalisation and sustainable development for many it remains a challenge'*. It is hoped that BU will continue to meet the challenge. The real test however will be how this ambition follows through from the Vision and Values, into the various sub-strategies which are currently being developed.

## **Conclusion**

At Bournemouth University global perspectives has been evolving for over ten years. A holistic approach has sought alignment with employability, internationalisation and the environmental agendas. The approach has also attempted to weave the links between education, knowledge transfer and research, which seems particularly appropriate for an institution which talks of 'fusion' in its new Vision. The approach to global perspectives continues to encompass: corporate responsibility and behaviour (the University as a global citizen); curricula and pedagogy (embedding global perspectives); and extra-curricular activities to support citizenship and international awareness. Such approaches are challenging; working across the silos which exist within universities presents hurdles. At BU, work at the corporate level and particularly collaboration with the Environment and Energy Team, has been fruitful and resulted in notable success.

The BU conferences, which have purposely drawn together participants with diverse perspectives and discipline backgrounds, have been particularly inspirational for sharing learning, exploring the theoretical concerns, and stimulating practical approaches to change.

Thus far, BU has made substantial progress in developing its holistic approach to global perspectives with a view that an 'inclusive curriculum' enhances the experience of all students. However, we are not there yet. Some programmes still cater largely to the needs of UK students who consequently could be missing opportunities to learn from the perspectives of others and experience the 'global in the local;' more work is also needed to



embed sustainable development within the curriculum. The main threats for the development of global perspectives arise from: not building on the work which was originally established to align global perspectives with internationalisation and the International Strategy; focusing on internationalisation at the expense of sustainability and; not addressing the barriers to inter-disciplinary working. The new BU Vision and Values offers a favourable context for the future however the role of the Centre and global perspectives will depend upon the sub-strategies, particularly the new International Strategy and the Education Enhancement Strategy, which are still under consideration. The opportunities to develop this agenda are substantial with the potential to result in a better environment, new sources of funding and research, and new partnerships, which would enhance the institution as a sustainable, global University.

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