education for sustainable development forum

ESDF Key Asks for the NI Curriculum Consultation

ESDF advocate for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) to be taught across subjects. In order to have a well-sequenced body of knowledge, we would encourage coherent language and terminology to be used consistently throughout education to equip pupils for lifelong learning, individual development and participation in wider society.

Pupils deserve to understand the subject of Education for Sustainable Development fully throughout school to prevent small gaps from widening. The subject matter needs equity, coherence and meaningful context for the realities we all face today into the future.

Environmental and Ecological responsibility is positioned as a capability; we ask for evidence of how that capability has influenced curriculum design, including content selection, disciplinary contribution, progression and the connections learners are expected to make.

ESDF reiterate that outdoor learning can be adopted throughout subjects, and the opportunities for teachers to do this should be explicit in the pedagogy in order that it will be realised and delivered.

An update to the wording in the HE Curriculum to make it a necessary part of ESD. This is an example of where ESD can be included across all subjects. Without this, HE falls short of fully explaining the fundamentals of sustainable food, nature-based solutions, farming and the environment. This reinforces the point that language and terminology should be consistent across the curriculum, guidance and pedagogy.

Greater links to professional development and training in green careers for future jobs in PSCC that give pupils real opportunities and enable them to make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives. Guide future skills development, green careers, and green growth, further supporting climate initiatives. In the future, every job will need to consider environmental and planetary crises. Therefore, every subject will need to consider it.

Further and higher education has already made significant changes in Education for Sustainable Development. Without ESD embedded across subjects at all levels, there remains a risk that the continuation of education for children and young people in NI will be at odds with their future learning.

We welcome fieldwork in the curriculum for relevant subjects, but expect to see explicit aims for fieldwork for pupils to fully learn from the subject and experience included in the pedagogy.