

The Environment Centre Social Accounts

Our Key Objectives

1. Raise awareness on environmental matters and issues.
2. Promote sustainability.
3. Encourage environmental partnerships of individuals, groups and organisations.
4. Deliver environmental education.
5. Offer an umbrella and support service to others.
6. Demonstrate good environmental practice.

Values

- To be ethical, environmental and sustainable in our operation.
- To provide a friendly, helpful and accessible service.
- Work with partnerships and as part of the local community.
- Being open, honest and transparent in our dealings.

This report is a summary of our 2007-08 Social Accounts

The Environment Centre has produced a set of Social Accounts for the second time in our history.

The first set covered the year 2005-06 and examined in detail, two of our key objectives, - Raise awareness on environmental matters & issues; and - Encourage environmental partnerships.

The second set covered the year 2007-08 and examined in detail key objective four - Deliver environmental education.

Both sets of Social Accounts determined whether our organisation

fulfils its mission and objectives and whether we live up to our values

The Social Accounts have been examined and verified by an external "social audit panel".

The Environment Centre has once again found the process of social accounting a useful and informative one. The accounts will serve as a starting point for improvements and



The second set of Social Accounts is marked by the introduction of our new logo.

developments, particularly through the actions identified within the accounts. The Centre looks forward to these developments and future social accounting cycles.

Future plans for the next social accounting cycle in 2009-10

We will give serious consideration, in future years, to reporting only on the chosen objective in the scope of the social accounts. This will give us the

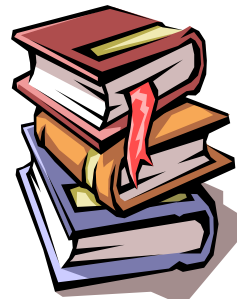
opportunity to balance the presentation of qualitative information with the available resource and also to include more quantitative data.

It will be useful to consider exploring other modes of consultation in the next round of social accounting, to improve the response rates.

Deliver Environmental Education—Schools

Here we aim to provide a project officer for all schools in the City and County of Swansea. The officer offers a wide range of resources and activities for schools with a particular emphasis on waste and recycling. These activities include lessons, assembly presentations, training for teachers as well as one-on-one support. Activities are mostly offered free of charge to schools

which makes them open to all. Specialist sessions, e.g. Sessions at Crymlyn National Nature Reserve, will attract a small fee for schools. Topics covered include waste and recycling, school grounds, food, energy use and water use. The position is full time and funded by European Union Objective One funding until



Environmental education is now part of the curriculum

the end of June 2008. The overall aim is to increase schools' and their pupils' awareness of environmental issues and to make schools more environmentally friendly places to be. It is hoped that once schools have worked with us, they will continue to consider the environment and progress further with their efforts.

Mission Statement

An action from the 2005-06 social accounts was to revisit the wording of the mission statement. The Environment Centre staff reviewed the statement / comments and felt that it was still appropriate for the 2007-08 social accounts.

The vast majority of people who responded to the questionnaire believed that the mission statement was appropriate to the

Environment Centre (98%).

There were comments that suggested we could improve the mission statement.

“The mission statement is fine but I feel for the Centre to be a focus, there needs to be a higher profile, many people I speak to are not aware of the centre’s location or the work that is done”.

(Member School).

“The Environment Centre provides a focus for environmental information, education and activities, as well as having a visitor facility to promote environmental and sustainable principles”.

Environmental Impact

We operate an Environmental Management System and have built on the success of previous years and once again successfully achieved level three



We need to protect our planet

accreditation of the Green Dragon Environmental Standard 2007-08.

The commitments entered into cover six areas, namely:



purchasing, energy, waste, landscape & biodiversity, transport, and legislation.

Actions have been identified to achieve new targets covering transport, energy consumption, information & training in 2008-09.

Deliver Environmental Education—Communities

Here we aim to provide a project officer for all community groups in the City and County of Swansea. The officer offers a variety of activities specifically relating to waste reduction and recycling. These activities include talks, presentations and workshops as well as one-on-one support for community



Community talks & presentations raises environmental awareness

organisations and businesses. All activities are offered free of charge. The position is full time and funded by European Union Objective One funding until the end of June 2008. The overall aim of the project officer is to educate the community

of the importance of reducing our impact on the environment and providing people with ideas and inspiration of how to do their bit. During the social accounting year, 59 talks & workshops were delivered to 1,437 attendees. Furthermore 60 events were participated in, via an information stall, reaching 4,696 members of the public.

Values

The Environment Centre has identified four values by which we try to operate (see front page).

We asked stakeholders (via questionnaire) how well they thought the Centre lived up to its stated values.

All of our values were seen as mostly “excellent” although 12 respondents to our questionnaire

recorded “don’t know” as an opinion on our values.

Other comments included *“Marked down for accessibility, there is little to bring in the casual visitor, it is difficult to drop in, to find by*

accident or find when looking for”.
Trustee

Actions on Values:

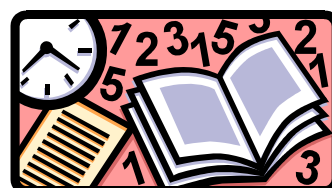
- Explore ways of making better links with immediate community.
- Ensure that information on our values is widely disseminated so that in future social accounting cycles we will have less “don’t knows” when asking opinion.

The Consultation process

For the 2007-08 social accounts we split the questionnaires into three, tailoring them to target specific audiences, following a recommendation from the previous set of social accounts. This worked well as people were only asked the questions relating

to them. However, staff, trustees and partners received all three questionnaires which resulted in many of them feeling they had to choose “don’t know” as it wasn’t directly relevant to them. A suggestion for future

cycles would be to again tailor the questionnaires and look more closely as to who is consulted to avoid this problem.



Inviting comment on all our objectives

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Strengths and weaknesses of the social accounting process

Producing a second set of social accounts has once again been a challenging and thought provoking process. A main strength during this accounting cycle has been the ability to draw on the experiences from the previous social accounts and use this to our benefit. This has helped to make the process more time efficient and reduce the workload for The Environment Centre staff involved. However, the social accounting process was once again a time consuming process.

Concentrating on only one objective proved successful. It meant that the accounts produced were concise and looked at the education objective in depth. The information received was still however enormous, combined with existing data such as numerical statistics and previous evaluation work.

Staff Contacts

Gareth Evans - Centre Manager
Jenny Edwards - Assistant Centre Manager
Hannah Adkins - Resources Officer
Anita Houten - Education Officer & SEEF Coordinator
Kathy Tate - Sustainable Swansea Project Officer
Carys Kelly - SCRAP Project Officer



Highlights of our achievements

- In 2007-08, two new posts were created at the Environment Centre. A SCRAP officer, Carys Kelly, was employed to co-ordinate the Waste Forum and SCRAP network. In addition, an SRS admin officer, Charlotte Mulcahy, was employed to assist with the administration and claims for the SRS project.
- The Green Fayre was attended by a record number of people in 2007 (around 2000), again held at the National Waterfront Museum.
- New branding for the centre has been designed and has begun to be implemented on all of our promotional materials creating a more professional, recognisable

brand for The Environment Centre.

- Every comment received via the questionnaire consultation, within the social accounting process, has been listed verbatim within the full version of these accounts.
- We enlisted the support of staff, trustees, volunteers and stakeholders to provide the relevant information for input into the accounts. Lindsey Hill, Project

Officer for Communities, was engaged to produce and format this set of social accounts.

- These Social Accounts have gone through a process of external audit. It is appropriate to thank the audit panel for their contribution in improving, as well as verifying, the accounts.
- We are grateful of the assistance given by Katherine Samuel for helping to finalise the social accounts document following the commentary of the social audit panel.



Singing our praises