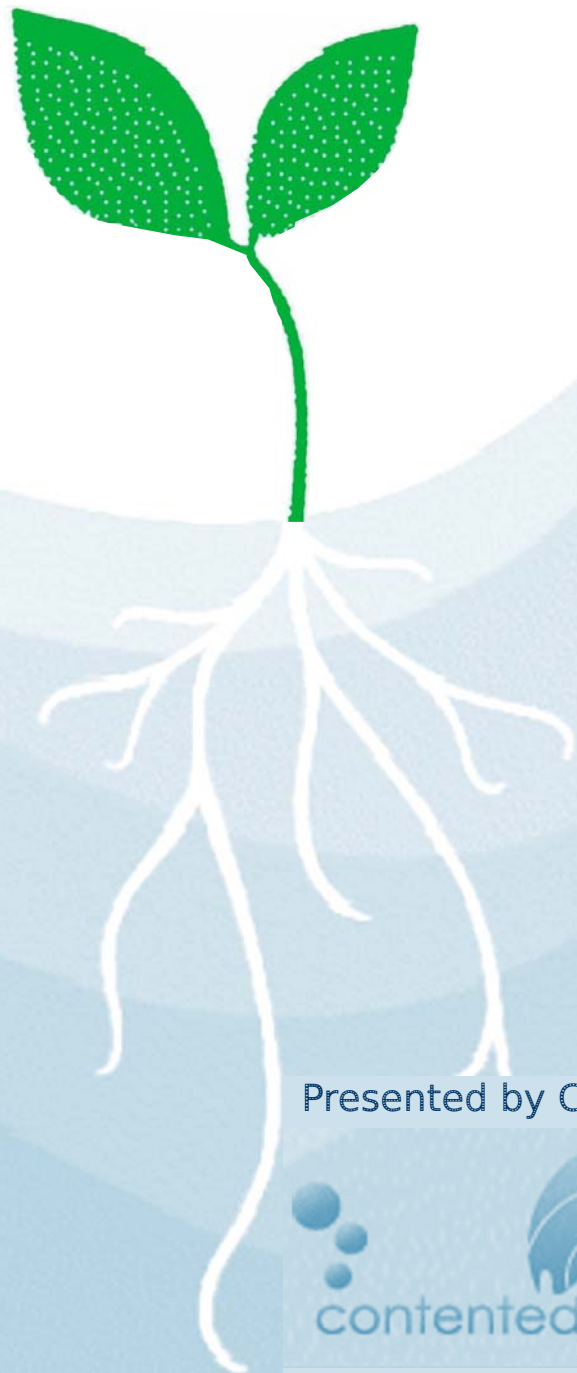


# Learning innovation for sustainable futures



*"To live in the third millennium, we shall need ... new thinking joined with new ways of perceiving ourselves, others, nature and the world around us."*

*(Ervin Laszlo, 1997)*

Presented by Contented



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## Sustainability & performance improvement

How can we learn to live and work in a sustainable world? Government inspector Ofsted says that sustainable schools, colleges & other providers offer dynamic, vibrant learning environments where students address real-life challenges in real places with real people. They build good practices through cycles of strategic goal-setting, action and assessment, centred on young people.

Here, improvement is evidenced by increased opportunities for each individual to realise a full potential and become an enthusiastic lifelong learner. We can help them tap into their personal passions and find a sense of purpose in life.

A sustainable school cares for people, the planet and their prosperity:

- addresses the social and emotional needs of learners;
- promotes healthy living;
- values and respects diversity;
- shows awareness of local and global environments;
- fosters confidence in people's ability to make a difference.

### Helping embed new initiatives

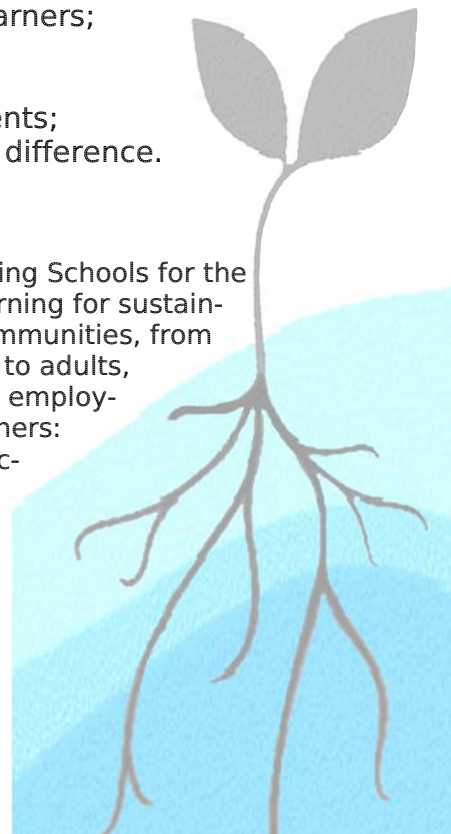
Current reforms, notably Every Child Matters and Building Schools for the Future, present a wealth of opportunities to embed learning for sustainability across communities, from primary children to adults, unemployed and employment-based learners:

*"The biggest challenge for educationalists is that education for sustainable development ... requires a systemic change to the learning process and priorities."*

*(The Real World Coalition)*

for example, functional, personal, learning & thinking skills and competencies; new curricula; enterprise & creativity; diplomas, including

extended projects; the flexibility offered by the National Database of Accredited Qualifications.



### Innovative Workforce & Enterprise Development

Since our establishment in 1999, Contented has worked with employers and educators to understand how quality learning can support business sustainability. We understand how government policy is emerging in response to demands of diverse stakeholders.

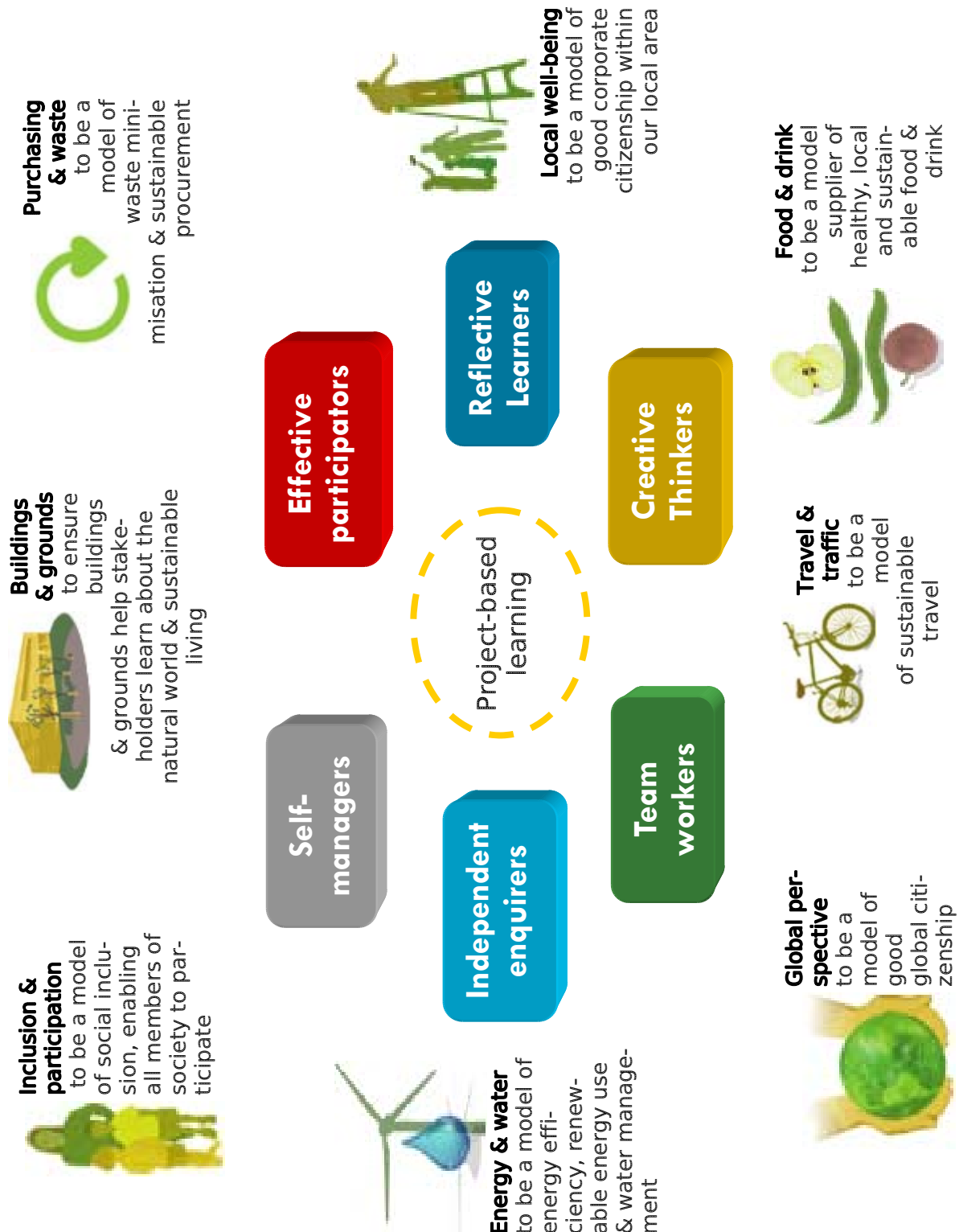
In order to help community partnerships ensure statutory compliance and promote stakeholder loyalty, we have combined expertise in risk and reputation management, and broader sustainability issues, with the accreditation of quality learning. Our processes allow clients to explore how sustainability can improve performance across partnerships and minimise risk to future generations. For example, increasing staff morale, retention and innovation, reducing carbon footprints, accidents and incidents and making the most of equipment. Our experience includes managing learning programmes on behalf of consortia, to allow partners to focus on their day-to-day operations.

Contented endeavours to provide additional support via regional and national fund-raising activities.

## Doorways into a complex world

Thought leaders and the s3 framework identify eight 'doorways' or perspectives through which organisations may choose to engage strategically in sustainable activities. Because a sustainable future is defined holistically, you may choose to 'enter' through any of these gateways, according to your community's current priorities.

Developed by the QCDA, with employers, parents, schools, students and the wider public, the personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) framework describes qualities and skills needed for success in learning and life — now, and for an uncertain future.



# The Contented Portfolio

## Workshops

Contented offers a range of participative, fun and integrative workshop modules designed to help create systemic change across communities.

Our simple processes equip practitioners with tools to embed learning for sustainability in their sessions while addressing existing priorities and strategies, including organisations' chosen 'doorways' from the s3 sustainability framework.

Learners achieve and attain through active leadership within their communities: taking a systems approach — linked to local issues — that delivers a range of skills essential for the 21st century.

We aim to prepare delegates to deliver tools and activities that teach explicitly, and facilitate practice in, creative thinking, enquiry, reflection, responsibility and collaborative work.

We've organised our workshops into three broad categories:

- **Leadership:** strategic development & management, youth-led approaches
- **Skills:** teaching & learning for change
- **Achievement:** activities specifically focused on accreditation

Workshops can be personalised to your own practice and requirements, from twilights to supported enterprise days.

Please discuss your needs with us.

## Leadership

Action Research & planning for sustainable learning communities

Supporting employers & other partners

Funding & evidencing young leadership

Conflict & creativity, supporting staff

Developing new structures for learning

## Skills

Overview of creative teaching & learning techniques

Edward de Bono thinking tools for students & practitioners

Embedding functional skills through narrative practice

Managing very large groups

Literacy through drama

Outdoor learning, transition and Early Years frameworks

Job Labs & sustainable business incubation

Soundscaping & systems thinking

Carbon business research & peak oil

Filming & Participative Video

Cartoons, Animation & Visual-thinking

Recording Label

Project Budgeting

TV game shows

Environmental Food & Fun

## Achievement

## Who is Contented?

Commissioning social enterprises to design, deliver and evaluate services is an essential leadership role, according to the Local Government Association. Businesses can learn much through quality engagement with their communities.

At their best, these 'third sector' organisations bring a culture of innovation, responsiveness and flexibility and an ability to work closely with customers and service users — especially some of those who are otherwise hard to reach.

### **Our Vision: sustainable communities**

... a world of vibrant, healthy & responsible communities where innovative enterprises collaborate to create prosperity and to address all of society's challenges and needs.

With this in mind, Contented has created a flexible collective of diverse self-employed and micro-businesses across the UK who share a passion for learning and for the prosperity of people and planet. Alone, we would not have the capacity to provide quality services. Together, we can draw on our experience leading schools, small businesses and interdisciplinary learning, from education and enterprise to psychology and the environment. Collaboratively, we can make the difference.

### **Collaboration & Innovation for Sustainable Futures**

Contented works with a wide range of organisations to design, support and manage quality projects that aim to balance the needs of diverse stakeholders. Our innovative leadership and learning programmes are tailored to your community, cluster or consortium. We actually manage work contracts, as well as offering traditional consultancy support.

By understanding an enterprise, school or college in its unique setting, we can focus on the specific needs of the local economy, society and environment. Participants in these creative *Learning Projects* can develop leadership, accredit new skills, help achieve regeneration goals, and innovate products and services to reduce environmental impact.

### **Quality facilitation**

Our facilitators practice learning for sustainability through a programme of continual personal and professional development based on action research, keeping up with the debate around sustainable development and business responsibility.

### **Our Purpose: facilitating innovation**

... to support the evolution of diverse and sustainable learning communities of place, interest and practice, and to facilitate the emergence of knowledge, creativity and innovative enterprises.

We are committed to meeting quality standards for Information, Advice & Guidance and subscribe to the Code of Conduct of the Teacher Development Agency, available separately along with our Terms & Conditions.

## Module: Action Research for Sustainable Learning Communities

**Aims:** To introduce quality collaborative learning techniques that are recognised by funding partners as good practice.

**Audience:** Senior leaders who want to empower change for sustainability across their communities while increasing performance.

**Outline:** This module offers a number of cycles based around an action research approach to learning for sustainable futures.

The Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) defines action research projects as pieces of development work which aim to improve teaching and learning by developing approaches, trying them out 'on the ground', reflecting on the outcomes, refining them and sharing findings. At their heart is the cycle of action-reflection-action. Adult and young learners using this process can be accredited through the Qualifications and Credit Framework. As for staff, the Institute for Learning (IfL) recommends 'carrying out and disseminating action research' as a method for appropriate Continuing Professional Development. This therefore offers a scaffold for a true *learning community*, embedding environmental, economic and cultural sustainability in curriculum, campus and beyond.

**Scenario:** In one approach, known as *cooperative enquiry*, a group of practitioners agree a research question that is explicitly provisional. Participants – including any external facilitators – become both researchers and research subjects, while deepening their awareness of key issues that need to be addressed in change programmes for sustainability. We identify meaningful ways of responding (that may become accredited projects for learners) and deeper association with others, whose development is crucial in addressing these issues and for promoting change for sustainable development.

We propose that our enquiry should focus on how we can facilitate creative leadership for sustainability across our communities, exploring key success factors for an action research project. Action and reflection are vital and we remain open to external funding to continue this work.

**Skills targeted:** A key area to explore is systems thinking and how it links to the PLT and functional skills, as well as science and humanities.

**Sustainability links:** Action-reflection is a key process for promoting change.

**Resources:** A one-day introduction can cover some of the key processes and explore how we might facilitate action & reflection across the community. The following pages introduce examples of activities that can be delivered as individual workshops or threaded throughout further cycles of enquiry.

*There are many things to do to bring about a sustainable world... Whatever you do, do it humbly. Do it not as an immutable policy, but as an experiment. Use your action, whatever it is, to learn.*

*Donella Meadows et al, 2004*

*As an aspiring learning organisation we are continually working to embed latest good practice. Modules in development are listed below and we'll be happy to work with you to design something specifically for your situation. You'll find our freephone number towards the foot of the page, where you can also request copies of our research reports.*

**Working with education update**, for non-teachers, a review of educational reform, including 14-19 agenda, skills, diplomas, the Foundation Learning Tier, learner voice and youth-leadership.

**Learner voice.** Action research through cooperative enquiry, specifically aimed at children, including developing and accrediting eco-clubs, supported by our independent moderators, Eco-Schools assessor, FLT and Diploma specialists.

**Embedding values and ethics issues into projects** through, for example, project choice, product analysis, decision-making and focused tasks. Not just for D&T.

**Creative Leadership for Sustainability**, our Arts Award-accredited programme helping young people develop responsible and innovative enterprises. Not just for A&D.

**Managing conflict and innovation.** As well as a behaviour management programme this allows students to reflect deeply through active learning on subjects from bullying to social justice, linking to PSHEE and Society, Health & Development.

**Transition programmes**, including Nature's Alchemy, our Y6/7 programme linking classical myth and literature to personal development through observing nature's cycles.

**Systems thinking:** Stories & games to help children understand the interrelatedness of systems in which we live, from Japanese folk tales to Dr Seuss and activities for older children.

**VLE development** including for example, computer simulations and scenario planning.

***Further information,  
Terms & Conditions  
and research reports:***

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freephone 0800-310 10 93  
www.contented.net**

This brochure is produced in Spranq eco-sans, a font designed to use dramatically less ink by carefully drilling holes in each letter. It's based on an idea by a young man called Colin — check out [www.ecofont.eu](http://www.ecofont.eu). You might also want to make sure the printer's using recycled paper (it doesn't have to be brown!) and non-toxic ink... Come to think of it, do you really *need* a paper copy?

