



GUIDE

Action, Creativity and Learning, for Healthy, Sustainable, Regenerative Futures

EVERY STORY IS UNIQUE

Facilitation team

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Background: In 2021 Lifewide Education and Creative Academic/ #creativeHE began exploring the Sustainable Development Goals and what it might mean to live in ways that are more likely to create a future that is more sustainable^{2,3}. This collaborative inquiry seeks to build on what has been learnt and provide opportunities for members of our communities to explore the relationships and interdependencies between action, creativity and learning for healthy, sustainable, regenerative futures and individuals’ own health, wellbeing and development as a human being.

“There can be no learning without action, and no action without learning” Reg Revans⁴

In a Nutshell: Each participant will undertake their own Action Learning Project in collaboration with others. Together, we form a “collective” that provides emotional and practical support, encouragement and opportunities for sharing, celebrating and curating what we have learnt. As a collective we have more impact and influence than the sum of our individual parts.

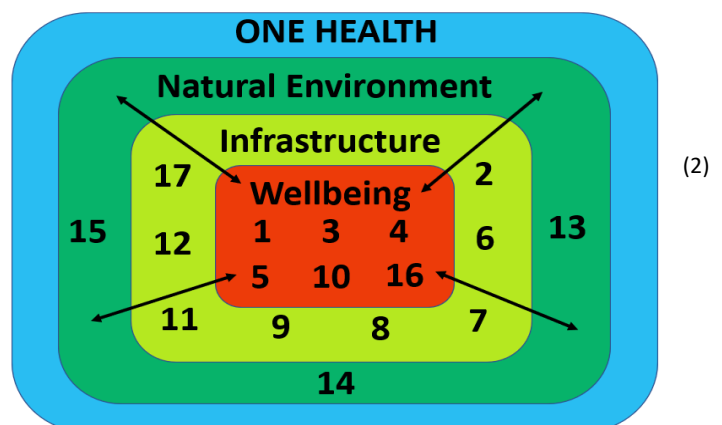
Action Learning Project is the name we are giving to a set of connected and coordinated activities to achieve a goal and to learn through the process of trying and reflecting on our efforts and effects. Action learning (AL) is a problem-solving strategy and experiential learning approach where a small group of people formulate and try to act on and solve problems that have real meaning to them learning together from the process and the results. People learn by doing and then reflect on what’s been learned to inform future actions. A useful summary is provided here⁴

Sustainability & Regeneration are core themes for inquiry: Our inquiry will contribute to UNESCO’s Future of Education initiative. Participants are invited to identify one or more of UNESCO’s 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)⁵ that they would like to form their own Action Learning Project around. The scope and focus for individual projects, how they would be conducted and who would be involved, would be determined by the individuals concerned. The aim of a project is to reduce negative and improve the positive effects of our ways of living in the world and to develop new habits that can be sustained in our everyday, personal or professional lives.

A healthier world: We are using the idea of health – our own health and the health of the world around us as a focus for our action learning. Figure 2 offers a framework for grouping the SDGs based on their intended outcomes using HEALTH as an organising principle⁶ (health of humans, families, communities, organisations, plants, animals, ecosystems, environments and planetary systems). In our collaborative inquiry we are suggesting that if we create conditions for sustainable regenerative futures we are also creating healthier environments, and conditions for people and other living things to flourish.

Figure 2 A framework for grouping the SDGs based on their intended outcomes using HEALTH as an organising principle.⁶

UN Sustainable Development Goals⁵ (1) No Poverty, Zero Hunger, (3) Good Health and Well-being, (4) Quality Education, (5) Gender Equality, (6) Clean Water and Sanitation, (7) Affordable and Clean Energy, (8) Decent Work and Economic Growth, (9) Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, (10) Reducing Inequality, (11) Sustainable Cities and Communities, (12) Responsible Consumption and Production, (13) Climate Action, (14) Life Below Water, (15) Life On Land, (16) Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, (17) Partnerships for the [Sustainable Development] Goals.



This way of framing the SDGs as the means of creating a healthier world, with concerns for the planet and all living and non living things as well as human health, provides a useful way of framing our own Action Learning Projects. Effectively we are imagining and creating our own problems to try to solve using the SDGs and the notion of a healthier world to guide our framing of the problem we are tackling.

We will be interested to discover if participants' attempts to bring about enduring positive change in the health of their world impacts positively on their own physical health and mental wellbeing as they use their imagination, creativity and agency to bring about change. Learning and personal development achieved through trying to bring about change is an important indicator of a regenerative human being.

Diversity: We want to be inclusive and embrace cultural, geographical, contextual and situational diversity. Projects can focus on any of the SDGs or any aspect of a particular SDG. Some illustrations are given below.

- Improving diet/eating better/healthier/less
- Responsible consumption/reducing waste
- Growing own food e.g. embracing permaculture
- Regenerating nature e.g. rewilding your garden or creating new habitats
- Responsible engagement with fashion e.g. reusing / recrafting existing garments
- Reducing and changing energy consumption
- Adopting more sustainable ways of travelling
- Using craft or artistic projects e.g. to regenerate self and the social or natural world
- Building communities for sustainable action
- THE POSSIBILITIES ARE INFINITE

Doing new things or extending what is already being done: Projects will typically involve doing new things but they do not have to be about doing entirely new things. A project may build on and extend practices that have already been developed. Here the emphasis might be on involving and engaging other people or extending the effects of existing practices.

Participation: Activities and learning within a project will involve the individuals but they should also involve other people for example:

- a) Other individuals from lifewide education and creative academic/#creativeHE communities
- b) Friends or family members
- c) Teachers working with their students or colleagues
- d) Educational developers or learning technologists working with colleagues
- e) Members of existing community groups or networks working together
- f) Any other combinations of people as appropriate.

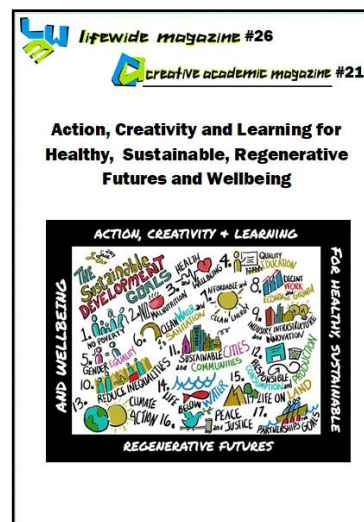
Preparation of a Rough Plan: Plans provide a framework for improvising rather than a rigid template that must be followed. We know that the details of a project will only be worked out as participants try to achieve something. But it is useful to have a plan to guide our actions and to help us see what resources we will need and how we will use them. Each participant should prepare a rough plan that provides a context, sets out some sort of vision of the changes that might result from action, together with some intended actions and the people who will be involved. It should also identify the particular SDG or SDGs that are being addressed. Appendix 1 contains a couple of examples of rough plans prepared by members of the facilitation team.

ALP Implementation: Each participant will implement their plan according to their own timescales and circumstances. It would be useful document in text, photos, sketches, audio or video significant actions that are undertaken.

Monthly Progress Report: During the last week of each month the leader of each ALP is invited to prepare a short report outlining key activities and achievements with some reflections on what has been learnt. The report should be shared with other participants in the Lifewide Learning R&D Forum.

Infrastructure to support inquiry: The inquiry will be supported by a team of facilitators who will also participate in the process. Our space for discussion and interaction is the “lifewide learning research and development forum” on the Linked In platform. Participants will be encouraged to post a short progress report once a month (3 times over the course of the inquiry) so that we all gain a sense of how the whole process is unfolding and gain feedback from other participants. There will also be a short zoom meeting on the first Wednesday of every month to enable participants to meet each other and share their experiences. At the end of the process we will convene a conference for participants to share their experiences and learning. ideas

Curation: As in previous inquiries we will synthesise and share what we have learnt through a joint publication of Lifewide & Creative Academic Magazines. This will constitute our contribution to the UNESCO Futures of Education initiative.¹



Time line: The inquiry will unfold between early March to early June 2022 (Figure 1). We recognise that many projects will only be making the initial steps to implement change rather than fully completing a change during this period.

Figure 1 Structure of the inquiry process

Jan/February	March	April	May	June
1 Discussion and development of proposal 2 Preparation of short Guide 3 Preparation of poster for marketing 4 Publicise in Lifewide Education, Creative Academic and #creativeHE communities and beyond 5 Active recruitment to research forum	Launch process on Linked In R&D Gp Ongoing discussion in Linked in space Last week of the month 1 post by each AL project leader describing their project on behalf of their group	Ongoing discussion in Linked in space Last week of the month 1 post by each AL project leader describing their project on behalf of their group	Ongoing discussion in Linked in space Last week of the month 1 post by each AL project leader describing their project on behalf of their group	Virtual Conference Short presentation every project accompanied by Project leaders prepare a short synthesis article describing the results of their project for publication in special issue Lifewide & Creative Academic Magazine
ZOOM MEETINGS First Wednesday of month	March 2 nd Launch meeting	April 6th	May 4th	Virtual Conference or other form of event date to be confirmed

Potential learning: The collaborative inquiry has potential for learning in the following areas:

- Individual participants:** The first priority is the learning and development of individuals and the opportunities afforded for creative self-expression and enhancements in wellbeing. Above all we are interested in the positive effects that individuals, acting with others, have on their world. Because the projects will span at least three months there is the possibility of recognising the development of individuals as they live the changes they are seeking.

- **The collective:** The second priority is the collective learning of the group through an ongoing process of sharing what has been learnt via posts in the Linked In R&D or #creativeHE forums, monthly zoom meetings and a final virtual conference for participants. The strength of a collaborative inquiry is the space it affords for discussion, alternative perspectives, reflection, mutual appreciation and inspiration.
- **The wider world:** our third priority is to share our learning by curating and disseminating what has been learned through a joint publication of Lifewide / Creative Academic Magazine. The magazine will be our synthesis contribution to the UNESCO Futures of Education Initiative.



Figure 3 This illustration by Brenna Quinlan captures the spirit of our collaborative inquiry <https://www.brennaquinlan.com/>

Invitation: This is an open education project and we welcome anyone who is willing to commit to this process. To join please email Dr Norman Jackson lifewider@gmail.com You will need to register on the Linked In platform in order to participate in the forum where discussion will take place.

Sources

- 1 UNESCO Futures of Education initiative <https://en.unesco.org/futuresofeducation/>
- 2 Lifewide Learning for Sustainable Regenerative Futures: Exploring the SDGs One Story at a Time Lifewide Magazine #25 Available at: <https://www.lifewideeducation.uk/magazine.html>
- 3 Imagination & Creativity for Sustainable Regenerative Environments, Cultures & Futures Inquiry. Discussion on the #creativeHE Forum. More information at: <https://www.creativeacademic.uk/sustainability.html>
- 4 Explanation of Action learning: Learning by doing https://utas.shorthandstories.com/PP_Action_Learning/index.html
- 5 UN General Assembly (2015) Resolution 70/1. Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Available at: https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_70_1_E.pdf
- 6 Queenan, K., Garnier, J., Nielsen, L., Buttigieg, S., De Meneghi, D., Holmberg, M., Zinsstag, J., Rüegg, S., Häsler, B., Kock, R. (2017). Roadmap to a One Health Agenda 2030. CAB Reviews Perspectives in Agriculture Veterinary Science Nutrition and Natural Resources. 12. 10.1079/PAVSNNR201712014. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/316841993_Roadmap_to_a_One_Health_Agenda_2030/download

APPENDIX 1 EXAMPLES OF ROUGH PLANS

1 Helping to Create a Healthier World: Understanding the habitats, plants and animals and increasing biodiversity within and around Betchworth village Norman Jackson & Friends

VISION – a new cooperative relationship with people who want to make a difference to the natural environment and the life it sustains around my village. Working together we aim to develop a better understanding of the natural habits and create some new habitats to encourage and improve biodiversity and the health of the environment.

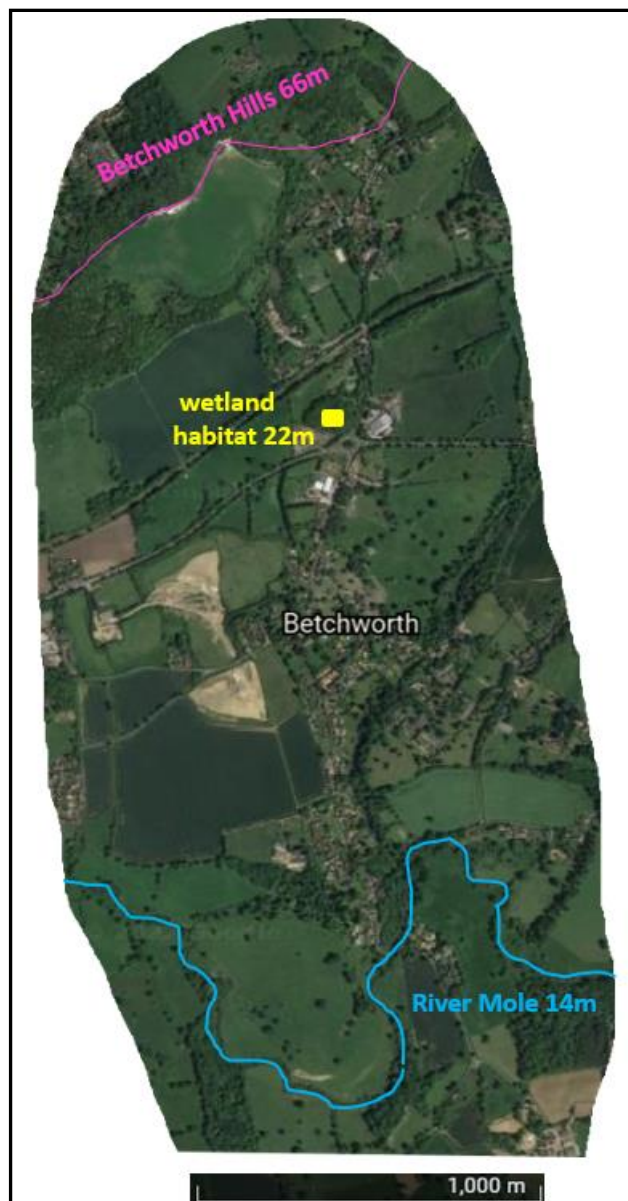
SDG Contexts

SDG 17 calls for “Partnerships for the [Sustainable Development] Goals” and SDG 15 urges us to attend to the “life on land”. 2022 will witness COP15, the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity 25 April-8 May 2022 - Kunming, China.¹ People have to learn what it means to live a life for a world that is sustainable and regenerative therefore SDG #4 education, self-education and lifelong-lifewide learning are essential to any sustainability project.

Background

There is a small group of enthusiasts and activists in my village who are interested sustainability and biodiversity. They have branded their project RE-Betchworth where RE stands for RE-wilding | RE-cycling | RE-educing | RE-pairing | RE-using | RE-storing | RE-inventing | RE-connecting

‘Biological diversity means the variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.’ Convention on Biological Diversity



My Action Learning Project will seek to work with members of my family and volunteers in the local community to develop better understandings of the natural habitats and plants and animals that live here, and seek ways of increasing biodiversity within the village and its environs. The key question we will be addressing is what does biodiversity mean to us in this particular place.

The ALP is likely to involve:

- 1) Collaborating with Mr James Benn who leads the RE Betchworth Sustainability project and other members of the village community
- 2) Mapping the environments and habitats in and around the village using google earth to display these
- 3) Creating inventories of the plants and animals that are part of our living community
- 4) Creating new environments and habitats to increase biodiversity including my own woodland wetland project.
- 5) A programme of tree planting – as part of the national plant a tree campaign - the Queens jubilee project – including my own woodland regeneration project
- 6) Contributing to the development of RE-Betchworth Sustainability website
- 7) Encouraging a focus on learning through doing and the experience of doing, curating the results of the project and what has been learnt for examples through interactive maps, magazine or book.
- 8) Personal reflections on the way in which I have been able to utilise my imagination and creativity and the health implications of my involvement.
- 9) An educational and collective learning dimension – for example creating a public exhibition or perhaps giving talks at the village school (SDG #4)

Timescale

I have initiated the first conversations but the project will be ongoing throughout 2022. The inquiry will therefore only span the first three months of a longer period of time.

Source

1 <https://www.cbd.int/meetings/COP-15>

Google Earth <https://earth.google.com/web/@0,0,0a,22251752.77375655d,35y,0h,0t,0r>

MAGIC <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

Surrey Interactive Map <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/land-planning-and-development/interactive-map>

2 Changing Perceptions of Mental Health & Destigmatising Mental Illness

Dr Jenny Willis (Lifewide Education) & Dr N Yoganathan (Consultant Psychiatrist)

VISION: to contribute to achieving SDGs #3 (Good health and wellbeing), #10 (Reducing inequality) and #16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions) in the context of mental illness and stigma drawing on SDG #4 (Quality Education). Throughout history and across cultures, people have struggled to understand mental illness, associating it with mystical powers and divine punishment. Despite the sophistication of today's industrialised societies, we still fear 'madness'. A natural response to perceived threat is to stigmatise it, hence the mentally ill are pilloried with pejorative names, and may be removed from society through

Sheffield takeaway driver drove like a 'nutter' and left woman with devastating injuries in horror crash

detention in forensic or penal institutions. The shocking headlines shown to the right are taken from recent newspapers, aptly illustrating the point. This project utilises education as a means to develop deeper understanding of mental health and destigmatise mental illness. It builds on the work the leaders have been conducting over the last two decades and provides an opportunity to extend its scope beyond those working in mental health professions.

2 Black death row inmates were executed despite one having an intellectual disability and the other having a severe mental illness

Participants and activities: the project leaders bring together professional and lived experience of mental illness in order to complement the education of medical, nursing and other allied professions' students and continued development of diverse professionals in the health sector. Typically, this is through interactive workshops in conference settings and latterly via on-line platforms. The workshops involve completion of a questionnaire at different stages of the event, designed to lead participants to greater understanding of their personal attitudes. Wherever possible, the responses are collated and analysed anonymously, and a report is sent to all who took part. Some of these are available on-line. The opportunity to collaborate with academics and professionals in other fields and parts of the world enables us to reach student bodies and begin the process of understanding stigma at an earlier age. Furthermore, discussion will inform the other activities we have planned for 2022. This project brings potential benefits to both the individual and wider society and, whilst focused on stigma in the context of mental illness, the principles extend to all forms of discrimination. Greater understanding leads to tolerance, which can only enhance the health of the world for ourselves and future generations.

The ALP anticipates involving:

- 1 Delivery of on-line and in person presentations/workshops to mental health professionals (Dr Yoganathan, to various NHS Trusts), including use of an interactive questionnaire regarding personal attitudes towards mental illness and stigma in general.
- 2 Analysis and anonymised reports based on these questionnaires (Dr Willis)
- 3 Discussion with members of the collective working in HE and other organisations to establish viability of surveying students/colleagues on attitudes towards mental illness.
- 4 Potentially leading to survey and/or workshops in those institutions.
- 5 Collation of all responses, towards articles on stigma and mental illness.
- 6 Participation in international World Association of Cultural Psychiatry conference September 2022: submissions pending on SDGs and wellbeing.

Newspaper references

- 19 JAN 2022 [Sheffield takeaway driver drove like a 'nutter' and left woman with devastating injuries in horror crash - YorkshireLive \(examinerlive.co.uk\)](https://www.yorkshirelive.co.uk/news/sheffield-takeaway-driver-drove-like-a-nutter-and-left-woman-with-devastating-injuries-in-horror-crash-14444444)
- 4 FEB 2022 [HTTPS://UK.NEWS.YAHOO.COM/2-BLACK-DEATH-ROW-INMATES-230457134.HTML](https://uk.news.yahoo.com/2-black-death-row-inmates-230457134.html)

3. Grandmother's United

Melissa Shaw

Vision: We will work as a mutually supporting and encouraging group of grandmothers i.e. we see ourselves as being able to be influencers in our multi-generational families and friendship networks. We will engage in thinking and learning about, planning, and taking personal actions in order to better protect our planet and quality of life for future generations, and address climate change.

UN SDG context: Focusing on the meaning and implications of ensuring **sustainable consumption and production patterns** (SDG [12](#)), for our own lives, our purchases, and behaviours, we will become more informed and responsible actors, customers, and consumers. Through our everyday conversations with family members and friends we will be able to foster conversations about our thinking and learning, and encourage others to join us and contribute to more informed action to address climate change. We see this as a potential beneficial “snowball effect” for wider impact.

We see our Project as also linking closely to **ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all ages** (SDG 3); and **achieve gender equality and empower all women** (SDG 5).

Our Project is likely to involve, through virtual discussions:

1. Taking an action learning approach to share our current situations and explore and develop ideas and plans for our future more sustainable living.
2. Identifying personal actions to address SDG 12 that can be initiated or developed in the timescale of the AL Project, and potentially adopted as continuing personal choices and habits.
3. Thinking creatively together about opportunities and ways to share our ongoing thinking, learning and planned actions with friends and families, and how to grasp these opportunities as they arise.

Timescale: Our work over 3 months will build upon existing interests and commitment, and support future planning and actions beyond the life of the Project.

Resources

UN Sustainable Development Goals <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

Millennials and baby boomers

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/boomers-30/202012/why-do-many-gen-xers-and-millennials-hate-baby-boomers>

Explanation of Action learning: Learning by doing

https://utas.shorthandstories.com/PP_Action_Learning/index.html