

THE SUSTAINABILITY & EDUCATION POLICY NETWORK

About the Sustainability & Education Policy Network (SEPN)

SEPN's goal is to examine and enable the evolution of educational policy and practice at the early education to grade 12 (EC-12) and post-secondary (PSE) levels in relation to Canadian environmental issues

- SEPN is a collaborative partnership between academic research institutions and national/international organizations
- SEPN is a \$2 million SSHRC Partnership Grant with \$1 million in additional cash and in-kind funding from Partner and Contributor Organizations
- Partners include leading Canadian environmental policy organizations, North American educational organizations focused on sustainability in EC-12 and PSE, and Canadian and international researchers in sustainability policy and practice in education

RESEARCH TEAM MEMBERS

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE)
Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA)
David Suzuki Foundation (DSF)
Learning for a Sustainable Future (LSF)
Sierra Youth Coalition (SYC)

CONTRIBUTOR ORGANIZATIONS

Assembly of First Nations (AFN)
Canadian Federation of Students (CFS)
EcoSource (ES)
Global Youth Education Network (GYEN)
Métis National Council (MNC)
Sustainability Solutions Group (SSG)

ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

Dalhousie University (DAL)
King's University College (KUC)
University of British Columbia (UBC)
University of Saskatchewan (US)
University of Waikato (UW)
Wageningen University (WU)

Why SEPN?

Education Must Play a Role in Creating a Sustainable Future

- Climate change, new environmental technologies, and energy and water sustainability are cultural and political challenges, not just technical issues. Responses to human-environment challenges require integrated solutions that depend on and assume an informed and motivated citizenry
- SEPN examines existing and new policies, practices, and innovations in relation to curriculum, research, facilities operations, governance, and community outreach and determine which are most promising for enabling educational change for a more sustainable future
- The project will develop new models to improve how environmental sustainability is taught and practiced in educational institutions within Canada and around the world

Existing Research is Scarce, Uncoordinated, and Limited in Scope

- Canada's decentralized system of education discourages educational research across provincial and community contexts in both EC-12 and PSE
- Currently no national level research examining education sustainability policy and practice exists; current research is local or regional in nature
- As a large-scale, national project, SEPN's research addresses the current lack of coordinated analysis and development of sustainability policy and practice in education in Canada by collecting comparable data across jurisdictions while still capturing site-specific differences
- SEPN's core focus is the policy-practice gap, guided by Braun et al.'s (2011) policy process model of contexts of text production, influences, and practice. Traditional policy analysis traces policy from development to implementation. SEPN uses practice to critically examine policy and ask how education sustainability policy comes about and might better respond to practice

Sustainability Policy Development Must Be Grounded in Active Dialogue

- It is vital to consult communities when developing policy and assessing its impacts
- Examining communities' on-the-ground experiences of sustainability policies provides the best chance for developing effective policy and practice
- SEPN's partnership model maximizes opportunities for creating new knowledge and practical tools to support decision-making

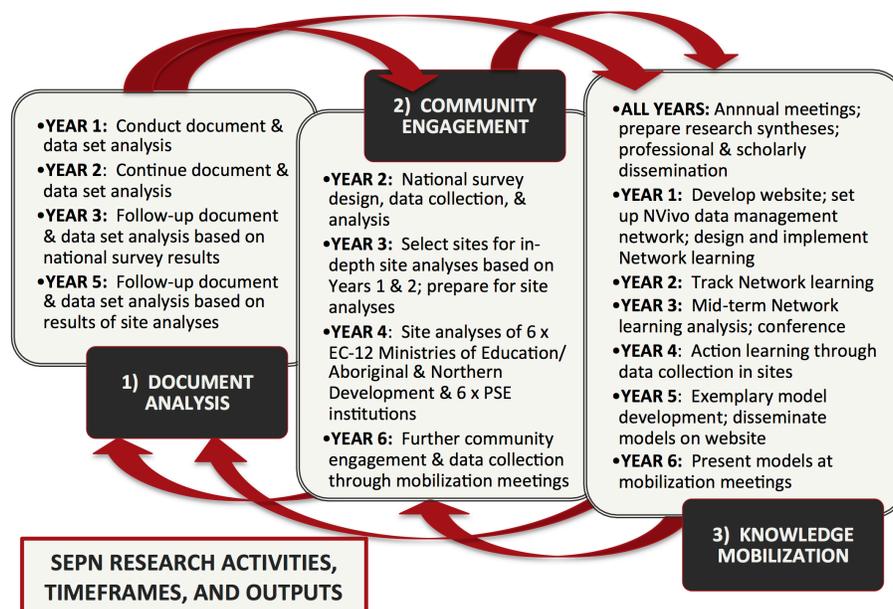


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Research

SEPN is organized into iterative Themes and two Subthemes A (EC-12) and B (PSE):

- **Theme 1. Document Analysis** examines existing policy to understand how current educational policy is engaging with sustainability issues as well as existing sustainability policy discourse in education across provincial Ministries of Education, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC), and a range of PSE institutions
- **Theme 2. Community Engagement** examines practices and experience of sustainability in education through community engagement across multiple sectors. Work involves (1) a national survey and (2) in-depth site analyses, both of which will offer situated community understandings of sustainability uptake in education, informing our understanding of relationships between sustainability policy and practice in the Canadian education system
- **Theme 3. Knowledge Mobilization** mobilizes new knowledge and best practices regarding sustainability in education to impact existing policy and practice. This theme tracks organizational learning within SEPN, develops situated models of exemplary sustainability policy and practice, and mobilizes models through engagement of educational institutions and communities to impact policy and practice across the country



Outcomes and Impacts

- Create innovative scholarly knowledge through situated and collaborative policy analysis
- Mobilize new models of exemplary sustainability policy and practice and enable application to decision-making in environmental sustainability education and practice in educational institutions
- Innovative training and mentoring
- Enable Network participatory organizational learning
- Create ongoing interdisciplinary and multi-sector national network
- Increased interdisciplinary and multi-sector knowledge of Canadian environmental issues and help develop greater sustainability in communities