

# The Ubuntu Network:

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## Promoting Action Research for Sustainable Development within Initial Teacher Education

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# Emergence of ESD as concept

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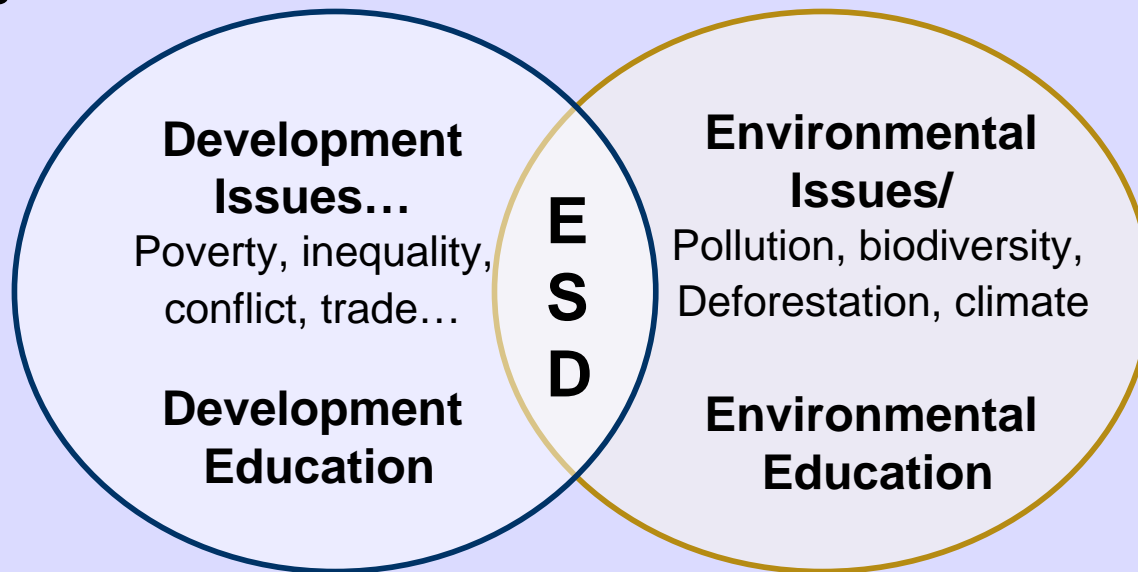
- Funders
  - Dept. of Foreign Affairs – Dev. Ed - €2.6 million
  - Dept. of the Environment – Env. Ed - €0.5 million
- Emergence of the Concept
  - Practitioners concerns
  - Relevance to other ‘adjectival educations’
  - 2007 Comhar commissioned audit of ESD in Ireland
  - 2008 Work towards national Strategy on ESD
  - RCE-Ireland

# Conceptualising ESD

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- A shift in thinking...

Moving from...



“environmental problems are not just those of the detrimental or irrational use of natural resources and pollution. They include problems of underdevelopment, such as inadequate housing and shelter, bad sanitary conditions, malnutrition, defective management and production practices and, more generally all problems which stem from poverty.” (UNESCO, 1977:11)

# Conceptualising ESD

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- A shift in thinking...

To...



# Conceptualising ESD

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- And from...

## Content

What we teach?

### Inequalities / injustices

Wealth distribution - poverty  
Trade restrictions  
Exploitation of workers  
Political unrest  
Overpowering 'western' culture

### Unsustainable Practices

Over consumption  
Ecological impact

## Process

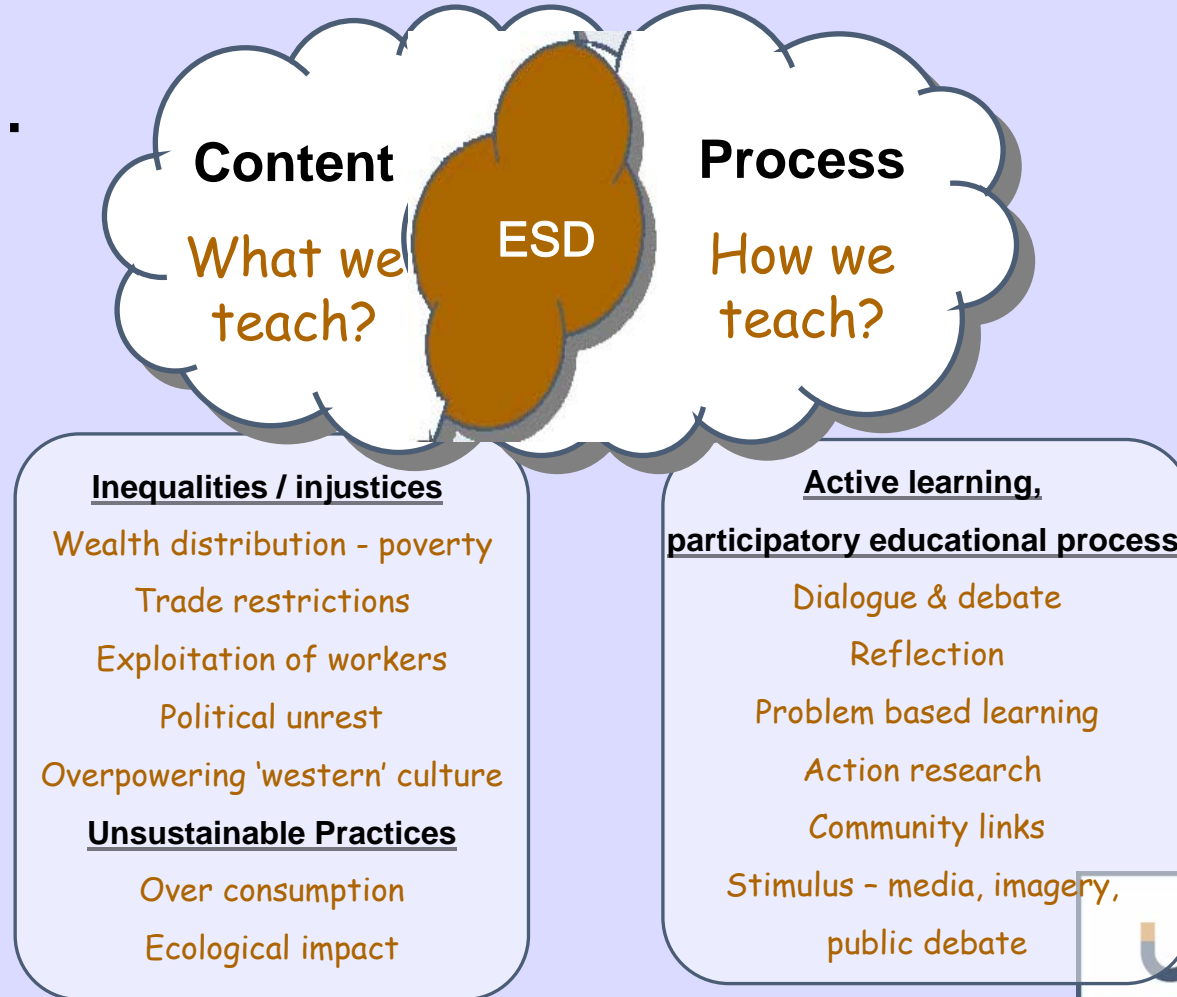
How we teach?

### Active learning, participatory educational process

Dialogue & debate  
Reflection  
Problem based learning  
Action research  
Community links  
Stimulus - media, imagery,  
public debate

# Conceptualising ESD

## ■ To...



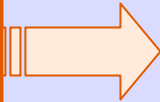
# Conceptualising ESD

**Knowledge, Ideas,  
Understanding**

- e.g. poverty, exploitation, environment, human rights, trade, health, education

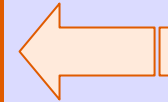


**Skills &  
Capacities**



- Critical thinking
- Systems thinking

**Attitudes &  
Values**



- Empathy
- Solidarity
- Appreciation of diversity
- Responsibility for Change

- Lifestyle changes
- Activitst

**Behaviour & Action  
Component**



# Ubuntu Network

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- Funded by Irish Aid, Dept FA
- Phase 1 (€370,000)
  - May 2005 – May 2008
- Phase 2 (€490,000)
  - May 2008 – May 2011



# Ubuntu Network

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- Aim
  - to support teacher educators to integrate aspects of Development Education (DE) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) into teaching and professional practices within post-primary Initial Teacher Education (ITE) in Ireland

# PP Teacher Education Colleges

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→ 14 Higher Education Institutions involved in Post Primary ITE

→ 2 Models of PP ITE programmes,  
- H.Dip/G.Dip  
- Degree

# Challenges to Integrating ESD

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- **Overloaded curriculum** at second and third level
- Time limitations at second and third level
- Emphasis on **assessment** at second and third level
- "Site" mentality - subject specialisms etc
- **Lack of knowledge** among teacher educators and teachers
- Perceived "size" of the issue. People often say **"where do I start?"**
- Lack of integration of DE/ESD into society
- Perceived conflict between DE and other areas such as Citizenship, EE etc.
- **Media focus** on consumerism + capitalism
- "Institutionalised" teachers
- It's more difficult to integrate DE into some subjects
- "Is this really my problem" mentality
- Perception of DE/ESD meaning **extra work** and reallocation of time

*From report from Ubuntu Network Workshop, 2006*



# Supports to Integrating ESD

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- Commitment of **Irish Aid to DE**
- Teachers already dedicated to DE/ESD issues
- More enlightened **high profile campaigns**
- Willingness of **NGOs** to support DE/ESD
- Success of participatory methodologies in the classroom
- Wealth of experience and expertise of individuals committed to DE/ESD
- **Links** between 3<sup>rd</sup> level institutions, schools and NGOs,
- Visibility of issues in **current affairs** and programmes
- Natural and extended links in teacher education
- Our multicultural society provides a context for learning
- Wealth of resources that already exist – packs, texts, websites
- Existing support services e.g. CSPE
- Very receptive students

*From report from Ubuntu Network Workshop, 2006*



# Ubuntu Network

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## ■ Objectives

- to generate interest and enthusiasm for DE and ESD among the post primary teacher education community and to create a disposition of **engagement** with the issues.
- To support teacher educators to design, deliver and evaluate DE/ESD based interventions within their teaching and professional practice, and to ensure that an **action research** element is included where possible.
- To establish and maintain a **collaborative** environment in which network members share and discuss knowledge and experience of DE/ESD issues and methodologies, and work together on collaborative DE/ESD based initiatives.

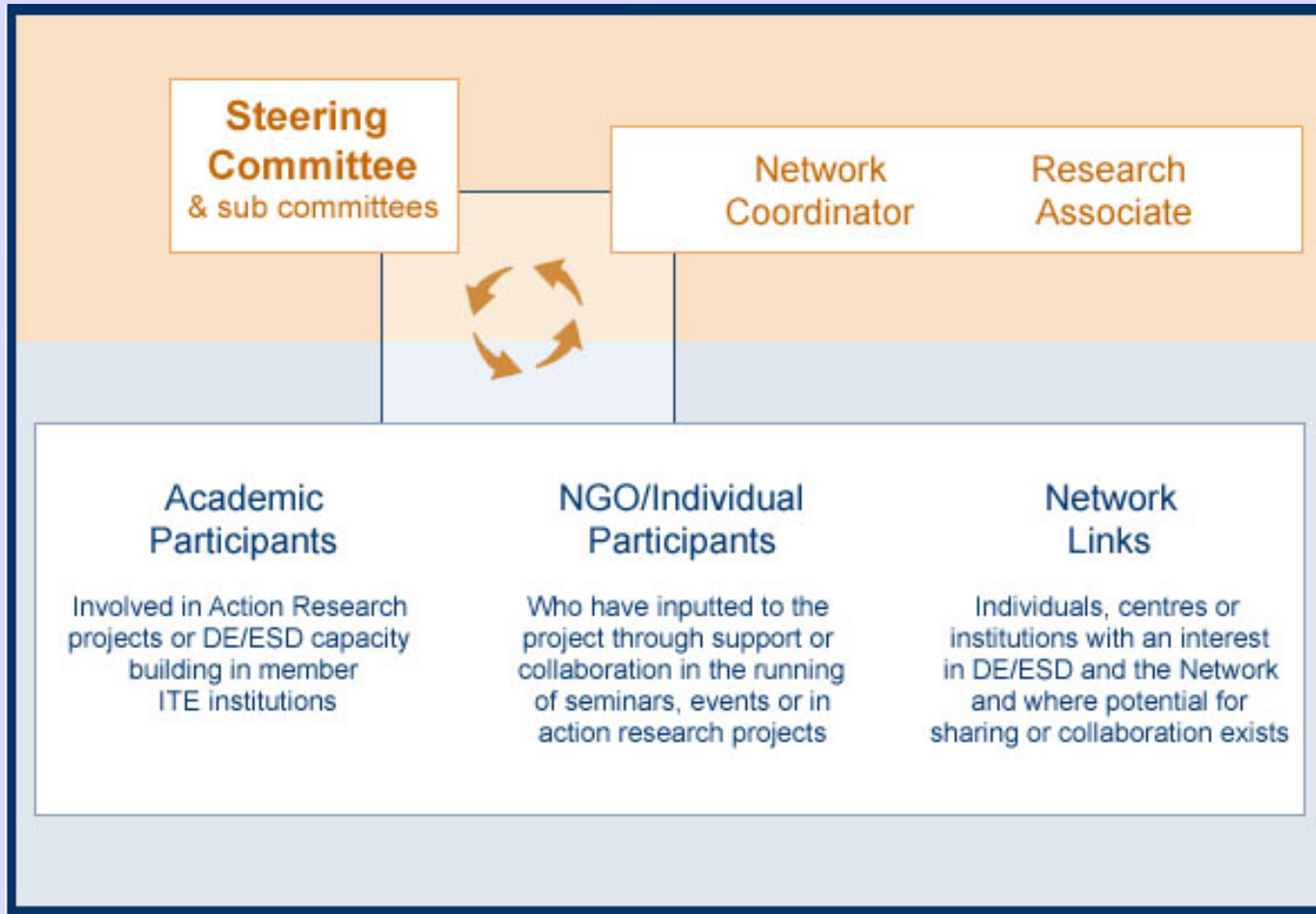
Strengths  
Model

Action  
Research

Sharing &  
Collaboration

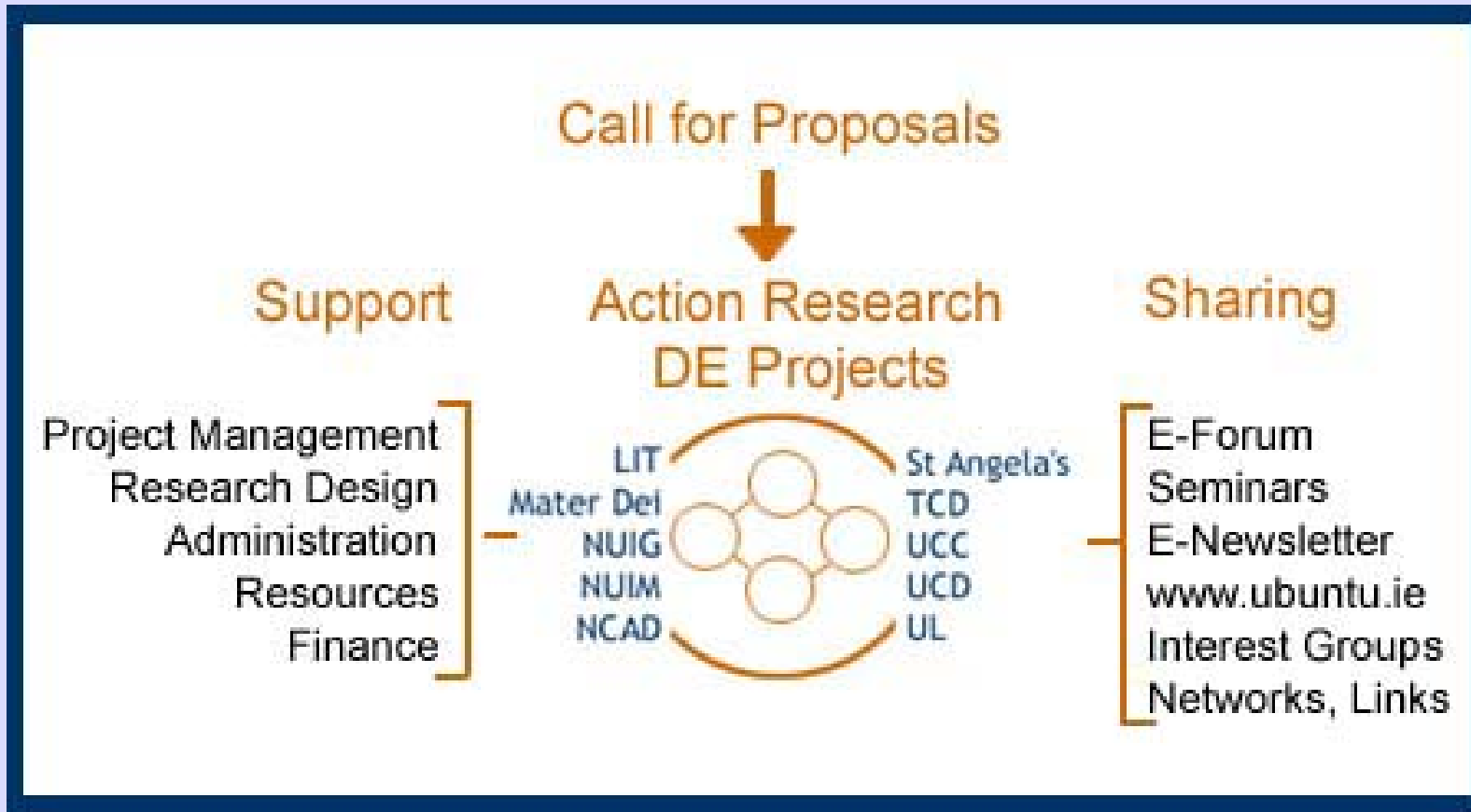


# Ubuntu Network – Structure



- Not prescribed - participation through interest
- Integration, not a substitution model

# Ubuntu Network – Operation



# Action Research – Year 1

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- Annual Call, small grant, support of research associate
- First Call – Academic Year '06 –07 – *“getting the birds in the air”*

## 5 Subject Specific

- **Art and Design**
- Religious Education
- English
- Physical Education
- Home Economics

## 8 Methodology Based

- Intercultural Ed Forum
- Web Based ESD Resources
- Student Teachers attitudes of DE programme
- ESD into Start Teach 0
- Assessing Emotional Int.
- **Active Learning Methods.**
- Problem Solving Skills
- Large Group Participatory Process

## 3 Capacity Building

- **Film & Book Club**
- Globalisation Interest Groups
- Workshops for TP tutors.

# Action Research – Year 2

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- Annual Call, small grant, support of research associate
- Second Call – Academic Year '06 –07 – *“birds flying together”*

## 4 Student Teachers Attitudes

- ...to ‘others’ in their classes
- ...to DE/ESD and 1st Yr Start teach
- ...and assessment of their EI
- ...to DE/ESD & prior experiences

## 4 TP/School Experience

- ...use of DE resources
- ...intercultural ed forum
- ...DE/ESD & adventure ed
- ...DE/ESD and HE on TP

## 3 Capacity Building

- **Film & Book Club**
- CoP for Teacher educators on identity

## 3 Subject Case Studies

- ...Religious Ed
- ...English
- ...Art and Design
- ...Science
- ...Home Economics

# Action Research – Year 1 and 2

- Cyclical Process, e.g. **Art and Design Project** – Year 1

## Review

- examine current curriculum and pedagogy
- identify areas of opportunity for integration



## Evaluate

- Post TP reflection sessions
- Focus groups with students
- Report

## Plan

- Series of 4 curriculum workshops
- e.g. Workshop 2: Design & Visual Coms.**
- Book design – intercultural issues
- Logo design - majority world issues
- Leaflet/Flyer design – majority world issues
- Poster design – world arts event
- Package design – fair trade

## Implement

- Running 4 workshops, development of teaching packs & schemes
- Teaching Practice Support

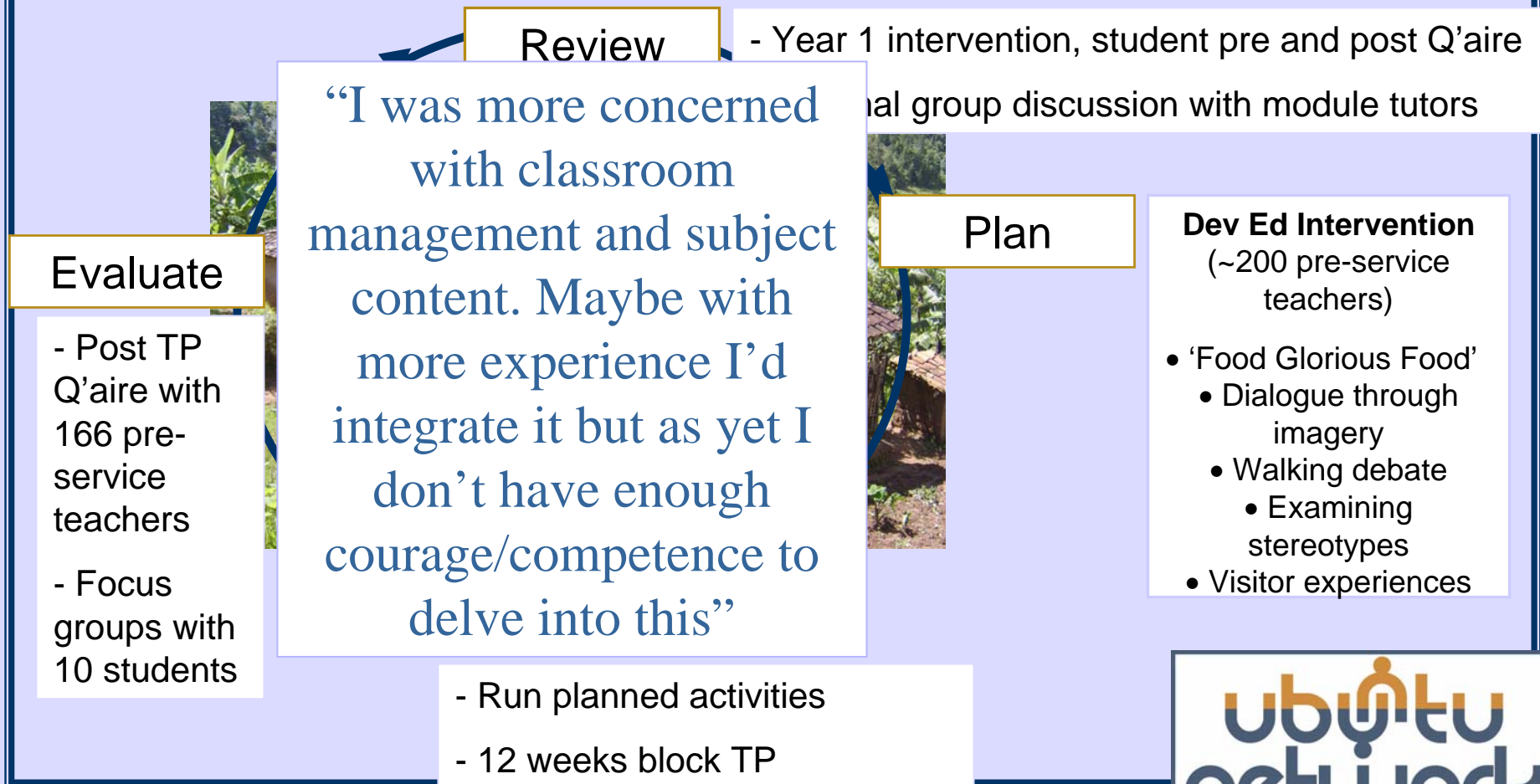
# Action Research – Year 2

- Cyclical Process, e.g. **Active Learning Methodologies Project – Year 2**



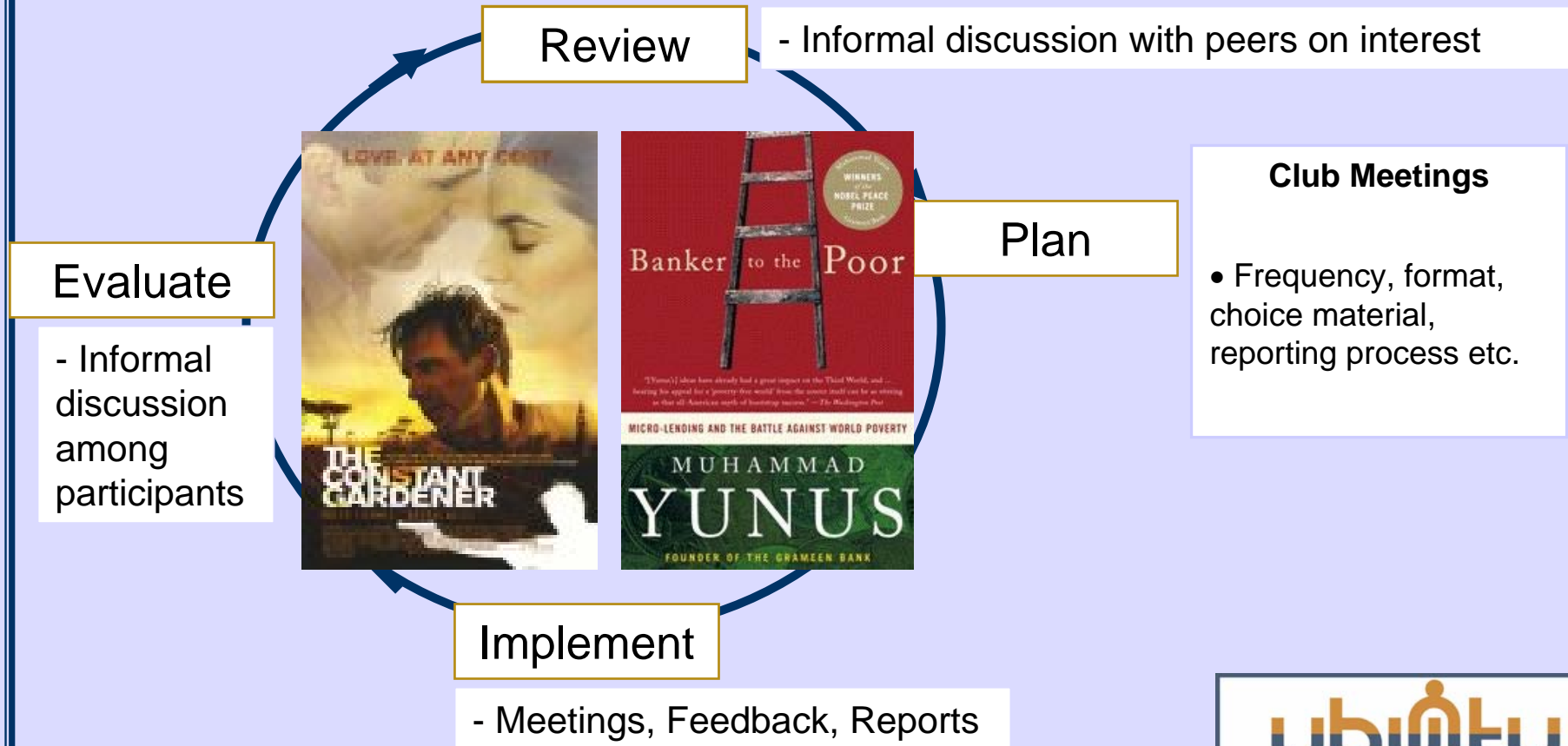
# Action Research – Year 2

- Cyclical Process, e.g. **Active Learning Methodologies Project – Year 2**



# Action Research – Year 1 and 2

- Cyclical Process, e.g. **Book and Film Club** Project – Year 1



# Action Research – A Need to Share

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- **Workshops** – Sept '07
- **Dialogue Days** – Apr and May '08
- **Information sharing** at Steering Committee Meetings – Sept '07, Dec '07, Apr '08, June '08
- **Interest Groups** – June '08



# Action Research – ongoing themes – Yr 4

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- **Subject Discipline as Culture** – strong/weak framing, subject norms, practices, skills, attitudes etc associated.
- **Innovative Pedagogies in Teacher Education** - include portfolio entry and reflection, use of ICT for learning, problem based learning, service learning or alternative sites of learning (alternative to teaching practice), and the use of media and film in the classroom.
- **Student Teacher Dual Identity** – subject specialists V teacher
- **Student Teacher Attitudes to ESD and related issues** - strong and weak notions of social justice
- **Evaluation of the Effectiveness of ESD interventions** -

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For more information on the Ubuntu Network...

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