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NSCC students, faculty bring international sustainability knowledge back home

By OurNSCC News
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Trades and Technology students and faculty have wrapped up the last leg of their incredible journey - the Energy Efficiency in the Built Environment (EEBE) Project Exchange.



The EEBE group – which includes Holland College (PEI) and the Institute of Technology Carlow – spent over three weeks in Carlow, Ireland trying their hand at developing energy-efficient solutions for homes while fostering their shared passion for environmental sustainability.

The project: retrofitting a standard Irish home to meet the PassivHaus (Passive House) criteria, a German standard focusing on extreme energy efficiency.

NSCC Energy Sustainability Engineering Technology (ESET) student Fin MacDonald was part of the exchange project. Fin says, “What many people don’t know is that Dr. Wolfgang Feist was inspired to create PassivHaus after viewing a house in our own country, decades ago, in Saskatchewan. Over a quarter century ago, Canadians built a house so energy-efficient that you could heat it with a hair dryer, and then we forgot about it.”

At the conclusion of his time in Ireland, Fin blogged that, “retrofitting our existing buildings is vital to using energy sustainably. Even if every new building were built to the best green standards, it would have a small impact on the total building energy consumption because of the amount of buildings that are already built. Projects like this get us thinking about the challenges we are faced with in the existing built environment.”


In the end, the PassivHaus standard was too high for the old house in Carlow. However, the EEBE group did recommend several changes that could make the home more energy-efficient.

“Exchanges like this can only broaden the knowledge our students learn in the classroom,” says Katie Orr, Director, NSCC International. “Seeing how it works or is working in another country and applying some of those ideas back home is invaluable to having these young minds tackle serious issues such as sustainability.”

The Energy Efficiency in the Built Environment (EEBE) is a three-year Canada – European Union student and faculty exchange project (2010-2013) funded by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and the European Union. NSCC is the lead college in this project and the other partners are Holland College (PEI), Hanze University of Applied Sciences Groningen (Netherlands) and the Institute of Technology Carlow (Ireland).

In addition to Fin, students on the exchange have come from Construction Management (Anna Keys and Sarah Mitchell), Architectural Technology (Matt Bordian) and Electrical Engineering Technology (Josh Murray) along with Cynthia Rogers, Faculty, Mechanical Engineering.

More information on this year's EEBE Project Exchange can be found on the [NSCC International blog](#) or [NSCC International](#).

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