



LEARNING FOR SUSTAINABILITY SCOTLAND REPORT December 2015- December 2016



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1. BACKGROUND

Scotland has a long-standing commitment to Learning for Sustainability (Lfs) involving all aspects of learning: formal (e.g. schools, colleges, universities), non-formal (e.g. youth, adult, community, business) and informal (e.g. home, leisure). The UN's Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-14) catalysed activity in all sectors through two Action Plans¹ co-ordinated by the Scottish Government. As the Decade came to its end, the Lfs community in Scotland considered that the establishment of a Scotland-wide United Nations recognised Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) in Education for sustainable development (ESD) was the most appropriate way to continue the work of promoting and supporting the concept and practice of Lfs in Scotland. The proposal to create Scotland's RCE was accepted unconditionally by the United Nations University in December 2012 and the first AGM of Scotland's UN recognised RCE, Learning for Sustainability Scotland, was held on October 22nd 2013.

2. GOVERNANCE

The Lfs Scotland Steering Group represents members, providing strategic advice and direction to support Learning for Sustainability Scotland's Vision, Mission and Objectives. Their roles and responsibilities are set out in the Lfs Scotland Strategic Plan 2015-20.

Eight Steering Group members were elected at the AGM in December 2015 for a two year period: Rehema White (University of St Andrews), Kate Campbell (Sustrans), Sarah Lee (EAUC Scotland), Susan Carleton (Sustaining Dunbar), Judy Paul (RSPB Scotland), Ullrich Kockel (Heriot Watt University), Kirsten Leask (Soil Association), Rosa Murray (University of Edinburgh). The Group has met four times during this period.

Sarah Lee resigned from the Group on leaving Scotland in September 2016 and Judy Paul resigned on changes to her role at RSPB in July 2016. Following these resignations Laura Curtis-Moss (RSPB) and Rebecca Petford (EAUC Scotland) were coopted onto the Group to provide additional expertise.

Task Group representation on the Steering Group during this period was: Further and Higher Education: Sarah Lee EAUC Scotland; Communications: Mike Pretious Queen Margaret University; Connection with Nature, Judy Paul RSPB; Sustainable Development Goals, Rehema White University of St Andrews; Food Pedagogy, Kirsten Leask; Curating Heritage for Sustainable Communities (Ullrich Kockel).

The Secretariat was managed by Professor Pete Higgins, University of Edinburgh, Director of Lfs Scotland. An Executive Group comprising the Director, Chair and the Secretariat met on a number of occasions to facilitate planning and action.

Over this period the Steering Group and Secretariat confirmed the Strategic Plan for Lfs Scotland 2015-2020 and an action plan 2016-18, based on the outcomes of the Members Survey carried out in October 2015 and the mapping of the field of Learning for Sustainability in Scotland carried out with previous Steering Group members (2013-2015). The Steering Group also reviewed fundraising activities, supported Task Group activities, led on and contributed to various policy consultations, engaged formally and informally with Scottish Government and contributed to national and European RCE fora.

3. MEMBERSHIP

Learning for Sustainability Scotland has 1275 members (December 2015), 683 individuals and the rest representing organisations.

¹ Scottish Government (2006) *Learning for Our Future: Scotland's First Action Plan for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development* and (2010), *Learning for Change: Scotland's Second Action Plan for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development*.

4. EMPLOYEES

During this period Betsy King was employed as Development Manager (0.6 FTE) and Abi Cornwall as Development Officer (0.75 FTE). A volunteer Fundraising Support Officer, David Philip, worked with LfS Scotland October- December 2016 undertaking background research to identify current and possible future funding opportunities for LfS Scotland and communicate these to the team to help with developing funding applications.

5. RESOURCES

The University of Edinburgh has generously hosted LfS Scotland and has provided administrative support as an in-kind contribution since its inception. This has included the provision of office accommodation for the LfS Scotland staff within the Moray House School of Education Campus, Edinburgh and full servicing for the Centre including payroll, HR, telephone and internet, IT support and the use of University meeting spaces. LfS Scotland operates under the University of Edinburgh's charitable status.

During this period activities to maintain the momentum of LfS in schools post UN Decade of ESD were supported by a Scottish Government grant to April 2016. In 2016 this included writing four Learning into Action Briefing papers for Education Scotland.

Funds from the former Sustainable Development Education Network supported the LfS Scotland Bulletin to June 2016. In addition LfS Scotland activities were supported through fee earning from projects (British Council, General Teaching Council for Scotland, University of Edinburgh) and professional learning events for teachers. The LfS Scotland team and members of the Steering Group are developing additional proposals for longer term funding.

6. ACTIVITIES

6.1 MAILING LIST AND BULLETIN

An e-bulletin containing information on events, courses, resources, policy and funding news, the latest job vacancies and the work of different organisations in the field of Learning for Sustainability was compiled by Norah Barnes and distributed monthly to members. During the year the Bulletin's scope and content was further extended and its information targeted to specific sectors.

6.2 PRESENTATIONS

Keynote presentations and workshops were given on behalf of LfS Scotland at the following conferences and seminars during this period:

Date	Event	Place
February 2016	Values and Learning for sustainability in Initial Teacher Education (with GTCS)	Edinburgh
March 2016	Learning for Sustainability in Scotland (British Council seminar)	London
March 2016	Glasgow College 'One City' event (with EAUC)	Glasgow
May 2016	College Development Network 'Fair Trade is Forecast'	Stirling
June 2016	Values and Learning for Sustainability in Initial Teacher Education	Edinburgh
June 2016	European RCE Conference workshop: Skills for Learning for Sustainability	London
August 2016	Sustainability at Edinburgh College (with EAUC)	Edinburgh
August 2016	UNESCO International Network of Teacher Education Institutions	Sweden
September 2016	TEESNet Conference workshop: Measuring What's Valuable & Valuing What's Measurable	Liverpool
September 2016	Sustrans Schools Active Travel conference	Stirling
October 2016	Education Conference –LfS developments in Scotland	Dublin
October 2016	ESD and Quality Education	Beijing
November 2016	European Parliament Seminar on Youth Employment and	Brussels

	Sustainability Education (New Education Forum)	
November 2016	Scottish Education Research Association conference roundtable(with GTCS)	Dundee
November 2016	Community Development for sustainable development conference (International Association for Community Development)	Glasgow
November 2016	Education and Biodiversity Conference	Edinburgh
December 2016	Values and Learning for sustainability in Initial Teacher Education(with GTCS)	Edinburgh
December 2016	Learning and the SDGs – Youthlink members conference	Edinburgh

6.3 SEMINARS and EVENTS

The following seminars and events were organized during the year.

6.3.1 AGM 2015

48 members attended the Annual General Meeting in December 2015. As the dust settled after the UN Climate Change conference and world embarked on making progress towards newly adopted UN Sustainable Development Goals this AGM considered the implications for learning for sustainability in Scotland. Particular emphasis was on contributing to the new Global Action Programme (post UN Decade of ESD) and the Scottish Government’s conversation on a Fairer Scotland.

6.4 COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

6.4.1 GTCS Initial Teacher Education project

In partnership with the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) and funded by the Gordon Cook Foundation LfS Scotland is working with all eight of Scotland’s Initial Teacher Education Universities to support the incorporation of the Learning for Sustainability dimension of the GTCS Standards, including the Professional Values , in existing and developing courses and programmes. This two year project began in August 2015 and during 2016 involved developing a web-based Reflection and Development Tool, piloting the Tool with Universities, supporting its use and considering collaborative research with an LfS focus.

6.4.2 British Council: Connecting Classrooms

LfS Scotland is collaborating with the University of Edinburgh in the delivery of the three year British Council Connecting Classrooms professional learning initiative in Scotland. The professional learning is for teachers interested in pedagogies for developing core skills in young people and support teachers to address the pupil entitlement to Learning for Sustainability, meeting the requirements of the GTCS Professional Standards and Curriculum for Excellence. In 2016 three ten week courses were delivered from January to December 2016 with 100 teachers and involving two face to face meetings and an online course. In June 2016 the course was accredited for GTCS Professional Recognition.

6.5 POLICY ENGAGEMENT

During this period LfS Scotland responded to consultations through its Task Groups and Steering Group members and representation on the Scottish Government’s Learning for Sustainability Implementation Group and Working Group. LfS Scotland contributed to the concluding report of the Government’s Implementation Group [Vision 2030+](#) , published in March 2016,

LfS Scotland’s Secretariat maintained formal and informal dialogue with a wide range of individuals from Government and its agencies during the year. In advance of the May 2016 elections to the Scottish Parliament the Steering Group developed a policy paper for the Scottish parliament: *Transforming Scotland: taking action on learning for sustainability*.

Responses were submitted on behalf of members to the Scottish Government's International Development Strategy consultation in May 2016 and the UK Environmental Audit Committee consultation on UK's response to the Sustainable Development Goals in September 2016.

6.6 INTERNATIONAL NETWORKING

LfS Scotland, Scotland's UN recognized Regional Centre of Expertise in ESD is one of the global network of 157 RCEs (November 2016). During this period there was regular contact with the Global Network and UK RCEs and the following international knowledge exchange and research activities were carried out.

6.6.1 LfS Scotland collaborated with members of the UK Teacher Education for Equity and Sustainability network to co-author an article for the [Journal of Management in Education](#). *A comparative review of policy and practice for education for sustainable development/education for global citizenship (ESD/GC) in teacher education across the four nations of the UK*

6.6.2 In June 2016 LfS Scotland shared Scotland's progress on LfS in relation to the Global Action Programme and Sustainable Development Goals, and facilitated a workshop on skills for Learning for Sustainability, at the European RCE Conference organized by RCE London. The meeting was attended by 45 representatives of 17 RCEs from across Europe (Belarus, Crete, East Midlands, Eco-net Denmark, Espoo Finland, France, Graz-Styria, London, Munich, Rhine-Meuse, Severn, Scotland, Skane Sweden, UNU IAS, Tyrol, Vienna, Wales). European RCEs pledged to continue close collaboration.

6.6.3 LfS Scotland was represented at the UNESCO International Network on Reorienting Teacher Education to Address Sustainable Development held in August 2016 in Visby, Sweden. This was a joint meeting of this group with the GAP partner – The Learning Teacher Network.

6.6.4 The 4th Asia-Pacific Expert Meeting on ESD (a joint meeting of the UNESCO network (above) and members of the Chinese Government with responsibility for ESD) was held in Beijing in October 2016. The meeting theme was 'Education for Sustainable Development: towards the Mainstream of World Education. LfS Scotland was invited to give a presentation on the policy developments in LfS in Scotland.

6.6.5 In November 2016, LfS Scotland was invited to Brussels to attend and present at a European Parliament forum on education, sustainability and youth unemployment. The GTCS were also invited. The invitations were through 'The New Education Forum', a European educational charity.

6.7 TASK GROUPS

The purpose of LfS Scotland's Task Groups is to enable members to work individually or together to carry out specific pieces of work or projects that relate to the Vision, Mission and Objectives of LfS Scotland. The following Task Groups were active during this period.

6.7.1 Connection to Nature (Convenor Judy Paul)

The Group had a change of Convenor and restated its aims in April 2016: to understand the level of connection to nature of children and young people in Scotland: To understand how to enable and enhance 'connection to nature'; To identify possible links with factors that impact on sustainability and To inform policy, education, and community targets on effective mechanisms for delivering LfS including recognition of the importance of connection to the natural world. During this period the Group met four times to plan a conference that will be held in Edinburgh in May 2017 The focus will be on bringing practitioners and researchers together and to provide a better understanding of what LfS is and how to deliver it; a real problem solving and practically focused event with lots of reflection on practice time.

6.7.2 Food | Pedagogy (Convenor Kirsten Leask)

The group aims to link the current interest in food-related learning to the sustainability agenda; determine the purpose of embedding learning about food in Learning for Sustainability; identify what does good Learning for Sustainability about food look like and how to measure success. The group has been reconfigured due to staff changes in initial Task Group leadership. This has delayed subsequent activities. An initial meeting of interested members has been held and a draft questionnaire to group members created. Responses will determine the focus of 2017 activities.

6.7.3 Further Education (Convenor Sarah Lee to September 2016, and then Rebecca Petford)

This is an ongoing networking group which has met as one of EAUC's Topic Support Networks to share practices on methods, research and projects, building on the Scottish colleges, Education for Sustainable Development initiative managed by Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges (EAUC). Two meetings were held in this period. In December 2015 the ESD in FE & Sustainable Construction Topic Support Network at South Lanarkshire College focused on their new BREEAM Outstanding teaching building and Low Carbon House, and how these integrate with learning and teaching in the College. In May 2016 Linking Curriculum, Campus and Community- the group met at College Development Network, and discussed existing and potential links between campus, curriculum and community and the barriers which can prevent links. Attendees also participated in a short workshop run by Quinn Runkle, leader of the NUS Responsible Futures programme in Scotland, about the potential of engaging with that programme.

6.7.4 Higher Education (Convenor Sarah Lee to September 2016, and then Rebecca Petford)

This is an ongoing networking group which meets twice yearly co-badged as one of EAUC's Topic Support Networks to share practices on methods, research and projects. One meeting was held during this period, in March 2016 at the University of Edinburgh, with a focus on Interdisciplinarity and Sustainability. Presenters from a range of universities were invited to share the modules or programmes they are involved with which have an interdisciplinary sustainability focus, including details of any innovative assessments or practical projects. Challenges and opportunities for education for sustainable development in the Scottish higher education sector were then discussed. Further meetings are planned for 2017.

6.7.5 Communications (Convenor, Mike Pretious)

The purpose of this Working Group is to develop communications policies and procedures for LfS Scotland in respect of external communication by the Secretariat and the membership. This is an ongoing Task Group which has met throughout the last year, progress has been made in revising the Bulletin and initiating work on the website. A meeting is planned for early 2017 with the goal to develop strategic aims and time scales for continued work on the website and other communication tools.

6.7.6 Sustainable Development Goals (Convenor, Rehema White)

A new Task Group was established to focus on the Sustainable Development Goals, creating a more formal group within which LfS Scotland to pursue work that has been ongoing for 2 years already. The first meeting was held in November 2016 and good representation from a wide range of backgrounds confirmed interest in this area. The objectives are: to influence policy through advocating for learning as a fundamental aspect of the SDGs, in Scotland and beyond, and link to GAP; to raise awareness and understanding of the scope of learning within the SDGs (within and across formal, informal and non-formal contexts); to engage and represent members; and partner with other organisations and individuals in Scotland and UK; to collaborate with relevant international partners (UNESCO, UN RCEs) to help deliver on GAP and the SDGs and to contribute to monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the SDGs in Scotland and beyond

The first event, planned for 2017, will be a workshop to explore the interactions between LfS and attainment, literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing in the context of the SDGs. An action plan highlighting priorities in this area was developed and ideas put forward into fund raising discussions.

6.7.7 Open Educational Practices Task Group (Ronald McIntyre)

A new Task Group was established to develop and plan an appropriate event exploring the use of free and open online resources to support Learning for Sustainability. The Task Group met in September 2016 and the event will be held in March 2017. It is intended that the group may continue beyond then in order to support the creation and use of free open online materials that meet broader LfS Scotland objectives.

6.7.8 Curating Heritage for Sustainable Communities (Ullrich Kochel)

A new Task Group was established in October 2016 to support the development of a framework for sustainable heritage tourism especially in vulnerable ecological settings. The project is supported by a doctoral studentship funded by the Scottish Graduate School for Arts and Humanities along with Heriot-Watt University and The University of the Highlands and Islands. The group will promote sharing of knowledge and expertise in this area and explore the feasibility of forming a Community of Practice to support continuing interest.

6.8 FEE EARNING ACTIVITIES

The following consultancy activities were carried out by members of the LfS Scotland Secretariat in order to support the wider core work of LfS Scotland.

6.8.1 The programme of LfS Scotland and University of Edinburgh professional development courses for teachers was ongoing attracting participants from all over Scotland. In this period one Leadership and Learning for Sustainability and one Learning for Sustainability in your GTCS Professional Update course were held.

6.8.2 LfS Scotland funding was obtained from University of Edinburgh to develop and deliver an eight week long (April/May 2016) Sustainability and Social Responsibility International Foundation programme for 23 students from China, Equador, Azerbaijan and Russia. This programme will be delivered again in 2017.

6.9 REPRESENTATION ON NATIONAL GROUPS

LfS Scotland presented at various national events and was represented on the following national groups by Secretariat or Steering Group members:

a. Learning for Sustainability Implementation Group

LfS Scotland continued to be represented on the Scottish Government's Learning for Sustainability Implementation Group to drive forward the implementation of the Learning for Sustainability Report's 31 recommendations and embed Learning for Sustainability in all Scottish schools. This Group produced its concluding Report [Vision 2030+](#) in March 2016. LfS Scotland was also represented on the LfS Working Group which met in September 2016 advising on LfS guidance, teaching resources and communications.

b. NUS Responsible Futures project Advisory Board member

This Group met several times during the year and is to be reconvened as the NUS ESD Advisory Group in 2017

c. Teacher Education for Equity and Environmental Sustainability Network (TEESNet) Steering Group member and Scotland representative

d. GTCS Sustainability Group member (from November 2015)

e. GTCS Research in Education Group member

f. Sustainable Schools Award judge June 2016

g. Food for Life Scotland Steering Group members

h. RSPB Nature of Scotland Award judge (Autumn 2016)

7. NEXT STEPS

Priority actions for the next year, agreed by members, include continuing to work towards facilitating Scotland's role in the UN's Global Action Programme and to promote coherence with and action towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals in Scotland. Further events, seminars, policy engagement and networking will be key in this endeavour. In 2017 LfS Scotland will convene a meeting of the UK RCEs to facilitate close collaboration and joint funding approaches and will continue to work collaboratively as part of the global UN RCE network.

In 2015-2016 LfS Scotland further extended its membership base. New members of the open network include those working in and with colleges, universities, community learning and development and other forms of informal education in addition to schools. Extending the membership base will continue to be a priority to ensure a wide range of perspectives and approaches. Support for Task groups will continue and there is potential for further Task Group activity, encouraging collaboration between members to develop new research and innovative practice. Fundraising to develop this work with members and ensure effective communication via e-Bulletin, website and social media will continue to be a priority.

Learning for Sustainability Scotland, December 2016