

Engaging young people with sustainability workshop 18th Jan 2018 - discussions

1. Ideas for the LfSS Youth Network and Young Scot

- 1) Collaborate with University student societies to encourage them to involve environmental aspects in their events
- 2) A beach clean with BBQ (youth requested)
- 3) Young Scot Sustainability Day / Week
- 4) App for plant ID/issues
- 5) A specific platform for youth to share ideas
- 6) Provide more positive evidence of sustainability “working” or providing results
- 7) Circulate the “Mission Statement” of the LfSS Youth Network widely. Maybe ‘being part of this network will help you...’
- 8) Encourage a formal qualification in the education system focussing on sustainability
- 9) Promote opportunities from other organisations through the network
- 10) Consider partner organisations such as Soil Association
- 11) Have a young ambassador network for LfS, e.g. 5th or 6th years in each school, college and uni and then have an ambassador forum / conference
- 12) Work with Princes Trust groups
- 13) Promote volunteering opportunities and events in Cairngorms National Park
- 14) Share your survey findings – both results and lessons learned from methodology – with everyone who engages young people – we need to learn how to do it better!
- 15) Support practical engagement e.g. internship, young inspired ideas (e.g. get rid of plastic bottles)

Offers:

- Field Studies Council (James Banks, Senior Tutor at Kindrogan, james.sco@field-studies-council.org) could offer LfSS a Venue / even and possibly Young Scot Rewards for relevant courses
- Solutions for the Planet (jess@solutionsfortheplanet.co.uk) can provide peer-mentoring opportunities for 18-35 year olds to work with high school students developing sustainability solutions
- Water of Leith Conservation Trust (Ruth) could partner with us on a conservation task on the water as a group event
- Transition Edinburgh will formally invite young people’s contribution

Other Comments:

- In Nursery, invite speakers to speak to groups of new parents to discuss and share knowledge about sustainability

2. Possible barriers for young people engaging with Sustainable Development

Group 1

- Expectations from media i.e. outdoor clothes & being passionate about environment is not cool
- Lack of access to the outdoors / recreation activities
- Attitude of young people
- Young people just don’t know enough
- Information not young people friendly
- Time pressures / demands
- Lack of positive examples / role models / youth examples
- What to believe – Fact vs Fake News
- Lack of confidence / understanding / value
- Image ‘not cool’ – peer pressure

- Jargon – ‘too big’ – can be overwhelming
- Can’t see connections between personal actions and large-scale impact
- Denial – not impacting useful
- Belief that no change will be needed – ‘tech will fix it’
- Lack of encouragement / motivation
- Distractions / other priorities
- Money – cost of courses / cost of ‘greener’ services
- Lack of knowledge / skills around living sustainability
- Relevant
- Not being relevant to them / no connection
- Lack of empowerment – problems too huge
- Opportunity / motivation
- Awareness of the day to day issues of negotiating job / house / ‘life’ can take priority over the wide of scope of sustainability
- Lack of understanding of sustainability and what it covers
- Uncertainty of the broader political and economic context
- Lack of empowerment - ‘will it make a difference’

Group 2

- Lack of belief that people in positions of power are doing about so why should we
- Perceptions: ‘It’s not for the likes of me’ – seen as a ‘middle-class, nice to have’
- Sometimes focused on immediate concerns and expectations rather than being able to discuss long term
- Time is dominated by building personal goals / academic / career
- Lack of knowledge e.g. SGD and of brand
- Not seen as a mainstream issue – although this is changing
- Lots of issues fighting for the attention of young people
- Linking up what’s learned in school to the outside world
- Where is the value for me?
- The language we use – too much jargon
- Young people who are carers / vulnerable / at risk of homelessness feel overwhelmed by issues of sustainability
- Resources we use aren’t snappy enough and too dense
- Mental Wellbeing
- Opportunities to feed in views and influence change in society
- Localising the big issues
- Bringing it into individuals / community
- Negative connotations of having to give things up / deprive yourself / make sacrifices
- Reason why young people can get involved? ‘It’s my future!’
- Organisations not working with young people
- Fear of working with young people
- Lack of knowledge about what sustainability actually is.
- Accessing the discussions – not having a voice
- We need to recognise heterogeneity of young people – different audiences and expectations

Marie Duguid, Young Scot

Rebecca Petford, EAUC Scotland