



# LEARNING FOR SUSTAINABILITY SCOTLAND REPORT November 2014-November 2015



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## **LEARNING FOR SUSTAINABILITY SCOTLAND REPORT NOVEMBER 2014-NOVEMBER 2015**

### **1. BACKGROUND**

Scotland has a long-standing commitment to Learning for Sustainability 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 Plans<sup>1</sup> 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) 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 22<sup>nd</sup> 2013 and the second on December 9<sup>th</sup> 2014.

### **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 2013-2015.

Nine Steering Group members were elected in October 2013 for a two year period: Rehema White (Chair), George Tarvit (KSB-SSN), Kate Campbell (Sustrans), Geoff Fagan (CADISPA), Sarah Lee (EAUC), Rebekah Stackhouse (RSPB), Ullrich Kockel (Heriot Watt University), Kirsten Leask (Soil Association), Marie Jeanne McNaughton (University of Strathclyde). The Group met five times during this period and one Executive Sub Group meeting was held. Rebekah Stackhouse resigned from the Group on leaving Scotland in December 2014 and Marie Jeanne McNaughton resigned on her retirement in June 2015.

Task Group representation on the Steering Group during this period was: Further Education: John Salter; Common Cause Action Learning Programme: Osbert Lancaster (to February 2015 when the task was completed); Community Learning and Development: Nicola Sykes Education Scotland; Communications: Mike Pretious Queen Margaret University, Connection with Nature, Morag Watson (replacing Rebekah Stackhouse from December 2014).

The Secretariat was managed by Professor Pete Higgins, University of Edinburgh, Director of LfS Scotland. An Executive Group comprising the Director, Chair and two Vice Chairs (Fagan and Lee) and the Secretariat met on several occasions to facilitate planning and action.

Over this period the Steering Group and Secretariat developed a draft Strategic Plan for LfS Scotland 2015-2018, created policy and procedures around membership fees, reviewed fundraising activities, supported Task Group activities, led on and contributed to various policy consultations, engaged extensively formally and informally with Scottish Government and contributed to national RCE fora as well as international initiatives. The Steering Group completed its participatory mapping of the field of LfS in Scotland. A Members Survey was carried out to review the support provided by LfS Scotland for members and others.

### **3. MEMBERSHIP**

Learning for Sustainability Scotland has 435 members (as at 25 November 2015), 212 organisations and 108 individuals not representing organisations. A Members Survey was carried out in October 2015 aiming to ensure that LfS Scotland was providing the best possible help and support for members. Responses were received from 16% of the members (Appendix 1 Summary).

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<sup>1</sup> 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 Morag Watson was employed as Development Manager (1 FTE) until December 31<sup>st</sup> 2014; Betsy King as Development Manager (0.6 FTE) and Abi Cornwall as Development Officer (0.75FTE). Financial constraints prevented replacement of the 1 FTE post from December 2014.

#### **5. RESOURCES**

The University of Edinburgh has hosted LfS Scotland and has provided administrative support as an in-kind contribution. 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.

The Development Officer post was supported to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 by grants from the Scottish Government and SDE Network.. Activities to maintain the momentum of LfS in schools post UN Decade of ED are supported by a Scottish Government grant, July 2015-April 2016. The two posts were supported through fee earning from projects (Perth and Kinross Countryside Trust, Higher Education Academy, University of Edinburgh, British Council, GTCs), professional learning events for teachers and other events. The LfS Scotland team and members of the Steering Group are developing additional proposals for longer term EU/Horizon 2020funding.

#### **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 1004 subscribers (as at 25 November 2015). Following a Steering Group review the Bulletin's scope and content was extended and its information was 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:

- November 2014 European Real World Learning European Conference – Cumbria
- November 2014 UNESCO International Network on Reorienting Teacher Education to Address Sustainable Development (Okayama, Japan)
- December 2014: The UN Decade of ESD and beyond , EAUC Higher Education Task Group
- February 2015 Leadership and LfS, Central Scotland Partnership, Livingston
- March 2015 Perth and Kinross Outdoor Learning Practitioners network, Perth
- March 2015 Interdisciplinary Learning, University of Edinburgh PGDE students
- April 2015 Education for Sustainability, College Development Network, Stirling
- June 2015 Kenyan Connections Conference, NECOFA Kenya & Crofting Connections, Inverness
- September 2015 Launch of Colleges Learning and Sustainability Group, CDN
- October 2015 Learning for Sustainability: Connecting Classrooms. British Council
- October 2015 Uehiro-Carnegie-Oxford Conference on Practical ethics and climate change, New York
- November 2015 The Learning Teacher Network annual international conference, Edinburgh
- November 2015 Public lecture in the University of Edinburgh's 'Our Changing World' series
- November 2015 EAUC Scotland Conference

### **6.3 SEMINARS and EVENTS**

The following seminars and events were organized during the year.

#### **6.3.1 AGM 2014**

41 members attended the Annual General Meeting in November 2014. As the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development came to a close, this event reflected on progress over the last year and considered how to ensure that the growing momentum for learning for sustainability continues. Workshops focussed on implications for the LfS sector in a post-Independence Referendum Scotland and how to successfully tap into the various types of funding streams available for LfS.

#### **6.3.2 Fundraising**

Two successful half day workshops were organized by LfS Scotland in May 2015, facilitated by fundraiser and trainer Pam Judson. The sessions were designed to help members understand the basics of successful fundraising and to approach funders effectively. Positive feedback from participants has resulted in consideration of further workshops to be held in early 2016.

#### **6.3.3. Social Media**

An interactive, informative session for members to learn more about the intricacies of social media was held in June 2015. The event, facilitated by Ross McCulloch, was fully booked with 24 participants and considered social media strategy, content and policies as well as hands -on activities with latest social media.

#### **6.3.4 Symphony of the Soils**

In September 2015 in celebration of the International Year of Soils LfS Scotland hosted the Edinburgh film premiere of 'Symphony of the Soil'. Organised in partnership with Soil Association Scotland and the James Hutton Institute the film was well received by more than 70 people. The screening was followed by a Q and A session with Director, Deborah Koons Garcia. The film highlights possibilities of healthy soil creating healthy plants creating healthy humans living on a healthy planet.

#### **6.3.5 UN SDGs and Education: opportunities for Scotland's schools**

This seminar, organised with the support of The Scottish Government, aimed to explore the contribution of Education to the new UN Sustainable Development Goals, provide an update on progress with the recommendations for Scotland's schools made in the 2013 Learning for Sustainability Report and offer an opportunity to discuss how to contribute to this work. Held in November 2015 there were 46 participants. Contributions from Education Scotland, the Scottish Government, and the LfS Implementation Group's Co-Chair and Professor Charles Hopkins, UNESCO Chair in Education for Sustainable Development were followed by small group discussions. A report is available on the LfS Scotland website.

#### **6.3.6 Fairer and Greener Scotland**

LfS Scotland, in partnership with the Ethnic Minority Environmental Network ,Council of Ethnic Minority Voluntary sector Organisations (CEMVO Scotland), The Scottish Government, CIFAL Scotland and the University of Edinburgh facilitated discussions to feed into the Scottish Government's Fairer Scotland conversation and help shape a plan for 2030. The conversation, attended by around 40 people, explored social justice and sustainability issues

#### **6.3.7 Connected to Nature**

The LfS Scotland 'Connected to Nature' task group organized a full practical day event in Perth 'Building Connections to Nature' in November 2015. The successful day brought together 37 academics, practitioners and other professionals from the field of outdoor environmental learning together to share an understanding of the latest research on the value and impact of connections to nature. The focus was on children's connections, accepting that adults also play an important role in influencing opportunities for

connecting to nature, as well as fostering their own lifelong connection. Key outcomes of the day were the identification of research opportunities, strengthening of the links between practitioners and researchers.

## **6.6 COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS**

### **6.6.1 Leadership Research**

In partnership with EAUC Scotland and funded by the Higher Education Academy, LfS Scotland carried out a scoping study to identify existing models of change programmes that have led to institutional change for sustainability. The study was carried out by Lucy Wishart, University of St Andrews, with support from Prof. Jan Bebbington and Dr Rehema White. A report of the findings is to be used as an evidence base for the development of an EAUC Leadership programme for the Tertiary Sector.

### **6.6.2 GTCS Initial Teacher Education project**

In partnership with the General Teaching Council for Scotland 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 will involve working with the ITE universities to help them review and develop all their courses and programmes.

### **6.6.3 Learning for Sustainability MOOC**

In partnership with University of Edinburgh with support from Education Scotland LfS Scotland participated in the writing and delivery of the Learning for Sustainability: Developing a Personal Ethic 'Massive Open online Course' (MOOC). The successful five week MOOC enrolled 12,427 participants from 166 countries across the world.

### **6.6.4 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. This will support teachers to address the pupil entitlement to Learning for Sustainability, meeting the requirements of the GTCS Professional Standards and Curriculum for Excellence. A pilot ten week course was delivered from October to December 2015 with 27 teachers and involving two face to face meetings and an online course.

## **6.4 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. LfS Scotland's Secretariat maintained formal and informal dialogue with a wide range of individuals from Government and its agencies during the year. In August 2015 a meeting was held with Dr Alasdair Allan MSP, Minister for Learning, Science and Scotland's Languages and discussions were held in advance of a meeting with the Minister for Europe and International Development.

## **6.6 INTERNATIONAL NETWORKING**

LfS Scotland, Scotland's UN recognized Regional Centre of Expertise in ESD is one of the global network of 138 RCEs (November 2015). During this period there was regular contact with the UK RCEs and the following international knowledge exchange and research activities were carried out.

6.6.1 LfS Scotland participated in UNESCO Research to examine evidence of the impact of Education for Sustainable development on the quality of education. In Scotland this resulted in the publication of Education Scotland's *Conversations about Learning for Sustainability* November 2014. **The research contributed to the UNESCO publication *The Contributions of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) To Quality Education: A Synthesis of an International Research Project*, published in May 2015.**

6.6.2 Scotland's progress updates and contributions to the UNESCO end of the Decade for Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) were facilitated partly through LfS Scotland input and led to recognition of Scotland's good practice in the final UN Report on the DESD. (UNESCO 2014 Shaping the Future We Want <http://bit.ly/10ZuExA> )

6.6.3 In November 2014 LfS Scotland shared Scotland's progress on LfS and gathered ideas from other nations at the 9<sup>th</sup> Global RCE Conference held in Okayama, the International Conference on Higher Education for Sustainable Development held in Nagoya. Input was made to the conference declarations presented to the UNESCO World Conference on ESD where the new Global Action Programme on ESD was launched. Attendance was funded by University of Edinburgh and the Global RCE Support Centre.

6.6.4 LfS Scotland was also represented at the UNESCO International Network on Reorienting Teacher Education to Address Sustainable Development (Okayama, Japan) which took place directly after the Nagoya meeting in November 2014.

6.6.5 LfS Scotland received visits from a number of international visitors during the year, including Dr Aitiber Zallo who is the Sustainability Officer of the University of the Basque Country (Spain), and Professor Chuck Hopkins (UNESCO Chair in Reorienting Teacher Education to Address Sustainable Development). The Learning Teacher Network (an international network contracted by UNESCO to deliver aspects of the Global Action Plan) held its annual conference in Edinburgh in November specifically to learn about recent developments in ESD/LfS in Scotland.

## **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 Communities with a Common Cause Action Learning Programme (Convenor Osbert Lancaster)**

This Task Group, supported by grant funding from the Scottish Government, brought together sixteen participants from eight grass-roots groups, NGOs and government agencies to develop practical approaches to applying Common Cause, a values-based approach to addressing social and environmental challenges. The project gained an Outstanding Flagship Project RCE recognition award in November 2014. On completion of the project the Task Group disbanded in February 2015.

### **6.7.2 Connection to Nature (Convenor Rebekah Stackhouse (to Nov.2014) and Morag Watson Nov 2014 to Nov 2015 and now Judy Paul)**

The Group aims to understand the level of connection to nature of children and young people in Scotland, to understand what activities enhance 'connection to nature', to identify possible links with factors that impact on sustainability and to inform policy, education, and community targets. During this period a 'Building Connections to Nature' event was organised (see above).

### **6.7.3 Food and Learning for Sustainability (Convenor Pete Ritchie/Kirsten Leask)**

The group aims to investigate and champion current provision and practice regarding the inclusion of LfS when teaching young people about food-related themes and the use of 'food' as a learning topic when exploring the broader themes of LfS and to provide recommendations for its integration into 'mainstream' educational practice. During the year the group organised the Symphony of the Soil event (see above).

### **6.7.4 Community Learning and Development (Convenor, Nicola Sykes)**

The purpose of the group is to drive progress in Learning for Sustainability in the community learning and development sector in Scotland. The Group was linked to the Ministerial CLD Working Group on the UN Decade of ESD and during this period the Group held its final meeting in May 2015 to reflect on progress

during the UN Decade and consider ways forward. There was still considered to be a need for a Task Group on Community Learning and Development and a new Convenor is being sought.

#### **6.7.5 Further Education (Convenor, John Salter to November 2015)**

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). During the year a was initiated by EAUC, LfS Scotland and the College Development Network. An introductory Colleges workshop was held in March 2015 to share understanding of LfS and identify some steps for support and making progress in all of Scotland's Colleges. The resulting Colleges Learning and Sustainability Group will hold an event in early 2015 and is developing ways to share and extend practice.

#### **6.7.6 Higher Education (Convenor, Mike Pretious)**

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.

#### **6.7.7 Mapping (Convenor, Rehema White)**

The Group aimed to explore areas in which LfS is well advanced in Scotland and those in which we have achieved less; to map out the field of enquiry and practice of LfS across different areas and groups, to begin to identify which stakeholders could be engaged around different sectors and to acknowledge opportunities for immediate and long term action for LfS Scotland. During the year the Group concluded its work, producing a Report and summary Report. The conclusions have been used to inform LfS Scotland's Strategic Plans beyond 2015.

#### **6.7.8 Communications (Convenor, Mike Pretious)**

The purpose of this Working Group is to develop communications policies and procedures for LfSS in respect of external communication by the Secretariat and the membership. This is an ongoing Task Group which has met regularly throughout the last year, progress has been made in reviewing and revising the Bulletin and initiating work on the website. On twitter 'Good News Thursdays' and the monthly photograph have been introduced.

### **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 In January 2015 LfS Scotland was contracted by Perth and Kinross Countryside Trust to carry out a scoping study in support of their future outdoor learning work.

6.8.2 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 two Leadership and Learning for Sustainability and one Learning for Sustainability in your GTCS Professional Update courses were held.

6.8.3 In March 2015 LfS Scotland funding was obtained from Education Scotland to enable LfS Scotland to contribute to the University of Edinburgh's MOOC (massive open online course) with the aim to use materials on GLOW 365, Scotland's schools intranet.

### **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. LfS Scotland is also represented on the LfS Working Group, advising on LfS guidance, teaching resources and communications and participates in the LfS Practitioners Network which invites representation from teachers in Scotland's 32 local authorities.

**b. Scotland's Post 2015 Steering Group** member. The role of this group is to oversee the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals which

**c. NUS Responsible Futures project Advisory Board member**

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

**e. GTCS Sustainability Group** member (from November 2015)

**f. GTCS Research in Education Group** member

**g. Sustainable Schools Award** judge June 2015

**h. Food for Life Scotland Steering Group** members

**i. RSPB Nature of Scotland Award** judge (Autumn 2015)

**7. NEXT STEPS**

In 2014-2015 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. Effective communication with members via e-Bulletin, website and social media will continue to be a priority. There is potential for greater Task Group activity encouraging collaboration between members to generate new research and innovative practice.

Priority actions for the next year, agreed by members, include maintenance of the momentum established by the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, with further events, seminars, policy engagement and networking facilitation key in this endeavor. Additional agreed areas of activity include deepening of engagement with community groups, HE and FE, business and ultimately a more responsive conversation with the popular media. There is potential to facilitate Scotland's role in the UN Global Action Programme and to promote coherence with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

**Learning for Sustainability Scotland**

**November 2015**

## APPENDIX 1

# LEARNING FOR SUSTAINABILITY SCOTLAND MEMBERS SURVEY

## A SUMMARY OF THE RESPONSES November 2015

### WHY WE DID IT

As part of an ongoing conversation to make sure that LfS Scotland is offering the best possible help and support for our members a short questionnaire was sent to all 402 members in October 2015 via Bristol Online Survey. The following presents a summary, full responses are available on the LfS Scotland website ([www.lfsscotland.org](http://www.lfsscotland.org))

### WHO REPLIED

63 of the 402 members (16%) responded to the survey. Of those members that replied 29.5% work in the third sector, 26.75% public sector, 15.5% schools, 12.75% tertiary sector and the remainder were self-employed individuals or businesses. There are members working in every local authority in Scotland.

### WHAT WE FOUND

**1. Your Audiences:** 40% of those that replied identified solely schools as the main audience for their work and 14% solely communities, with the remainder addressing a mix of schools, the tertiary sector, communities and local and national government and the private sector.

**2. Your interests:** Members that responded focus on all five core sustainable development principles, with an emphasis on 'living within environmental limits' and 'ensuring a strong, healthy and just society' while 'achieving a sustainable economy', 'using sound science responsibly' and 'promoting good governance'. The top five topics of interest were (ranked in order): climate change; resource use and waste; health; sustainable consumption and production and biodiversity.

**3. Engaging with Learning for Sustainability Scotland's activities:** A high level of engagement was reported, particularly with the e-Bulletin, website, professional development and other events. 92% were interested in receiving information targeted at their interest sector. There were useful detailed comments and suggestions for change.

- **Monthly-E-Bulletin** Many gave positive comments about the e-Bulletin, saying that it was easy to read, interesting, informative and usually passed on to colleagues. Suggestions for improvement were to include more: of the good work happening in schools; International highlights and perspectives and promotion of the work of LfS Scotland. There was a plea to keep it short with clear links to more detail.
- **Website** Some were happy with the website format and content, others suggested it needed to be more engaging, with further consideration of its navigation, layout and brevity of content with more stories and pictures. Suggestions for additional content were: international perspectives; best practice links; on-line collaboration, guest articles from grassroots activists. Linking the website to the e-Bulletin is considered important.
- **Twitter** engagement was considered to be good with the possibility for further development.

- **Events and professional learning** were considered well organised and informative as well as a good opportunity to network with peers. Suggestions for the future were: developing a web based conference strategy including podcasts and blogs; more collaborative/co-badged events; more events out-with Edinburgh and Glasgow.  
Suggestions for future events were: UN Sustainable Development Goals & ESD; International collaboration; sharing practice; LfS in schools; how to work effectively with schools; community, youth and adult learning.
- **Learning for Sustainability- related policy consultations** were considered to be a vital component of LfS Scotland's present and future work.
- **Task Groups** were of great interest, with members suggesting they would like to be more active. Suggestions for new Groups were 'Clean Energy' and 'Collaborative Events'. There was interest in further activity in the Food and Tertiary Sector Task Groups.
- **Research** was thought to be an important role for LfS Scotland, for example bringing together work on implementing the new Sustainable Development Goals in Scotland; examining the relationship between LfS and Outdoor Learning; and exploring Learning and Sustainable Cities.

#### 4. Other comments

A number of members considered that LfS Scotland had focussed its attention mainly on schools to date and thought it vital to also do more for those working with communities, young people, adult learners and business.

It is thought that the interests of the LfS Scotland network would be strengthened by greater representation and networking at the many allied conferences and meetings.

## NEXT STEPS

Overall responses were very positive and indicated strong support for and interest in our work, with only minor suggested changes to LfS Scotland. The many helpful and constructive comments will be considered and where possible addressed by the organisation in its planning for the next year and beyond.

**November 2015**