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The UN Decade of ESD (UNDESD) 2005-2014 and beyond Learning for Sustainability in action in Scotland's Schools A retrospective review – April 2016

Education for Sustainable Development and Learning for Sustainability

For at least a decade prior to 2012 the terms **Sustainable Development Education (SDE)**, **Global/International Citizenship Education**, **Children's Rights** and **Outdoor Learning** were used to refer to different aspects of education in Scotland's schools. In 2012 it was acknowledged that these are different aspects of a wider agenda; now known in Scotland as **Learning for Sustainability (Lfs)**. Internationally, and particularly in United Nations (UN) documents, this form of education is known as **Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)**. However, perhaps uniquely in Scotland, alongside ESD and Global Citizenship Lfs is considered to include elements of outdoor learning with the specific intention of helping learners to become familiar with and to respect and care for nature and the planetary processes that sustain life on Earth.

In Scotland's schools learning for sustainability is considered to be:

'A whole school approach that enables the school and its wider community to build the values, attitudes, knowledge, skills and confidence needed to develop practices and take decisions which are compatible with a sustainable and equitable society'. (GTCS 2012)

1. Introduction

Sustainable development, a constantly evolving concept, is *'the will to improve everyone's quality of life, including that of future generations, by reconciling economic growth, social development and environmental protection.'* (UNESCO 2016). Since the 1992 Rio de Janeiro "[Earth Summit](#)" education and learning, encouraging changes in values and attitudes, skills and knowledge with the vision of enabling a more sustainable and just society for all, have been understood as key to making progress towards sustainability.

In 2002, at the UN World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, world leaders agreed that 2005-2014 should be a [UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development \(UNDESD\)](#) with UNESCO as the lead international organisation. The **UNDESD 2005-2014** aimed to integrate the principles, values and practices of sustainable development into all aspects of education and learning across the world.

The UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development in Japan November 2014, marked the end of the UNDESD with its final report, [Shaping the Future We Want](#) (UNESCO 2014) providing an assessment of international progress. The Report concluded that internationally *'a solid foundation has been made for ESD at the end of the Decade, influencing*

policies and generating significant numbers of good practice projects.’ (p. 9). For Scotland particular mention was made of significant progress in schools education (p. 52, 53).

2. The UNDESD in Scotland - Planning for Action

The Scottish Government made a substantial commitment to the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

‘Our aim is that by 2014 people in Scotland will have developed the knowledge, understanding, skills and values to live more sustainable lives’. [Learning for our Future 2006](#)

Two Action Plans were produced in partnership with a wide range of agencies and third sector organisations, setting out a vision of sustainable schools in Scotland. Each Plan set out expectations of schools, as well as universities, colleges and communities for a five-year period; [Learning for our Future](#) (published in August 2006) and [Learning for Change](#) (published in May 2010).

[Learning for Change](#) recognised that *“creating a sustainable future for Scotland will require widespread understanding and huge cultural change—and the key to achieving this is education for sustainable development”*

During the UNDESD the Action Plans set out a vision of sustainable schools in Scotland where:

- Education for sustainable development, in the context of the school curriculum, clearly helps young people to become responsible citizens
- Classroom learning is set within a whole school approach that promotes the same values
- Schools are modernised and improved based on sustainable design principles
- Schools have access to the highest quality materials, advice and support on sustainable development education
- Learning and support in sustainable development is of the highest quality
- Schools are making the best possible use of our natural heritage as a classroom for learning

3. UNDESD achievements in Scotland: establishing a Learning for Sustainability Framework

A strong framework was put in place to support Learning for Sustainability in Scotland’s schools during the UNDESD.

Learning for Sustainability has been fully integrated into Scotland’s [Curriculum for Excellence](#), which was launched in 2009. Curriculum for Excellence provides the overarching philosophical, pedagogical and practical framework and context in which ESD ought to be applied. One of the four [core capacities](#) of all learners defined in Curriculum for Excellence, that young people should become ‘responsible citizens’, signals a strong impetus towards living sustainably and equitably. Many of the attributes and capabilities identified, for example ‘apply critical thinking in new contexts’ and ‘communicate their own beliefs and view of the world’ are essential for contributing to a sustainable and just society.

The [Scottish Qualifications Authority](#) (SQA) now considers, supports and promotes the essential skills for learning, life and work, of sustainable development, enterprise, employability and citizenship throughout and across the curriculum and looks for opportunities in Courses to include these when developing qualifications. Several new qualifications focus directly on sustainable development; [Environmental Science National 4](#) ; [Modern Studies National 5](#); [Sustainable Development in Practice](#) SCQF level 5; and [The Scottish Baccalaureate in Science](#) encourages interdisciplinary projects with sustainability themes.

The influential review of teacher education in Scotland [Teaching Scotland's Future \(Donaldson, 2010\)](#) confirmed that that *'The Government believes that all teachers should have the opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge in relation to important cross-cutting themes across the curriculum such as international education, sustainable development, citizenship, enterprise and creativity'* ([Scottish Government, 2011](#)).

In 2013 Learning for Sustainability and its values were deliberately embedded within the suite of [General Teaching Council of Scotland \(GTCS\) Professional Standards](#) stressing its importance and the potential impact it could have in developing the citizens of the future. This has been further enhanced by the implementation of [Professional Update](#) which requires teachers to regularly reflect on the standards and how they can be used to improve classroom practice. In addition the GTCS now recognises individual teachers with [Professional Recognition](#) in Learning for Sustainability and has also accredited programmes from a range of Learning for Sustainability providers.

[Education Scotland's Corporate Plan 2013-2016](#) supports the embedding of Learning for Sustainability in the practice of practitioners and school leaders, in line with the GTCS professional standards. Included in the Corporate Plan are the commitments to 'Support the embedding of learning for sustainability in the curriculum by encouraging the adoption of a coherent whole-school approach to global citizenship, sustainable development education, children's rights, outdoor learning and play' and 'Support the embedding of learning for sustainability (including global citizenship, sustainable development education and outdoor learning) and the modern labour market (including career management skills and enterprise in education) in the practice of practitioners and school leaders in line with the new professional standards'. During the UNDESD the themes of LfS increasingly featured in school inspection reports and discussions with schools and parents about inspections as well as in the impact reports that are produced for different curricular areas. Following the UNDESD and subsequent work through the Learning for Sustainability Ministerial Advisory and Implementation Groups (see below), 'increasing learning for sustainability' has been included as a main strand in the self-evaluation process for schools '[How Good is our School?](#)' from August 2016. Information on how LfS is being embedded is already available from the inspection process and from aspect reports.

The [Learning for Sustainability](#) report published in 2012 and accepted by the Scottish Government in March [2013](#) made five high-level recommendations for Scotland's schools, as part of Curriculum for Excellence:

1. All learners should have an entitlement to learning for sustainability
2. In line with the new GTCS Professional Standards, every practitioner, school and education leader should demonstrate learning for sustainability in their practice
3. Every school should have a whole school approach to learning for sustainability that is robust, demonstrable, evaluated and supported by leadership at all levels
4. School buildings, grounds and policies should support learning for sustainability
5. A strategic national approach to supporting learning for sustainability should be established.

An implementation Group was set up by the Scottish Government in 2014 to take these recommendations forward, working in partnership with stakeholders and practitioners. The Group reported on progress and made future recommendations in March 2016, linking these closely with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (2016). The report's title emphasises the 2015-2030 timescale of the UN SDGs: 'Vision 2030+ The report of the Learning for Sustainability Ministerial Implementation Group'.

For school buildings and grounds the Scottish Government's School Estate Strategy [Building Better Schools: Investing in Scotland's Future](#) 2009, focuses specifically on greener schools in Guiding Principle 6 – Schools which are 'greener', more sustainable and environmentally efficient. 'Delivery of schools which have an EPC rating of 'B+ (before renewables)' and 'target the achievement of BREEAM 'Excellent' are two measures which are currently monitored across the programme. This will help meet the Scottish Government's commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050 as required under the [Climate Change Act \(Scotland\) 2009](#). Building Better Schools also sets out the importance of good consultation - including pupil involvement - and innovative design to ensure that the school estate is accessible to all users. In addition, reference to the upper levels of the [Scottish Government's Sustainability labelling system](#) can be used either alongside or as an alternative means of demonstrating a new school building's environmental credentials. These are all important components of the national school building programme, [Scotland's Schools for the Future](#).

Sustainable school travel choices can have considerable benefit, in terms of promoting health and wellbeing, reducing emissions and saving money, and parents and pupils as well as local authorities can benefit. During the UNDESD local authorities encouraged schools to put school travel plans in place and encourage walking and cycling rather than being driven. From 2008 a [Hands Up Scotland Survey](#), has been conducted which is funded by [Transport Scotland](#) and coordinated and published by [Sustrans Scotland](#) asking pupils 'how do you normally travel to school?' In 2014 50.04% said they travelled to school actively without motorised transport.

In October 2014 more than 50 stakeholders met to celebrate the achievements of the UNDESD and identify the next steps that should be taken. ([Appendix 1 Scotland's End of UNDESD Conference report](#)) UNESCO's report on the UNDESD, [Shaping the Future We Want](#) (UNESCO 2014) identified Scotland as a world leader in Education for Sustainable Development, identifying Scotland as an example where high level political leadership, co-ordination with stakeholders and accountability had set clear vision and goals.

4. Scotland's schools respond to the UNDESD and beyond

The reorientation of education towards sustainable development in Scotland, promoted throughout the UNDESD has begun to make a difference at school, teacher and classroom level

To mark the conclusion of the UNDESD Education Scotland's [Conversations about Learning for Sustainability](#) report (2014) identified case studies from 20 primary and secondary schools, schools for learners with additional support needs (ASN schools) and early years centres with a commitment to learning for sustainability. Each centre and school had taken sustainability forward in a way that best met their own needs and context.

These inspiring case studies drawn from across Scotland report positive outcomes for learners in relation to:

- Confidence and skills of learners
- Learning experiences and motivation of learners
- The reputation of the centres
- Staff morale, wellbeing and motivation
- Ethos of the school, community partnerships and community spirit.

Leadership at all levels was identified as key and the commitment and the vision of the Headteacher was viewed to be crucial. In addition the support, resources and guidance provided by non-governmental organisations were seen to be of enormous value to teachers and schools as they make progress towards a coherent whole school approach to Learning for Sustainability.

At the October 2014 end of the UNDESD celebrations, pupils from Thornlie Primary School, Wishaw and Hazlehead Academy, Aberdeen spoke compellingly about the impact of Learning for sustainability in their schools ([Appendix 1 Scotland's End of UNDESD Conference report](#)).

Thornlie Primary School's journey towards a whole school approach to learning for sustainability began in 2005 with the development of the [school's grounds](#). These now provide a stimulating learning environment used daily to support the curriculum and natural play. The school is very committed to sustainability issues and is involved in [Fairtrade](#), [Philosophy for Children](#), [restorative approaches](#), UNICEF's [Rights Respecting Schools](#) Programme and [Eco-Schools](#).

In **Hazlehead Academy** two promoted members of staff have whole-school responsibility for sustainability and global citizenship. In the junior phase, all learners take part in the [Youth and Philanthropy Initiative](#). In the senior phase activities in the wider community are recognised through Scottish Qualification Authority [Leadership](#) and [Creative Industries](#) Awards. The school has been involved in Eco-Schools since 1999. Learner voice is important and pupils have led local campaigns on reducing waste and participated in the [Aberdeen Schools Hydrogen Challenge](#) and a partnership with Bucksburn Academy and schools in Italy to explore [sustainable energy](#).

4.1 Curriculum

4.1.1 Curriculum areas and subjects

During the UNDESD schools were encouraged to move towards the development of a more a coherent whole-school approach to global citizenship, sustainable development education, children's rights, outdoor learning and play as part of successful implementation of Curriculum for Excellence. This has led to an approach to learning which is relevant to real life, connected and meaningful.

The following examples drawn from Education Scotland's 2013 [Sciences 3-18 curriculum impact report](#) and [Social Studies 3-18](#) highlight case studies of good practice in these two curriculum areas

In a **pre-school nature kindergarten**, the children spend almost all of their time outdoors. This provides them with a rich natural environment which is used very effectively to promote early science skills and develop children's interests in living things. Effective shared planning for learning allows children the space and time to explore and discover their natural environment. This is supported by well-timed and skilful interactions with staff. Children are developing their powers of observation and investigation very well. They are well aware of change and its effects on them, for example, their own growth, changes in weather, trees, flowers and plants. Children enjoy observing living things, for example, they know where to find the 'toad' outdoors in the garden. They are learning about planting and growing and know that you need sunshine and rain to make some things grow for example, carrots, peas, onions, strawberries, tomatoes, planting trees. Through their daily walks into the wild wood, children explore their natural environment and fulfil their inquiry, creativity and problem-solving skills.
[Sciences 3-18 curriculum impact report](#)

One **special school** has utilised its very strong cluster partnership with a local secondary school to plan and develop a whole school sciences learning programme. The programme is planned taking into account each learner's level of skill, knowledge and understanding. Careful planning ensures that each learner has access to a broad general education, including those with more complex needs. One creative project was planned to develop learners' STEM skills. This was planned in partnership with the technologies department from a local secondary school and involved designing and building bird boxes. It was delivered through a challenging real-life context, developing learners' creativity, team working and problem solving skills. This partnership approach provided shared activities and experiences for learners and gave them access to the specialist equipment required to construct the bird boxes to scale and use engraving tools to make box house plaques. Learners developed their confidence and presentation skills through showcasing their skills, knowledge and understanding at the National Science and Engineering Week and parent workshops. Learners' self-esteem will be enhanced through the display of the boxes in the school grounds as part of the school Grounds for Learning programme.

[Sciences 3-18 curriculum impact report](#)

Discovering an invasive species of worm within their school grounds and sharing the news with the scientific community was just one of many exciting moments for children turned citizen scientists at one **primary school**. Through their citizen science activities, children developed a range of scientific skills including measuring accurately, recording, classifying and observing. Information and communications technology (ICT) and literacy skills were also developed in the process of uploading data to the OPAL website and recording experiences and learning in their John Muir Award journal. Partnerships with local conservation groups and a university enabled detailed study of the biodiversity and impact of climate change on the local river. Children reported an increased enthusiasm for science and a new-found pride in their local community and its natural assets. Children who required additional support with their learning were fully included in all activities and had grown in confidence as a result. Find out more about Citizen Science surveys.

[Sciences 3-18 curriculum impact report](#)

Planning across the contexts for learning

Staff in [Pentland School](#), a 'rights respecting school', aim to empower the children to achieve a better future. Staff plan learning across the four contexts and use the school's environment to make children want to come to school every morning. Active participation in discussions about their rights and responsibilities within school help them to develop skills that are important for active citizens.

[Social Studies 3-18](#)

Outdoor learning in Mortlach Primary School

A range of well-planned partnership activities take place within [Mortlach Primary School](#) in Moray. The presentation on Glow shows the work of the whole school, for example how setting up an orienteering course and working on Balvenie Castle assists children in the school to develop their skills in social studies.

[Social Studies 3-18](#)

4.1.2 Interdisciplinary learning (IDL)

Learning for Sustainability goes beyond subject boundaries and makes connections between different areas of learning. During the UNDESD many schools offered learners opportunities to explore relevant, challenging, complex and sometimes controversial sustainability issues providing them with enjoyable and meaningful learning experiences. Such learning for

sustainability promotes deep learning and the development of skills including higher-order thinking skills. This also provided opportunities to work with supportive partners and enhance young people's wider involvement in society. The following examples, drawn from Education Scotland's 2013 [Sciences 3-18 curriculum impact report](#) and [Social Studies 3-18](#), highlight case-studies of good practice.

One school has formed a positive partnership with the staff of a local country estate. Young people studying the sciences can visit the estate and experience their learning in a real-life context. They can work with the estate managers, rangers and other estate workers as they observe what they have been their learning in practice. For example, the learning for one physics class was contextualised as they observed electricity and circuits being used for electric fences and cattle management, incorporating opportunities to consider potential hazards and risk management.

[Sciences 3-18 curriculum impact report](#)

One school has been given a substantial area of land by a local business to maintain, develop and use as an 'outdoor classroom'. This provides a relevant context for learning. Teachers can take classes to this outdoor area and develop young people's knowledge and skills as they study areas of the sciences such as biodiversity and sustainability. Young people's skills are developing through using sampling techniques, making various measurements, recording, presenting and analysing data. They develop team-working skills as they contribute ideas for improving the land and work together to carry out practical work such as planting trees.

[Sciences 3-18 curriculum impact report](#)

At **Glen Urquhart High School** young people in S2 study slavery in history at the same time as studying the history of blues music. Using *Amazing Grace* as the focus, young people perform for the junior assembly and senior assemblies using bagpipes and other instruments, and singing and storytelling. It is filmed as evidence of achievement. The librarian supports young people to locate sources of local history about the slave trade. Links are made to current fair trade issues and S2 organise a fair-trade coffee morning where their investigations are displayed.

[Sciences 3-18 curriculum impact report](#)

At **Aboyne Academy** young people, led by the social studies faculty, helped to rediscover a lost village, deepen their learning and develop a host of important skills through outdoor learning.

[Social Studies 3-18](#)

In Cauldeen Primary School, Inverness, relevant global links enhance learning and information and communications technology (ICT) skills. Children are offered richer learning experiences through e-twinning with European partners.

[Social Studies 3-18](#)

St Margaret's Academy in West Lothian promotes democratic literacy and citizenship and empowers students through holding pupil council elections. These are developed with the assistance of the local council and partners, making them more relevant and realistic.

[Social Studies 3-18](#)

4.1.3 Ethos and life of the school

In schools with a whole school approach to learning for sustainability a positive, open and participative ethos is palpable across the school and there is a common sense of purpose, towards building a more sustainable and equitable future for all. During the UNDES the

importance of learner voice across decision-making and planning and within the classroom was highlighted by a consultation on [Children's Rights](#) in 2011, and the introduction of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill 2014

Queen Anne High School, Dunfermline, uses the remembrance of war as a focus to develop young people as citizens. Each year a large remembrance service is organised in school with work being undertaken by young people to help them to understand the horrors of war. Recent deaths of soldiers who went to the school are remembered on the school's remembrance plaques and help young people to see the devastating effects war can have on the local community. Members of the local community are invited to the service and are consistently impressed with the attitude of young people to the day. The service not only acts as a way of developing young people as global citizens but also helps them to be seen as positive members of the local community.

[Social Studies 3-18](#)

During the UNDESD increasing numbers of schools used recognised Award schemes as starting points for their whole school approach to Learning for Sustainability.

By the end of the UNDESD 98% of all local authority schools were registered with the [Eco-Schools Scotland](#) Award programme and 50% of schools had gained a Green Flag. Eco-Schools is an international initiative designed to encourage whole-school pupil-led action for the environment across a range of issues, including water and energy use, waste minimisation, bio-diversity and sustainability. The programme is run by Keep Scotland Beautiful (KSB) and during the UNDESD was joint-funded by the Education and Environment departments of the Scottish Government. The programme is currently being redesigned to further support pupils in learning for sustainability.

The [Rights Respecting Schools](#) Award is a UNICEF UK programme that aims to put children's rights at the heart of schools and embedded in their ethos and culture. The Award recognises a school's achievement in putting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child into practice within the school and beyond. By the end of the UNDESD almost a third of the UK Rights Respecting Schools were in Scotland with 35% of Scottish schools registered. During the UNDESD the Scottish Government invested in strengthening the programme to ensure alignment with CfE and GIRFEC (Getting it Right for Every Child) and increase participation.

The [Fairtrade](#) Award for schools is run by the Fairtrade Foundation. At the end of the UNDESD, 1073 schools had registered in Scotland and 291 had achieved full Fairtrade status in Scotland

4.1.4 Opportunities for personal achievement

Learning for sustainability provides a valuable context for providing children and young people with opportunities to develop personal skills and insights, a sense of satisfaction, motivation, resilience and confidence. During the UNDESD schools increasingly worked with voluntary youth organisations to help young people access information and opportunities and make their voices heard. In 2008 the [Amazing Things](#) Awards network was set up to raise awareness of the numerous awards available to young people 12-25 years old. Some examples are highlighted below.

The [John Muir Award](#) is an environmental award scheme that encourages people to connect with, enjoy, and care for wild places. More than 12,500 John Muir Awards were awarded in Academic year 2013/14 and resources and [case studies](#) made available to support schools.

[Cocksburnspath Primary School](#), for example, completed a John Muir Award by visiting their local woods every week from spring to summer and identified and measured trees, tracking and recording weekly changes. (October 2010)

The Humanities department at [Larbert High School](#) led all first years through the Award, connecting English with the work by 'sharing' experiences through various forms of writing, with staff noting that 'all pupils have responded to this opportunity with genuine enthusiasm and a growing respect for the environment'. (2013)

Some schools made use of the [Youth Scotland](#) partnership with [Eco-Schools Scotland](#). This allowed learners to gain individual recognition and accreditation for their learning through involvement in the Eco-Schools Scotland programme, using external moderation by Youth Scotland and accreditation by [the Awards Scheme Development and Accreditation Network \(ASDAN\)](#).

[Sciences 3-18 curriculum impact report](#)

The [Duke of Edinburgh's Award programme](#) with its focus on developing young people for life and work and involving them in volunteering that will make a difference to other people's lives, contributed to personal achievement in learning for sustainability for a number of young people.

[Youthlink Scotland](#) developed a [Participative Democracy certificate](#) for young people, based on decision-making in groups, giving participants the opportunity to acknowledge and develop communication, decision-making and negotiation in the context of democratic engagement.

Scottish Junior [Saltire Awards](#) were developed, designed to formally recognise the commitment and contribution of youth volunteering. Supported by the Scottish Government, the Saltire Awards enable young volunteers to record the skills, experience and learning gained through successful volunteering placements in school or provided by local and national voluntary agencies. The [Junior Saltire Competition](#) focuses on renewable energy themes.

5. School Buildings and Grounds

A [School Grounds and Buildings Conversation Day](#) in 2014 brought together those responsible for and with an interest in school buildings and grounds to discuss how best to implement the recommendations made in the Learning for Sustainability (LfS) Report and to identify the elements of a supporting action plan. The increasingly supportive framework for sustainable school buildings and grounds has resulted in examples of good practice.

Building Better Schools includes a number of [case studies](#) which highlight a number of innovative aspects of sustainable school building including design and pupil involvement. In many parts of the country children were involved in the designs for their new classrooms, and learning about the relationship between design and the daily management of waste, energy and other resources - in short, putting sustainable development education into immediate practice. Sustainable design therefore, has an important role not just in shaping healthy and ecologically-sensitive school environments but also demonstrating to pupils an awareness of the need for all of us to develop more sustainable ways of living. Further [case studies](#) are available online, for example:

An extension at [Gullane Primary School](#) East Lothian showed that key desirable features associated with adopting a sustainable approach (e.g. a low energy design, well day lit and naturally ventilated, and using healthy materials) can be achieved within 'normal' budget constraints. It also dispels the myth that design is compromised in sustainable buildings.

[Galston Primary School](#) East Ayrshire incorporates a significant number of alternative energy and "green" technologies. The building is considered to be a leading example of a "green school" and includes a wind turbine, photovoltaic cells, a ground source heat pump and grey water recycling. The school building has been rated as B+ using the SBEM energy calculation tool.

[Dalry Primary School](#) North Ayrshire demonstrated the value of extensive consultation with users during the development of the design brief.

The increased use of school grounds for outdoor learning was supported by third sector partners, for example [Grounds for Learning](#) Scotland working with [Oakgrove Primary School](#), Glasgow and [Thornlie Primary School](#), Wishaw

6. Professional Learning

The review of teacher education in Scotland [Teaching Scotland's Future \(Donaldson, 2010\)](#) proposed teacher education as a continuum from initial teacher education to career long professional learning and leadership. For learning for sustainability in schools this has promoted a culture of professional learning, innovation and collaboration, drawing on a wide body of research and practice from local authorities, schools and academic sources.

6.1 In **Initial Teacher Education** in Scotland during the UNDES, [IDEAS](#) members and the Development Education Centres in Scotland worked with seven of the initial teacher education universities in Scotland. Successive projects, supported by DfID, worked with Universities on the integration of global citizenship into programmes. A teacher educator network around global citizenship was initiated and a research publication '[Education in a Global Space](#)' produced, as well as a [Global Citizenship in ITE Audit](#). This work is currently being taken forward in a wider Learning for Sustainability context by GTCS and LfS Scotland funded by the Gordon Cook Foundation.

6.2 Career Long Professional Learning

Following a [Career Long Professional Learning for LfS workshop](#) attended by the many partner organisations available to support professional learning in aspects Learning for Sustainability in Schools, an [Opening up Great Learning: Learning for Sustainability](#) briefing, developed by Education Scotland, was sent to all Scotland's teachers.

The workshop report highlighted many third sector providers in Scotland. In addition Education Scotland provided peer support, and 'collaboration funding' was provided to school clusters and authorities over a three-year period to allow joint planning, networking, sharing of practice and mentoring activities This programme was complemented by professional learning Glow meets, school open days and local, regional and national network events, Learning for Sustainability at Scottish Learning Festivals, showcase events, national and regional conferences, twilight sessions and international study visits. In addition, Global citizenship and sustainability were highlighted in national events such as the London 2012 Olympics and 'Game on Scotland' for the [Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games](#).

Current CLPL:

The 'Vision 2030+' report recommends that professional learning opportunities are available for all educators. The following fully funded opportunities are currently available throughout Scotland:

The [Global Learning Programme Scotland](#) offers practical fully-funded support to clusters, schools and teachers to develop global citizenship across the curriculum and through whole school activities. The Programme is aimed at all sectors – primary, secondary (including transition) and additional support needs. Schools can access training sessions, day conferences, sharing and networking sessions or tailored support. All support to schools is offered through the six Scottish regional Development Education Centres and coordinated by the [International Development Education Association for Scotland](#) (IDEAS)

[Learning for Sustainability: Connecting Classrooms](#) is a new professional learning opportunity for primary and secondary teachers in Scotland to develop their practice in relation to Learning for Sustainability. This is a ten week face to face and online professional learning initiative by the University of Edinburgh and Learning for Sustainability Scotland in partnership with the British Council. The course aims to help teachers to grapple with what LfS means, what existing and new core skills, values and knowledge are required, and how this might all look in their school context.

7. Resources for learning and teaching

With an increased focus on Learning for Sustainability numerous high quality teaching resources were produced during the UNDESD in Scotland.

A [Global Citizenship resource guide](#) was prepared by Education Scotland to provides a comprehensive guide to the resources and websites available to support learning in global citizenship, and [online case studies](#) offer examples of how global citizenship was embedded into the learning, teaching and the life of educational establishments. Regularly updated links to individual [Global citizenship resources](#) are produced by Education Scotland.

The [Schools Global Footprint](#) teaching resource was produced by WWF Scotland to help schools to explore and to reduce their environmental effect on the planet. This resource, aimed primarily at the second and third levels, is made up of two main teaching tools which work hand in hand: an online footprint calculator and a [teacher's handbook](#).

A substantial online resource about [Weather and Climate Change](#) was developed for practitioners and learners from early level onwards with background information about climate change, easy access to topical news and resources and high-quality videos that can be used directly with children and young people.

Education Scotland developed [Political Literacy](#) support materials for practitioners, schools and community settings to help them reflect on how well they help learners to 'use their voice', and participate and contribute to real and meaningful decision making processes.

A national professional development resource for adults working with children and young people,

[Recognising and Realising Children's Rights](#), was produced by Education Scotland. In addition, through a partnership with 'Glasgow 2014', UNICEF's [Child Rights Launchpad](#) was developed to take children and young people 3-18 years in Scotland on a journey to explore their rights. Through the Launchpad, children and young people aged three to 18 can still learn about their rights, and the rights of others around the world, and take action to help children in other countries to enjoy their rights too.

[Ready for Emergencies](#) is a resource that contains a range of materials to help children and young people prepare for, and deal with emergencies. It has been developed for use by practitioners using examples from real-life emergency situations wherever possible. It aims to engage and inform the audience about the benefits of building resilience through education.

The place of Outdoor Learning was confirmed in [Curriculum for Excellence through Outdoor Learning](#) and through Education Scotland's website, [practical guidance, ideas and support](#) for teachers is now available as well as advice on the [Experiences and Outcomes Guides for Outdoor Learning](#). The core values of Curriculum for Excellence echo the key concepts of outdoor learning as an approach to learning for sustainability: 'challenge, enjoyment, relevance, depth, development of the whole person and an adventurous approach to learning'.

The [Scottish Environment website](#) SEWeb, was developed by a network of partners who have collaborated to produce resources for schools. These include a suite of 'Get Learning' web pages for young people, the 'Our Environment' Competition, an Air Quality Citizen Science in schools Our Environment' Competition, a 'What's In My Area' interactive map, and dashboard of 'apps' for finding out about local environmental quality, recycling facilities, things to see, monitoring and action projects to get involved and an inventory of 'citizen science' and action projects.

8. Conclusions and next steps

Participants at Scotland's end of UNDESD conference identified **major successes** during the UNDESD in schools education to be the introduction of Curriculum for Excellence and Learning for Sustainability within it, acting as both a driver and enabler of activities in schools. They believed these had led to an increase in 'pupil voice' in schools. The incorporation of Learning for Sustainability as a theme in the GTCS Professional Standards for educators now gives teachers permission to engage as part of a career long professional journey, and the extensive inclusion in HGIOS4? provides a means by which they, and the schools inspectorate can review the impact on schools.

Key to successes in schools during the UNDESD and beyond, identified by participants at Scotland's end of UNDESD conference, are:

- Curriculum for Excellence as an enabler
- Whole school approaches with school leader(s) that believe in it and give colleagues a license to do it
- Practical outcomes that are visible to young people
- Local Authority support
- Working with others locally, nationally and globally
- The important role of teachers & helping them to increase their professional learning
- Real pupil leadership and decision making, in partnership with teachers
- Making values more explicit
- Framing the problems and questions to find solutions to local needs
- Making connections across themes e.g. Children's Rights and Outdoor Play
- Learning and teaching approaches that are varied and enjoyable

In 2014 UNESCO – the UN agency responsible for ESD – launched a [Global Action Programme on ESD](#) to continue to build on what was achieved during the UNDESD. The GAP on ESD addresses five priorities: advancing policy, transforming learning and training environments, building capacity of educators and trainers, empowering and mobilising youth, and accelerating sustainable solutions at a local level. The programme was launched at the end of

the UNDESD celebrations in Japan, and the commitment to further support this process was fully supported by the Scottish Government.

In September 2015, 193 countries across the world agreed the UN's new [Sustainable Development Goals](#). They set a challenge for every country to tackle poverty, inequality, climate change and sustainable development with Education, and learning as a central component. Here in Scotland there was a clear initial statement of adoption of the SDGs and the place of learning and education within them, and the future for learning for sustainability will be inextricably linked to these and achieving them in Scotland.

Betsy King
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