



LEARNING FOR SUSTAINABILITY SCOTLAND REPORT December 2016- December 2017



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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.

Our eight elected Steering Group members 2016 – 2017 were:

Elected AGM 2015

- Rehema White (University of St Andrews)
- Kate Campbell (Sustrans),
- Susan Carleton (Sustaining Dunbar)

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*.

- Ullrich Kockel (Heriot Watt University)
- Kirsten Leask (Soil Association)
- Rosa Murray (University of Edinburgh)

Elected AGM 2016

- Lorna Matthews (Primary teacher)
- Kerr McConnell (Keep Scotland Beautiful)

Elected Steering Group chair Rehema White was supported by Vice Chairs Kirsten Leask and Kate Campbell during the year.

Laura Curtis-Moss (RSPB) and Rebecca Petford (EAUC Scotland) were coopted onto the Group in 2016-2017 to provide additional expertise. Task Group representation on the Steering Group during this period was: Further and Higher Education: Rebecca Petford EAUC Scotland; Communications: Mike Pretious Queen Margaret University; Connection with Nature, Judy Paul RSPB (to June 2017); Sustainable Development Goals, Rehema White University of St Andrews; Food Pedagogy, Kirsten Leask (task completed June 2017); Curating Heritage for Sustainable Communities (Ullrich Kockel).

In September 2017 Laura Curtis-Moss and Rebecca Petford were appointed as Scotland's RCE Youth Coordinators.

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. The findings of the Members Survey carried out in May 2017 were used to develop plans to support implementation of the UN SDGs during the year. 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 **1398** members (December 2017), 725 individuals and the rest representing organisations.

A Members' survey to gather opinions on themed networking forums and find out about members' current work aligning with the UN SDGs was undertaken in July 2017. Responses were used to design future events and in LfS Scotland communications.

4. EMPLOYEES

During this period Betsy King was employed as Development Manager (0.6 FTE Dec 2016-Sept 2017 and 1FTE Sept 2017 – Dec 2017)) and Abi Cornwall as Development Officer (0.75 FTE).

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.

LfS Scotland activities during this period were supported through fee earning from projects (British Council, General Teaching Council for Scotland, University of Edinburgh, Scottish College for Educational Leadership) and events. 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 to focus on the UN Sustainable Development Goals and its information targeted to specific sectors.

6.2 PRESENTATIONS

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

Date	Event	Presentation(s) by LfS Scotland	Event organized by LfS Scotland (many in partnership)	Place
February 2017	Promoting meaningful teaching and learning (EAUC Scotland Conference)	X		Stirling
February 2017	Global Intimacy - learning to love your planet. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=leFZtVGhtL0	X		TEDx Edinburgh
March 2017	Values and pedagogy of Learning for Sustainability (LfS) (Open Educational Practices and LfS workshop)	X	X	Edinburgh
March 2017	Meeting the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in initial teacher education (ITE) across the UK (TEESNet/LfSS/GTCS)	X	X	Edinburgh
Jan, May, Sept 2017	Teacher as Researcher webinars	X	X	Online
May 2017	Values and LfS (Connections to Nature conference)	X	X	Edinburgh
May 2017	Current action on the SDGs in Further and Higher education in Scotland and UK (EAUC Scotland/LfSS seminar)	X	X	Edinburgh
June 2017	Responding to the UN SDGs in UK and Scotland (UK Regional Centres of Expertise in ESD conference)	X	X	Edinburgh
June 2017	Policy development in outdoor education and learning for sustainability in Scotland (Education Outdoors Conference: Connecting evidence, policy and practise. Victoria State Government & La Trobe University).	X		Sydney, Australia

August 2017.	Environmental education, learning for sustainability and policy development. (Chinese Academy of Sciences)	X		China
August 2017	Values and Learning for Sustainability in Initial Teacher Education (with GTCS)	X	X	Edinburgh
September 2017	Youth Employment and Sustainability Education (New Education Forum)	x		Edinburgh
September 2017	Promoting meaningful engagement and action on the UN SDGs (European RCE Conference)	X	X	Dortmund
September 2017	Introduction to Vision 2030+ launch	X	X	Edinburgh
September 2017	Learning for Sustainability: making the SDGs real in Scotland through Connecting Classrooms (TEESNet Conference)	X		Liverpool
September 2017	Responding to SDGs (Soil Association workshop)	X	X	Edinburgh
October 2017	Values and LfS in your ITE courses and programmes workshop	X	X	Ayr
October 2017	What really matters? RSE Spotlight on Biodiversity Conference	X		Edinburgh
November 2017	Taking action on SDGs in schools and communities – what are SDGS?	X	X	Edinburgh
November 2017	European Parliament Seminar on Youth Employment and Sustainability Education (New Education Forum)	X		Brussels
November 2017	Learning for Sustainability in Scotland – from research to policy to practise. (Universities and Sustainable Development: Learning experiences that shape the future conference hosted by the University of Bilbao and University of Basque Country	X		Bilbao, Spain
December 2017	Education and Biodiversity SNH Conference	X		Perth

6.3 SEMINARS and EVENTS

The following seminars and events were organized during the year.

6.3.1 AGM 2016

57 members attended the Annual General Meeting in January 2017, ‘Transforming our World –education and learning that responds to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), discussing how members can contribute to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals in Scotland and beyond. Aaron Benavot, Director, UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report 2016 presented its findings. Members shared their experiences of working on the SDGs in Schools, With Young People and Communities, in Tertiary Education and with Government. Members were keen to see a Task Group linking community learning with the SDGs, opportunities for networking, further LfS Scotland involvement in lobbying and clear alignment with the SDGs.

6.3.2 Open Educational Practices and Learning for Sustainability

LfS Scotland, in partnership with Open Educational Practices Scotland, organised a workshop for 26 participants to explore the opportunity of developing open practices with a LfS focus. The shared values and

pedagogy of open educational practices and learning for sustainability were identified, including thinking on ways to use openness to be transformative and inclusive. Outcomes of the workshop included the desire to collaborate in the development of an online professional learning opportunity and to map existing opportunities.

6.3.3 Making Connections with Nature

The LfS Scotland 'Connected to Nature' task group organized an extremely successful full day event for 200 teachers and community workers and NGOs from across in partnership with Edinburgh City Council, IDEAS and the Forestry Commission. The focus was on bringing practitioners and researchers together and to providing 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.

6.3.4 Meeting the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in initial teacher education (ITE) in the UK

LfS Scotland hosted a seminar for 20 key educators in UK initial teacher education institutions in partnership with the Teacher education for Equity and Sustainability Network (TEESNet) and the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS). The seminar participants shared progress on Learning for Sustainability, identifying the need to raise the profile of SDG 4 in ITE, to engage a broader audience with LfS approaches and language, to develop a framework for supporting educators and to find opportunities for research and collaboration across the UK.

6.3.5 Embedding the SDGs across Further and Higher Education.

In collaboration with SDGs and Further and Higher Education (FHE) Task Groups EAUC Scotland and LfS Scotland jointly organized an event on Embedding the Sustainable Development Goals within FHE institutions. The session attracted 26 attendees with the aim to share current practice and progress so far, and to develop ideas and plans to embed the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into universities and colleges, both within individual institutions and strategically across the sector. Following an introduction to the SDGs and the response to them within Scotland, the UK and the rest of the world, the group explored how the SDGs relate to other sustainability reporting activities happening within FHE institutions, the demand from students for more action on the SDGs, how they can be used to increase the value of teaching from both an academic and student perspective, and their potential to support progression of the wider sustainability agenda. An interactive workshop then allowed the group to work together to begin to develop a strategy to both report on current work around the SDGs in Scottish FHE institutions, and to support the sector in utilising the SDGs to progress teaching, engagement and operational activities.

6.3.6 Sustainable Food Cities

LfS Scotland was a key partner in the 2017 Sustainable Food Cities Conference held in Edinburgh. The event showcased the people and projects across the UK that are exploring practical solutions and taking a joined-up place-based approach to making healthy and sustainable food a defining characteristic of where they live.

6.3.7 UK Regional Centres of Expertise in ESD conference

In June 2017 LfS Scotland hosted the first meeting of the UK RCEs since June 2013, aiming to promote joint working around the values and actions needed to take forward the SDGs. 26 participants drawn from 6 RCEs across the UK worked together in exploring the relationship between our values and the SDGs and on the role of the UK RCEs a role in the domestic implementation of the SDGs.

6.3.7 Taking Action on the SDGs across Communities and schools

40 participants attended this event, organized by the SDGs and Communities Task Groups. Bringing together those working in or with communities and schools the focus was on exploring how to effectively embed the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into our work. Key outcomes of the day were participants seeing the need for greater cross sectoral working on SDGs driven by their local contexts; considering how to engage the media and business and identifying ways of engaging with government and decision making processes.

6.4 YOUTH CO-ORDINATORS

6.4.1 In 2017 Global RCE Network asked all RCEs to nominate a Youth Coordinator to help engage "youth" with the networks (by which they mean anyone under the ages of 35!), and Laura Curtis-Moss (RSPB) and Rebecca Petford (EAUC-Scotland) stepped forward to be Co-ordinators for Scotland's RCE. The aim is to increase Learning for Sustainability Scotland's engagement with students and young professionals with an interest in teaching and learning about sustainability, through development of a Youth Network.

6.4.2 The first Youth Network event took place during Climate Week in September, in the form of a very popular joint screening of *Demain* in collaboration with Scotland's 2050 Climate Group, which attracted well over 100 attendees of all ages. The Youth Coordinators appreciate the strength of many of the organisations which already support people of this age group to learn about and engage with sustainability, and hope the Network can continue to work in partnership with groups such as the 2050 Climate Group, and organisations such as RSPB, on events and projects going forward.

6.4.3 A Survey was developed to gather ideas from people aged roughly 18-35 about what the Youth Network could offer to help people develop their understanding and skills in education for sustainability, and meet other young professionals with similar interests. The results of the survey are currently being analysed but demonstrate a clear interest from young people to participate.

6.5 COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

6.5.1 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 2017 involved piloting a web-based Reflection and Development Tool with Universities, supporting its use and developing research articles with an LfS focus. Phase 2 of the programme in 2017-2018 will engage 20 newly qualified teachers in a practitioner enquiry focused on values and learning for sustainability.

6.5.2 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 2017 six ten week courses were delivered from January to December 2017 with 180 teachers and involving two face to face meetings and an online course. In November 29 teachers achieved GTCS Professional Recognition. In 2017 a fully online version of the course was developed and successfully piloted with 34 teachers.

6.6 POLICY ENGAGEMENT

LfS Scotland's Secretariat maintained formal and informal dialogue with a wide range of individuals from Government and its agencies during the year.

During this period LfS Scotland responded to consultations through its Task Groups and Steering Group members. Responses were submitted on behalf of members to the:

- UK Office of National Statistics on their approach to measuring and reporting SDGs in the UK (September 2017)
- Department for International Development consultation on Development Education in UK (October 2017)

- QAA Consultation on the redevelopment of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code) (,December 2017)

LfS Scotland contributed to the launch of the Government’s Implementation Group [Vision 2030+](#) Report by Minister for Further and Higher Education and Science, Shirley-Anne Somerville, held in Moray House, University of Edinburgh, in September 2017.

LfS Scotland has participated in the newly formed Sustainable Development Goals Network during the year, co-ordinated by the Open Government Pioneers SCVO and aiming to ‘use open government commitments to help people secure progress towards the SDGs in UK.’ Joint advocacy is planned in advance of the second year anniversary of the SDGs in January 2018.

In addition LfS Scotland became a partner of the UK Stakeholders for Sustainable Development network to add a learning and education dimension to their work as contribute to their presence in Scotland. The network is developing a Stakeholders Action plan for the SDGs.

6.7 INTERNATIONAL NETWORKING

LfS Scotland, Scotland’s UN recognized Regional Centre of Expertise in ESD is one of the global network of 158 RCEs (December 2017). 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.

6.7.1 In June 2017 LfS Scotland hosted the UK RCEs conference (see 6.3.6 above)

6.7.2 In September 2017 LfS Scotland shared Scotland’s progress on LfS in relation to the Global Action Programme and the Sustainable Development Goals, and facilitated a workshop on ‘Promoting meaningful engagement and action on the UN SDGs’ at the European RCE Conference organized by RCE Denmark, RCE Ruhr and RCE Oldenburger Münsterland. The meeting was attended by 44 representatives of 19 RCEs from across Europe (Bordeaux, Brittany, Denmark, London, Severn, Scotland, Graz-Styria, Upper Austria, BeNE Munich, Ruhrgebiet, Oldenburger Münsterland, Stettiner Haff, Hamburg, Ostwürttemberg, Czechia, Dublin, Nizhny-Novgorod, Espoo, Belarus, UNU-IAS, OPEDUCA-Project). European RCEs pledged to continue close collaboration and develop partnerships across Europe.

6.7.3 LfS Scotland participated in the ‘Young People and the SDGs ‘ think tank event session at St George’s House, Windsor Castle in November 2017. A further event on post 16 years (mainly Further and Higher Education) in 2018 will be chaired by LfS Scotland.

6.7.4 The 5th Asia-Pacific Expert Meeting on ESD (a joint meeting of the UNESCO International Network on Reorienting Teacher Education to Address Sustainable Development Network (above) and members of the Chinese Government with responsibility for ESD) was held in Beijing in December 2017. The meeting theme was ‘School development and learning innovation towards sustainable development’. LfS Scotland was invited to give a presentation on innovations in LfS in Scotland.

6.7.5 In September 2017, LfS Scotland participated in a ‘New Education Forum’, event in Brussels to discuss the employment market and the development of ‘soft skills’.

Director Pete Higgins and Steering Group member Rosa Murray contributed a Scotland case study to the UNESCO publication, Martin, S., Higgins, P., Murray, R. *et al.* (2017). *Good practise in Education for Sustainable Development in the UK: Case Studies. Case Study 1.* London: UK National Commission for UNESCO. 30pp

6.8 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.

6.8.1 Further and Higher Education (Convenor Rebecca Petford/Mike Pretious/Elaine Crawford)

This is an ongoing networking group which meets twice yearly co-badged as one of EAUC's Topic Support Networks to explore and share best practice in learning for sustainability within further and higher education settings, curricula and research practices and develop resources to support teaching and research staff to embed sustainability in their practice. Further and Higher Education groups plan both separate and joint meetings, attended by representatives from universities and colleges around Scotland, depending on the focus of the meeting.

A popular joint meeting was organised with the Further Education Task group in May 2017 (see 6.3.4). An event on Measuring Sustainability in the Curriculum is currently being developed, and will be the focus of a joint meeting on 10th January 2018. There will also be an ESD TSN for both FE and HE in Spring 2018, focusing on embedding sustainability within vocational training curricula.

The Further Education Group is planning an event with the College Development Network in early 2018 to discuss the new Outcome Agreement Guidance from Scottish Funding Council on Leadership in Environmental and Social Sustainability, and relaunch the series of workbooks developed to support embedding sustainability into specific college curriculum areas.

6.8.2 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 developing a new website and producing guidelines for writing a Blog.

6.8.3 Sustainable Development Goals (Convenor, Rehema White)

The objectives of this Task Group 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 Group has developed an action plan highlighting priorities in this area was developed and ideas put forward into fund raising discussions

During 2017 workshops were held to explore the interactions between LfS in communities and schools in the context of the SDGs (see 6.3.7) and to discuss embedding the SDGs across Further and Higher Education (see 6.3.4).

6.8.4 Open Educational Practices Task Group (Ronald McIntyre)

This 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 event was successfully held in March 2017 (see 6.3.2) Group members expressed a desire to support the creation and use of free open online materials that meet broader LfS Scotland objectives. This may develop in future depending on Members' organizational priorities.

6.8.5 Communities

The first meeting of the Communities and LfS Task group was held in September 2017. Attendees agreed that the aims of the Group were to provide training and knowledge exchange on the SDGs for community

development workers, to link relevant networks, share case studies and advocate for LfS in communities. A first event was held in November 2017 (see 6.3.7).

6.8.6 Curating Heritage for Sustainable Communities (Ullrich Kochel and Kirsten Leask)

The Task Group aims to develop a framework for sustainable heritage tourism especially in vulnerable ecological settings. It takes at its starting point an appraisal of the maritime heritage of the Northern Isles as a cultural resource for sustainable community development and care for that resource. The group will explore the potential for community engagement with heritage through creative responses to selected items. Development work has been carried out in 2017 towards the development of a showcase exhibition in 2018.

6.8.7 Connection to Nature (Convenor Judy Paul to June 2017, new Convenor tbc)

The Group aims to: understand the level of connection to nature of children and young people in Scotland; understand how to enable and enhance 'connection to nature'; identify possible links with factors that impact on sustainability and 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 planned the successful conference held in Edinburgh in May 2017. A conference is planned for 2018 with a focus on the UN SDGs. This will be co-ordinated by Edinburgh City Council with LfS Scotland as a partner and the Task Group will focus on an action research project in 2018.

6.9 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.

6.9.1 LfS Scotland funding was obtained from University of Edinburgh to develop and deliver an eight week long (April/May 2017) Sustainability and Social Responsibility International Foundation programme for 23 students from China, Equador, Azerbyjan and Russia. This programme will be delivered again in 2018.

6.9.2 LfS Scotland funding was obtained from the Scottish College for educational Leadership to deliver a web-based Professional Learning Activity.

6.10 REPRESENTATION ON NATIONAL GROUPS

LfS Scotland was represented on the following national groups by Secretariat or Steering Group members:

a. **NUS ESD Advisory Group**

This Group met several times during the year

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

c. **Sustainable Schools Award** judge June 2017

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

e. **RSPB Nature of Scotland Award** judge (Autumn 2017)

7. NEXT STEPS

Priority actions for the next year, agreed by members, include:

- Continued engagement regarding the underpinning role of education for all the UN Sustainable Development Goals and in the Education SDG 4 specifically, at Scottish, UK, European and international levels
- Continued leadership and engagement with policy makers / government around the support of LfS within Scotland in different sectors and through formal consultations
- Running workshops and events for members, particularly in partnership with relevant organisations and across sectors to offer new insights and networking for members
- Providing information and sharing knowledge, through the monthly Bulletin and other mechanisms
- Supporting Task Groups around particular issues as requested by members

Learning for Sustainability Scotland, December 2017