



LEARNING FOR SUSTAINABILITY SCOTLAND REPORT January 2021 - December 2021



COP26 Tree of Promises



ACKNOWLEDGED BY



UNITED NATIONS
UNIVERSITY

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 University-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 United Nations University unconditionally accepted the proposal to create Scotland's RCE in December 2012 and the first AGM of Scotland's UNU-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 2020-25.

Our eight elected Steering Group members, elected in January 2020 and continuing in 2021, were:

- Andrew Samuel (Abertay University)
- Dee Bird (Edinburgh Napier University Students' Association)
- Duncan Zuill (Levenmouth Academy, Fife)
- Fritha Gilbert (Fife Pupil Support Services)
- Laura Curtis-Moss (East Ayrshire Coalfield Environment Initiative)
- Rehema White (University of St Andrews)
- Sara Smith (Royal Highland Education Trust)
- Ullrich Kockel (University of the Highlands and Islands)

Rehema White was re-elected Steering Group Chair in March 2020 and continued during 2021. During 2021, the Chair continued to be supported by Vice-Chairs Dee Bird and Laura Curtis-Moss. During the year, Rebecca Petford was co-opted to the Steering Group to provide Tertiary Sector expertise.

Task Group representation on the Steering Group during this period was:

- Further and Higher Education: Rehema White (University of St Andrews) and Rebecca Petford (EAUC)
- Community and Sustainable Development Goals: Rehema White; Heritage: Ullrich Kockel (University of the Highlands and Islands).

Laura Curtis-Moss continued to work as Scotland's RCE Youth Coordinator (from September 2017).

Professor Pete Higgins, University of Edinburgh and Director of LfS Scotland, managed the Secretariat. An Executive Group comprising the Director, Chair, Vice Chairs and the Secretariat met on a number of occasions to facilitate planning and action. Over this period, the Steering Group and Secretariat developed a Strategic

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*.

Plan for LfS Scotland for the period from 2020-2025 and a work plan for 2020-2021. 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 global fora.

3. MEMBERSHIP

Learning for Sustainability Scotland has 983 members (December 2021), comprising both individuals and groups or organisations from across Scotland.

4. EMPLOYEES

During this period, Betsy King was employed as Development Manager (0.6 FTE), Jenny Haggarty as Administration and Finance Officer (Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning –CCGL - 0.75 FTE) and Kirsten Leask as Project Manager (CCGL 0.8FTE) and Project Manager LfS Scotland (0.2 FTE). Project consultants engaged by LfS Scotland were Mary Collacott, Sophie Coats, Angela Farnish, Jack Reed, Catherine Dunn, Katie Grant (Bulletin) and Anna Dodge (website).

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 LfS Scotland staff within the Moray House School of Education and Sport campus 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.

Other than this University of Edinburgh resource and support from grant for specific projects, LfS Scotland is entirely self-funding. It has no recurrent direct grant for core activities from the Scottish Government or any other source, but continues to be free for members to join and receive the benefits of this membership. Every year the organisation secures funding to keep operating, and we were again fortunate this year to be successful in funding bids. Such grants, however, all require services to be delivered and there continues to be no core funding to support staffing. We produced the core provisions of LfS Scotland through University of Edinburgh resources, permitted overhead return and more general support from the Steering Group and other members.

During 2021, LfS Scotland's activities were supported through grant and fee-earning from projects (British Council (August 2018- December 2021), University of Edinburgh, GTCS, Erasmus+ (2020-2023), ODA DEFRA (Jan-June 2021) and TEESNet (to December 2021). The LfS Scotland team and members of the Steering Group continue to develop additional proposals for longer-term funding.

6. ACTIVITIES

6.1 MAILING LIST AND BULLETIN

A monthly 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 Editor Katie Grant and distributed to members.

6.2 WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The [website](#) continued to be updated by consultant Anna Dodge in line with comments and suggestions from members.

LfS Scotland's Twitter presence was enhanced in 2021, with an increase to 6166 followers (December 2021). In addition, the Facebook site was re-vitalised and a Learning for Sustainability Scotland YouTube site created.

6.3 PRESENTATIONS AND WORKSHOPS

The Covid19 pandemic had severe impact on our ability to host face-to-face gatherings in 2021, and most events and workshops organised by ourselves and others took place online. During 2021, presentations and workshops were given on behalf of LfS Scotland at the following conferences, webinars and seminars:

2020	Event	Presentation(s) by LfS Scotland	Event organized by LfS Scotland (many in partnership)
January	Introducing Learning for Sustainability - Edinburgh Napier University PGDE	X	X
January	Building Forward Better: The role of Learning for Sustainability- AGM and annual gathering	X	X
January	Reviewing the emerging QAA guidance on ESD for higher education in UK. EAUC Scotland TSN in Education for Sustainable Development / Learning for Sustainability Scotland Task Group in FE/HE	X	X
January	'Partnerships in a Pandemic – input to event run by Scotland Malawi Partnership	X	
January	Connecting Classrooms Cluster Co-ordinator Get-Together		X
January	'Collaborating Online': guidelines for safe and effective online collaboration (in partnership with Education Scotland's Digital Team)		X
February	'Achieving the SDGs: action through learning in a time of global crises' Global RCE webinar -1	X	X
February	Cluster Co-ordinator Get-Together		X
February	How to Learn for a Better Future through youth work - school partnerships (webinar with Youthlink Scotland)	x	x
March	Curriculum Development and Learning for Sustainability in Scotland (2x events for Romanian and Latvian teachers networks)	X	
March	Panel member Scotland Malawi Partnership Youth Event	X	
March	Using storytelling, drama and creativity outdoors –an interactive webinar with Eco Drama	X	X
March	SEDA Land conversations: Nature's impact on health – creating inclusive local economies	X	
March	Cluster Co-ordinator get-together (professional learning focus)	X	X
March	Building back greener and fairer: Education and action for a Just Transition (SUII Climate Justice Education webinar)	x	

March	SUII workshop - Sustainable land use and governance in Scotland: addressing the global UN SDGs, national imperatives and local needs	X	
April	Introducing Sustainability and Social Responsibility (UoE Be Sustainable Advanced)	X	X
May	What is Education for Sustainable development? (pilot online learning module with Guatemala/Mexico educators) 2 events	X	X
May	Presentation on LfS & CCGL at Dumfries & Galloway LfS Showcase	X	
May	UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development	X	
May	Taking Action on Sustainability (University of Edinburgh Be Sustainable advanced alumni)	X	X
May	LfS in East Lothian Settings (in partnership with SCOTDEC)	X	
May	Using the QAA/Advance HE Guidance (LfSS/EAUC ESD Topic Support Network)	X	X
May	Presentation on LfS/CCGL to the North Ayrshire Council STEM & LfS Network Strategy Group	X	
June	SUII workshop - Strengthening policy for sustainable land use and governance in Scotland	X	
June	Taking action on Sustainability and Social Responsibility (UoE Be Sustainable Advanced)	X	X
June	The Future they Want: supporting young people to take action for a more sustainable world (webinar with Youthlink Scotland)	X	X
June	'Achieving the SDGs: action through learning in a time of global crises' Global RCE webinar -2	X	X
June	Supported Partnerships: national promotional/training webinar for teachers		X
June	Learning for Sustainability Staff development presentation for University of Vechta -	X	
August	Introduction to Learning for Sustainability/CCGL For the North Ayrshire Council STEM & LfS Network Practitioners Group	X	X
August	Next steps: Sustainability and Social Responsibility (UoE Be Sustainable Advanced course)	X	X
August	Getting Ready for COP26 – MOOC Drop-in session (with Education Scotland)	X	
August	Introduction to Learning for Sustainability (for Rights and Participation Network)	X	
September	Beyond COP26: Learning for Sustainability and Young People in Scotland'.	X	X
September	Introduction to LfS & CCGL at the West Lothian LfS Showcase (with the West Lothian Inclusion Service)	X	

September	Getting Ready for COP26 Getting Ready for COP26 – MOOC session (with Education Scotland)	X	
September	Introduction to LfS in Scottish Borders Settings (with SCOTDEC)	X	
September	UN University Leadership Programme - Presentation	X	
October	Learning for Sustainability in Youthwork (Youthlink conference workshop)	X	
October	Sharing and celebrating your CCGL story – national information session for teachers.	X	
October	Podcast for the British Council - 'What the UK can learn from other countries when it comes to teaching sustainability.	X	
October	Scottish Parliament Festival of Politics -Can Education Build a Sustainable Society? Panellist	X	
October	Royal Society of Edinburgh - 'Facing Up to Climate Change 10 Years on' - Invited participant	X	
November	The Role of Teacher Education in Responding to Global Challenges(LfSS/TEESNet webinar)	X	X
November	Expert advisory group for ESD and UNESCO 2030 roadmap - Germany	X	
November	Scottish Graduate School of Social Science: Shaping the Future: rising to the challenge of the climate crisis – panel member for PhD showcase event	X	
November	RCE Global Conference: 'Achieving the SDGs: action through learning in a time of global crises' (3 days)	X	X
November	Sustainability in the Curriculum (webinar for Edinburgh Napier University staff)	X	X
November	SUII SDG Conference: Accelerating Progress towards the UN's Global Goals	X	
November	Observer at COP26. Activities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panel Member in Scientific Pavilion 'Education and Climate Change' • Chairing a panel for the New York Times 'Educate on Climate' day 	X	
November	Scottish Government Cross-Party Group on Outdoor Education - invited external member	X	
December	Global Impact Conference - Bridging the Gaps. Russia/On-line presentation	X	
December	Luosuo River Forum on Science Education, China. Keynote Presentation	X	

6.4 WORKSHOPS, WEBINARS and EVENTS

The following offers more detail on some of the workshops, webinars and events organized during the year to give a flavour of the range of activities undertaken.

6.4.1 AGM January 2021

Our Annual General Meeting, held online for the first time, gathered more than 150 members gathered to explore the theme ***Building Forward Better: The role of Learning for Sustainability*** - *What role does Learning for Sustainability play in making the world a better place, and how can we make this a reality?* We were challenged by keynote speaker Arjen Wals; Professor of Transformative Learning for Socio-Ecological Sustainability at Wageningen University, The Netherlands and UNESCO Chair of Social Learning and Sustainable Development.

Inspiring Members' Stories were shared by Emily Reid (EcoDrama), Ishani Erasmus (The Scottish Parliament), Chris Litwiniuk (Sustainability Innovation and Engagement Manager, University of Edinburgh), Jane Jackson and Yvonne McBlain (Falkirk Children's Services curriculum support officers), Claire Ramjam (University of Stirling) and Andrew Bagnall (City of Edinburgh Council's Outdoor Learning Team). Members then selected from four interactive workshops:

1. *'Learning for a better future through community action'* (Cara Walkden, Bridge of Don Academy/Aberdeen for a Fairer World and David Somervell, Convenor, Transition Edinburgh);
2. *'Storytelling as a key to nature connection, environmental appreciation and regeneration'* (Jane Mather, freelance storyteller);
3. *'Stepping outside together - learning outside your door'* (Natalie White, Highland Council and Penny Martin, Outdoor Learning Adviser, Nature Scot);
4. *'Inspiring Learning for a Fairer Future – Start the Change Project'* (Highland One World's Catriona Willis, Ben Sparham and Rachel Avery)

6.4.2 Youthwork and Learning for Sustainability

YouthLink Scotland and LfS Scotland continued their jointly-hosted series of webinars; exploring the role of Learning for Sustainability in youth work settings.

In February, more than 70 teachers and youth work practitioners from across Scotland joined **How to learn for a Better Future through School – Youth Work Partnerships** and discussed how Schools and the Youth Work sector can work more effectively in partnership to support young people to meet future challenges and become active change agents for a better world. A panel including Julie Beckett, Education Scotland; Kate Allen Scotdec and Lesley Kettles, St Modan's High School/ Stirling Council inspired a conversation about the important place of Learning for Sustainability in schools and what youth work brings to this. Inspiring insights and approaches were shared by Pauline Wilson, FARE Scotland and St Mungo's Primary; David Exeter The Outward Bound Trust; Julia Duncan, TCV and Lesley Kettles, St Modan's High School.

In **The Future they Want: supporting young people to take action for a more sustainable world** in June, we explored how to inspire hearts and minds and support young people to both envision a sustainable future in their own communities and to become active change agents for sustainability. Contributions from Edward Chidombe Msiska from Malawi and Emily Farquhar from Scotland started the conversation, sharing the futures for people and planet that they, as young people, want to see. Approaches to supporting young people as agents of change were shared by Amy Calder, YouthLink Scotland's On Our Wavelength programme; Michele Meehan and Laura Kemp, Youth Scotland Young Placechangers programme; and

Lyndsey Lauder, teacher from Dundee and leader on the Scouts Taking Action on the Sustainable Development Goals. These were an important starting point for considering how can we contribute to strengthening young people's agency and ensure that young people's participation in sustainability action is meaningful.

6.4.3 Using storytelling, drama and creativity outdoors

A group of more than 50 teachers, NGOs and others interested in exploring, promoting and developing the role of Creativity in Learning for Sustainability joined our inspiring interactive webinar with Glasgow-based theatre company Eco Drama. Sharing evidence from the award winning 'Out to Play' project, Emily Reid and Ben Mali explored and demonstrated the impact and benefits of using the arts in Learning for Sustainability and outdoor learning for 3-11 year olds. Participants experienced practical ways to engage, inspire and provoke feelings of wonder, curiosity and care for nature in children and young people.

6.4.4 The Role of Teacher Education in Responding to Global Challenges

This webinar concluded the series of professional learning programmes across the UK (see 6.6.2) and provided an opportunity for 90 initial teacher education practitioners to come together, learn from examples of good practice in Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland and contribute to a dialogue about how teacher education responds to global challenges. The differing contexts across the UK were highlighted and the benefits of sharing good practice of what is possible (and the impact it is having) in winning hearts and minds and in particular, convincing senior leaders to give the 'green light' for a whole-setting approach to LfS.

6.4.5 Using the QAA/Advance HE Guidance (LfSS/EAUC ESD Topic Support Network)

In this workshop, working in partnership with EAUC, we brought together staff from universities and some colleges to discuss the relevance and implementation of the recent QAA/Advance HE guidance. We offered a presentation on the guidance, workshops and discussion of how to take this forward in different contexts.

6.5 YOUTH CO-ORDINATORS

6.5.1 In 2017, the Global RCE Network asked all RCEs to nominate a Youth Co-ordinator to help engage "youth" with the RCE network. In this context, youth is defined as being anyone under the ages of 35 or working with those under 35. 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. Laura Curtis-Moss is the Co-ordinator for Scotland's RCE.

6.5.2 In 2021, further links were made with RCEs in Europe to plan co-ordinated and networked responses to inspire youth to engage with learning for sustainability. Partnership working with YouthLink Scotland continued and an ongoing programme of webinars exploring how members can support youth action were developed.

6.5.3 Regular contact was maintained with Students Organising for Sustainability-UK and EAUC Scotland to ensure co-ordinated support for students' sustainability action in Scotland.

6.6 COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

6.6.1 British Council Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning August 2018-December 2021

In 2021, LfS Scotland continued to work as part of a consortium with University of Edinburgh/LfS Scotland, International Development Education Association of Scotland (IDEAS) and the Scotland Malawi Partnership

as the Scotland lead organisations delivering the UK wide [Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning programme in Scotland](#). Kirsten Leask, LfS Scotland, manages this programme; supported by Administration and Finance Officer Jenny Haggarty and working with Local Advisers based in Scotland's five Development Education Centres. By December 2021, 234 educational settings in Scotland were funded and supported in the school partnerships aspect of the programme and a further 311 settings had engaged with webinars and other activities provided by the programme .

During 2021, LfS Scotland implemented several new interventions to support schools in Scotland with their Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning partnerships work. These included:

- Co-design of the support materials for the new Supported Partnerships offer in conjunction with local advisors from Scotland, Wales and England

Creation of the online open-access Sharing Space for settings to share partnership stories/CLPL participants to share the impact of their learning.

The CCGL programme in Scotland received recognition in the 2021 Global RCE Awards as a Global RCE 'Acknowledged Flagship Programme'.

During 2021, University of Edinburgh/Learning for Sustainability Scotland continued to deliver its successful GTCS-accredited professional learning programme for educators in early learning, schools and colleges, '**Making Connections through Learning for Equity and Sustainability**'. This professional learning was available fully online at two levels over 6 weeks or 10 weeks in 2021 across the UK and at three levels over 6, 10 and 18 weeks in Scotland. In addition to individual teachers, tailored programmes were provided for groups of student teachers at Edinburgh Napier University in 2021.

Dornoch Firth Cluster (Dornoch Academy, Dornoch Primary and Bonar Bridge Primary) produced a research report with University of Edinburgh/LfS Scotland investigating their development of a whole-cluster approach to Learning for Sustainability.

6.6.2 British Council Supporting teacher educators to embed Development Education and Global Learning in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) 2019-21

LfS Scotland, in partnership with the Teacher Education for Equity and Sustainability Network (TEESNet), concluded their successful series of professional learning programmes for UK educators in Initial Teacher Education (ITE): Introducing learning for Equity and Sustainability in ITE (four courses) and Leading Change in Equity and Sustainability in ITE (2 courses). These programmes were funded by the British Council, and designed and facilitated by LfS Scotland.

6.6.3 Learning for a Sustainable Future Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)

LfS Scotland, in partnership with The University of Edinburgh and funded by the University and The British Council, developed and facilitated two 'massive open access online' courses hosted on FutureLearn. The five-week **Learning for a Sustainable Future** course, led by Dr Beth Christie, focused on personal reflection, local and global contexts, online community building, and action within individual 'spheres of influence'. This attracted more than 2,500 participants and will be offered again in 2022.

In November 2021, [Learning for a Sustainable Future: Live at COP26](#) offered participants an opportunity to examine what the Glasgow Climate Change Conference was, why it was important, and consider how to

support the co-ordinated aims and ambitions of the Conference through action. ‘Live’ insights into COP26 were shared with more than 2,100 global participants over the two weeks of the conference, and the material is still available as a legacy resource.

6.6.4 Erasmus+ KA2 - Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices

ESD SuperVision 4.0 (September 2020-2023)

In 2020, LfS Scotland/University of Edinburgh was part of a successful Erasmus+ partnership proposal, led by the University of Vechta, Germany and working with RCE Oldenburger Munsterland (Germany); three secondary schools (Germany, Romania, Latvia); Casa Carpului Didactic Damborita (ITE institution Romania); Daugavpils University (Latvia); Italian Association of Sustainability Science (Italy); Vytauto Didziojo University (Lithuania); and Karlova University (Czech Republic). The project’s focus is implementation of Education for Sustainable Development into school curricula through: 1) Capacity building for teachers and educators; 2) School development as a whole-institution approach and; 3) Policy making in relation to ESD in secondary schools.

6.6.5 Erasmus + KA2 - Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices

Sustainability Framework for School Self-Assessment "Jump into Sustainable Lifestyle" (September 2020-2022)

In 2020, LfS Scotland/University of Edinburgh was part of a successful Erasmus+ partnership proposal, led by the Lithuanian Children and Youth Centre and working with the University of Vechta, Germany; EESTI People to People (Estonia) and Vytauto Didziojo University (Lithuania). The project aims to develop a holistic sustainability framework for school self-evaluation “Jump into Sustainable Lifestyle” and to empower teachers and pupils to be change agents in today’s complex world.

6.6.6 Scottish Universities Insight Institute (SUII) -funded projects August 2020-21

In 2021, LfS Scotland supported four Scottish Universities Insight Institute (SUII) funded projects with a focus on responding to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. We were also represented at the final conference in November 2021.

1. [Agents of Change Toolkit \(ACT\)](#) for schools and teachers, led by University of Edinburgh and Glasgow School of Art. The ACT toolkit facilitates teachers and schools acting as agents of change to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Toolkit is designed to help educators by: building SDG-related improvements into their local plans; identifying relevant expertise and working with other players within and beyond schools to implement change projects; and evaluating the impact of change processes and outcomes.

2. [Food activism in the schoolyard](#) building capacity for sustainable food systems in Scotland, led by University of Strathclyde and University of Edinburgh. Addressing key global challenges such as poverty, inequality and climate action, this programme was centred on growing food in school gardens to support the wellbeing, informed activism and democratic participation of young people across educational sectors. The programme co-produced a Learning for Sustainability Framework and a Food Activism Framework action plan for developing food education in school gardens as a core element of young people’s participation and activism in schools.

3. [Education for climate justice](#): Centering social justice amidst demands to prioritise the climate crisis in education led by University of Edinburgh and University of St Andrews

Young activists leading the Scottish Climate Strikes have demanded climate justice and the prioritisation of climate crisis in education. Taking these demands seriously, the Programme brought together diverse stakeholders over a series of events in order to examine what it means to truly place social justice at the heart of efforts to address the climate crisis in education. Participatory online workshops focused on three initial themes: centring anti-racist and de-colonial perspectives in climate education and action; education for a just transition and centring the emotions in education for climate justice. The programme has acted as a catalyst for longer-term conversations and [educational resources](#) have been co-produced.

4. [Sustainable land use and governance](#) – The centrality of ‘place, work and folk in the UN SDGs: learning with Falkland Estate towards Scotland’s Land Use Strategy (LUS), led by University of St Andrews, Dundee and Aberdeen with Scotland’s Land Commission and Falkland Estate

This project aimed to critically investigate how the framework of the SDGs and their interactions might influence the transformation of integrated land use and governance models in Scotland and beyond. Action learning in the development of a land use strategy for Falkland was facilitated. The project informed the implementation of the LUS, the Scottish Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement, the work of the Land Commission, and engagement with the SDGs.

6.7 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 2021, LfS Scotland responded to consultations through its Task Groups and Steering Group members. Responses were submitted on behalf of members to:

- QAA/Advance HE ESD Guidance consultation (January 2021)
- Net Zero Nation Public Engagement Strategy (March 2021)
- Schools [Education Reform](#) (November 2021)

During 2021, LfS Scotland continued to participate in the implementation of the Scottish Government’s [Learning for Sustainability Action Plan](#) for the Government’s Implementation Group Vision 2030+ Report as a member of the Learning for Sustainability network.

A selected group of academics across the UK, including LfS Scotland’s Chair Rehema White and Director Pete Higgins, worked with the QAA and Advance HE to produce revised Education for Sustainable Development Guidance for UK HE institutions. A joint LfS Scotland and EAUC meeting developed feedback to the consultation on the guidance draft, with the final version published in March 2021.

LfS Scotland continued to participate in [Scotland’s Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\) Network](#) development with LfS Scotland’s Chair Rehema White and Steering Group member Rebecca Petford as SDG Network Steering Group members. This coalition on sustainable development is open to all.

6.8 INTERNATIONAL NETWORKING

LfS Scotland is Scotland’s UNU recognized Regional Centre of Expertise in ESD and one of the global network of 180 RCEs (December 2021). Betsy King served as the RCE Regional Advisor for Europe to advise RCEs in the region and to review new RCE applications.

During 2021, there was regular contact with the Global RCE Network and UK and Ireland RCEs. We carried out the following international knowledge exchange and research activities:

6.8.1 UK and Ireland RCEs

During 2021, regular contact with progress of RCEs in England, Wales and Ireland was maintained by online meetings.

6.8.2 European RCEs.

Planning was undertaken for the next two-day European RCEs conference to be held in early 2022 hosted by RCE Fryslan. Again, this will be held fully online because of Covid19, under the theme '*The Imaginative Power of the Region: Learning for the SDGs Together*'.

Improving communication between European RCEs continues to be a key issue and regular online newsletters were produced and circulated during the year

6.8.3 Global RCE Conference webinars and conference 2021

The successful [12th Global RCE Conference](#) was co-hosted by LfS Scotland and the Global RCE Service Centre from 16-18 November, 2021. Scheduled to follow on from the COP26 climate conference, this was the last of three global online events hosted by LfS Scotland (February, June and November 2021) on the theme of '*Achieving the SDGs: Action through learning in a time of global crises*'.

Building on the momentum created by our webinars in February and June 2021, the Conference provided an opportunity for over 300 participants from across our global network of over 180 Regional Centres of Expertise to collectively share, explore and build on the knowledge, skills and values within the network to enhance the capacities and actions needed to achieve the SDGs.

The holistic approach of Scottish 19th century polymath and educational visionary Sir Patrick Geddes (1854 - 1932), widely credited with developing the concept of 'sustainability' and promoting the benefits in engaging 'heart, hand and head' to achieve truly transformational learning, was used to shape the Conference programme. Opportunities on offer included thematic Practice Sharing Sessions; Workshops led by RCE colleagues; insights on how Scotland is taking action on sustainability through a series of 'Postcards', and speakers from the University of Stirling, the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network and UN Institute for Lifelong Learning, as well as Lara Freitas; educator and eco-neighbourhood designer. Opportunities for reflection and networking included a virtual ceilidh.

6.8.4 UNESCO ESD Conference Berlin June 2021

LfS Scotland attended as a RCE representative and was invited to [facilitate sessions](#) on Advancing Policy for Education for Sustainable Development at the UNESCO [World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development](#) in Berlin in May 2021. This important conference provided an opportunity for global discussion and promotion of the transformation of education as outlined in [the UNESCO ESD for 2030 Roadmap](#), and concluded in the 2,800 participants adopting the [Berlin Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development](#).

6.8.5 International Climate Conference COP26 November 2021

LfS Scotland Director, Pete Higgins, attended the international climate conference in Glasgow, COP26, as an official Observer in the UN Blue Zone. During the conference activities included

- being a panel member in the Scientific Pavilion 'Education and Climate Change' event,
- meeting with the Greek Minister of Education to discuss sustainability education and Learning for Sustainability Scotland,
- chairing a panel for the New York Times 'Educate on Climate' day and
- meeting with HRH Crown Prince of Malaysia to discuss sustainability education, and peatland restoration.

The Learning for a Sustainable Future: Live at COP26 MOOC (see 6.6.3) provided an opportunity to highlight Scotland's focus on Learning for Sustainability, with contributions from Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills Shirley-Anne Somerville, NatureScot Chief Executive Francesca Osowska, [Learning for Sustainability Scottish Education Award winners](#) and many more. The resources are available to use [here](#).

6.9 PARTNERSHIPS

In line with the partnership focus of the SDGs and our status as a network organisation with many active members, we continue to seek to strengthen our partnership working. We organised and ran events in partnership, and have developed stronger links with other organisations nationally and internationally.

Examples include working with:

- Tertiary education sector leading organisations such as the QAA, EAUC Scotland and the College Development Network;
- NGOs supporting education or other aspects of sustainability, such as the National Network of Outdoor Learning, International Development Education Association for Scotland, Scotland Malawi partnership, YouthLink Scotland;
- Schools and teacher education organisations such as Education Scotland, the Regional Improvement Collaboratives, GTCS, the SQA and several local authorities;
- UK level groups and organisations such as The British Council, TEESNet and the Our Shared World coalition;
- International partners such as UNESCO and our Erasmus+ partners (see 6.6.4 and 6.6.5)
- University of Edinburgh's international teacher exchange programmes.
- Community groups and organisations such as Global Ecovillage Network, Ecolise, Permaculture Scotland, SCCAN and Transition Scotland

6.10 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. Covid19 limited many Task Group activities during this period.

6.10.1 Further and Higher Education (Convenors: Scott Strachan, Rehema White, Christine Calder)

This is an ongoing networking group 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.

In January 2021, the group developed a joint response to QAA's consultation on its revised Guidance on Education for Sustainable Development. Following the publication of the Guidance in March 2021, a webinar

explored [how to introduce and implement the Guidance](#) on ESD. The event included an introduction to the guidance, insight into implementation plans from staff within a range of positions within higher education institutions as well as the Co-Chairs of the Advisory Group for the Guidance, and an open discussion on barriers to implementation and opportunities the guidance presents for individual attendees.

6.10.2 Curating Heritage for Sustainable Communities (Convenor Ullrich Kockel)

The primary objective of the group is to develop a framework for sustainable heritage tourism; especially in vulnerable ecological settings. It takes as 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 is exploring the potential for community engagement with heritage, through creative responses to selected items. Members include Shetland Museums & Archives, Orkney Museum, Heriot-Watt University and various community groups.

The project has been very successful to date and has opened up new perspectives on sustainable development of community co-curated heritage. This has involved a “[New Connections across the Northern Isles](#)” exhibition in Orkney and Shetland and a Virtual Museum. Further proposals have been delayed because of Covid19.

6.10.3 Connection to Nature

This task group was dormant in 2021 whilst awaiting a clear task to pursue in the future.

6.10.4 Community and SDGs

Efforts in this area have focused primarily on contributions to the formal establishment of Scotland’s SDG Network. This Network has elected a Steering Group, and has developed administrative and strategic resources and moved across to the Mighty Networks platform. A talk was given on behalf of the SDG Network and LfS Scotland to the Scottish University Insight Institute conference.

6.11 CONSULTANCY ACTIVITIES

Members of the LfS Scotland Secretariat and associates carried out the following consultancy activities, in order to support the wider core work of LfS Scotland.

6.11.1 LfS Scotland was engaged by University of Edinburgh to deliver an 8-week long (April/June 2020) Sustainability and Social Responsibility International Foundation programme for 33 international students. This programme will be delivered again in 2022.

6.11.2 LfS Scotland (Mary Collacott, Betsy King, Pete Higgins) was engaged by University of Edinburgh Sustainability and Social Responsibility Department to deliver a 12-week online sustainability and social responsibility courses for staff April – August 2021. The course will be revised and an additional module produced and delivered in 2022.

6.11.3 LfS Scotland (Mary Collacott, Betsy King) were engaged by University of St Andrews to undertake small-scale research as part of the ODA Supporting Skills, Competencies and Learning for Engagement in sustainable forest management project. ESD professional learning activities for teachers were adapted, developed and piloted to enhance capacity of educators in schools around the Selva Maya in Mexico and Guatemala.

6.11.4 GTCS Learning for Sustainability Hub

LfS Scotland has been engaged to support the development of a national hub on the GTCS website that will catalyse the engagement of teachers in early years, primary, secondary, ASN and college settings with LfS in the GTCS Professional Standards at every stage of their careers. A Guidance document has been produced and a mapping of LfS across the Standards. Developments will be supported by a cross-sectoral practitioner focus group.

6.12 REPRESENTATION ON NATIONAL and INTERNATIONAL GROUPS

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

- a. **Ubuntu Committee of Peers for the RCEs** as Regional Adviser to the RCE Community (Europe) (from January 2020)
- b. **Scottish Government Learning for Sustainability Network** (member from June 2019- ongoing)
- c. **Scotland SDG Network** (Steering Group members from December 2020)
- d. **Teacher Education for Equity and Environmental Sustainability Network (TEESNet)** Steering Group member and Scotland representative
- e. **Scottish Education Awards** –Learning for Sustainability Award Leadership/Learning Community judges (September 2021)
- f. **GTCS Professional Standards Review – convenor LfS Practitioners Group** member (from October 2021– ongoing)
- g. **COP26 Partner Forum** (from June 2021)
- h. **RSPB Nature of Scotland Award** judge (Autumn 2021)
- i. **UK Our Shared World Coalition** Steering Group member (from Autumn 2019, ongoing)
- j. **College Development Network Awards** Judge (September 2021)
- k. **National Network of Outdoor Learning** (November 2019 and ongoing)
- l. **Blue-Action Societal engagement group** (member 2019 and ongoing)
- m. **College Development Network Climate Emergency Expert Group** (October 2019 and ongoing)
- n. **China Nature Education Network** expert adviser (2019- ongoing)
- o. **Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Advisory Group** reviewing the Education for Sustainable Development Guidance (2020- March 2021)
- p. **Scottish Government** - Scottish Biodiversity Programme Stakeholder Engagement Group (member September 2020 and ongoing)
- q. **St Andrews Prize for the Environment Steering Committee** (ongoing)
- r. **Royal Society of Edinburgh Education Committee** - Conference on Early Years Conference Planning

6.13 PUBLICATIONS

We have produced various resources and papers to support our activities and facilitate our members over the year. These include:

Price, E. A., White, R. M., Mori, K., Longhurst, J., Baughan, P., Hayles, C. S., ... & Preist, C. (2021). Supporting the role of universities in leading individual and societal transformation through education for sustainable development. *Discover Sustainability*, 2(1), 1-16.

McCune, V., Tauritz, R., Boyd, S., Cross, A., Higgins P. & Scoles, J. (2021) Teaching wicked problems in higher education: ways of thinking and practising, *Teaching in Higher Education*, DOI: [10.1080/13562517.2021.1911986](https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2021.1911986)

Nicol, R. & Higgins, P. (2021) Transformative learning. Reflections on 30 years of head, heart and hands at Schumacher College, Environmental Education Research, DOI: [10.1080/13504622.2021.1991280](https://doi.org/10.1080/13504622.2021.1991280)

7. NEXT STEPS

The Strategic Plan for LfS Scotland in 2020-2025 has been developed in the context of the [UNESCO Plan for ESD to 2030](#) and Global [Roadmap for the RCE Community 2021-30](#).

Priority activities are:

1. We weave connections across sectors within Scotland and with our international partners
1.1 Increase engagement in LfS in Scotland across all sectors
1.2 Share knowledge, achievements and opportunities for members
1.3 Organise and co-host events for members, within and across sectors
1.4 Coordinate task groups to address issues of concern and interest for our members
1.5 Share our learning with others across the UN RCE Network
2. We co-produce, pioneer and practise new knowledge and approaches and curate materials and resources with and for educators, organisations and communities
2.1 Play a leading role in debating, enabling and monitoring the UN SDGs in Scotland and beyond (especially but not exclusively SDG 4.7)
2.2 Contribute to the conceptualisation as well as the practice in this field
2.3 Develop and facilitate professional development for educators
3. We advocate and provide strategic advice for effective learning for sustainability policy
3.1 Lead on and contribute to policy debates in Scotland, UK and internationally
3.2 Provide advice to practitioners, policy and decision makers
3.3 Lead and contribute to expert groups to address LfS issues
3.4 Work with local authorities and Regional Improvement Collaboratives for progress across Scotland in sustainability capacities
4. We lead, monitor and evaluate projects and programmes locally and internationally, often in partnership
4.1 Pursue the implementation of LfS in the school sector, including teacher education at all stages
4.2 Support learning in communities and the Third Sector
4.3 Engage with the Further Education and Higher Education sectors to integrate and embed LfS
4.4 Undertake consultancy projects to progress LfS

8. MEMBERS' VOICES

We seek to inspire and inform members, to connect members and to work in partnership with members. We are driven by external policy and highlighted imperatives for LfS but we wish to respond to members' needs. We are always willing to hear new ideas or requests for Task Groups, communication or events. Please get in touch if you have any suggestions or if you wish to partner in a new venture.

9. FINAL WORD

It has been a challenging year for many of our members and for the organisation itself. The increased online environment has created new opportunities to reach out to all parts of Scotland in an inclusive manner and to engage with other countries around the world. However, the change to more online working has had an emotional and connective cost for many members and has provoked intense working conditions for some. We have had an immensely productive year at LfS Scotland, and we are glad that learning for sustainability is at last a mainstream goal and topic of debate. We hope to continue to feed this interest in future years whilst seeking further funding to enable us to share our resources and expertise more widely. In this way, we will help catalyse the transformation of which we are all a part.

Learning for Sustainability Scotland, December 2021