



REGIONAL CENTRE OF EXPERTISE  
ON EDUCATION FOR  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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# Welcome!



# Connecting for Transformational Change through Learning

**Rehema White  
Chair**

# Overview

16:00	Welcome and icebreaker	
16:05	Welcome from Learning for Sustainability Scotland	<a href="#"><u>Dr Rehema White</u></a> , Chair
16:10	Welcome and 'Our Story of Transformational Change through Learning':	<a href="#"><u>Evie Murray</u></a> , Earth in Common
16:20	'Transformational Change through Learning for Sustainability: a personal and professional perspective'	<a href="#"><u>Rosa Murray</u></a> , University of Edinburgh
16:40	Words and stories of Transformational Change through Learning	Everyone
17:05	Connecting through Transformational Change through Learning	Everyone: networking, food, fire, music and crafting
18:00	Close	



# Welcome to Earth in Common

**Evie Murray**



# Urban Crofts – Reclaiming the Commons for Community Food Growing (and more) in Scotland

# Urban crofts: What role do they play in education, food and climate justice?

- **Urban crofts on common land bring together people from different backgrounds creating fascinating community learning spaces**
- **Connected to the land and each other, people become active agents learning about the food and climate movement.**
- **A network of urban crofts could contribute towards supplanting agroindustry and provides cross-cutting solutions to societal and environmental issues.**

# What is a Croft?

- Scottish small-holding tradition, family-owned pieces of land
- Traditionally distinguished through values of cooperative endeavour, self-sufficiency, intergenerational care and skill-sharing
- Dùthchas – feeling of belonging to a place and taking responsibility for it
- We established Scotland's first modern 'Urban Croft' in Leith by reclaiming a two-acre piece of common good land and starting to grow food on it communally

# Consultation & Land Stewardship

- Got inspired by idea of reviving community ownership of land as a political act towards transforming the place that we live in
- Tapping into what crofting means in Scotland – values that were lacking broadly in society
- Intrigued by how communities can use common land to gain agency over food production, local economy, education, health, and wellbeing

# The Tragedy of the Commons

- Hardin (1968) – when people have access to a common resource (land, oceans) they get greedy, overuse the resource for their own benefit, and destroy the common resource thereby
- Solution: privatisation or increased state control
- However, this was widely debunked (e.g. Ostrom, 1990, 2009)
- Thought-experiment not based on how communities actually co-manage resources
- With bottom-up management, communities *can* manage commons in a sustainable way

# The Power of the Commons?

- Common land brings people together across difference, and can contribute to empowerment and learning in a community
- Combat climate change, diversity loss and environmental degradation
- Many people across diverse positions to build the power to confront monopolies, power imbalances and extractivist business

The significant efforts to transform the croft began in 2013



# Leith Community Croft Today

- 120+ Crofters grow food communally on shared, collectively managed plots
- Market garden cultivated with the help of volunteers
- Farmers' market and café
- Croft Carbon College & Minecroft
- Learning hub in our newly refurbished pavilion



# The Big Picture

## Food Sovereignty and Climate Justice

- 'Food movement'
- Originated as response to productivist 'green revolution' (post-WWII) based on monocultures, pesticides and fossil fuels
- 'Modern' food movement in Global North initially focused on food born illnesses, health and obesity - salmonella - e. coli – norovirus – listeria
- Progression/politicisation towards creating/enacting alternatives to industrial food system
- Counter-hegemonic education toward decolonisation, democratic citizenship and more
- Characteristics of social movement: formation of common identity, creation of space for political and knowledge exchange, politicising practices and market interactions
- Tradition of peasant movements for self-determination and food sovereignty (e.g. Via Campesina, Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa)

# How our local initiatives connect us to national and even international issues



The NEW NORMAL  
Starts now!



# Pushing for change – Good Food Nation Bill

which is now an Act

## Ag Bill consultation

This just closed yesterday. We submitted to



# La Via Campesina - International Food Sovereignty Conference Romania



# Participation in COP25 mobilisations in Paris



Arrived at  
the red lines  
protest



# Branching out – Malawi

- Multi-partner project in Malawi alerted us to the need for the concept of Restorative Climate Justice ([tinyurl.com/rcjust](http://tinyurl.com/rcjust))
- Led to us becoming members of Scotland Malawi Partnership & Scotland's International Development Alliance





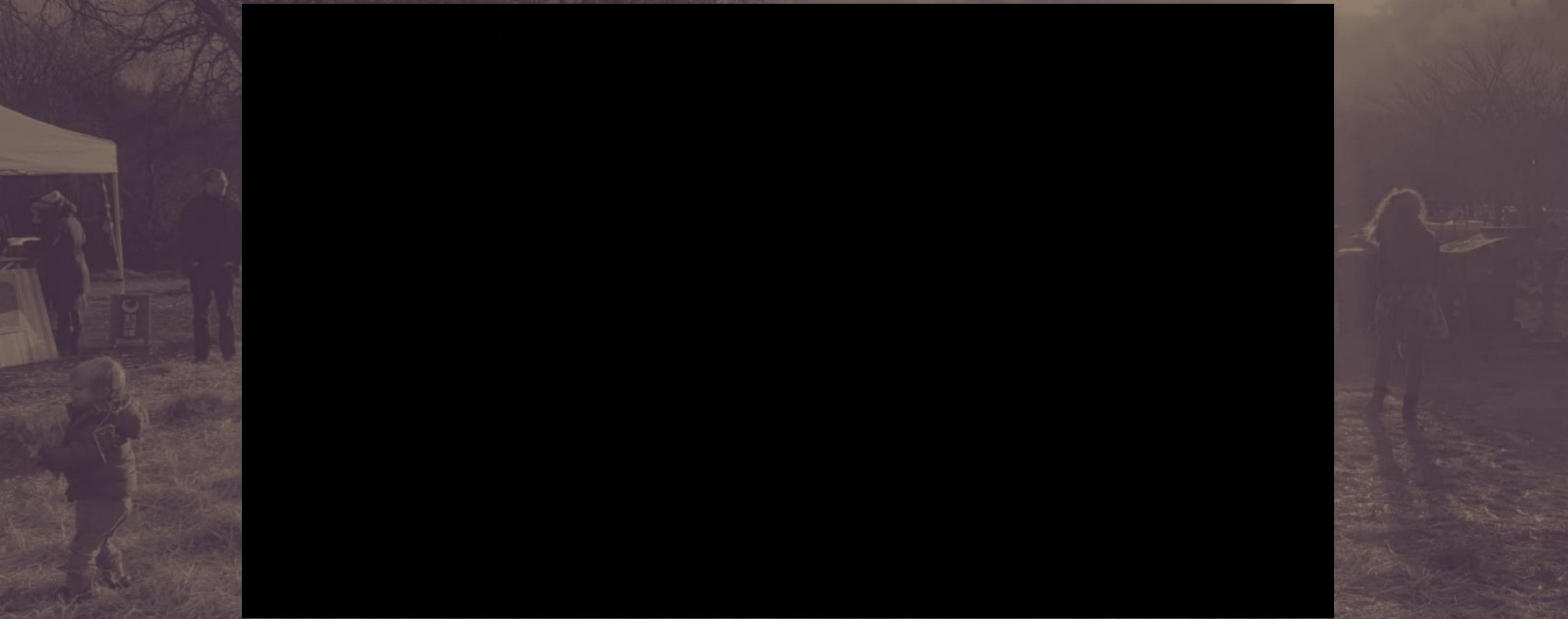
# Joining Struggles – Leith Community Croft

- Leith Community Croft
  - Aims to tackle social and environmental inequalities
  - Unites people from different backgrounds and across causes
  - Creates and enacts alternative structure that strengthen local economy and support biodiversity and agrobiodiversity, tackle isolation and poverty, promote climate resilience and food security, healthy diets, and reduce emissions
  - Explicitly linked to international movements

# Leith Community Croft – Reclaiming Land, Reclaiming Power

- Learning on Leith Community Croft
  - Skills – food growing skills, traditional crafts, building through individual learning/informal educational activities
  - Knowledge – climate science, political aspects of climate, food and environmental movements, knowledge exchange at market and café
  - Contestation/political action – joining demonstrations, government campaigns, international conferences – COP26 delegation
  - Experiential learning – building relationship with place, soil and nature, pride in local identity as a basis for action
  - Collective empowerment – the experience of taking control of a piece of common land and the narrative of a community

# Experiential learning – building relationship with place, soil and nature



# A network of urban crofts could help towards supplanting agroindustry, providing cross-cutting solutions to societal and environmental issues.

- There is an abundance of derelict urban land across Scotland/UK/internationally
- Broad concern over climate, environment and food is growing, people across the board want to take action
- Values of collectivity and solidarity; cross-cutting political perspective; connection to land and related education; international outlook with local action
- Spreading this concept, not just urban community gardening but *politicised* urban community gardening, could start becoming a real alternative force to agroindustrial monopolies

# Urban Crofts

Connection, community and cross-cutting solutions to social and environmental problems

Two-sider for parliamentarians by



(Scottish Charity SC044220)

see <https://www.earth-in-common.org/urbancrofts> for more!

## Potted history

Founded in 2013 as Leith Community Crops in Pots, our charity soon found itself a bit 'pot-bound' by this title as, with and for the local community – and thanks to support from the Scottish Government (the Climate Challenge Fund), the City of Edinburgh Council and others – we took over a neglected piece of common good land and transformed it into Scotland's first modern urban croft, offering a wide variety of experiential, volunteering, training and employment opportunities through a suite of integrated projects, with connection to the land at their core.

Now, as Earth in Common, we've been funded by the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund and the National Lottery Community Fund to convert the dilapidated old tennis pavilion on the site into a multipurpose community hub – a 'home', completing our urban croft vision.

Most excitingly, on the basis of the social and environmental benefits of our work, the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation is supporting us for a third time, to help us take the urban croft idea nationwide: to support others to emulate our project, and to set up an umbrella body for urban crofts.

According to dictionaries: '*In Scotland, a croft is a small piece of land which is owned*

**Note these words:**

- small enclosed plot of land
- adjoining a house
- owned, farmed, family
- provides them with food

In order to supply themselves with food, the members would need to have *knowledge* and *skills* – ideally *complementary* (assuming no single person can know everything). *Co-operative endeavour* is implied and, for the family as a whole, *self-sufficiency*. For this to be viable, family members would need to be *mutually supportive* and relationships *harmonious*. 'Family' also implies multiple *generations caring for each other and the raising of children* and the *passing on of knowledge and skills*.

An urban croft has analogous physical and social components to a traditional croft, and several more. It offers a range of formal and informal activities (with an emphasis on educational and community-building activities related to the natural world and wellbeing) and requires more formal organisation than a traditional croft. At its core, it is about joint responsibility and stewardship, or *dùthchas*...

## Dùthchas

As outlined in a moving talk by Iain Mackinnon of the Scottish Crofting Federation ([tinyurl.com/crofttalk](http://tinyurl.com/crofttalk)), we have much in common with those who fought for the principles of crofting tenure, and we also believe in the value of the Gaelic concept of *dùthchas* – a sense of belonging to a place and of taking responsibility for it.

## More than community gardens and distinct from allotments

*Urban crofts are more than community gardens and very distinct from allotments.*

*They foster a collective 'family' spirit and connection to the land and, as a nationwide network, could be a powerful force for good in a world of growing inequality, loneliness and alienation, and environmental catastrophe.*



'Minecraft' outdoor adventure and survival skills – popular in all weathers!



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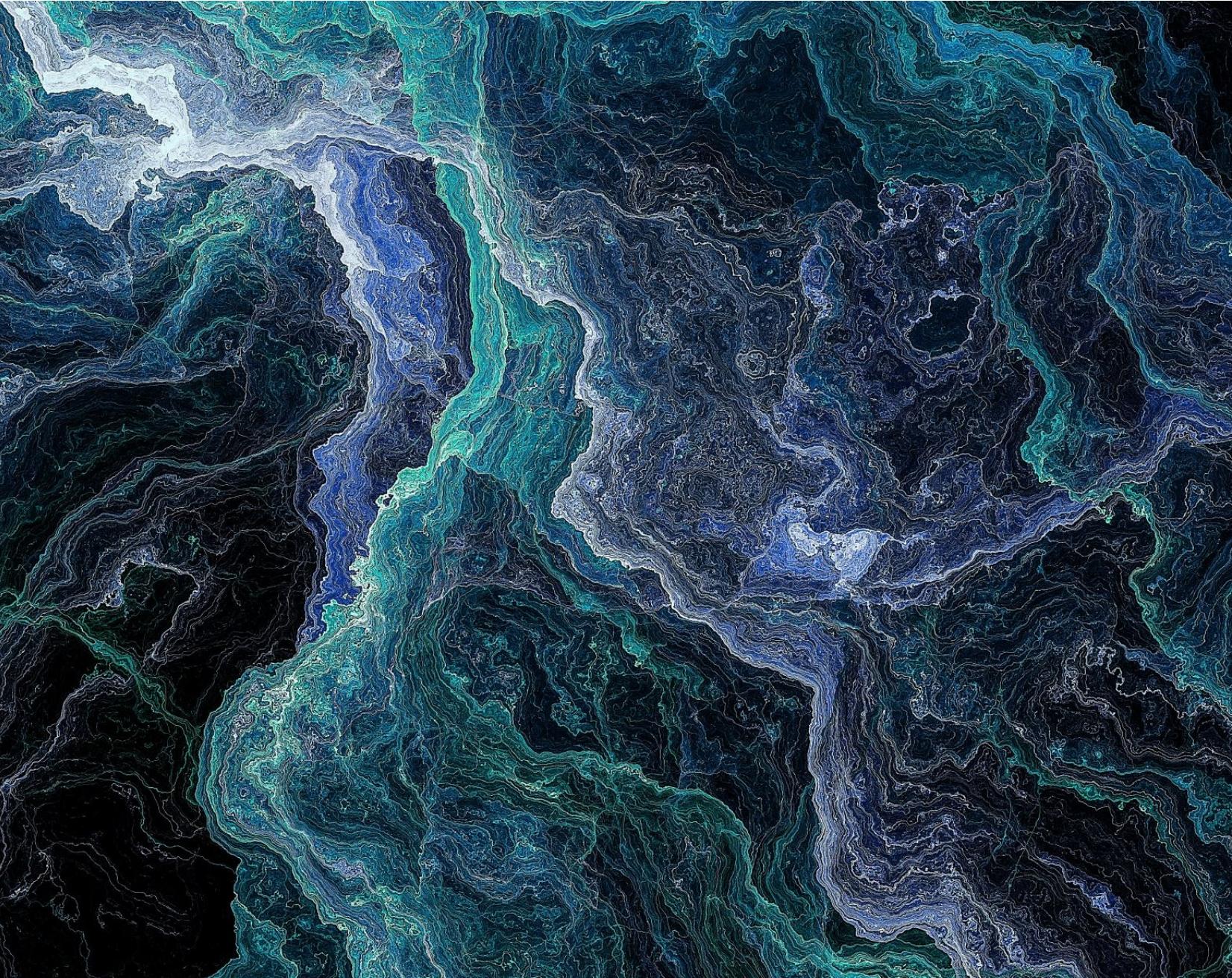
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# Social Justice: from Seashore to Policy

Rosa Murray

# Social Justice from seashore to policy

Love and Social Justice



# From seashore solitude to public policy: a research journey towards systemic change

## Personal Context

- An increase of inequality in the distribution of power and wealth in the world
- The persistence of inequality between men and women
- The growing power of the financial sector
- The systemic injustice across the world
- Deep commitment to Social Justice

And then....







GTCS PROFESSIONAL  
STANDARDS



ONE PLANET SCHOOLS

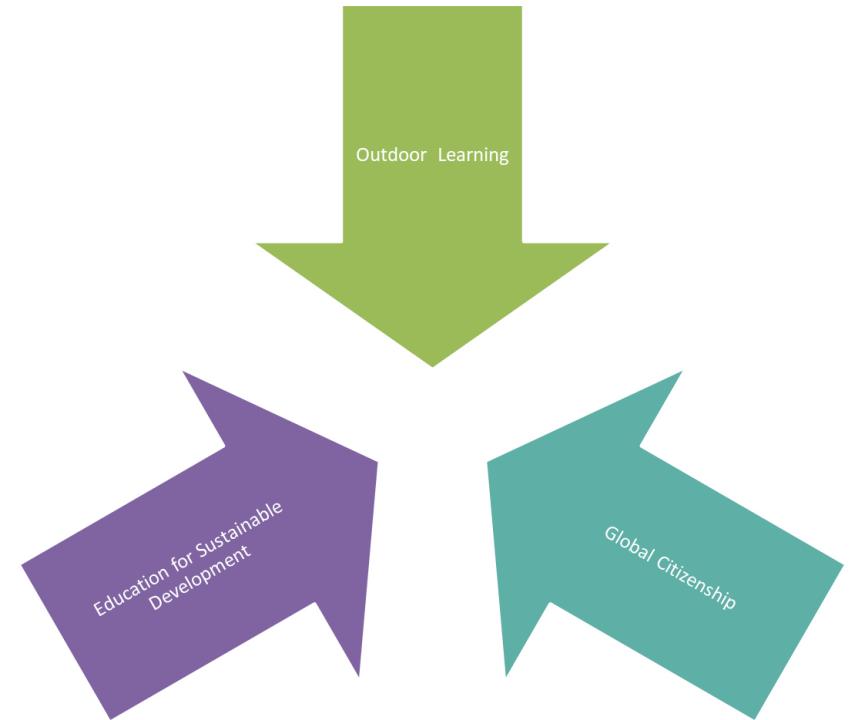


VISION 2030 +

# Defining ‘Learning for Sustainability’

“Learning for sustainability (LfS) is an approach to life and learning which enables learners, educators, schools and their wider communities to build a socially-just, sustainable and equitable society. An effective whole-setting and community approach to LfS weaves together global citizenship, sustainable development education and outdoor learning to create coherent, rewarding and transformative learning experiences.”

*Education Scotland*



# A vision for learning

- In 2022, Learning for Sustainability continues to take a strategic national approach:
- Aligned to SDG 4.7
- Revised Action Plan in 2019
- An entitlement for all learners
- A whole-setting approach.
- Embedded in whole-school self-evaluation.
- Central to the national Professional Standards for all teachers.
- Woven throughout the Scottish curriculum.
- Includes school buildings, grounds and policies

## Vision 2030+

Concluding report of the Learning for Sustainability National Implementation Group  
March 2016



It's 3.23 in the morning  
And I am awake  
Because my great great grandchildren  
Won't let me sleep  
My great great grandchildren ask me in dreams  
What did you do while the planet was plundered?  
What did you do when the earth was unravelling?  
Surely you did something  
When the seasons started failing?  
As the mammals, reptiles, birds were all dying?  
Did you fill the streets with protest  
When was democracy stolen?  
What did you do  
once  
you  
knew?

*(Drew Dellinger)*



# Sharing stories of connection

## Everyone



**Sharing stories of connection...and food, fire,  
wine and music!**

**Everyone**