

## CATYLYSING A MOVEMENT FOR CHANGE: Learning for Sustainability in Scotland': Perspectives

### Background

In June 2023 The Scottish Government launched Scotland's refreshed Learning for Sustainability action plan - [Target 2030: A movement for people, planet and prosperity](#) ", which aims to 'build an inspiring movement for change so every 3 to 18 place of education becomes a sustainable learning setting by 2030'. At a time of economic, environmental and social crises, this refreshed and much-strengthened Action Plan has cross-party support, based on the original five strategic goals accepted by Scottish Government Ministers in 2013 and the subsequent, [Vision 2030+: Concluding report of the Learning for Sustainability National Implementation Group \(2016\)](#).

The Plan has been launched in the context of educational reform and system change in Scotland and offers a potentially ground-breaking opportunity to respond to the values, skills and knowledge that are required for learners to thrive in an increasingly complex and interdependent world.

On 30 August 2023, ahead of the Plan's national 'Call to Action' in October 2023, Learning for Sustainability Scotland invited a diverse group from within and outwith Scotland's education system to a creative round-table event to explore and uncover the essential ingredients which will catalyse this 'Movement for Change'.

### Perspectives

To stimulate discussion four of the participants shared short individual perspectives on 'Creating a Movement for Change'. Below are selected quotes from their presentations.

#### Professor Graham Donaldson, Director, Goodison Group in Scotland

'Where I come from is trying to think about the relationship between policy and practise'. 'Why is it that we feel, despite all of the evidence that we have, that the inertia, the resistance in the system, needs a 'movement'?

'We need to think quite carefully and be very agile in responding to what I think over the next few months is likely to be quite a febrile policy landscape. There has never been a time when the past, the present, and the future are colliding in the way they are just now'.

'We have a lot of inherited issues from the past'. 'Education systems across the UK that are very heavily focused on metrics and on standards', '...an obsession with effectiveness; without necessarily asking whether we are becoming better and better at doing things that are less and less relevant'.

'At present we have the expectations from all of these reviews; ...the continuing impact of the pandemic ... continuing issues to do with inequity inside the education system; ...the budget problem'

'We have embarked on a technological revolution that is going to transform learning and teaching'.

- '...the challenge, I think, is to capture the imagination in a way that doesn't frighten people
- '...the nature of the movement we're talking about has to somehow or other give hope.'
- '...it's about simplicity and clarity.. and it's got to be uplifting
- '...recognise who the gatekeepers are- who can open or close the gates in relation to all of this'.
- '...win the hearts and minds of everyone but particularly the key gatekeepers and the multipliers in the system who help things to go viral'.

#### Helena Good, Director, Daydream Believers

'Daydream believers are a small group of people who take a what, and a why, and build a how'.

'What we've done is a really straightforward and simple way of supporting agency and autonomy for teachers to take learning for sustainability, to take real world challenges and place them centre stage in the curriculum'.

'35 high schools across Scotland are working on a new qualification in Creative Thinking. It's an SCQF level five and six. There are five learning outcomes and they are based around a process. At the end, the challenge is to tell us your story – and make us care'.

'There is an app that allows teachers to mark, in real time, project based learning, and a creative bravery playlist which can be downloaded on the website' -

'We are working with Education Scotland and their Learning for Sustainability and STEM team on 'Solarpunk Island'. 31 schools in the BGE phase are taking part in this in this academic year. In this challenge, they will be shipwrecked on the Island and we frame the question 'what if we got it right?'

'Some schools are running it as a STEM lunchtime club. At West Calder High School the whole curriculum in S2 is being delivered through Solarpunk Island'.

### **Lang Banks Director, WWF Scotland**

'I think there are three success factors in terms of where you want to go' 'connect with people and win their hearts and minds and heads...convert the passion into action...sustain that movement and the momentum'.

1. **'that ability to connect ...** is about how you motivate people and engage them'... 'the framing is important, and understanding the motivations of others-especially if they are going to be different from yours.'

2. **'converting that passion into action-** .remind people why they joined that profession in the first place. How can we really light that fire to give them a new sense of purpose or engage in this movement... creating opportunities for people to shape this as well'..

3. **'sustaining the momentum-** .it's really driven by energy and ability as opposed to inspiring leaders'... 'the most successful movements for change that I've seen have been the ones that have been built at a local level'. 'There's a sense of collective action'.

'My four key ingredients are: 1. Shared purpose...align your values. 2. What does good look like? Define it but don't be perfect about it- just get on with it. 3. Relationships. Building trust and collaboration- New networks will come along, how do you harness the ones we already have? Leadership - collective leadership. 4. Organisation. Every movement needs some kind of clear strategy; resource so that challenge can be mitigated'.

'To quote Nelson Mandela: it always seems impossible, until it is done'.

### **Mike Robinson, Chief Executive, Royal Scottish Geographical Society**

'A 'movement' is the coming together of people around a shared agenda'... 'you've got to bring people around with the same issue and share a vision, share a sense of direction'. 'The journey is really critical'.

'It's back to the head the heart and the hands: there's no point in just appealing to the head - you won't get very far. We need to think differently... it needs follow-through, and needs persistence'

'We do need to inform people, not belittle them; we need to empower people not badger them; but we also need to tailor the information that we present'.

We've got to help people start a journey in a realistic way.' 'We need to guide that direction really carefully; it needs structure and a framework. .both nationally and globally-.otherwise the efforts you're making are on your own'.

'How can they add to anything? How do you know what you're doing is complementing what other people are doing?'

'We need simplicity and consistency - and in terms of solutions, consistency is absolutely crucial...so that investment, innovation and education are driving in the right direction'.