

Learning for Sustainability Scotland

Annual Report

January - December 2025



UN SDGs display at the 14th Regional Centres of Expertise in Education for Sustainable Development Conference, Okayama, Japan, in October 2025.

Creativity

Collaboration

Respect

Compassion

Integrity

Foreword

I am delighted to commend Learning for Sustainability Scotland's annual report for 2025 to you.

This has been a fast-paced year, shaped by both challenge and change, and it is with real pride that we reflect on how we have navigated it together. As we close the year, we do so enriched by new and deepened collaborations, strengthened partnerships, and a wealth of shared achievements and milestones.

Over the past year, we have led and supported an inspiring breadth of work — from large-scale international online courses and conferences, to joyful, community-led cardboard theatre productions. We have celebrated an international UNESCO award nomination and amplified the voices of young ARTivists from Scottish primary schools; whose creativity and commitment to Learning for Sustainability offered a clear intergenerational call to action. We have also developed an important series of Critical Sustainability Conversations: offering spaces to challenge thinking, explore new perspectives, link theory to policy and practice, and open up new possibilities through partnerships. Each milestone marks meaningful progress in its own right, and together, they tell the story of a growing, collective movement; offering a sense of purpose and direction at a time of profound change and uncertainty.

This annual report captures many of the larger projects and events we have delivered and supported. Yet some of the most important aspects of our work are less easily recorded: the relationships built, the trust nurtured, and the connections that sustain this community. Throughout the year, I have often described LfS Scotland as a 'weaver' - of ideas, projects, people and partnerships – which brings diverse threads together into something stronger and more resilient.

This work is only possible because of the people who make it happen. Alongside the core team, we are incredibly fortunate to be supported by a dedicated and generous Steering Group, Chair, Vice-Chair and Youth Co-ordinator; whose insight, enthusiasm and challenge continually energise the Centre's thinking and practice. Their contribution is woven throughout our work and clearly reflected in this report. Together with our broad and diverse membership, we form a vibrant LfS Scotland community; driven by a shared vision of a just, sustainable and equitable future for all.

My heartfelt thanks go to everyone who has contributed to, collaborated with and supported Learning for Sustainability Scotland this year. Your creativity, commitment and care continue to inspire and strengthen this collective journey.

Dr Beth Christie

Director

Learning for Sustainability Scotland

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1. About us

In this section:

- 1.1 Who we are
- 1.2 Our vision and mission
- 1.3 How we work

1.1 Who we are

Learning for Sustainability Scotland is Scotland's [UN University-recognised Regional Centre of Expertise \(RCE\) in Education for Sustainable Development \(ESD\)](#). We are part of a global network of 200 RCEs across 78 countries (as of October 2025); with a Global Secretariat based at the UN University's Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability in Tokyo, Japan.

The UN's Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-14) catalysed activity across all educational sectors through two Action Plans¹ co-ordinated by the Scottish Government. As the Decade came to its end, the Learning for Sustainability (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 (UNU) 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'** ('LfS Scotland'), was held on October 22nd 2013.

Since its launch, LfS Scotland has been very active in Scotland, the UK and globally. In 2015, Scotland was one of the first nations to commit to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) 2015-2030 – weaving them across its [refreshed National Performance Framework](#) in 2018 - and LfS Scotland has been an active contributor to the UNESCO [ESD for 2030 programme](#); framing its work through the [UNU-IAS Roadmap for the RCE Community 2021-30](#). In 2025, we contributed to the co-creation of the [2025 Okayama Declaration](#); which celebrates two decades of action by the global RCE community and reaffirms our collective commitment to enabling sustainable futures for all by 'harnessing ESD as a transformative force for societal change.'

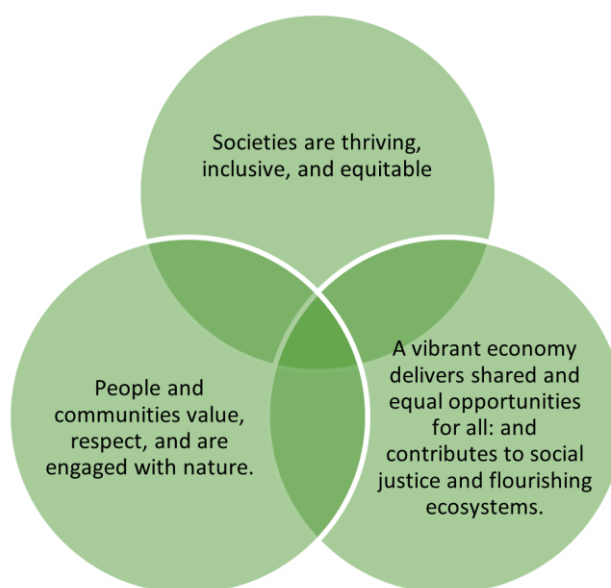
More information on projects and partnerships can be found on the LfS Scotland website (www.learningforsustainabilityscotland.org) and [in previous Annual Reports](#).

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*.

1.2 Our vision and mission

Our vision is for Learning for Sustainability (LfS) to infuse the whole of Scottish society; inspiring, informing and enabling Scotland's capacity to contribute to sustainability – locally, nationally and globally.

Our mission is to work co-operatively with our members and partners to harness the transformative potential of Learning for Sustainability to enable and support a world where:



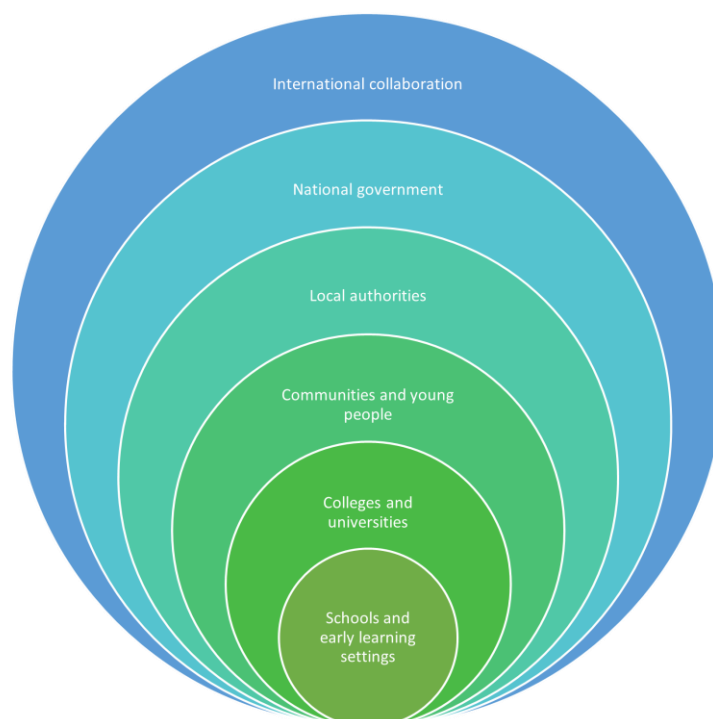
1.3 How we work

We are a pan-sectoral membership network of over 1,000 educators, policymakers and organisations; working together to embed LfS and the UN SDGs across all educational settings - formal, non-formal and informal - for all learners and educators.

We work across all educational sectors in Scotland; and collaborate with UK, European and wider global partners.

We work in partnership to shape national educational policy & practice. Our partners include national and local government, education leaders, educators, learners, non-governmental organisations and other RCEs.

Our activity contributes to Scotland's *'movement for change so that every 3-18 place of education becomes a sustainable learning setting by 2030'*² - but goes beyond this to embed LfS into communities and tertiary education too.



² [Target 2030: A movement for people, planet and prosperity: Scotland's Learning for Sustainability Action Plan 2023-2030](#)

We achieve this by:

1. Weaving connections across sectors within Scotland and with our international partners;

2. Co-producing new knowledge, and sharing skills and resources;

3. Advocating and providing strategic advice for effective learning for sustainability policy;

4. Leading, monitoring and evaluating projects and programmes.

Our approach embeds an inclusive, intergenerational, local-global & holistic approach to sustainability. We work to co-create solutions that include everyone; bridging local and worldwide perspectives – and enabling learners, educators and communities to drive transformative change for the flourishing of people and planet.

Partnerships

In line with the partnership ethos of the UN SDGs and our status as a network organisation with many active members, we continually seek to strengthen our partnership working; locally, nationally and internationally.

Examples of this include working with:

- **Early learning, school and teacher education** organisations such as General Teaching Council (GTC) Scotland, Initial Teacher Education institutions, and the Scottish Council of Deans of Education;
- **Tertiary education sector** organisations; such as the Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges (EAUC) Scotland, Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland (sparqs), the College Development Network, and universities across Scotland; including our host, the University of Edinburgh;
- **Community groups and organisations** such as Greener Kirkcaldy, and Scottish Communities Climate Action Network;
- **NGOs supporting education or other aspects of sustainability**; such as International Development Education Association for Scotland, SDG Network Scotland, Scottish

International Development Alliance, YouthLink Scotland, 2050 Climate Group and Teach the Future Scotland.

- **National and local government departments and organisations** such as the Scottish Government's Curriculum & Qualifications Division, local authorities across Scotland, Education Scotland, Scottish Qualifications Authority, Sustainable Scotland Network, and the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework team.
- **UK-level groups and organisations** such as The British Council, TEESNet (Teacher Education for Equity and Sustainability), SOS-UK (Students Organising for Sustainability) and the Our Shared World coalition;
- **International partners** such as UNESCO ESD-Net, the UN University's Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability, European RCE partners, and the Planetary Health Alliance.
- **Transdisciplinary collaborations** to enable dialogue, deliver critical analysis or seek funding for research.

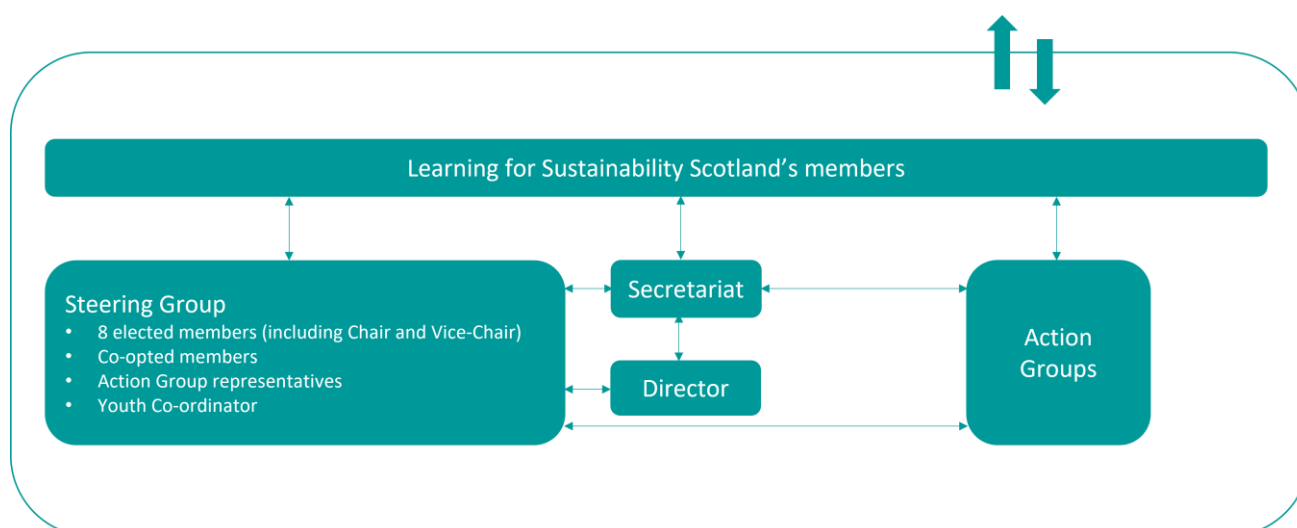
2. Our Structure and Governance

In this section:

- 2.1 Overview
- 2.2 Our Members
- 2.3 Our Steering Group
- 2.4 Our Action Groups
- 2.5 Youth Co-ordinator
- 2.6 Employees
- 2.7 Resources

2.1. Overview

Learning for Sustainability Scotland is structured as follows:



An Executive Group comprising the Director, Chair and the Secretariat (which comprises our Development Manager, Project Manager, and Finance & Administrative Officer) met quarterly in 2025 to facilitate planning and action.

Over this period, the Steering Group and Secretariat continued work based on our work plan for 2024-2025, which is derived from the [Strategic Plan for LfS Scotland](#) for the period from 2025-2030; which, in turn, is set within the context of the [UNU-IAS Roadmap for the RCE Community 2021-30](#). The Steering Group also reviewed fundraising activities, supported Action and Task Group activities, led on and contributed to various policy consultations, engaged formally and informally with the Scottish Government, and contributed to national and global fora as detailed in this report.

2.2 Our Members

Learning for Sustainability Scotland has 1,134 members based in Scotland, and a total of 1,348 bulletin subscribers (as of December 2025); comprising a blend of individuals, groups and organisations.

2.3 Our Steering Group

The Learning for Sustainability Scotland Steering Group represents our members: providing strategic advice and direction to support our Vision, Mission and Objectives. Their roles and responsibilities are set out in the [Strategic Plan for LfS Scotland](#).

Our eight Steering Group members, elected in January 2025 for a two-year term, were:

- Fiona Craig (Scottish Qualifications Authority)
- Katie Gerardot (Clifton Hall School)
- Carolyn McFarlane (Thrive Outdoors)
- Louise Mitchell (SRUC)
- Rebecca Petford (Greener Kirkcaldy)
- Sara Smith (Royal Highland Education Trust) – elected as Vice Chair in March 2025
- Sam Thomson (West College Scotland)
- Rehema White (University of St Andrews – re-elected as Steering Group Chair in March 2025)

Kathrin Möbius (EAUC Scotland) continues to be co-opted to the Steering Group to provide Tertiary Sector expertise. Alyson MacKay (2050 Climate Group) is our Youth Co-ordinator. Betsy King (former LfSS Development Manager and current Regional Advisor for the European RCE Network), and Pete Higgins (former LfSS Director), are also members of the Steering Group. Action Group Leads are also represented, such as Ullrich Kockel, who leads on the Heritage Group.

2.4 Our Action Groups

Action Groups are designed to enable members to work individually or collaboratively on specific pieces of work or projects that relate to the Vision, Mission and Objectives of LfS Scotland. There are different formats of Action Groups:

- **Task Groups:** Member-led groups with a focus on specific time-bound tasks with defined purposes, outputs and resources required.

- **Interest Groups:** Member-led, topic or sector-focused groups with defined purposes, but without defined outputs or resources required.
- **Operational Groups:** Ongoing internal Secretariat and Steering Group-led groups.

There are currently four Interest and Task Groups. They are represented on the Steering Group as follows:

- Community and SDGs: Rehema White and Rebecca Petford
- LfS/ESD in Further and Higher Education: Rehema White and Kathrin Möbius
- LfS into Personal and Social Education (PSE): Katie Gerardot
- Curating Heritage for Sustainable Communities: Ullrich Kockel

Action Group activity in 2025

- **Community and SDGs Interest Group**

This interest group has focused on SDG Network Scotland, which has continued to support efforts towards the SDGs in sectors across Scotland, with a focus on NGOs and communities. The Network has also liaised with Scottish Government and continued to encourage refresh of the National Performance Framework in alignment with the SDGs. In addition, this interest group facilitated a partnership between LfS Scotland and SDG Network Scotland to deliver one of our [Critical Sustainability Conversation webinars](#) and to support policy inputs through formal and non-formal routes. Research collaboration with [ecovillage](#) researchers has continued; with appointment of research postgraduate students and with input to establishment of the new International Ecovillage Research Institute. Finally, a closer connection with [Greener Kirkcaldy](#) is informing new potential actions.

- **LfS/ESD Further and Higher Education Interest Group**

Much of the work of this long-standing networking group; formerly known as the 'Topic Support Network' is now co-badged as part of [EAUC's new pan-UK Community of Practice network](#). Its purpose is to explore and share best practice in learning for sustainability within further and higher education settings. Topics of interest include curricula and research practices; and the development 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. Two online events were held in 2025 (see section 3.2 for details). In addition, some members of this group contributed to a new book to provide critical insights to the QAA Expert Guidance on ESD for higher education. This sector-leading book was published in April 2025 and has met with wide acclaim: White, R.M., Kemp, S., Price, E.A.C. and Longhurst, J.W.S. (eds) (2025) [Perspectives and practices of Education for Sustainable Development: a critical guide for higher education](#). (Routledge).

- **LfS into Personal and Social Education (PSE) Task Group**

In 2025, a small Task Group began to explore the ways in which aspects of LfS could be delivered through PSE as a core subject. The suggestion in principle is that **PSE** might become **PSGE** focusing on 3 strands - Personal Education (care for self), Social Education (care for others) and Global Education (care for people and planet); formalising this as a space for Citizenship Education as well as Health & Well Being. This work will be further developed in 2026.

- **Curating Heritage for Sustainable Communities Task Group**

The primary objective of the group is to develop a framework for sustainable heritage-based activity; especially in vulnerable ecological settings. Previous activity has included an appraisal of the maritime heritage of the Northern Isles as a cultural resource for sustainable community development, and collaborations with colleagues from University of Western Ontario, Canada and representatives of indigenous/traditional communities in Turtle Island, Scotland and New Zealand. In December 2025, we worked with North Yell Development Council, Shetland, to secure funding from Scotland's Intangible Cultural Heritage Partnership for an oral tradition-based pilot project as part of the ['Protection through Connection: Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage'](#) initiative. This exciting new work will begin in January 2026.

- **LfS Scotland Operational Groups**

Operational Groups are also convened by Steering Group members, core employees, and other co-opted individuals to enhance specific internal functions of LfS Scotland. Current Operational Groups include Communications, Policy, Evaluation and Impact, Stakeholder Analysis, Youth Engagement, and Key Events Planning. All Operational Groups met throughout 2025 and further activity will be undertaken as required in 2026.

2.5 Youth Co-ordinator

In 2017, the Global RCE Network asked all RCEs to nominate a Youth Coordinator to help engage "youth" with the RCE network. In this context, "youth" is defined as being anyone, or working with those under, the age of 35. We aim to increase LfS Scotland's engagement with students and young professionals with an interest in teaching and learning about sustainability, through the development of a Youth Network. In 2025, regular contact was maintained with organisations such as YouthLink Scotland, Students Organising for Sustainability (SOS)-UK, sparqs, and EAUC Scotland to ensure co-ordinated support for students' sustainability action in Scotland. Our youth engagement is also expanding internationally as our Youth Coordinator, Alyson MacKay, is also the Co-ordinator for the RCE

European Region: regularly connecting with and collaborating on multi-national projects with her peers across the world. In 2025, the Regional Youth Co-ordinators jointly delivered a session about youth engagement at the 14th Global RCE conference in Japan; with each Coordinator sharing an overview of an intergenerational project from their home country. This included an overview of the four [‘Why Not Scotland?’ series of film screenings](#) which our Youth Co-ordinator facilitated across Scotland in 2025.

2.6 Employees

Betsy King was employed as Development Manager (0.6 FTE) until her retiral in December 2024 and she was succeeded in post by [Cecilia Manosa Nyblon](#). Jenny Haggarty is our Administration and Finance Officer (0.7 FTE), and Kirsten Leask is our Project Manager (1.0 FTE). Project consultants engaged by LfS Scotland were Sophie Coats and Angela Farnish (online learning facilitation) and Katie Grant (Bulletin editor).

2.7 Resources

The University of Edinburgh has generously hosted LfS Scotland and 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 its meeting spaces. LfS Scotland operates under the University of Edinburgh’s charitable status. Other than this University of Edinburgh resource and support from grants for specific projects, LfS Scotland is 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. There is no core funding to support staffing, although currently salaries are underwritten by Moray House School of Education and Sport; which offers longer-term planning continuity.

We deliver the core work of LfS Scotland through full economic costing in some projects, University of Edinburgh resources, and more general support from the Steering Group and other members. During 2025, LfS Scotland’s activities were supported through grant and fee-earning from projects (British Council, UKRI (2024-26), University of Edinburgh, Stirling Council, Coursera, and YouthLink Scotland). The LfS Scotland team and members of the Steering Group continue to develop additional proposals for longer-term funding.

3. Our Activities in 2025

In this section:

- **3.1 Communications overview**
- **3.2 Summary of events, webinars, presentations and workshops**

Selected Highlights:

- **3.3 Events, webinars, presentations and workshops**
- **3.4 Collaborative projects**
- **3.5 Policy engagement**
- **3.6 International networking**
- **3.7 Consultancy activities**
- **3.8 Awards and publications**

Our pan-sectoral activities in 2025 were developed in response to findings from the 2024 Members' Survey and strategic inputs from the Steering Group. A further Members' Survey will be conducted after the 2025 AGM and Annual Gathering in January 2026 to provide ongoing direction for our work.

A number of additional large and small partner-based grant proposals were submitted in 2025 to a range of funders; the outcomes of which are currently pending.

3.1 Communications overview

- **Monthly Bulletin and Quarterly Policy & Research Update**

A [monthly e-bulletin](#) containing an update on LfS Scotland activities and highlighting information on events, courses, resources, policy and funding news, the latest job vacancies and the work of our members and different organisations in the field of Learning for Sustainability, was compiled by Editor Katie Grant and distributed to members. Since March 2022, a quarterly [Policy and Research e-bulletin](#) has also been compiled for members.

- **Website and Social Media**

A refresh of the LfS Scotland website was commissioned in Autumn 2025, and [our new-look website was published in early November 2025](#). Further development of the site will be informed through consultation with our Communications Operational Group and member comments and suggestions; which will be invited after the 2025 AGM in January 2026. Our online presence is further complemented by use of several social media platforms. As of December 2025, our [LinkedIn site](#) now has 2,321 followers and 1,526 connections, on Facebook we have 754 followers, and our Instagram account now has 159 followers. Our [X](#)

presence has 7,112 followers, and our Bluesky account has attracted 933 followers since its establishment in December 2024.

3.2 Summary of events, webinars, presentations and workshops

Following consultation with members, most events and workshops organised by ourselves and others have continued to take place online. During 2025, presentations and workshops were organised by, or delivered on behalf of LfS Scotland at the following conferences, events, webinars, seminars, and workshops:

2025	Event	Presentation by LfS Scotland	Event organized by LfS Scotland (many in partnership)
January	<i>Learning for Sustainability across the City of Edinburgh's LfS Community of Practice</i> – professional learning session	X	
	LfS Scotland AGM and Annual Gathering: <i>'Developing creative approaches to address controversial sustainability issues'</i>	X	X
	RCE Europe Connect webinar: <i>Creativity4Climate and the BRIDGE initiative</i> . (with RCE Vienna)	X	X
	Learning for Sustainability and the GTCS Professional Standards: <i>'A Golden Thread': LfS and the Scottish Curriculum Improvement Cycle</i> . (with GTC Scotland)	X	X
	<i>Positive Impacts on Learning and Quality</i> - EAUC Scotland Topic Support Network in Education for Sustainable Development/LfSS Action Group in FE/HE	X	X
	<i>Exploring the Potential of...a whole-setting approach to ESD</i> (with the RCE Europe Network)	X	X
February	<i>Responding to the Youth Work (Scotland) Bill consultation</i> : webinar (with YouthLink Scotland)	X	X
	RCE Europe Connect webinar: <i>COMMEET, 'New Economy, New Systems', and Social Justice Jam: Spaces for Change</i> (with RCE London)	X	X

	<i>Alternative Pathways’ Workshop designed for and delivered to an Albanian delegation for this British Council international learning programme.</i>	X	
	<i>Learning for Sustainability and the GTCS Professional Standards: ‘LfS and the Voices of Learners’ (with young people from the City of Edinburgh and West Lothian. Delivered in partnership with GTC Scotland)</i>	X	X
March	<i>RCE Europe Connect: ATELIER, E-Know, promoting ‘green’ competences (with RCE South Poland)</i>	X	X
	<i>Learning for Sustainability and the GTCS Professional Standards: ‘LfS and the Role of Senior Leadership Teams’ (with input from a secondary school in Highland Council. Delivered in partnership with GTC Scotland)</i>	X	X
April	<i>Exploring the Potential of...creative approaches to ESD in challenging contexts (with the RCE Europe Network)</i>	X	X
	<i>‘Why Not Scotland?’ film screenings and community discussion in Edinburgh; the first of 4 events across Scotland.</i>	X	X
	<i>RCE Europe Connect: The Belarus National ESD Strategy Concept (with RCE Belarus)</i>	X	X
	<i>Learning for Sustainability and the GTCS Professional Standards: ‘LfS and a Rights-Based Approach’ (with input from UNICEF. Delivered in partnership with GTC Scotland)</i>	X	X
	<i>Input to East Renfrewshire Schools’ LfS Learning Festival (in partnership with East Renfrewshire Council)</i>	X	
	<i>Launch of the National Learning for Sustainability in Initial Teacher Education Framework (in partnership with the University of Edinburgh, University of Glasgow, University of Stirling, and GTC Scotland)</i>	X	
May	<i>Critical Sustainability Conversations: Mapping the Terrain around the UN SDGs (in partnership with SDG Network Scotland).</i>	X	X
	<i>RCE Europe Connect: A focus on the work of RCE Helsinki Metropol (with RCE Helsinki Metropol)</i>	X	X

	Advancing ESD across Europe through the RCE Network (input to <i>'Environmentalism and Education: Global Trends and the Belarusian Perspective'</i> international conference, Vilnius)	X	
	<i>Critical Sustainability Conversations: Education, Sustainability and Decolonialism: thinking and moving beyond the greenwash</i> (in partnership with Queen Margaret University and Canterbury Christ Church University).	X	X
	<i>ARTivism Showcase</i> at University of Edinburgh with St Mark's Primary School Primary 7 pupils sharing their in-school arts-based and sustainability-focused activism.	X	X
	<i>Learning for Sustainability and the GTCS Professional Standards: 'A Focus on the new National Framework for LfS in Initial Teacher Education'</i> (with input from the University of Edinburgh, the University of Glasgow and the University of Stirling. Delivered in partnership with GTC Scotland)	X	X
June	<i>'We Are The Possible: Co-Creating New Narratives Ahead of COP30'</i> (2 x webinars in partnership with the University of Exeter and the Planetary Health Alliance).	X	X
	<i>Critical Sustainability Conversations: Peace Education – Fighting for the Future</i> (in partnership with University of the West of Scotland).	X	X
	<i>Exploring the Potential of...tools and frameworks for ESD</i> (with the RCE Europe Network)	X	X
	<i>Learning for Sustainability and the GTCS Professional Standards: 'Creating a culture of LfS in your setting'</i> (with input from City of Edinburgh Council. Delivered in partnership with GTC Scotland)	X	X
	<i>Teaching Climate Through Connection: climate and sustainability conference</i> (hosted by University of Edinburgh)	X	
	<i>RCE Europe Connect: A focus on the work of RCE Basque Country-Navarre and partners</i> (with RCE Basque Country-Navarre, Zabalketa and Elkartenet)	X	X

July	<i>'An introduction to the UN SDGs: moving from abstraction to application'</i> (UoE Centre for Open Learning Summer School)	X	
	Input to the <i>Third International Seminar on Climate Change Education</i> , Sicily (Office for Climate Education and UNESCO)	X	
August	Responding to <i>The Wellbeing and Sustainable Development (Scotland) Bill</i> consultation: webinar (with Sarah Boyack MSP)	X	X
	Co-facilitation of 2 x Focus Groups on <i>guidance for colleges on LfS/ESD</i> (in partnership with EAUC Scotland and SQA)	X	
	Supporting the Scottish Government's <i>Scottish Outdoor Learning Working Group</i>	X	
September	Input to the <i>City of Edinburgh LfS Community of Practice</i>	X	
	Responding to <i>Scotland's Draft Environment Strategy consultation</i> : webinar (in partnership with EAUC Scotland)	X	X
	RCE Europe Connect: <i>A focus on the work of Strategic Working Group 1: Partnerships</i> (with RCE Basque Country-Navarre, and RCE Fryslân).	X	X
	<i>Co-facilitation of events associated with visit to Scotland by Satya Tripathi; Secretary-General of the Global Alliance for a Sustainable Planet, and former UN Assistant Secretary-General</i> (in partnership with Aberdeen for a Fairer World, University of Edinburgh, Scottish Government, and City of Edinburgh Council).	X	
	<i>Rethinking Learning: Risks and Benefits of AI</i> - EAUC Scotland Community of Practice in Education for Sustainable Development/LfSS Action Group in FE/HE.	X	
	<i>Why Not Scotland?</i> Three film screenings and community discussions in Kirkcaldy, Elgin and Glasgow.	X	X
	<i>Critical Conversation: The (im)possibilities of teaching and learning climate justice in mainstream schooling.</i> Hybrid seminar at the University of Edinburgh involving Dr Callum, McGregor, Dr Beth Christie (University of	X	

	Edinburgh) and visiting scholar Dr Eve Mayes (Deakin University, Australia)		
October	<i>Imagining Possible Futures: creative workshops x 2</i> (In partnership with Hamishibai, University of Edinburgh, and YouthLink Scotland)	X	X
	Input to the <i>Scottish Youth Parliament Learning for Sustainability Round Table</i> (led by the Scottish Youth Parliament Learning for Sustainability Youth Leadership Group)	X	
	<i>Learning for Sustainability policy overview: PGDE lecture</i> (in partnership with UoE)	X	
	<i>Teach the Future (Scotland) – input to their panel discussion on education at the SNP Conference in Aberdeen</i> (in partnership with Teach the Future Scotland)	X	
	Presentation and participation at the <i>20th Global Ubuntu Committee of Peers for the RCEs</i> meeting	X	
	<i>Input to the 14th Global RCE Conference, Okayama, Japan</i> – participation in plenary discussion, co-facilitation of Capacity-Building Workshop, and delivery of Thematic Presentation. (in partnership with the UN University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability, RCE Fryslân, and RCE Basque Country-Navarre)	X	X
	Input to the <i>Young STEM Leader programme</i> (in partnership with SSERC, Ocean Winds and The Education Academy Scotland.	X	
	<i>Schools' Climate Negotiation Simulations x 2</i> (in partnership with British Council, University of Edinburgh, and Stirling Council)	X	X
November	<i>Educating for a Healthy Planet and People: Strengthening Partnerships on the Road to COP30</i> (in partnership with the Planetary Health Alliance)	X	X
	Input to the <i>UNESCO Greening Education Partnership</i> webinar	X	
	<i>RCE Europe Connect: A focus on the outputs of the 14th Global RCE Conference</i> (with RCE Czechia, RCE	X	X

	Denmark, RCE Basque Country-Navarre, and RCE Fryslân).		
	Responding to the <i>Scottish Government's School Inspections consultation</i> (webinar)	X	X
	<i>Scotland's National Framework for LfS in ITE</i> (presentation at SERA Conference; in partnership with University of Glasgow, University of Edinburgh, University of Stirling, and Edinburgh Napier University.)	X	
	<i>Learning for Sustainability: Exploring opportunities for Practitioner enquiry.</i> (presentation at Rural Education and Learning for Sustainability Hub part of the <u>Centre for Teaching Excellence</u> , University of Glasgow; in partnership with University of Glasgow, University of Edinburgh, University of Stirling, and Edinburgh Napier University.)	X	
December	<i>Teaching Climate and Sustainability Community of Practice: ESD and AI</i> (in partnership with University of Edinburgh)	X	X
	RCE Europe Connect: <i>A focus on the work of Strategic Working Group 2: Communications</i> (with RCE Oldenburger-Münsterland, RCE Bretagne, and RCE South Poland).	X	X
	<i>From learning for unsustainability to unlearning for sustainability? Stuckness, disavowal and the importance of making space for ambivalence.</i> Hybrid seminar at Kings College London as part of the RESET—Research and Education for socio-ecological transformations - seminar series involving Dr Callum McGregor and Dr Beth Christie (University of Edinburgh)	X	
	Supporting the <i>Scottish Government's Learning for Sustainability Leadership Group's series of Sprint Groups</i> : 1) Meaning and Understanding – three sessions 2) Monitoring and Evaluation – three sessions	X	

Selected Highlights:

The following sections offer more detail on selected activities undertaken during the year to provide more insight into the range of opportunities we have initiated and engaged with:

- **3.3 Events, webinars, presentations and workshops**
- **3.4 Collaborative projects**
- **3.5 Policy engagement**
- **3.6 International networking**
- **3.7 Consultancy activities**
- **3.8 Awards and publications**

3.3 Events, webinars, presentations and workshops

- **AGM and Annual Gathering January 2025**

Our 2024 AGM, held online on 09 January 2025, was themed around the concept of ['developing creative approaches to address controversial sustainability issues'](#).

This included four 'member story-shares'; from Glasgow School of Art, Rowanbank Environmental Education, Roughbounds Consulting, and UHI Moray; all of which provided wonderful reflections on the theme of creative approaches to sustainability issues from a variety of different perspectives, and perfectly illustrating just some of the infinite diversity of possibilities across all forms of learning.

We also welcomed Lewis Hou from Science Ceilidh as our keynote speaker; who shared engaging and thought-provoking insights around the theme of *'Exploring sustainability through trans-disciplinary creative teaching and community-led research'*; which provided 'food for thought' for all present; particularly around provocations around the role of traditional arts and cultures across the world to support shared learning and understanding around sustainability issues. Members also enjoyed breaking out into small groups to share and discuss inspiration, challenges. and opportunities in using creative teaching and learning approaches to address controversial sustainability challenges.

Our Chair, Rehema White, also shared the warmest thanks of the LfSS Secretariat, Steering Group, and members to Professor Pete Higgins, who stepped down as Director of LfSS in



Autumn 2024; and Betsy King, who retired from the role of Development Manager after more than ten years.

- **‘Exploring the potential of...’ webinar series: a new initiative from the RCE Europe network.**

On Thursday 30th January, the European network of Regional Centres of Expertise (RCEs) in Education for Sustainable Development welcomed a global audience to the inaugural event in its ‘Exploring the potential of...’ webinar series.



Working in partnership with other European RCEs, LfS Scotland (‘RCE Scotland’) played a key role in co-designing and hosting each of these events, which have now reached a pan-European and wider global audience of several hundred participants.

The first webinar was centred around the theme of [‘Exploring the potential of...a whole-setting approach to Education for Sustainable Development’](#). The second, held in April 2025, focused on [‘Exploring the potential of...creative learning for sustainability’](#) and a third, held in June, examined the theme of, [‘Exploring the potential of...tools and frameworks for Education for Sustainable Development’](#).

Speakers from across the European RCEs were invited to present case studies relating to each of these themes; which included input from Dunblane Primary School, Stirling, on their whole-setting approach, and an overview of Scotland’s new Framework for LfS in Initial Teacher Education. Other guest speakers included [Arjen Wals](#), Professor of Transformative Learning for Socio-Ecological Sustainability at Wageningen University, Netherlands, and UNESCO Chair of Social Learning and Sustainable Development.

The RCE Europe Network is currently planning its next suite of ‘Exploring the Potential of...’ webinars and further details will be available in due course.

- **‘Critical Sustainability Conversations’**

The pursuit of sustainable futures is complex, requiring deliberation of contested concepts, navigation of moral and practical challenges, and consideration of unpredictability. Learning for sustainability should thus support and enable dialogue; as well as the acquisition of specific skills, knowledge and competencies.



Critical Sustainability Conversations

‘Mapping the terrain around the UN Sustainable Development Goals’

Monday 12th May
12:30 – 13:45
online



In May 2025, LfS Scotland hosted its inaugural ‘Critical Sustainability Conversation: the first of our new series of events which seek to provide spaces for the ambitions outlined above.

This first Conversation focused on [‘Mapping the terrain around the SDGs’](#) and was held in collaboration with SDG Network Scotland. Our second examined [‘Education, Sustainability and decolonialism: thinking and moving beyond the greenwash’](#) and was held in partnership with Queen Margaret University and Canterbury Christ Church University. The third was centred around the theme of [‘Peace Education: Fighting for the Future’](#) and was delivered in partnership with the University of the West of Scotland, Liberton High School, and the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom.

We are now planning further Critical Sustainability Conversations for 2026 and more information will be made available in due course. We warmly welcome suggestions for these Conversations and look forward to co-designing future events of this kind with members and partners.

- **Celebrating Scotland’s Climate week: ‘Thinking and Being Outside the Box’**

LfS Scotland [co-designed and co-hosted an exciting collaboration](#) with Hamishibai Cardboard Theatre from Argentina, YouthLink Scotland, and the University of Edinburgh to celebrate Scotland’s Climate Week.

These sessions brought together a rich mix of participants – including Postgraduate



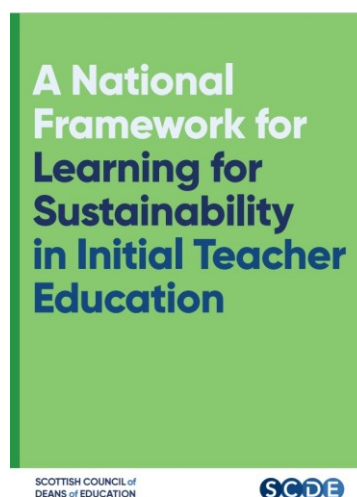
Diploma in Education, and Masters in Outdoor and Environment Education, students; youth workers; educational practitioners; academics; and our own LfSS team.

Through storytelling, games, cardboard theatre, and humour, Hamishibai opened new possibilities for dialogue, connection, and collaboration; helping participants to break barriers, challenge perspectives, and to '*think outside the box*' about issues of climate change and sustainability. The experience sparked not just bold imaginative and courageous ideas, but new ways of being together to unleash new imaginings for our complex and often absurd world - confronting difficult and complex issues in collaborative and disruptive ways.

3.4 Collaborative projects

- **Learning for Sustainability in Initial Teacher Education (ITE)**

LfS Scotland (Beth Christie, Betsy King and Kirsten Leask), collaborated with colleagues from the University of Stirling (Prof Lizzie Rushton, University of Stirling and Scottish Council of Deans of Education (SCDE) lead for LfS), GTC Scotland (Suzy Aldous) and University of Glasgow (Dr Claire Ramjan) to build on the work they had initiated in 2024 to facilitate a national working group aiming to 'create a single national approach to support LfS within Initial Teacher Education' ([LfS Action Plan, item 24](#)).



In 2024, more than thirty representatives from the eleven Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) in Scotland who have ITE portfolios, met for collaborative meetings online and in person to reflect on the current status of LfS in ITE, articulate a shared vision and understanding, and co-create a framework of guiding principles for LfS in ITE. The resulting Framework was published in early 2025, and a series of events were co-organised by LfS Scotland to disseminate and raise awareness; including a national [launch event](#) in April 2025, a [teacher-specific event](#) in May 2025, and a [workshop at the Scottish Educational Research Association Annual Conference](#) in November 2025. Further activities associated with dissemination and implementation are anticipated in 2026.

We are delighted to announce that this initiative was recently recognised at the 14th Global RCE Conference, held in Okayama, Japan; in the RCE Awards '[Outstanding Flagship Project: Non-Youth-Led](#)' category.

- **Learning for Sustainable Futures 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 three 'massive open online courses' in 2025.



The five-week [Learning for a Sustainable Future](#) course, led by LfS Scotland

Director Dr Beth Christie, focused on personal reflection, local and global contexts, online community building, and action within individual 'spheres of influence'. This facilitated course was offered in March 2025; with a refreshed version, ['Learning for Sustainable Futures'](#) offered in October 2025; which offered a greater focus on learning and teaching approaches.

Following on from this course, [Learning for a Sustainable Future: Live at COP30](#) offered participants from all over the world an opportunity to examine what the UN Climate Change Conference in Belém, Brazil was, why it was important, and consider how to support the co-ordinated aims and ambitions of the Conference through action. 'Live' insights into the Conference included contributions from **Peter Mathieson**, Principal University of Edinburgh; **Jenny Salmon**, Clima Talk, alumni University of Edinburgh; **Katharine Taylor**, PhD student, University of Edinburgh; **Kiara Worth**, official photographer, UNFCCC; **Johnny Dabrowski**, Earth Day (focus on Climate Education); **Ian Menzies**, Education Scotland; **Monomita Nag-Chowdhury**, British Council; **Katerina Ananiadou**, GEP, UNESCO; **Nafissa Insibayeva** - UNU-IAS; **Axel Ericsson**, Climate Youth Negotiators Programme /UN Advisory Panel; **Professor Navraj Singh Ghaleigh**, Senior Lecturer in Climate Law at the University of Edinburgh; **Fatima Ismail**, Climate Youth Delegate for Ireland; **Seán Dillon**, Climate Youth Delegate for Ireland; **Marie-Claire Graf**, UNFCCC Youth Negotiators Academy; **Emma Heiling**, CEO & Founder of Clima Talk; **Nina Pusic**, Senior Manager, Educational Programs, Environmental Law Institute; **Dearbhla Richardson**, Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty; **Lea Jordan-Tank**, University of Edinburgh's LLM in Global Environment and Climate Change Law; **Timon Steger**, YOUNGO, Children and Youth Constituency of the UNFCCC; **Navya Kala**, Student, NDC Partnership Consultant, YOUNGO; **Quinn Runkle**, SOS-UK; **Dr Rowan Jackson and Prof. Liz Grant**; University of Edinburgh Delegation; **Howard Mwesigwa**, University of Edinburgh Earth Fellow; **Prof. Dave Reay**, University of Edinburgh.

The material will be available as a legacy resource until COP31 in November 2026.

Together, these MOOCs have now attracted over 47,000 participants from 167 countries.

- **COP30 Climate Negotiation Simulation events**

In advance of the UN Climate Change Conference, Learning for Sustainability Scotland; in partnership with the University of Edinburgh, British Council, and Stirling Council, welcomed nearly 200 students from 19 secondary schools across the City of Edinburgh, Falkirk, Renfrewshire, Scottish Borders, Stirling, and West Lothian to take part in [COP30 Climate Negotiation Simulation events](#).



Role-playing as politicians, journalists, and lobbyists, students had the opportunity to find out what it's really like to negotiate a climate deal. Interviews with students, teaching staff and organisers were incorporated into the November 'Live at COP30' MOOC. We were delighted to also welcome Gillian Martin MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Climate Action and Energy; and Fernanda dal Piazz, Deputy Consul from the Consulate General of Brazil in Edinburgh, as keynote speakers to the Edinburgh event.

It was the third time this [award-winning initiative](#) has been held in Scotland; and for the first time, two events were held – in Edinburgh and Stirling – reaching even more young people.

- **Weaving Learning for Sustainability across the Professional Standards for Teachers**

Since 2021, LfS Scotland has worked in partnership with GTC Scotland to offer a range of resources and professional learning opportunities for teachers through the [GTC Scotland 'LfS Hub'](#).



A key part of this has been the monthly meetings of the **'LfS Connect' Community of Practice**; co-organised and facilitated by LfS Scotland. Over 400 teachers and others in the world of education have now participated in these sessions; each of which has included input from a guest speaker on a particular LfS-related theme, insights from GTC Scotland as to how the theme links to the Professional Standards for teachers in Scotland - across which [Learning for Sustainability is a key cross-cutting theme](#) – and opportunities for group discussions. Themes covered in 2025 included the [Scottish Curriculum Improvement Cycle](#), the [voices of learners](#), the [role of Senior Leadership Teams](#), a [rights-based approach to LfS](#), the new [National Framework for LfS in Initial Teacher Education](#), and [creating a culture of LfS in your setting](#).

'LfS Connect' will return in 2026.

- **Supporting educators and learners in Scotland’s tertiary sector**

LfS Scotland is delighted to be working with EAUC Scotland and the Scottish Qualifications Authority to **create guidance for Scotland’s colleges on whole-setting approaches to embedding Learning for Sustainability** across everyday learning, research, and operations for staff and students. Co-created with input from focus groups of college-based staff from a variety of institutions, this will include practical suggestions, case studies, and practice examples.

We are also very excited to be working with sparqs, EAUC Scotland, and SOS-UK on a Sustainable Development Lens to further enhance the sparqs [Student Learning Experience model \(SLE Model\)](#) and support students and staff to consider the full breadth of the learning experience through three areas of focus: equality, diversity and inclusion; mental health and wellbeing; and sustainable development.

More details on both of these initiatives will be shared in 2026.

- **‘Feeling the Untouchable’: Haptic touch experiences for naturalistic learning**

LfS Scotland is a partner in an exciting new two-year initiative that is bringing together teachers, students and researchers to engage with sustainability challenges by co-creating tactile discovery experiences of the natural world.



The project is led by The Open University with partners that include University of Edinburgh, Imperial College London, LfS Scotland and City of Edinburgh Council; and is funded from October 2024 to October 2026 by UK Research and Innovation.

LfS Scotland is supporting the facilitation of workshops with schools in Scotland, the creation of materials for use with pupils, and, in time, the dissemination of project results.

- **Climate Sisters, Wen (Women’s environmental network)**

LfS Scotland is a partner in the ongoing [Climate Sisters](#) project, led by Wen (Women’s Environmental Network). This year the Climate Sisters project received £1.5 million from National Lottery Community Fund, which enabled the project to expand their participatory climate leadership programme to Manchester and the Northwest of England and Scotland Central Belt.

The project enables people to share their knowledge and lived experience, while also developing skills and confidence to take climate action and influence policy. LfS Scotland will

support by helping to share opportunities for participation in part in local and national events, campaigns and policy-making spaces to increase opportunities for experience in public speaking, co-facilitation, and community engagement.

- **Building a Movement for Change: The impact of Learning for Sustainability - focused professional learning across Scottish schools and communities.**

This ESRC IAA (Economic and Social Research council Impact Accelerator Award) research is being led by Dr Beth Christie, University of Edinburgh in partnership with Learning for Sustainability Scotland, British Council, and the City of Edinburgh Council.

The Scottish Government's Learning for Sustainability (LfS) Action Plan 2023–2030 (Target 2030) aims to embed sustainability across 3-18 education with the ambition that by 2030 all learners will receive their entitlement to LfS and all places of learning will be 'Sustainable Learning Settings'.



In support of this, we are developing a pilot model of professional learning to enhance teacher practice, and, in turn, support Local Authorities and Scottish Government to realise their Target 2030 ambition. Through this work we aim to better understand the needs of teachers in terms of LfS professional learning and track the impact of the professional learning on offer in relation to the development of LfS practices within their setting.

LfS Scotland will support by providing strategic expertise and administrative/marketing support to align with international and national LfS policy and strategic direction; increase international and national learner engagement; amplify outcomes through pan-sectoral reach, national and international networks; and embed the professional learning offer within existing and emerging networks to ensure long-term impact.

- **Advancing Action: The University of Edinburgh's research and reflections for COP30 and the future**

The University of Edinburgh produced a publication ahead of COP 30: [Advancing action](#). This publication is a collection of opinion pieces from climate experts across the University of Edinburgh who are facing up to the climate crisis in all its forms.

Dr Beth Christie, Director of LfS Scotland, led on *'The vital role of education and learning in enabling change'* which formed part of the section entitled *Pillar 6 of the Action Agenda: Unleashing Enablers and Accelerators*. LfS Scotland colleagues supported the development of this chapter, which also highlighted LfS Scotland's MOOCs and ongoing contribution to advancing sustainability education across the University of Edinburgh, externally across Scotland, and internationally.

- **Perspectives and Practices of Education for Sustainable Development: A Critical Guide for Higher Education**

Our Chair, Prof. Rehema White, and former Director, Prof Pete Higgins, collaborated with academics from across the UK to write and edit this pivotal publication to provide critical insights to underpin the [QAA Expert Guidance on ESD for higher education](#). Informed by theory and full of practical advice, it offers a clear route to education for sustainable development (ESD) whilst questioning how we reconcile participatory, inclusive processes, and the urgency of global crises. The book covers key topics such as:

- The need for sustainable development and the role that universities can play in this
- Showing how ESD should be part of a whole-institution approach
- Development of relevant curricula with innovative and inspiring pedagogies to support sustainability competencies
- Transdisciplinary learning and pioneering forms of knowledge production
- Graduate futures and emerging priorities in the field of ESD

Through detailed case studies from experts in the field, this book demonstrates how ESD enables a critical interrogation of our world and strengthens the capacities of our universities to nurture future thinking leaders.

This is essential reading for all those interested in beginning or widening ESD in programmes, universities and the wider sector, including academic staff, university senior managers and support staff, students, policy makers, employers, and community leaders.

3.5 Policy engagement

- **Engagement with Scotland-wide policy leads**

LfS Scotland's Secretariat maintained formal and informal dialogue with a wide range of individuals from Scottish Government (members and officials) and its agencies during 2025. This included participation in the national Learning for Sustainability Leadership Group, regular meetings with key Scottish Government LfS leads, participation in workshops on the place of Learning for Sustainability in the new Curriculum Improvement Cycle, and in 'Sprint Groups' set up to consider particular aspects of the national LfS strategy:

['Target 2030: a vision for people, planet, and prosperity'.](#)

"Target 2030"
A movement for
people, planet and prosperity

Scotland's Learning for Sustainability
Action Plan 2023-2030



Supporting the:

SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT GOALS



LfS Scotland also continues to participate in [Scotland's Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\) Network](#) development through LfS Scotland's Chair, Rehema White. This coalition on sustainable development is open to all.

LfS Scotland was invited to join a panel debate on how [Schools are leading the Net Zero transition in Scotland](#) at a fringe event at the Scottish National Party conference on 13th October 2025 in Aberdeen. This debate was convened by [Teach the Future](#), a UK-wide campaign led by secondary and tertiary education students to improve education on the climate emergency and ecological crisis.

- **Responding to policy consultations**

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

- Feb 2025: Scottish Parliament Member's Bill: [Youth Work \(Scotland\) Bill](#)
- Jun 2025: Scottish Parliament Member's Bill: [Ecocide Bill](#)
- Aug 2025: Scottish Parliament: [Well-being and Sustainable Development \(Scotland\) Bill](#)
- Sept 2025: Scottish Government: [Scotland's Draft Environment Strategy](#)
- Nov 2025: Scottish Government: [Schools' Inspection Consultation](#)

- **Engaging with international policy**

LfS Scotland was invited by the Global RCE Service Centre at the UN University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability to contribute to a publication celebrating 20 years of the Global RCE Network.

Our article in [Learning, Collaborating and Transforming: The 20-Year Journey of the Global RCE Network | United Nations University](#) is aligned to Priority Action Area One: Advancing Policy of the [UNESCO ESD for 2030 Roadmap](#) and has a focus on the policy work that LfS Scotland has helped to influence to 'integrate Learning for Sustainability as both a learner entitlement for all learners aged 3-18 and as a requirement for teacher standards'.

3.6 International networking

LfS Scotland is Scotland's United Nations University-recognised Regional Centre (RCE) of Expertise in ESD, and one of the global network of 200 RCEs across 78 countries (as of December 2025).

Betsy King was re-appointed by the Global RCE Centre in UNU-IAS as the RCE Regional Advisor for Europe 2023-2025, to provide strategic advice to the Global RCE Centre, advise RCEs in the European region, and to review new RCE applications.

During 2025, there was regular contact with the Global RCE Network and European RCEs. We carried out the following international knowledge exchange activities:

- **Rethinking Learning for a Sustainable Future: the 14th Global RCE Conference**

LfS Scotland participated in the [recent Global RCE Conference](#); which brought together RCE members and key stakeholders from all over the world to Okayama, Japan, to exchange knowledge, celebrate achievements and shape the future of ESD.



The conference provided an opportunity to reflect on the network's accomplishments to date and its efforts to advance UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 (Quality Education); which is essential to achieving the other UN SDGs.

With the theme “*Rethinking Learning for a Sustainable Future: 20 Years of Action and Innovation*”, this conference was a cause for celebration: commemorating both the 20th anniversary of the [Global RCE Network](#) and the [50th anniversary of the United Nations University](#). It also comes at the midpoint of the implementation timescale of two important international frameworks for ESD; namely the [RCE Roadmap 2021–2030](#) and the [ESD for 2030 framework](#).

LfS Scotland’s work to support Priority Action Area One of the UNESCO ESD 2030 Roadmap was included in a [publication marking the 20th anniversary of the Global RCE Network](#) and delegates also adopted the [2025 Okayama Declaration: RCEs’ Collective Commitment for Sustainable Futures](#); reaffirming the Global RCE Network’s commitment to harnessing education as a transformative force for societal change.

We also participated in two Plenary Sessions, co-delivered a Capacity-Building Workshop, and a Thematic Presentation – and were [delighted to receive ‘Outstanding Flagship Award: Non-Youth-Led’ for two partnership-led initiatives](#): *The National Learning for Sustainability in Initial Teacher Education Framework*, and our work on *Advocating for Learning for Sustainability in Scotland*.

- **Supporting the European RCE network.**

In 2025, LfS Scotland continued to play a key role in supporting the work of the RCE Europe network; including the activity undertaken by the five Strategic Working Groups (Strategic Partnerships; Communications; Events; Research and Funding; and Youth) established at the 2024 European RCE Regional Meeting.



Betsy King continued in her role as Regional Advisor and Kirsten Leask continued in her role as co-Communicator (with Detlev Lindau Bank, RCE Oldenburger Münsterland). In 2025, LfS Scotland supported nine ‘Connect’ sessions, three ‘Exploring the Potential of...’ webinars, the provision of a Global RCE Service Centre-led session on Action-Oriented Pedagogy, and the ongoing development and activity of the Events and Communications Strategic Working Groups in particular.

- **Ubuntu Committee of Peers for the RCEs**

Betsy King, RCE Regional Advisor for Europe, and Alyson MacKay, RCE Europe Youth Coordinator contributed to the meetings of the Ubuntu Committee of Peers for the global RCE network in 2025.



Agenda items included: the Okayama Declaration on RCEs and ESD; the 20th Anniversary Conference and Publication; reviews of progress and plans for 2026; discussion on future strategies; and developing plans for resource mobilisation.

- **Greening Education Partnership**

During 2025, LfS Scotland continued its participation as a stakeholder in the [UNESCO Greening Education Partnership](#); 'a global initiative that takes a whole-of-system approach to support countries to tackle the climate crisis by harnessing the critical role of education'.

The Partnership was one of the six 'Calls to Action' launched at the UN Transforming Education Summit in 2022, and is a growing community of practice comprised of 97 Member States (including the UK) and over 1,000 organizations (including LfS Scotland) (as of December 2025).

- **Educating for a Healthy Planet and People: Strengthening Partnerships on the road to COP30**

In the run-up to COP30, LfS Scotland worked with colleagues from the [Planetary Health Alliance](#) to [co-design and deliver a global webinar](#) to explore the role of Planetary Health education in preparing societies for the urgent transitions demanded by the climate crisis.

Aligning with COP30's agenda, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) this webinar explored a number of themes: including the opportunities presented by the Planetary Health Educational Framework, developed by the Planetary Health Alliance.

- **International Climate Conference COP30 November 2025**

The [Learning for Sustainable Futures: Live at COP30 MOOC](#) (see 3.4) provided an opportunity to highlight Scotland's focus on Learning for Sustainability; with contributions from Ian Menzies, Learning for Sustainability lead at Education Scotland, and footage and insights from Scotland's secondary schools Climate Negotiation Simulation events. Inputs from other RCEs, and global organisations such as UNESCO - as well as University of Edinburgh delegates - were also featured.

3.7 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:

- LfS Scotland was engaged by University of Edinburgh to deliver an 8-week long (April/June 2025) [Sustainability and Social Responsibility International Foundation Programme](#) for 40 international students.
- LfS Scotland was commissioned by Stirling Council to organise and co-deliver a Schools' Climate Negotiation Simulation event for 106 secondary school pupils from Stirling, Falkirk, and Renfrewshire in October 2025.

3.8 Awards and Publications

- LfS Scotland and its partners received award success for two of their projects in the [2025 Regional Centres of Expertise in Education \(RCE\) Awards for Innovative Projects on Education for Sustainable Development \(ESD\)](#). These awards are presented annually to RCEs that have made outstanding contributions to address local sustainable development challenges in their regions.
- We were also shortlisted for the [ESD Okayama Award 2025](#), which recognizes outstanding ESD (Education for Sustainable Development) initiatives across the world. This year, the organisers received 346 submissions from 81 countries around the world; the highest number in the history of the award.
- We were also nominated by the UK delegation to UNESCO for the [UNESCO-Japan Prize on Education for Sustainable Development](#). Nominations for the prize can be submitted by Member States of UNESCO or Non-Governmental Organizations in official partnership for



UNESCO each year. The prize winners are selected by a jury consisting of international members, and the Director-General of UNESCO appoints the jury, which meets annually in Paris, France. The Prize and award winners recognize the role of education in connecting the social, economic, cultural and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

We have also produced or contributed to various resources to support our activities and facilitate our members' activities over the year. These include:

- White, R.M., Kemp, S., Price, E.A.C. and Longhurst, J.W.S. (eds) (2025) [*Perspectives and practices of Education for Sustainable Development: a critical guide for higher education*](#). Routledge.
- Mardero, S., Schmook, B., Calmé, S., Casanova, G. and White, R.M. (2025) *Drifting past policy coherence? Rhetoric and realities of the Mexican Sembrando Vida program's sustainability goals*. *Land*, 14: 278. <https://doi.org/10.3390/land14020278>
- Young Geographer article: https://issuu.com/rsgspubs/docs/young_geographer_health_in_a_changing_climate

4. Representation on national and international groups

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

Across Scotland:

- **College Development Network Awards** Judge (ongoing)
- **Education Scotland LfS Partner Forum** (member from June 2021)
- **Education Scotland Rights and Participation Network** (member from 2022)
- **Island Schools Regional Stakeholder Group** – Panel Member (2022 – ongoing)
- **Local authority Learning for Sustainability network/advisory groups (various)** – members (2019 – ongoing)
- **NatureScot** - Board Member, Chair of Scientific Advisory Committee (2021 - ongoing)
- **Outdoor Centres Residential (Scotland) Bill** - member of Advisory Group (2022 - ongoing)
- **Royal Society of Edinburgh Education Committee** - member
- **Scottish Government Learning for Sustainability Curriculum Improvement Cycle workshops** several members (2024- ongoing)
- **Scottish Government Learning for Sustainability Leadership Group** member (2022 – ongoing)
- **Scottish Government Learning for Sustainability Sprint Groups** several members (2025 – ongoing)
- **Scottish Council of Deans of Education LfS in Initial Teacher Education Working Group** (2024 – ongoing)
- **SDG Network Scotland** Steering Group member (2020 - ongoing)

Beyond Scotland:

- **Blue-Action Societal engagement group** member (2019 and ongoing)
- **Field Studies Council** - Board Member and Chair (2020 - ongoing)
- **Green Gown Awards** Judge (ongoing)
- **Joint Nature Conservation Committee (UK)** - Member (2022 - ongoing)
- **Teacher Education for Equity and Environmental Sustainability Network (TEESNet)** Steering Group member and Scotland representative
- **Ubuntu Committee of Peers for the UN University-recognised Regional Centres of Expertise (RCEs) in Education for Sustainable Development** as Regional Adviser to the RCE Community (Europe) (2020 - ongoing)
- **UNESCO Greening Education Partnership** member (2023 ongoing)
- **WEN (Women's Environmental Network)** Trustee (2024 ongoing)

5. Next steps

The Strategic Plan for LfS Scotland in 2025-2030 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, the 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 for LfS progress across Scotland
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

Engaging with our members

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 Action Groups, communication, or events.

Please get in touch if you have any suggestions or if you wish to partner on a new venture.

Our regular Members’ Surveys are used to inform our Work Plans, and members will be invited to share their views in our 2026 Survey; which will be announced at our 2025 AGM on 15th January 2026.

6. Closing words

This is an exciting time for Learning for Sustainability Scotland. 2026 holds significant global and local challenges, as we consider how AI will increasingly influence education, as we tackle the climate and nature crises head on, and as we continue to navigate shifting political and cultural contexts. However, with the strength and commitment of our members, we can – and will - continue to make a positive difference.

After over 10 years of experience supporting education and learning for a better world, we are looking forward to the future. We were sad to see members of the Secretariat and Steering Group leave us or complete their term in 2025, but we have welcomed new individuals and their wisdom and perspectives. We will continue to have significant roles to play in local initiatives, in national policies such as Scotland’s ‘Target 2030: a movement for people, planet and prosperity’, and in global networks such as the Regional Centres of Expertise in ESD which celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2025. Education can change people, processes and practices, and we intend to support transformation towards more sustainable futures.

We look forward to working with members and partners in the year to come.

Learning for Sustainability Scotland

December 2025

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Glossary of key terms

Action Groups	Groups focused on specific sustainability projects or areas within LfS Scotland, such as education or community engagement.
Co-opted Members	Experts brought onto committees to provide specialised knowledge, even if not elected.
Collaborative Projects	Joint initiatives between LfS Scotland and external partners to achieve shared sustainability goals.
Communities of Practice (CoP)	A group of individuals who share a common interest or practice and engage in collective learning to improve their knowledge and skills.
Co-Producing New Knowledge	Collaborative creation of knowledge across stakeholders, ensuring diverse perspectives in sustainability solutions.
Consultancy Activities	Professional services provided by LfS Scotland to support educational institutions or organisations in implementing sustainability-focused programs or strategies.
Economic Costing	A model for calculating the true cost of projects, including overheads and staff time, used to secure funding.
External-Facing Action Groups	Groups that collaborate with external organisations or communities on sustainability issues.
Interest Groups (Member-led, Topic-Specific)	Member-led groups exploring topics related to sustainability without set deliverables.
LfS (Learning for Sustainability)	A holistic approach to education that integrates sustainability into teaching, learning, and daily practices to foster a sustainable future.
MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses)	Free online courses aimed at large-scale participation, offering flexible learning opportunities globally, often on sustainability-related topics.

Operational Groups	Internal groups focusing on ongoing functions like policy development, communications, and evaluation within LfS Scotland.
Pan-sectoral Membership Network	A diverse network of stakeholders from various sectors (education, government, NGOs) working on sustainability education.
Policy Engagement	The process of influencing or contributing to the development of public policies related to sustainability and education at national and international levels.
Roadmap for the RCE Community 2021-2030	A strategic guide for RCEs , outlining priorities and actions for advancing education for sustainable development/LfS.
Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE)	A network recognised by the United Nations University focused on delivering Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) at a local level.
Sustainable Learning Setting	Educational settings designed to integrate sustainability into their culture curriculum, campus (daily operations and use of physical/digital spaces) and into the wider communities they are part of.
Task Groups (Member-led, Time-bound)	Member-led, time-bound groups focused on specific tasks with defined outcomes.
Tertiary Sector Organisations	Institutions involved in post-secondary education (e.g., universities, colleges), often working with LfS Scotland on sustainability initiatives.
UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014)	A global initiative that catalysed Education for Sustainable Development activities, after which LfS Scotland was established.
UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	A set of 17 global goals set by the UN to tackle the world's most pressing issues, such as poverty, climate change, and inequality, by 2030.
UNESCO ESD-Net	A global network of experts and institutions focusing on Education for Sustainable Development, led by UNESCO.
UNU-IAS (United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability)	The academic arm of the UN focused on sustainability research and action, including the development of RCEs.

Youth Coordinator	A role aimed at engaging young people (under 35) in sustainability efforts, promoting youth involvement in RCE activities.
RCE Europe Network	The network of Regional Centres of Expertise based in Europe, collaborating on sustainable education initiatives.