**Date:** 11 May 2022

**Time:** 10-11.30am

**Venue:** Virtual

**MINUTES**

**Community Engagement Topic Support Network: Agents of Change**

**Attendees:**

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| Alice Smith | AS | EAUC-Scotland |
| Lucy Patterson | LP | EAUC-Scotland |
| Rory Hill | RH | EAUC-Scotland |
| John Thorne | JT | Glasgow School of Art |
| Severine Monvoisin | SM | Edinburgh College |
| Ruth Donnelly | RD | University of Edinburgh |
| Rachel Allcock | RA | University of Nottingham |
| Adam Kesby | AK | Sustrans |
| Jone de Roode Jauregi | JJ | Kings College London |
| Vered Balan | VB | Oxford University |
| Hannah Morgan | HM | University of Bristol |
| Sara Maclean | SM | Glasgow Caledonian University |
| Viola Retzlaff | VR | University of Glasgow |
| Iona Scanlon | IS | Edinburgh Students’ Charities Appeal |
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| **10:00** | **Welcome and Introductions** *John Thorne, Sustainability Coordinator, Glasgow School of Art*  JT welcomed everyone to the meeting and led a round of introductions. |
| **10:10** | **Case study: Students as Change Agents (SAChA) programme***Ruth Donnelly, Assistant Director, Careers Service, University of Edinburgh* See the [Sustainability Exchange](https://www.sustainabilityexchange.ac.uk/community_engagement_topic_support_network_agen) for a recording of Ruth’s presentation.  **Q&A**  JT asked about subject engagement. RD responded that there is lesser engagement from maths, physics, medicine and vet medicine. Language students often apply because they view data as something missing from their education.  JT also asked about programme’s attitude to greenwashing. RD responded that they take a hands-off approach. By making students aware that data can be manipulated, they reach the conclusion organically.  AK asked whether students experience frustration with pace of change. RD said that they are aiming to make Agents of Change for Life – students are not told that they can make change overnight.  SM asked how external organisations approach the university with their challenges and whether they are filtered. RD said that sometimes organisations approach with a specific question, sometimes they just want to work with the programme. They work hard to make sure that organisations understand that this isn’t business consultancy, this is challenge thinking. Overly small, niche, localised questions are encouraged to broaden, partner with other organisations or approach other programmes.  SM asked how staff are encouraged to become involved as facilitators. RD said that they started off with their consultation group containing staff members with an interest in volunteering for SAChA and it developed into a network of colleagues across the university. They have since started offering these roles as a paid opportunity for PhD students, and have worked with SOS on how to find these students.  JJ asked whether organisations would be involved throughout the project. RD said that they have three touch points: introducing the challenge, interim Q&A session, and presentation event. They ask organisations to have an email address available where students can pose questions if necessary.    JJ asked about challenges of rollout, core curriculum and accreditation. RD said that they haven’t yet found the answers. They have focused on keeping the profile of the programme high so that Senior Management are aware and may want to refer to the project in the curriculum. They want students to become change agents to be change agents, not just for academic credit, so they have tried to keep assessment simple but robust. |
| **11:15** | **Roundtable discussion: How do we encourage students and staff to become agents of change and equip our communities to challenge greenwashing around us?** *Severine Monvoisin, Community Garden Coordinator, Edinburgh College*  *John Thorne, Sustainability Coordinator, Glasgow School of Art*  VB raised the gap between students’ desire to change and what we see in action from the student body. SM agreed that students’ actions do not always align with their values – students who engage in litter-picking may also engage in littering.  RA noted that wider climate activism takes aim at larger organisations rather than individual action and suggested that a loss of student community due to Covid-19 may be impacting on this.  JT talked about micro-damages, and suggested that we focus on what we can do rather than what we can’t avoid.  VR talked about cycling in Glasgow – as well as giving to the cycling community, perhaps we should take away from drivers. VB said that this is being trialled in Oxford.  JT said that there should be a focus on making our engagement personal and values led. We are our communities. |
| **11:30** | **Thanks and Close** |