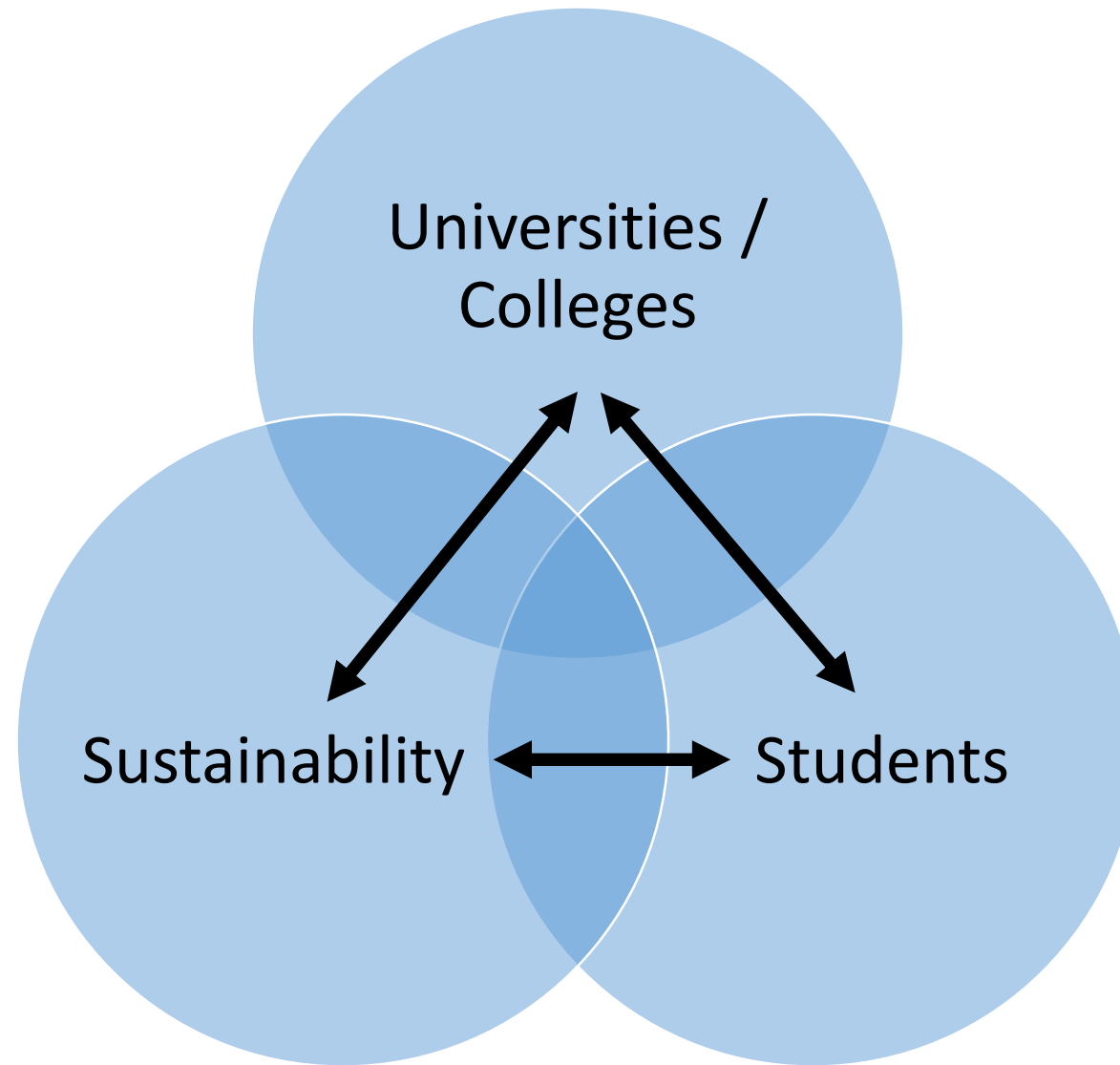


Student Leaders: Campaigning for Sustainability

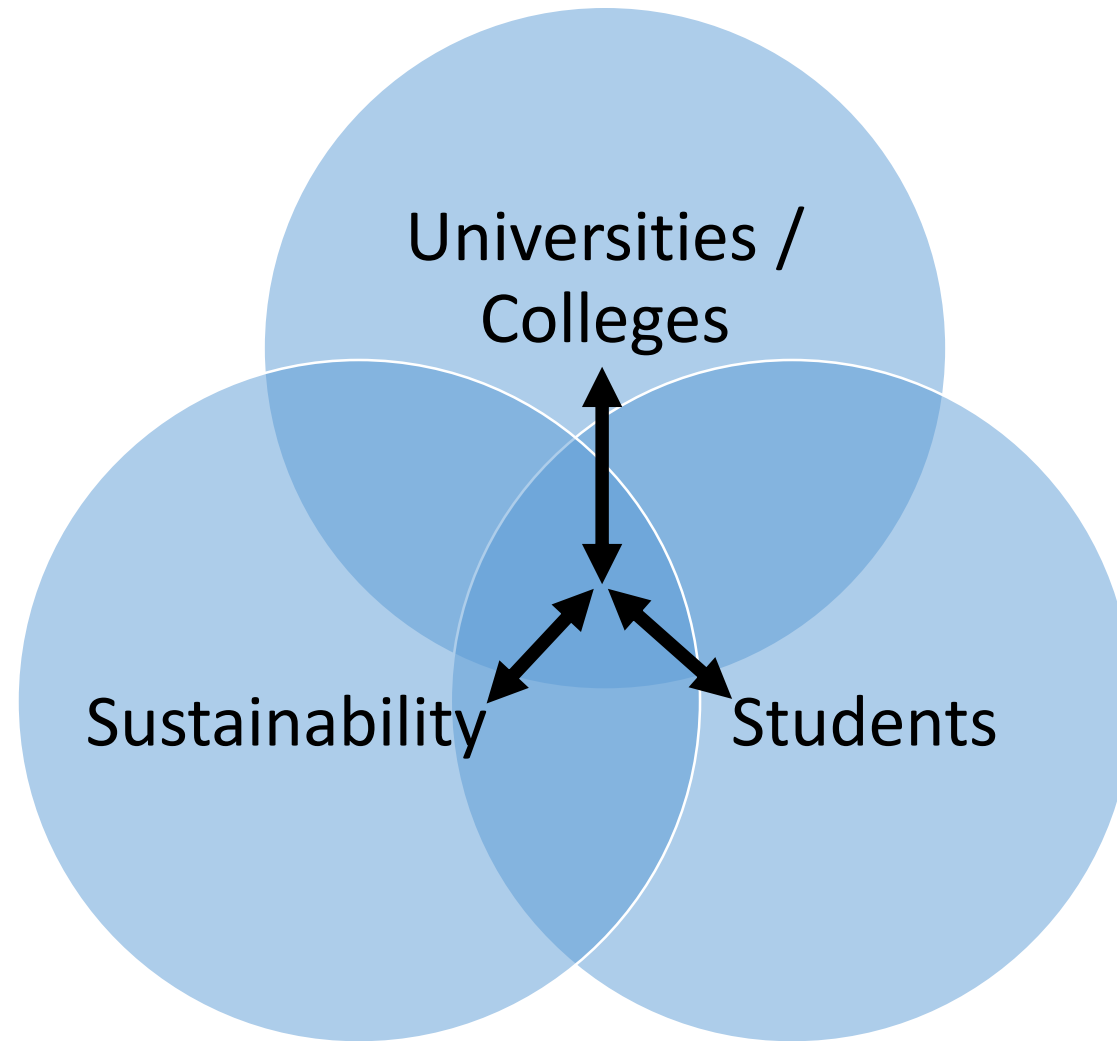
Using COP26 to engage students with climate change and sustainability
17th August 2021

Matt Woodthorpe | EAUC-Scotland Programme Manager

This talk



This talk



[Campaigning for] Sustainability at the University of Stirling Students' Union



The Sustainability Hub



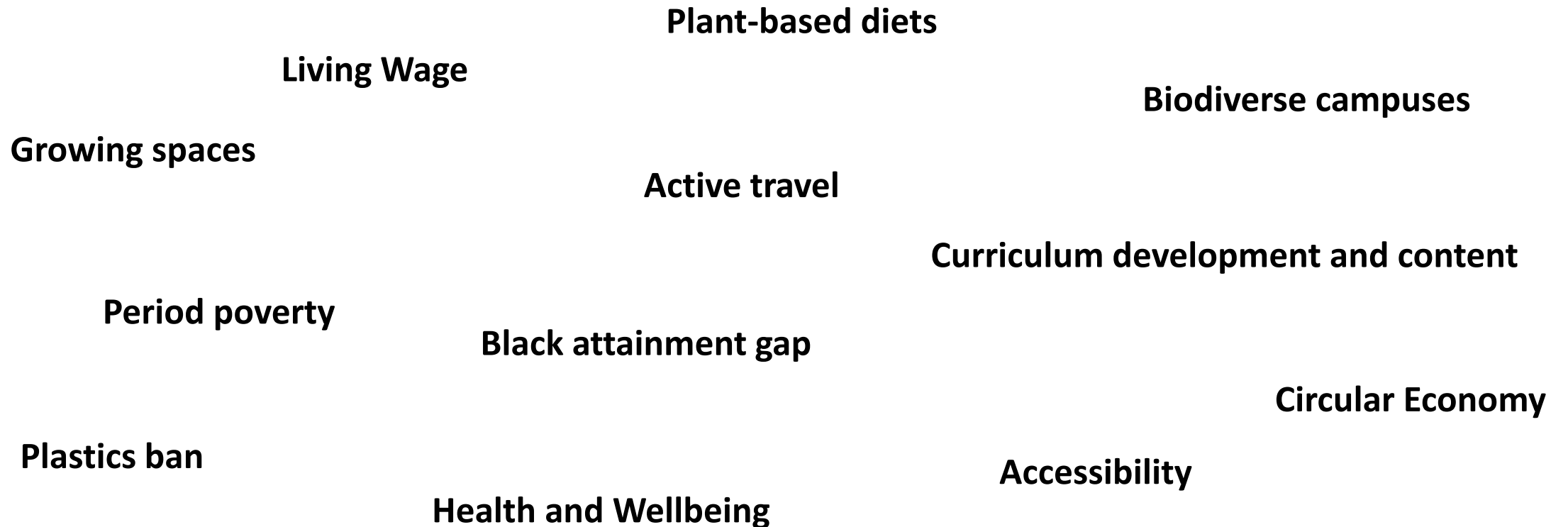
Achievements To Date

- 2019 – **1st Carbon Neutral Students' Union**
- 2019 - **Divestment**
- 2018 – 2019 – **Mooncups (Period Poverty)**
- 2018 – **Funding for +25% bike parking spaces**
- 2018 – **20p Coffee cup charge**
- 2017 – 2019 – **Interhall Energy Competition**
- 2017 – **Paperless coursework**
- 2015 – 2017 – **Funding transition**
- 2014 – **Food Hive established**
- 2014 – **Community Garden & Accommodation Food Waste Collections**
- 2012 – **Green and Blue Space & Fair Share established**

Sustainability with people and
community at its heart

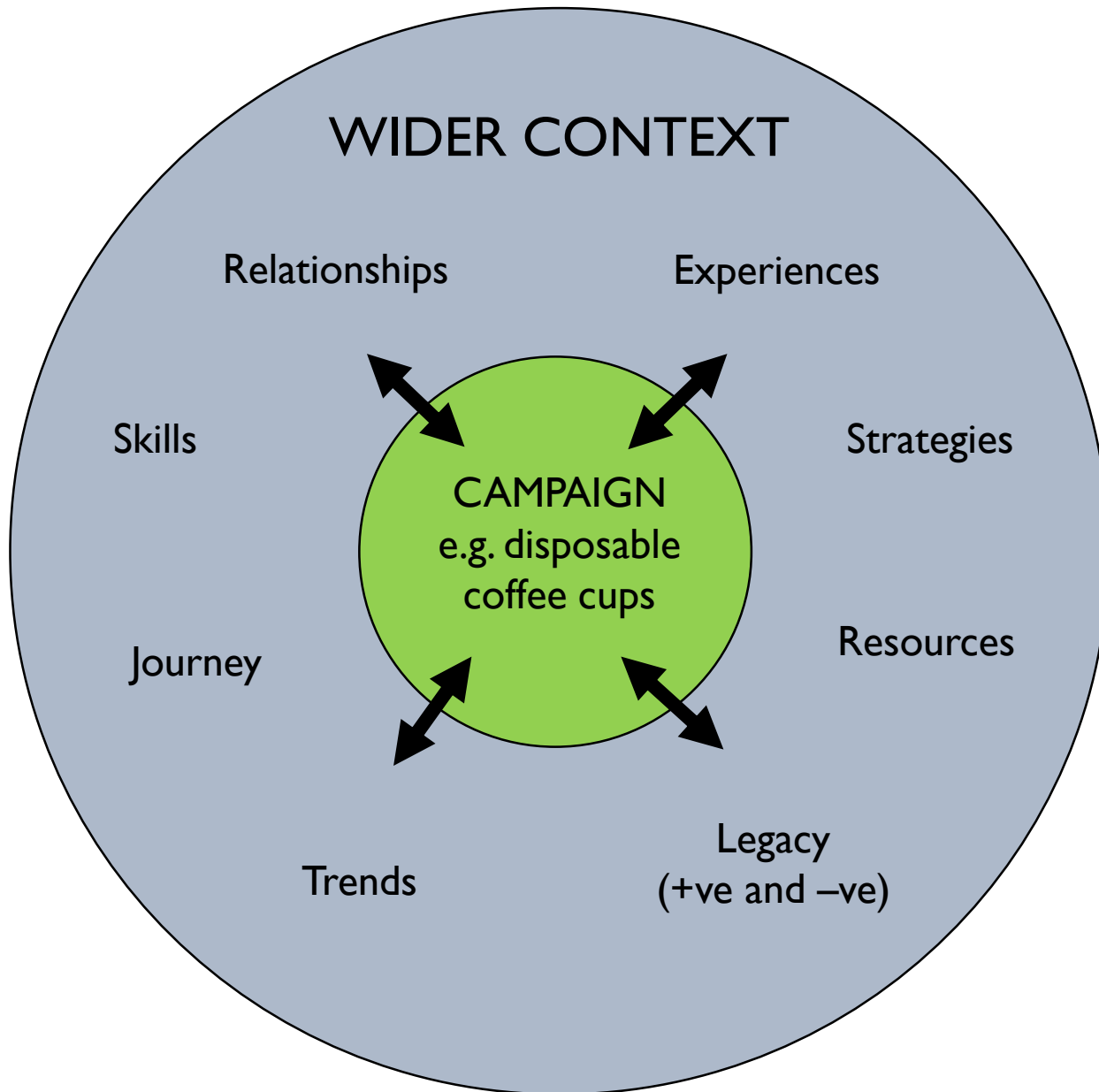
Wider sustainability

Sustainability is not just about carbon.



Key “takeaways” of effective campaigning





Campaigns do not happen in isolation and their structure and success is shaped by a wide range of external factors.

Key “takeaways” of effective campaigning



- PLAN! – SMART plan your campaign:
 - be specific what you want students/union/institution to do
 - forecast future barriers – time can be against us
 - manage expectations
- Do groundwork – informs your plan and actions
- Understand your key relationships – stakeholder and motivation mapping

Key “takeaways” of effective campaigning



- Be prepared to do a lot of work (you may feel the Uni/College should be doing this)
- Do regular self/team reflections of the campaign
 - How is it going?
 - Has the wider context changed since you started?
 - Do we need to alter the plan?
- Do keep everyone in the loop – bring them on the journey

Key “takeaways” of effective campaigning

- What is campaigning?
Can be a lot of shouting on social media – which is good!



Key “takeaways” of effective campaigning

- What is campaigning?

Can be a lot of shouting on social media – which is good!

But remember the importance of non-public campaigning – ‘dry’ but crucial.

Sustainability Project Proposal and Supporting Business Case – 2019/20

This template is intended to provide a structure for capturing input of essential information for the Sustainability Project Proposal: Plastic-Free Campus Award and Water Fountains

Proposal context and outline

Plastic-free Campus (Surfers Against Sewage):

This award scheme recognises communities and campuses that are actively championing the removal of single-use plastics in their respective environments.

8 million tonnes of plastic enters the marine environment each year. The effects of this waste is widespread – impacting marine ecosystems through consumption and health deterioration, with knock-on effects for human health through consumption of marine products. A study in the US found BPA (a plastic derivative and endocrine disruptor) in detectable levels in children as young as 6 months old.

The Students' Union is seeking for the University to build on the great work between the SUJ, University and Baxter Storey this past year and engage with the Plastic-free Campus programme. This work to date has included:

- Increasing use of reusable coffee cups to approximately 35% of campus hot drink sales (from 3% 2017/18 baseline) – this has removed approximately 150,000 disposable coffee cups in 2018/19 (3 tonnes in waste)
- Removal of condiment sachets and replacing these with refillable bottles
- Union banning external businesses using plastic bags (Fresher's Fayre)

Water Fountains Petition:

In 2017, 156 students and staff responded to Ilona Kater's (Sustainability Officer for the Students' Union 2017/18) survey supporting the stance the University of Stirling did not provide adequate free drinking water facilities for students. Based on this survey, the Corporate Sustainability Steering Group actioned a scoping exercise. This produced a map of potential new chilled water fountain points - 1 in **Cattofoot** building and 2 in Cottrell. However, University senior managers rejected the proposed project due to costs. 3 chilled water fountains would cost approximately £6,000 to purchase, for the benefit of a campus community of over 14,000.

In response to this, Hannah Dry (Sustainability Officer) launched a petition during Scotland's Climate Week. **752 students and staff support the statement:**

As a student/staff member of the University, I believe that free drinking water access is inadequate and I ask that the University invests in water fountains in accessible public area so people can access free water and reduce the University's single-use plastic bottle consumption.

The Students' Union is seeking the University to reconsider its initial decision and invest in high quality (including bottle counter), accessible water fountains across campus. We believe having chilled fountains with bottle counters is important as they are in line with gamification theory and builds a community response to sustainability issues. The University would be able to quantify easily how many bottles have been saved by students, staff and visitors each year and promote this.

Strategic contribution

The Plastic-free Campus Award and Water Fountains project would:

- Support the University's carbon reduction targets and wider sustainability plan
- Improve the University's reputation as a sustainability leader

Earlier this year, the Students' Union's social media post that the University had committed to divesting its fossil fuel investments reached over 12,000 people, with over 4,000 post engagements. The Students' Union's announcement of being carbon neutral has reached nearly 5,000 people and resulted in three organisations already asking for more details and support with their own work. This, and in the context of the local, national and international Youth Strikes 4 Climate Change, demonstrates that leading on sustainability presents a significant PR opportunity for the University in recruiting new students, and improving the student and staff experience of the University when enrolled or employed.

Costs

Plastic-free Campus:

- No award costs
- Establishment of a Plastics Working Group (Commercial Services, Baxter Storey, Students' Union) overseen by the Corporate Sustainability Steering Group.
-

Water fountains:

- Initial scoping estimates presented to the Corporate Sustainability Steering Group in spring 2018 suggested approximately £6,000 installation costs for 3 water fountains.

Further notes:

- University Of Edinburgh will have upgraded / installed 200 free water points by 2021 <https://www.ed.ac.uk/estates/buildings-information/free-water-points>
- Glasgow Caledonian University have 41 water fountains <https://www.gcu.ac.uk/sustainability/wasterecycling/reducereuse/freewater/>
- The University Of Stirling Students' Union clubs and societies supported Scottish Water launching their public tap in Stirling as part of Scotland's Climate Week. The Scottish Water initiative has saved 120,000 plastic bottles from being used across 5 public taps to date.



Key “takeaways” of effective campaigning

- Remember this is a journey – build relationships (not always easy!) and keep chipping away to create a strong legacy for future work.
- Using the UN SDGs as a framework for sustainability can help a lot internally and externally



Role of Student Leaders

Students, Student Officers and your respective Students' Union/Association can be a key driver for many types of change, including issues surrounding sustainable development and climate justice. Understanding of the climate and ecological crisis and sustainability within student governance structures and the wider student body is essential to creating a step-change in campus sustainability.

Resources:

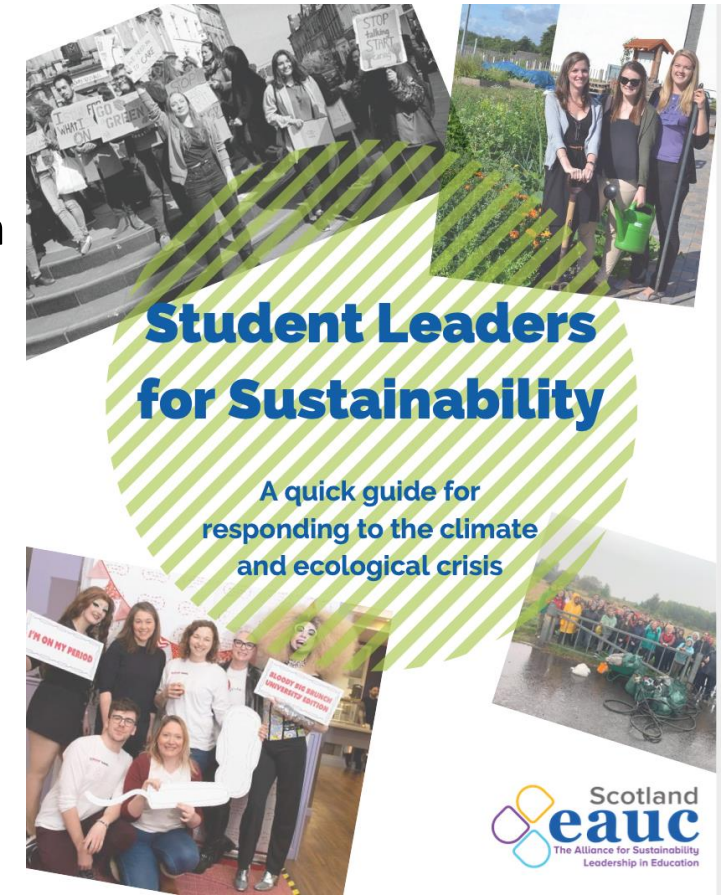
[Student Leaders for Sustainability Guide](#)

[Example Students' Union / Association SMART Action Plan](#)

[Simplified SU / SA GHG emission calculator](#)

You have the platform to create positive change.

[**www.eauc.org.uk**](http://www.eauc.org.uk)



Thank you

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www.eauc.org.uk