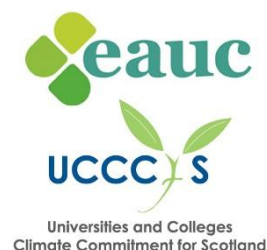


Date: Friday 12th May 2017
Time: 9:45–13:00
Venue: Glasgow School of Art



MINUTES:

EAUC-S Community Engagement Topic Support Network: Climate Psychology and Engagement in Further and Higher Education

Attendees:

Jackie	Beresford	Environmental Officer	Dundee and Angus College
Clément	Bouveret	Intern: Energy Management	Edinburgh Napier University
Paulo	Cruz	Sustainability Officer	Glasgow Caledonian University
Steven	Giannandrea	Soft Services Manager	City of Glasgow College
June	Graham	Sustainable Development Officer	Keep Scotland Beautiful
Catherine	Happer	Lecturer in Sociology	University of Glasgow
Rachel	Howell	Lecturer in Sociology/SD	University of Edinburgh
Kasia	Janik	Sustainability Engagement Officer	Edinburgh Napier University
Osbert	Lancaster	Director	Natural Change Limited
Julian Yves	Manley	Research Associate	University of Central Lancashire
Grace	Mark	Radial Project	Glasgow School of Art
Fergal	McCauley	Head of Facilities Management	City of Glasgow College
Rebecca	Petford	Scotland Programme Manager	EAUC
Viola	Retzlaff	Travel & Transport Coordinator	University of Glasgow
Gemma	Stenhouse	Procurement Manager	APUC Ltd
Kate	Thornback	Environment Officer	SRUC
John	Thorne	Sustainability Coordinator	Glasgow School of Art
John	Wincott	Sustainability Advisor	Fife College

Apologies:

David	Charles	Energy Engineer	University of Strathclyde
Rizki	Fitria	Sustainability Project Officer	Heriot-Watt University
Jenny	Jamieson	Policy Officer	Scottish Funding Council
Sam	Woolhead	Student	University of St Andrews

1	<p>WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS</p> <p><i>John Thorne, Community Engagement TSN Convenor and Glasgow School of Art</i></p> <p>Everyone was welcomed to the event and invited to introduce themselves to the room.</p>
2	<p>RECAP: A PSYCHO-SOCIAL UNDERSTANDING OF OUR ABILITY TO FACE THE CHALLENGES OF CLIMATE CHANGE</p> <p><i>Dr Julian Manley, University of Central Lancashire and Climate Psychology Alliance</i></p> <p>Climate psychology is “concerned with understanding the non-rational dimensions of our collective paralysis in the face of worsening climate change”</p> <p>There are nuanced differences between psycho-social approaches and others which have the word “psycho” as part of them. The “social” part means the work is more focused on applying knowledge not just on the individual self but to groups, which is critical in terms of behaviour change.</p> <p>Until recently the psycho-social approach only had a background presence in climate change debate as research on it wasn’t getting out of the ivory tower. But because of the worsening climate change situation and difficulties that climate scientists have had in communicating the challenges there has begun to be a bit of a shift, and it has begun to appear more generally, including in IPCC documentation.</p> <p>There has been a general failure in communicating the hard facts of climate change to the general public and political readers.</p> <p>Ro Randall’s Chapter on Carbon Conversations in [Rust, M-J, and Totton, N. (Eds.) (2012). <i>Vital Signs. Psychological responses to ecological crisis</i>. London: Karnac] looks at people in groups and how their behaviours might change. Her work showed a shift from general techniques for behaviour change, moving towards discussing emotions more explicitly, inviting participants in the sessions to share feelings about climate change and the behavioural responses needed in a supportive and understanding way.</p> <p>Emotions are vital to understand and consider – they are the chief thing that rules us, and there are many emotions associated with climate change for different people. Natural defence mechanisms against anxiety caused by the threat of climate change need to be considered when trying to encourage people to change their behaviours.</p> <p>Ideas and knowledge frameworks based around the work of thinkers such as Melanie Klein, Wilfred Bion, Donald Winnicott... Technically speaking, these are concepts and theories such as Klein’s Paranoid Schizoid and Depressive Position; Bion’s container/contained and his Basic Assumptions; Winnicott’s transitional object and potential space; theories of transference and counter transference, all as applied to the nexus between the individual and society.</p> <p>The emotions and responses of climate change scientists who were identifying worrying data trends but whose findings were widely being ignored also need considered – the scientific community built up defence mechanisms against this rejection by retreating from the world, which may not help the cause.</p>
3	<p>PERSONAL CONNECTIONS TO RESEARCH AND TEACHING</p> <p><i>Dr Rachel Howell, University of Edinburgh</i></p> <p>Self-identifies as an interdisciplinary environmental social scientist, with research crossing boundaries between lots of different research areas. Interested in what goes on in people’s minds as well as the social context (behaviour change with a focus on social practices) so interested in the psycho-social approach as an idea. Personal research looks at things like attitudes <i>and</i> behaviour in response to climate change.</p> <p>Climate change shouldn’t be seen as an environmental problem (this pigeon holes it as something environmentalists should deal with). Not all those working on climate change have a</p>

	<p>deep connection nature, but may be motivated by social justice issues etc.</p> <p>Lecturer in sustainable development on the social science-based degree in Sustainable Development at the University of Edinburgh, which is taught in a cross-disciplinary way. Interesting to consider the motivations of students to take the degree or individual courses – their level of engagement with the topic (not just the lectures or assessments) doesn't necessarily seem to be deep on a personal level. Concerned that in pre-honours (years 1 & 2), students who do the degree or individual courses in sustainable development don't need to engage emotionally with the subject, so created a new third year course with the idea of engaging more deeply, including asking students to choose their own sustainability challenge (own behaviour change, getting involved with a campaign, influencing others etc. – a challenge to them, not necessarily an influential change) and write a blog about it, which was successful.</p> <p>Feel we have a moral imperative to help students think about what might really happen, so the final session had a reading about needing to educate students to be resilient for after the collapse of society, paired with readings about social / emotional engagement with climate change. The session used a talking stick technique to just hear people speak, with no discussion. The reading brought out a mixture of emotions – some relieved to hear it, some angry that writer was "defeatist".</p> <p>Believe it is important to get students to engage with their emotions around climate change, and would like to talk more about engaging with students through teaching.</p>
4	<p>FEEDBACK FROM ATTENDEES ON APPLICATION OF PSYCHO-SOCIOLOGY IN CLIMATE CHANGE ENGAGEMENT</p> <p><i>Led by John Thorne, Community Engagement TSN Convenor and Glasgow School of Art</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It isn't necessarily about either considering this academically or in terms of practical activities – the two can and should tie to each other. • At the University of St Andrews, Carbon Conversations led to activity all-round on campus, with participants showing more engagement in a number of ways (including academically) rather than just changing a single behaviour. • It is perhaps not the mechanism that is important (e.g. recycling) but the change internally. • Decisions around climate change behaviours (i.e. flying) should be consciously made. • Having conversations with individuals to encourage them to adopt more sustainable behaviours is difficult. • Preparing students with resilience skills is so important. • Creative approaches can engage people in a way scientists can't – we need to support this process. • Climate Conversations sessions from the Scottish Government were about giving participants space for a conversation about climate change but gathered some interesting data, which revealed most people knew it was happening and said something should be done. • If you can't see the result of your activity (e.g. waste disposal in our society) then you are less likely to do something about it. • Deprived people in our society can be difficult to engage (e.g. some college students) because some of them are on the breadline as much as the communities their emissions will affect. However they are probably already living lower carbon lifestyles and you could celebrate this as a way of engaging with them. Also we are almost all prioritising limited resources and this shouldn't be seen as an excuse. • Choice is quite artificial as a concept, because routine and social norms create so much behaviour. We need to work on changing social norms, not individual behaviour. • Government should take a lead (Scottish Government are doing some things) but major change can happen through regulation. Drink driving as an example, which is now no longer socially acceptable, and the 5p carrier bag charge. Need governments to look at

	<p>how to engage people about climate change issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing and communications are really important around climate change – we could learn a lot from the sector. The ISM approach links to marketing principals and it could be used to unravel some of this. • We need to break up the challenge into smaller issues and tackle them individually, but rarely have the resources to find and address all the barriers around the smaller issues. GCU have been working on cycling for 4 years by implementing a range of interventions addressing each barrier, and it is slowly improving. • Need to engage with people using hope and positivity, not fear.
5	<p>CLIMATE CHANGE: PERSUADING PUBLICS IN THE POST-TRUST ERA</p> <p><i>Dr Catherine Happer, University of Glasgow</i></p> <p>Climate change is much more than an environmental problem. However, it is not considered a major issue for voters, and not mentioned in the leaked Labour manifesto.</p> <p>The media is wide place where lots of stakeholders influence messages. The messages which get out are dictated by power dynamics and social systems in place.</p> <p>Interested to understand why some groups are more likely to accept some arguments than others, and how this relates to engagement?</p> <p>There are international differences in responses to climate change, with meaning shaped by local experiences and media cultures. In Brazil and China meanings are more about lived experience than media, e.g. pollution is linked to climate change in China, and to deforestation in Brazil. Climate change therefore seems simpler, with a more visual language and linked to lived experienced. In the USA and UK it is more about a debate – climate change is something that is theorised and talked about, but not lived. In the UK, even within those who believe in climate change, people don't see it so immediately obvious as other issues, so it is generally not a key concern.</p> <p>There is also a key influence around ideology and context. Generally, China and Brazil have more trust in speakers in the public sphere, and a belief that political action will lead to the public good. There is less belief in that here, where there is a sense that there is a lack of transparency and media have failed to expose what is going on, so people are less likely to believe what they are told. The Trump election can be seen as a howl of neoliberal rage – the contract was seen to have been broken between the public and the decisions makers.</p> <p>Neoliberalism is about competition, and we would generally think our individual competitiveness might be weakened by taking action on climate change. Long term decision-making for climate change doesn't immediately benefit 'ordinary people'.</p> <p>Key questions to share for discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of social media in sustainability – it seems as a perfect vehicle for alternative visions to appear but it splinters off in different directions, and also promotes competitiveness. • If we can't get a holistic view of climate change within the general public what should we aim for? What is the "pollution link" in the UK that would make it understandable? • Does information make a difference at all? Do we need to force behaviour through government? • Can we harness the language of individualism for our own means?
6	<p>DISCUSSION: IMPLICATIONS OF THE PSYCHO-SOCIAL APPROACH FOR FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION</p> <p><i>Led by Osbert Lancaster, Natural Change Limited</i></p> <p>Group discussion topics:</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What big questions do we share? 2. What could help us tackle these questions? 3. Who can help and how? (EAUC/CPA/others) <p>Key questions shared:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The barrier is how we communicate with people – when you challenge behaviours you challenge identify, how do you communicate with different people at their level without offending them? • When people are struggling financially how do we make this matter to them? • How can we bring people together to take action? • How do we raise these issues up the priority list to decisions makers? • How do we encourage people to feel they have a stake in society? • How do you move conversation to action? • How can we better link research to action? • Should we reframe everything around wellbeing? <p>What could we do and who could help?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to use the media better to share our own messages • Need to consider the demographics and how different actions work in different places • Living Labs ideas could be used to encourage more action-research around engagement on campuses • Use the Sustainability Exchange (EAUC) to share ideas – and what doesn't work as well as what does • Government should give more information and show leadership but we need to use it to increase engagement with ideas • Social media is difficult to create engagement or direct to the right sources • Should consider the role of leadership and senior management in moving things forward – how to engage them on a personal level. Idea of “work-life balance” suggests your work is not your life, but you have impacts at all the time and work is a big part of your time. • Need to delve into what makes people tick and what they think about climate change – don't assume you know. We have prejudices about who is interested in climate change, including politically. • Need to make it simpler for people to understand climate change
7	<p>THANKS AND CLOSE</p> <p><i>John Thorne, Community Engagement TSN Convenor and Glasgow School of Art</i></p> <p>Thanks to all contributors.</p> <p>Everyone is welcome to stay for lunch, followed by the inaugural meeting of the Climate Psychology Alliance Scotland.</p>