

**Date:** Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2017  
**Time:** 10:30-15:30  
**Venue:** University of Edinburgh

[Event resources available here](#)



## MINUTES:

### Embedding the Sustainable Development Goals within Further and Higher Education Institutions

#### EAUC-S ESD in FHE Topic Support Networks and LfSS ESD in FHE and SDGs Task Groups

##### Attendees:

Simon Allen	Lecturer	The University of Edinburgh
Laila Atalla	Postgraduate	University of St Andrews
Jackie Beresford	Environmental Officer	Dundee and Angus College
Liz Cooper	Research and Policy Manager	The University of Edinburgh
Lorraine Corbett	Project Coordinator	Heriot-Watt University
Elaine Crawford	Student Engagement Officer	Dumfries & Galloway College
Laura Cristea	Sustainability Project Officer	NUS
Hannah Earle-Payne	Programme Team Leader Agriculture	SRUC
May East	Fellow	UNITAR
Karen Fryer	Lecturer	Glasgow Caledonian University
Pete Higgins	Prof of Outdoor and Environmental Education	The University of Edinburgh
Tom Kemsley	Active Travel Coordinator	Queen Margaret University
Adam Kesby	Active Travel Champions Project Officer, FHE	Sustrans
Betsy King	Development Manager	LfS Scotland
Matthew Lawson	Programme Manager	The University of Edinburgh
Dugald MacGilp	Assessment & Development Officer	Eco-Schools Scotland
Lindsey Mackay	Environment Intern	University of St Andrews
Rebecca Petford	Scotland Programme Manager	EAUC
Nina Pusic	Student	University of Edinburgh
Eve Redhead	Student	University of Edinburgh
Andrew Samuel	Lecturer in Sociology	Abertay University
Kate Thornback	Environment Officer	SRUC
Hassan Waheed	Projects Officer	EAUC
Alec Wersun	Senior Lecturer	Glasgow Caledonian University
Rehema White	Sustainable Development Degree Coordinator	University of St Andrews
John Wincott	Sustainability Advisor	Fife College

##### Apologies

Kenneth Amaeshi	Reader in Strategy and International Business	The University of Edinburgh
Craig Cathcart	Senior Lecturer	Queen Margaret University
Georgina Jamieson	Research & Impact Admin. at Business School	The University of Edinburgh
Ron Mackay	Lecturer	Edinburgh College
Mike Pretious	Senior Lecturer	Queen Margaret University

## Meeting Report

1	<p><b>Welcome and Introductions</b> - access slides <a href="#">here</a> <i>Rehema White, Lfs Scotland and University of St Andrews</i></p> <p>Everyone was welcomed to the event, introduced, and invited to note what they would like to get out of the session for everyone to see. Key aims shared included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop ideas for embedding SDGs into teaching</li><li>• Develop ideas for exposing students to SDGs more through engagement</li><li>• Learn how to get academics more interested in sustainability</li><li>• Develop ideas for action research</li><li>• Discuss how FHE can take forward the SDGs agenda in Scotland</li></ul> <p>This event was developed on the back of the EAUC-Scotland Conference 2017 session on <a href="#">Promoting Meaningful Teaching and Learning</a>, which led to the realisation that little coordinated action is taking place to develop engagement with the SDGs in FHE.</p> <p>This event brings together existing networks – the <a href="#">EAUC-Scotland Education for Sustainable Development Topic Support Networks</a> and the <a href="#">Learning for Sustainability Scotland SDGs Task Group</a> – with the hope of drafting a Strategy to bring in key players and start making an Action Plan to embed the SDGs more within FHE institutions.</p>
2	<p><b>Introduction to the Sustainable Development Goals</b> - access slides <a href="#">here</a> <i>Rehema White, Lfs Scotland and University of St Andrews</i></p> <p><u>Emergence of the SDGs</u></p> <p>The 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development prompted the SDGs, but they were also part of a follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals that was more universal. They had a broad mandate, with lots of people involved with development and negotiation.</p> <p><u>The Goals</u></p> <p>There are 17 Goals and 169 targets which combine both development and sustainability and are holistic and interlinking, and have been framed by the UN Secretary General into the 5Ps Framework of Planet, People, Prosperity, Partnership and Peace. They are both Visionary and (to some extent) SMART.</p> <p>Quality Education and Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions underpin many of the other goals, with Partnerships at different scales and sectors key for implementation.</p> <p><u>Implementation</u></p> <p>There is both domestic and international responsibility for implementation, with the response being about not aid but partnerships, social investment and ethical trade. All sectors have both responsibility and opportunity in achieving the goals.</p> <p><a href="#">Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development</a> was produced by committee and strongly influenced by the civil society lobby, and shares both the vision and activity to implement that vision. The SDGs support a policy move towards sustainable development again rather than the current divergence into different sectors and a climate change policy focus.</p> <p><u>Link to Education</u></p> <p>The Goals are part of a transformative agenda, changing the way we think about education, and supporting work to increase learning for sustainability. They encourage holistic education and</p>

systems thinking, as they are *'integrated and indivisible'* (Agenda 2030), and can potentially be used to link theory to practice for students and promote meaningful engagement.

Educational institutions should be exemplars (Orr, 2004), and operationally we should take on the SDGs in teaching, estates, governance, research, and student and community engagement, and work together to create a coherent strategy.

It is surprising how little critical research on SDGs has come out so far from Scottish FHEs – this is an important role for the sector going forward.

#### University of St Andrews Example

Sustainability is addressed within the sustainable development course curricula through a contemporary issues matrix combining topics such as poverty, climate change and biodiversity with cross cutting themes such as knowledge for research, learning and practice, and partnership and diversity. Pedagogic innovations also enable experiential and transformative learning.

There is a lot of interaction within different areas of the university around sustainability, with links in all directions including teaching, research, estates, governance, students, Transition University of St Andrews and the wider community.

Mapping is currently taking place of sustainability activity and the SDGs onto the EAUC [LiFE](#) matrix, but will be a lengthy process.

#### Conclusions

The SDGs provide both aspiration and pragmatic indicators, which are great as they are combined and interconnected. Educational institutions need to reflect on current practice and lead by example, using the SDGs to inspire and support scholarship as well as operations. However, it is important also to retain a critical stance.

### **3 Current Action on the SDGs: UNESCO and International Context**

*May East, Gaia Education and UNITAR*

#### Thinking of environment and development as one sector

Rio agreed in 2012 a process by which we would design the SDGs. Each member state had two major communities discussing how this framework would work: development and environmental sustainability. Developing countries said they could not afford to develop now and pay later so they demanded integration. However, when nation states started to respond they began to retreat into their original areas. We thus need to work across sectors, develop trust through conversations and promote links between development and environment communities.

#### Using SDGs as a framework or checklist

We need to ask our governments to have the SDGs linked to every decision, from community gardens to huge dams. Let's make them a live document and adopt them in practice to guide our decision making. Some sectors don't have the lexicon yet.

#### Education – educating children and students

Need to educate youth from an early age so that no matter what they do later in life, they have an understanding of sustainability and can redesign our society. The SDGs thus begin with education. On 28<sup>th</sup> June there will be a high level event with heads of state on how to integrate SDGs into the curriculum of every school in the world. These discussions are thus happening at top level but we have already made steps in Scotland. Education 1, 4 and 8 link, for example. Education requires

partnership.

UNESCO Global Action Programme is the post UN DESD plan. There are 5 action areas including number 5 on local action and education; community led discussion, which Gaia Education is promoting. [Gaia Education](#) has [4 flashcards per SDG](#) – each SDG has a worldview, an economic, a social and an ecological question. Gaia Education also give seminars with educators in different parts of the world – e.g. just trained 400 educators in Ottawa, Canada.

Even within the education sector there is some division because ESD and global citizenship. Teachers are brought together under the SDGs. In Scotland we have already brought together ESD and Global Citizenship under Learning for sustainability.

We need to shift to transformative learning. Freire quote: *“The teacher is of course an artist, but being an artist does not mean that he or she can make the profile, can shape the students. What the educator does in teaching is to make it possible for the students to become themselves.”* (Horton & Freire, 2010)

#### Questions

Good examples - Scandinavian countries are doing best so far! Denmark doing very good work in schools; looking at pedagogy as well as curriculum.

#### **4 Current Action on the SDGs: Scotland and UK** - access slides [here](#)

*Betsy King, LfS Scotland*

#### Scottish Context

Nicola Sturgeon confirmed before the launch of the SDGs in September 2015 that Scotland would respond to the SDGs as being universal. We were thus ahead of the game in some ways. We in Scotland had a post-2015 (end of UN Decade of Education for SD and end of Millennium Development Goals) working group that was convened by the International Development team in Scottish Government. There were different work strands including one on academia, but it did not make much headway.

There was initial mapping of the SDGs against Scotland’s frameworks to tackle inequality and poverty in 2015-16, especially the National Performance Framework, SNAP on Human Rights, and the Fairer Scotland Action Plan.

There was a 2015 [Consultation on International Development](#) from Scotland, but these mostly followed on Millennium Development Goal actions. The response was mostly about international and not domestic policy and action, and there was mapping undertaken but no public release of the exercise and outcomes.

There is a consultation on the National Performance Framework coming out.

#### UK Context

Reporting on SDGs will occur at a UK level, with Scottish action feeding in to that.

In March 2017 the UK Government produced a report on what it is doing on the SDGs called [The Global Goals](#), which does not mention Scotland in particular.

In April 2017, the UK Environmental Audit Committee released a [report](#) from their consultation which refers to Scotland but was generally critical of domestic action in UK, e.g. the UK government regards these goals as being for other countries; no substantive work to launch the goals domestically; we need a cabinet level minister; we need an implementation report.

There is a preoccupation with indicators, including a [Consultation from the UK Government Office of National Statistics](#) on how we measure the SDGs. This has been held back now until after the General Election on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2017.

#### Open Government Project

This is UK-wide but led by SCVO in Scotland, and funded by Big Lottery for two years, aiming “to use open government commitments to help people secure progress towards the SDGs in the UK”, and “to help people challenge governments to serve them better”.

We could all get involved in this. There is a planning Wiki so you can look at what is happening, an Open Forum to lead on coordination, outreach and delivery and scrutiny which is managed through [Knowledge Hub](#) by [Paul Bradley](#), and a website at [www.globalgoals.scot](http://www.globalgoals.scot).

#### Action in Scottish Schools

SDGs Action in Scotland in schools is world leading. Eco-Schools is pushing this and we have great events for teachers funded by DfID and British Council and delivered by NGOs and University of Edinburgh.

#### Action in Scottish FHE

So far there has been the [EAUC-Scotland Conference](#) in February 2017, the [LfSS Initial Teacher Education Seminar](#) in March 2017, and the upcoming GCU Business event in June.

More is probably happening in individual institutions, which we’ll hear about today.

What next? How do we develop a coherent plan?

### **5 The FHE Sector: Mapping the Relevant Policy Context** - access slides [here](#)

*Rebecca Petford, EAUC-Scotland*

Aim of this presentation is to highlight how FHE institutions currently have to report on what they do to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and Scottish Government, and where there might be opportunities to push for more action around ESD or engagement to highlight the SDGs.

#### Outcome Agreements

OAs set out what institutions will deliver in return for their funding from SFC. The goals should be complementary to the institution’s individual strategies, and deliver progress towards SFC and Scottish Government’s vision of a smarter, fairer, wealthier and greener Scotland.

OAs are three year documents, developed through staff and student engagement and reviewed annually. They combine SFC and institutional measures of progress, and are all accessible to view on the [SFC website](#), along with Guidance on how they are developed.

OAs for universities are developed under five priorities (all of which link to particular SDGs), to include commitments, strategies and measures of progress on:

- 1) Widening access
- 2) High quality learning and teaching
- 3) World-leading research
- 4) Greater innovation in the economy
- 5) High performing institutions

The only required measure for environmental sustainability is Gross Carbon Footprint under Priority 5.

### Public Bodies Climate Change Duties Reporting

Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 requires Public Sector Major Players (inc. universities and colleges) to report on their carbon emissions to the Scottish Government through the Sustainable Scotland Network (SSN). The process was launched in November 2014, with the first mandatory reporting deadline November 2016. The reports and their analysis have been [published by SSN](#), and EAUC-S will do a summary report on the FHE data and quality of reporting.

There are two reporting sections, Required (Organisational Profile; Governance, Management and Strategy; Corporate Emissions, Targets and Project Data; Adaptation; Procurement and Validation and Declaration) and Recommended (wider impact and influence, and would include ESD and engagement activities around wider sustainability as well as climate change). Most public bodies didn't do the Recommended section, although 4 universities and 1 college provided a good level of input here. This section requires input from different stakeholders to the Required section – perhaps get involved?

### Universities and Colleges Climate Commitment for Scotland

The UCCCFs is a statement last signed in 2015 at Principal and Board level by every university and college in Scotland, committing them to take action on climate change. Engagement and ESD are not explicitly mentioned, but the Commitment will be refreshed under the [new EAUC-S Programme](#).

### Next Steps for EAUC-S

- 1) Engage with Outcome Agreement Managers to push for more sustainability within OAs
- 2) Provide guidance and support on PBCCD Reporting Recommended Section responses
- 3) Develop the UCCCFs to be signed by more stakeholders and have a wider focus, then ask institutions to re-commit.
- 4) Continue to work with EAUC UK on:
  - Promoting the holistic [LiFE framework](#) for sustainability in FHE
  - Developing an international FHE 'SDGs Charter'

## **6 The FHE Sector: Case Studies of Curriculum Focus on SDGs - access notes [here](#)**

*Alec Wersun, PRME and Glasgow Caledonian University*

Alec leads on [PRME](#) (Principles for Responsible Management Education) in Scotland, which is connected to the UN Global Compact. PRME and signatory institutions and business schools do a number of student engagement projects which are business facing.

PRME Members participate in Voluntary Reporting every 18 months to share knowledge.

The costs of achieving the SDGs are estimated to be \$2-3 trillion/year, about 4% of global GDP, and the private sector will have a large role to play.

### Case Studies

Four PRME Case Study projects outlined on the Presentation Notes:

- 1) Aim2Flourish – Students go to local company to interview them and write a case study on what the organisation does, how they fill a gap, and their social impact. The students figure out what SDGs are being contributed to, and learn about positive things businesses can do.
- 2) WikiRate – WikiRate is a global reporting initiative matrix. Tutors appoint a company with a commitment to SDGs and Global Compact, and Students have to write a report on how they are contributing through GRI metrics.

	<p>3) Breakthrough Innovation – Companies pose challenges for students to solve, with the winning team getting to work with the real company to achieve action</p> <p>4) Sustainability Literacy Test – Free of charge test of economic, social and environmental literacy. Now a module been launched and a quiz.</p> <p>Contact <a href="#">Alec</a> for more information.</p>
7	<p><b>The FHE Sector: Student Perspectives</b> - access slides <a href="#">here</a>  <i>Laura Cristea, National Union of Students</i></p> <p>Aiming to share students’ expectations for teaching and learning for sustainability.</p> <p><u>NUS Surveys</u></p> <p>NUS runs a Student Survey including expectations for teaching and learning for sustainability. For example, do students expect universities and colleges to develop students’ sustainability skills as part of courses? – 75% in FE and 76% of HE students state yes.</p> <p>Students (87%) expect their FHE institutions to actively incorporate and promote and take action in relation to sustainability. Students also talk about personal and professional development and a need to think about the future in their qualitative comments.</p> <p>Employers also think sustainability skills are important.</p> <p><u>Why does it matter?</u></p> <p>“3% of people attend university but they take up 80% of leadership positions.” So HE sector is disproportionately important.</p> <p>NUS has a list of sustainability attributes they think students should leave university with, including ability to bring about change, global citizenship perspectives etc. – see <a href="#">slides</a>.</p> <p><u>Examples of NUS work linking to SDGs</u></p> <p>Whole Earth Exhibition – highlighting SDGs through photographs</p> <p>St George’s House Consultation – pre-16 education implementation of the SDGs</p> <p>WikiRate – join bid for EU funding in conjunction with WikiRate and Green Office, a new project to train students to assess their institutions’ implementation of the SDGs</p> <p>Responsible Futures – embedding sustainability in the curriculum by applying ideas from successful Green Impact programme. This is both an accreditation and mechanism to support institutions with a structure to follow to implement ESD projects.</p>
8	<p><b>Workshop: Strategy and Action Plans for SDGs in FHE</b>  <i>Led by Rehema White, LfS Scotland and University of St Andrews</i></p> <p>The participants separated into four groups to discuss and explore strategy in relation to the SDGs and the FHE sector.</p> <p><i>Find a summary of each group’s discussion below and more in-depth notes in Appendix 1.</i></p> <p><u>Focus one: Dreaming</u> – Facilitator Andy Samuels</p> <p><i>This group discussed what embedded SDGs might look like in all aspects, including teaching, research, community engagement (internal and external), governance and operations. They</i></p>

*debated what visions might apply; what the goals and potential outcomes of our work in this area might be.*

There was remarkable harmony between all four groups: the mantra of *free education for all for life*, was a typical motif all groups wanted for the future of tertiary education *per se*, while this would facilitate a critical and broad-based interdisciplinary education, central to an Education for Sustainability and, of course, the inculcation of the Sustainability Goals. Qualifications as an end result of educations were seen as problematic, as education should be an end point in itself. The learning process was seen as fundamental in engendering a sustainable future, while it was hoped that if put into practice in Scotland, this would set an example for Tertiary Education in other geographical areas.

Criticality was seen by one group as a central concern, drawing on Scotland's Educational heritage – a Generalist educational philosophy epitomised in the Curriculum for Excellence – while in general terms this heritage was seen to be important in baselining any vision of an educational future for Colleges and Universities.

#### **Focus two: Planning – Facilitator Betsy King**

*This group discussed how we could influence policy. Who do we need to engage? What stakeholders do we need to involve? This might include vice chancellors, transition/community grassroots initiatives, students, academic staff, discipline societies, funders, operational staff, employers. How do we engage them? What arguments and what tools can we use? What resources can we draw on? There are a number of existing networks and sites.*

Everyone needs to be involved, and we need a coherent voice from the sector perhaps via a working group convened by EAUC Scotland and LfS Scotland. Funding is a big driver of activity in FHE, so we need to influence the funding bodies, whoever they may be. In institutions there is a need to engage senior leaders as well as inspire students and staff. There are lots of resources to draw on – networks, students, case study examples, frameworks and funding – but we need to establish a big picture.

#### **Focus three: Implementing – Facilitator Rehema White**

*This group explored how we can engage different groups of people to practically achieve some of the strategic goals outlined in the dreaming section and planned in the planning discussion. Some examples of how individual institutions can tackle SDGs were shared. Practical suggestions were discussed. This included realisation of the need to engage different actors within FHE: Research, learning, operations, community outside and inside, policy and practice.*

We are not really at the implementation stage yet in relation to the SDGs. A question was raised as to what extent are we implementing sustainability itself, and using the SDGs to further the agenda, rather than implementing SDGs. It is probably more important to focus on sustainability which is the longer term and more fundamental topic. It was discussed how it is essential to encourage critical debate; the SDGs should not be blindly embraced and embedded in teaching without question, but rather our role is to continue to reflect critically and constructively on these and to facilitate the capacity for critical analysis in our students.

There are political issues to be addressed in the short term. FHE can influence the Daily Mail as well as the Guardian and we need to recognise and engage with wider cultural discourses and norms. Implementing the SDGs will be difficult because it is about changing norms and influencing people who don't want to change – and supporting infrastructure and regulations to normalise activity.

As schools' level of ESD increases we need to increase our own game in FHE, and things will carry through to employers and society.



	<p><b>Focus four: Celebrating and reflecting – Facilitator Rebecca Petford</b></p> <p><i>This group outlined what we are doing in our own institutions and what we have achieved. Examples and case studies were collated to try to begin to develop a list of resources in relation to whole institution strategy, research and innovation, teaching and learning, community engagement within institution, community and regional engagement, operations, leadership across sector/governance.</i></p> <p>Some explicitly SDGs work is going on, with engagement activity at Dundee and Angus College and development of an induction module at University of Edinburgh highlighted. Research funding also often asks for SDG relevance at the application stage.</p> <p>However, lots more is happening that could be tied in to the SDGs but isn't communicated as such, e.g. research at SRUC and work at Art Schools around where materials come from.</p> <p>It is important to increase visibility through communications and staff training, but also think about more innovative ideas such as listing related SDGs beside option module lists, integrating them within Outcome Agreements.</p> <p>The question was raised as to whether it matters whether students and staff understand the SDGs as a whole, or whether they just need to understand those most relevant to them and the values that underpin them. They shouldn't be seen as a tick list to work through.</p> <p>We should also celebrate that there are SDGs, as they set a good context for moving forward.</p>
<p><b>9</b></p>	<p><b>Concluding Remarks and Next Steps</b>  <i>Led by Rehema White, LfS Scotland and University of St Andrews</i></p> <p>It is important to remember our values and what we are working towards – learning in the tertiary sector is not just about imparting 'facts', but rather about enabling students to fulfill their potential, and to enable them to become active members of our democratic society by encouraging engagement and also critical thinking.</p> <p>The notes will be written up and shared with everyone present, and we need to find the resources to take action.</p> <p>A working group should be established to take things forward, to include EAUC and LfSS and invites to Scottish Government, SFC, NUS, COSLA, KSB, Universities Scotland, Colleges Scotland, Open Government Partnership etc, as well as all universities and colleges.</p>

Minutes by: Rebecca Petford  
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