

Date: 17th August 2021
Time: 10am-12noon
Venue: Virtual via Zoom
Resources: www.sustainabilityexchange.ac.uk/cop26_student_engagement



MINUTES:

Using COP26 to engage students with climate change and sustainability

	SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS	START
1	<p>Welcome <i>Matt Woodthorpe, EAUC-Scotland</i></p> <p>Everyone was welcomed to the meeting and given some background to this event – a collaboration between the EAUC-Scotland Student Leaders, Education for Sustainable Development and Community Engagement Topic Support Networks.</p> <p>A poll was undertaken to ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendees’ roles within the FHE sector: 33% were sustainability professionals, 22% were teaching staff, 18% worked within student unions, 12% were individual students, and the rest had other roles. 4% didn’t work in the sector. • How well informed they felt about COP26: 12% felt very well informed, 39% well informed, 45% slightly informed, and 4% knew very little. • How interested they think students are with engaging with COP26: 14% said very interested, 33% interested, 47% slightly interested and 6% not interested. Reasons given for those answers included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lack of knowledge - not knowing COP is happening, not understanding what COP is or how significant it is (for their lives, for the UK or globally) • A lack of faith in COP achieving change • Students having other priorities, especially in light of COVID-19 • A lack of understanding of how they can get involved • Feeling it isn’t their place to get involved, either because COP is seen as a political / science platform not something for them, and also there can be a negative perception of the kinds of young people involved in the issue • Students <u>are</u> interested! They know existing structures will move to slow to impact on climate change, they care about having a sustainable future, green jobs, etc., and they are keen to do work around COP <p>The goals of this session are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the networks’ collective knowledge of COP26 and how and why students should get involved • To inspire with new ideas, thoughts or perspectives which could lead to action for working with students in the run up to COP26, but also beyond it in creating a tangible legacy. 	0.00

<p>2</p>	<p>What is COP26? <i>Nick Cullen, Stop Climate Chaos Scotland</i></p> <p>Stop Climate Chaos Scotland are interested in climate change and justice.</p> <p>This is a crucial moment in history for COP26 to happen. We are getting towards catastrophic breakdown of climate systems, the inequality globally but also within countries and states is deepening, and exploitation of minority groups is rife. We need change to prevent climate breakdown.</p> <p>COP is the global negotiating space where countries and power blocks come together and negotiate over different aspects of climate change. Negotiating can be technical and opaque, but tends to be around commitments from different regions, how targets are accounted for etc. The legal mechanism comes down to Paris Agreement which was the first major negotiation on COP.</p> <p>Loss and damage and reparations are the focus at the moment, making sure those who are causing and have caused the problems in the past are supporting those who are suffering the most.</p> <p>There are three “spaces” within COP, the Negotiating space, the Observing space where NGOs can put pressure on, then the Outside space for activist people power.</p> <p>A few things to look out for if you want to get involved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Day of Action on the 6th November • People’s Summit • COP26 homestay network • Climate Fringe 	<p>5.45</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>Why and How Should Students Engage with COP26? <i>Julieta Marino Tartaglino and Cathy Yitong Li</i></p> <p>Perspective from YOUNGO and COY16 <i>Julieta Marino Tartaglino and Cathy Yitong Li</i></p> <p>YOUNGO is the youth constituency of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), basically the official avenue of youth engagement with the international climate processes. It is an independent platform and network consisting of children and youth below the age of 35 years, as well as youth groups and non-governmental organisations. YOUNGO is run by youth for youth, and is run by self-organised non-hierarchical teams of volunteers, clustered in various working groups, and has two representatives called Focal Points.</p> <p>YOUNGO’s hope for COP26 is that there will be wide engagement from youth within the different spaces of COP. YOUNGO is allowed to send representatives as observers of the official COP process. YOUNGO’s focuses are action for climate empowerment, move towards a new work programme, loss and damage and reparations, and issues around equalities. YOUNGO are leading all the thematic sessions on the Youth Day at COP, which will open with the delivery of a statement by COY.</p> <p>COY16 (UN Climate Change Conference of Youth) is hosted by YOUNGO, and will take place at the University of Strathclyde.</p>	<p>18.36</p>

<p>COY16 is the 16th United Nations Climate Change Conference of Youth, and it will be celebrated this year 28th-31st October in Glasgow, with a virtual conference for those who cannot get there. COY's main objective is to ensure the representation of the global youth at COP26 and the climate negotiations. They look to provide a safe space for the youth of the world, regardless of their socio-economic background, gender, age or sexual orientation, to raise their demands to world leaders. This is done by the collection of national demands and the creation of a "Youth Statement". There are 7 different working groups from around 150 countries involved in this, and anyone under 35 years old can get involved or volunteer. During the event itself COY will have a curated selection of educational spaces, workshops and sessions to educate attendees, and help them network and share their expertise.</p> <p>The decisions being made by leaders attending summits and conferences like COP have consequences that affect future generations, including the lives of today's youth. Their choices, or lack of action, have direct impact in our lives, future, and the world. This is why youth should take full ownership of their future and get involved in the decision-making process, to ensure their voices are heard, and demands taken into account.</p> <p>Universities and colleges should be doing a lot.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They should be educating youth. Climate change is a constant and real threat that affects us all. No country is safe and future generations are already being born in a world with irreparable damage, so educating people about the past, present and possible future is key. • They should also serve as avenues for youth to get involved with different ways of activism, be it clubs, seminars, workshops or more • They can also be part of the change by introducing changes in their facilities, such as clean energy and using reusable or recycled materials <p>Find full information on COY16 is available at ukcoy16.org. If any universities or colleges want to collaborated with YOUNGO you can get in contact at partnerships@ukcoy16.org.</p>	
<p>Perspective from the Youth Climate Action Network <i>Katherine Priestley and Bindu Bhandari</i></p> <p>Y-CAN (Youth Climate Action Network) formed in March last year to provide a programme of education, action and innovation to support students to be inspired, supported and empowered to take action on climate change. They work alongside Climate Interactive to spread the word about the En-ROADS model.</p> <p>Y-CAN are supporting a network of student-led education programmes, and have trained dozens of students to become climate educators to their peers themselves, and reached out to hundreds of students and adults in over 10 countries.</p> <p>Y-CAN are also working with the Royal Institution, using the En-ROADS programme, on peer to peer learning, and developing a separate programme on biodiversity loss using another model and the En-ROADS model with the Natural History Museum and some Imperial College scientists.</p>	33.04

	<p>Important to Y-CAN that everything is grounded in excellent science and data, so having assessed the market for climate education tools they decided to use the En-ROADS climate simulator. The tool understands what policies and actions need to be taken within the UNFCCC Paris Agreement to ensure temperature change doesn't rise above 2°C. En-ROADS was developed by MIT-Sloan and Climate Interactive in the US, but is used in over 85 countries.</p> <p>The En-ROADS tool's users have been focused on policy makers and business leaders, but the mission of Y-CAN is to bring it more to the student body by teaching them to use the tool, with different depths of highly interactive training available, including equality and justice issues too.</p> <p>The idea behind the programme is that showing people research doesn't work, they need to get engaged with the data and considering what mitigating strategies could be.</p> <p>En-ROADS is a robust and rigorously tested simulation model, launched in 2019, based around the actions from the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change's Paris Agreement (the starting point for all COP climate change negotiations) and peer-reviewed, widely accepted data, which is updated as new data becomes available. Rigorous testing has been done to ensure it aligns with the predictions of other similar models. It enables users to alter parameters to create different scenarios for the future of the climate to see what the impacts are. It can be used by policy makers, students youth campaigners and many other audiences in different ways, including workshops.</p> <p>All resources and the En-ROADS simulator itself can be found free to access on the Climate Interactive website. If you need help getting going with En-ROADS please contact the Youth Climate Action Network via Y-CAN.org. Y-CAN hope to be working with the University of Strathclyde on an En-ROADS education pilot program shortly.</p>	
<p>4</p>	<p>Top Tips on Running an Effective Sustainability Engagement Campaign <i>Matt Woodthorpe, EAUC Scotland</i></p> <p>Sharing experience today from time working at the University of Stirling Students Union on sustainability. The Sustainability Hub at the university only got off the ground because of student lobbying, which caused the university to seek funding, which provided staffing and led to a lot of different (both successful and unsuccessful) sustainability projects, so it's a great example of students causing change to happen.</p> <p>Students tend to be more aware of practical sustainability actions with people and community at the heart, but that is not how the official mechanisms of a university often work, and sometimes to make large changes happen you need to consider the language required for a business case to the university.</p> <p>Engaging with a core group of interested students effectively can have a huge impact, it's not always about the number of people who get involved.</p> <p>Campaigns do not happen in isolation and their structure and success is shaped by a wide range of external factors which should be considered and taken into account – relationships, resources, strategies, skills, experience, trends, journey, legacy (both positive and negative) etc.</p>	<p>47.45</p>

	<p>Ask ‘how can I help you’ of partners to get them on board.</p> <p>Key ‘takeaways’ of effective campaigning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan – SMART – be specific about what you want to do, forecast future barriers as time is often against you, manage expectations • Do groundwork – informs your plan and actions • Understand your key relationships – stakeholder and motivation mapping, how can you engage with them? Consider ‘shadow hierarchy’ – may not be the same as the formal structure but may be effective for making change happen • Be prepared to do a lot of work! • Do regular self/team reflections of the campaign - how is it going? Has the context changed since we started? Do we need to alter the plan? • Keep everyone in the loop or/or bring them in the loop <p>Campaigning can be public (e.g. social media engagement) and non-public. Some work might seem ‘dry’ but be crucial, such as writing a business case for a sustainability committee. If you don’t know how to do this then ask for past examples.</p> <p>Remember this is a journey – build relationships and keep chipping away to create a strong legacy for future work.</p> <p>Using the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a framework for sustainability can help internally and externally.</p> <p>EAUC-Scotland have produced three sets of resources which may be of use to you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Leaders for Sustainability Guide • Example Students’ Union / Association SMART Action Plan • Simplified SU / SA GHG emission calculator <p>They are all available on the Student Leaders page on the EAUC website.</p>	
5	<p>Example of Activity to Engage Students with COP26</p> <p>University of Leeds COP26 Student Ambassadors <i>Kate Lock, University of Leeds</i></p> <p>COP26 Student Ambassadors Team established in January 2021 in collaboration with the University of Leeds COP26 Task Force. Harriet Thew, a COP26 Fellow and post graduate researcher and teaching assistant at the university, is leading this work, which now has a diverse group of 73 members from across the university.</p> <p>The initial focus was a week of activities in April – Connecting Voices for Climate Action</p> <p>Ambassador Activities have included supporting the Yorkshire and Humber Regional Youth Climate Assembly by fact-checking their manifesto, supporting an international virtual youth conference, an Instagram takeover, Beta-testing new University of Leeds MOOC on climate solution for 18 year olds, and a summer school of climate and politics for 16-18 year olds in West Yorkshire. Internally they’ve been involved in discussions on priorities, action meetings, a training session on lobbying, and signposting to resources. There is also interest in setting up buddying with the students from South Africa involved in the youth summit.</p>	59.26

	<p>The Ambassadors have been approached by the University of Leeds COP26 Task Force to consider how they can engage people in Leeds with COP. Suggestions so far have included an Instagram takeover, live streaming COP side events and discussing them, and linking with other students and organisations involved with COP26.</p> <p>Building relationships is the most important thing.</p> <p>If anyone wants to find out more about the University of Leeds COP26 student ambassadors, or get in contact, Kate can be reached on K.M.Lock@leeds.ac.uk.</p>	
6	<p>Examples of Student-led and Focused Sustainability Initiatives</p> <p>Transition University of St Andrews <i>Alistair Macleod, University of St Andrews</i></p> <p>Transition University of St Andrews is focused on community, and that is across the town as well as students.</p> <p>Transition UStA started in 2009, and is one of 500+ Transition Towns across the UK. Transition is about transitioning towards a low carbon future and fostering community resilience. Transition encourages reflection about yourself as a person – your head, heart and hands.</p> <p>The Steering Group is driven by students, but with staff and local residents too. Students have always been a vital part of the discussions, ideas and generating the solutions.</p> <p>Transition Network’s guide to how to do Transition in a university or college, written by a former student and Chair of the Steering Group, is available on the EAUC’s Sustainability Exchange.</p> <p>Transition is a way to get involved, not just in climate change but also about getting involved in living a better life the community. Key principles are self-organisation and collective action, experimental and focused on idea sharing, and positive visioning, creativity and fun.</p> <p>Transition UStA is a Community Interest Company separate from but part of University, which works with students and staff but also reaches out into the town. There is a staff team of around 6 (not all full time).</p> <p>Transition UStA find they have most success when we engage people where they feel comfortable, usually with something that they are doing or interested in doing anyway like commuting, or providing a service that they need such as re-use opportunities. They also think it is important to provide a space to vision and allow ideas to grow – this gives students a fantastic opportunity to test whether projects work.</p> <p>Work under five themes – local food; smarter travel; carbon literacy and action; green spaces and wildlife; sharing reuse and repair. Also hold lots of events and support networks. You can find out more about the projects at www.transitionsta.org.</p> <p>This year Transition UStA got funding from lottery to help support a Fife-wide project to create engagement and action on climate change, and as a university they are keen to make sure young people are engaged with this. One of the events will be a Line in the Sand, which Transition UStA previously held in 2019 and had 1500 on the beach in a line</p>	1.09.00

<p>– probably the largest civil action St Andrews had ever seen and led to real change in the University – it changed how senior management looked at climate change. This year we want to do that across Fife, supporting other communities to do it to reflect the urgency.</p> <p>Big 5 for Fife – another project which outlines climate actions for the wider community Steering Group is pretty much student led, and they provide students with space to take action and lead, but also reach out to partners and other community groups – everyone needs to get involved.</p> <p>Sometimes student unions and groups like Transition UStA can access funding which the university can't, so it is worth considering how you are set up and what opportunities that allows you.</p> <p>Green Lancaster's EcoHub <i>Darren Axe, University of Lancaster</i></p> <p>Programme has been running since 2009 when they received an external catalyst fund to enable them to kick-start their sustainability journey, the most prominent of which is development of the student-led Eco-Hub.</p> <p>Green Lancaster is a partnership between the university and student union, working on the agenda of education and engagement for sustainable development to provide opportunities for the university community to engage with the critical responses to the climate and ecological emergencies, to propose their own ideas and facilitate (if feasible) their own practical responses. Green Lancaster provide practical and engaging multi-dimensional learning experiences in the formal and informal curriculum on campus and beyond.</p> <p>They frame their approach to engagement against the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), finding it useful to track their outcomes and outputs against the global agenda, focusing particularly on Goal 4 (Quality Education) and Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) which are most relevant to their work.</p> <p>Green Lancaster have been thinking over the last 6 months about where they want to go over the next 10 years – the UNESCO Education for Sustainable Development roadmap for 2030 has been helpful in developing a strategic framework for supporting members over the next decade of action.</p> <p>As a grassroots organisation it is about facilitating community action, and they find social practice theory's ideas around individual, collective and systemic change being influenced by grass roots activist and social norms useful in considering how an individual idea or project can achieve the scale and momentum that results in systemic change to social norms. It is therefore important to support members and ensure their voices can be heard at a high level in the University, so they can be agents of change.</p> <p>Many core projects, all very practical and tactile, and many in the outdoor environment.</p> <p>Priority action areas are Advancing Policy, Transforming Learning Environments, Building Capacity of Educators, Empowering and Mobilising Youth and Accelerating Local Action.</p>	<p>1.20.11</p>
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	<p>One of the strengths is the deployment of a paid 5-person Green Lancaster Team of students annually to deliver on the projects, events and campaigns, meeting the objectives and targets of the Green Lancaster fund and building projects around the wishes of students as well as supporting existing projects such as the Eco-Hub.</p> <p>Projects are clustered around four groups: ecosystem services, building regenerative land management and sustainable agriculture; resource efficiency and the circular economy, sustainable mobility and transport, and energy supply and demand.</p> <p>Green Lancaster EcoHub is the home for environmental sustainability at the University, providing internal and external space for active participation and demonstration of projects, with a specific focus on agriculture and biodiversity initiatives. The EcoHub is a crucial health and wellbeing facility on campus, providing engagement, enterprise and education activity for the university community for volunteering and curriculum activity.</p> <p>COP26 Festival planned at the University for the 20-27th October to connect communities working on climate change areas across the campus, to engage staff, students, local communities, businesses and global partners with COP-related research and innovation, and provide an opportunity to highlight actions at the university and by individual staff. The EcoHub will be used to host workshops, showcase the work of the student volunteer community, and highlight the links between nature-based learning, health and wellbeing, and climate change action as both part of the formal curriculum and extra-curricular events.</p>	
7	<p>External Sustainability Programme Opportunities for Student Unions</p> <p>Green Impact <i>Sonya Peres, Students Organising for Sustainability (SOS-UK)</i></p> <p>SOS-UK is an educational charity created by students and staff at NUS in response to the climate emergency and ecological crisis. They support students to lead, act on and learn from sustainability, promote embedding sustainability in formal and informal education across all disciplines and ages, making sustainability more inclusive for everyone</p> <p>Their work is driven by student demand – students care about sustainability and want to learn about the climate crisis – 91% are concerned about the effects of climate change, 91% say they agree their place of study should actively incorporate and promote sustainability, and 65% say sustainable development is something they would like to learn about, so embedding sustainability across campuses, curriculums and communities is fundamental to representing students and strengthening students’ unions.</p> <p>Green Impact Students’ Unions (GISU) is a sustainability support package and award programme. SOS-UK provide a framework for unions to use to <u>collaboratively</u> address key issues to lead on embedding sustainability and social justice across campus, the curriculum and society. It supports Students’ Unions to build impactful projects and campaigns around climate justice and equality, curriculum reform, health and wellbeing and much more. By signing up Unions are joining the SOS-UK network, so this also provides opportunities to partner with other unions, hold networking events and share best practice through resources and case studies. The toolkit both provides support for local actions and using collective action to drive wider social change.</p>	1.31.26

	<p>Student Unions who sign up get access to an online toolkit, which is a software which breaks sustainability down into areas of influence with direct and manageable actions, with guidance and additional resources for completing those actions. Unions and Associations use the toolkit to plan and monitor project and campaigns. By completing the toolkit you score points, and at the end of the academic year the toolkit is audited by SOS-UK to have a conversation about progress over the last year and next steps.</p> <p>Some institutions are using the toolkit around COP26, e.g. to network with other institutions to exchange knowledge.</p> <p>Unions receive a range of support – resources, webinars and workshops, peer-to-peer learning and networking, email, phone and ad hoc support, training and learning and development opportunities.</p> <p>Student Unions take part for a wide variety of reasons, to provide structure and focus, to link to strategic planning, to demonstrate and evaluate success, to support self-reflection, to support collaboration, to gain accreditation and recognition, to communicate with their students, to benchmark against other SUs, to hold the SU accountable, and to help those involved realise what is possible to achieve.</p> <p>SUs can decide where they want to focus their efforts.</p> <p>Next year SOS-UK plan to add more focus on curriculum, gardening / growing and wellbeing, ethical investments, decolonising and decarbonising.</p> <p>Contact SOS-UK on hello@sos-uk.org or Sonya on sonya.peres@sos-uk.org for more information. They are also active on Instagram and Twitter.</p> <p>SUs don't need to be affiliated with NUS to participate, and cost is really low compared to the Green Impact for institutions package – approximately £280 for a year – so institutions may be willing to support SUs to participate as a trial.</p>	
8	<p>Discussion Groups: What have you been inspired to do by today's event?</p> <p>No notes taken</p>	1.42.50
9	<p>Thanks and Close</p> <p><i>Matt Woodthorpe, EAUC-Scotland</i></p> <p>The poll question on how well-informed participants felt about COP26 was repeated, and 28% felt very well informed, 62% felt well informed, 7% felt slightly informed, and 3% knew very little. This is in comparison to the poll at the start of the session where 12% felt very well informed, 39% well informed, 45% slightly informed, and 4% knew very little. The event was therefore considered to be successful in its aim of increasing the understanding of COP26 and how it is possible to get involved.</p> <p>Everyone was thanked for attending, and the presenters and Topic Support Network Convenors in particular thanked for their contributions to the session.</p>	1.43.23