

**Date:** Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2021  
**Time:** 1:30–4:00pm  
**Venue:** Online via Zoom  
**Resources:** [Available here](#)

## Education for Sustainable Development Topic Support Network Meeting Minutes

### Preparing the Ground: Getting started with Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in your institution

#### Attendees:

Ana Carla Madeira	AC	University of Porto
Amy Gove-Kaney	AGo	University of Stirling
Alexander Hedlund	AHe	Deloitte
Amanda Harrington	AHa	Loughborough University
Alex Meredith	AMe	Nottingham Trent University
Alastair Robertson	AR	Glasgow Caledonian University
Alice Smith	ASm	EAUC
Angela Spence	ASp	Inverness College UHI
Belmira de Almeida Ferreira Neto	BdA	University of Porto
Boray Huang	BH	University of Dundee
Betsy King	BK	Learning for Sustainability Scotland
Claire Blennerhassett	CB	Edge Hill University
Christine Calder	CC	Dundee and Angus College
Cathy d'Abreu	Cd'A	Oxford Brookes University
Claire de la Motte	Cde	EAUC
Carol Langston	CL	SRUC (Scotlands Rural College)
Claire Mitchell	CM	EAUC
Christophe Viavattene	CV	Middlesex University
Derek Cowie	DC	Inverness College
Eilidh MacPhail	EM	University of Highlands and Islands
Eleanor Wills	EW	Bournemouth University
Gosia Mitka	GM	University of St Andrews
Hannah Biggs	HB	University College London
Ileana Thomson	IT	Queen Margaret University
Jose Basto	JB	University of Porto
Julia Carrell	JCa	The University of Sheffield
Julie Gwilliam	JG	Cardiff University
Justin Hinshelwood	JHi	University of Exeter
Jasmine Ranson	JR	Nottingham Trent University
John T	JT	Unknown
Julie Thornton	JuT	Wakefield College
John Thorne	JoT	Glasgow School of Art
Kelly Forster	KF	Leeds Arts University
Karen Milligan	KM	New College Lanarkshire
Katy West	KW	Glasgow School of Art

Lesley Morrell	LM	University of Hull
Lucy Patterson	LP	EAUC
Mary Argyraki	MA	University of Sunderland
Michel Mason	MM	University of Essex
Nanna Blomquist	NB	University of Hertfordshire
Neva Mowl	NM	Birmingham City University
Philip Tamuno	PT	Queen Mary University of London
Rachel Curzon	RC	Birmingham City University
Rebecca Forster	RF	University of Lincoln
Rana Hijazi	RHi	University of the West of England
Rebecca Petford	RP	EAUC
Roslyn Taplin	RT	SOAS University of London
Rehema White	RW	University of St Andrews
Sarah Gretton	SG	University of Leicester
Suzanna Jones	SJ	South & City College Birmingham
Severine Monvoisin	SMon	Edinburgh College
Suzanne Moody	SMoo	Liverpool Hope University
Stann Scott	SS	Queen's University Belfast
Vanessa Mccorquodale	VM	The University of Edinburgh
Wim Melis	WM	University of Greenwich

**Apologies:**

Janice Foster	JF	Glasgow School of Art
Jennifer O'Brien	JO'B	The University of Manchester
Kathleen Harper	KH	Ayrshire College
Clare Allcock	CA	Wakefield College
Scott Strachan	SS	University of Strathclyde
Sonya Peres	SP	SOS-UK

	<b>SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS</b>	<b>ACTIONS</b>
<b>1</b>	<p><b>Welcome</b></p> <p><i>Christine Calder, Co-Convenor, Dundee and Angus College</i></p> <p>Everyone was welcomed to our first post COP26 series event, Getting started with ESD, which will be followed by two further events looking at implementing ESD in April and evaluating ESD sometime later in the year. Attendees were invited to introduce themselves in the chat box and encouraged to ask questions throughout to ask questions in the chat box as well.</p> <p>Christine talked about how motivating images can be when communicating about sustainability, but when starting to implement ESD for her it's about people and considering what matters to them and what they've noticed or done in terms of sustainability, so she wanted to hear from the group. She</p>	

	<p>asked to share 'where you're at with your personal journey to sustainability'. A few responses are shared below:</p> <p><i>Amanda Harrington</i> - In the summer, I use a hot bin - recommend them! (composting cooked and raw food at high temperatures). I use a fountain pen and stopped personal use of bios - and stopped them being handed out as freebies at events I organize.</p> <p><i>Jasmine Ranson</i> - Realizing what I have and how I can help others - donating things I don't use and looking to volunteer my time to help others.</p> <p><i>Cathy D'Abreu</i> - Getting many, many more people involved in ESD - we need everyone involved! Inviting hope, conversations and more</p> <p><i>Angela Spence</i> - I've been part of the eco movement one way or another over the last 20 years. At the moment I am trying to make changes as a family - like you say little changes make a big difference - and write a blog about it to hopefully inspire others.</p> <p><i>Karen Milligan</i> - I intend to source more sustainable healthcare/ beauty care products.</p> <p><i>Claire Blennerhassett</i> - I've ditched my car and I am shopping more locally and with less plastic. I am hoping to start my own veg patch this year</p> <p><i>Christophe Viavattene</i> -last summer I volunteered to remove Himalayan balsam, invasive species from our local river banks</p> <p><i>Ileana Thomson</i>- I have gone vegetarian and now almost vegan. Planning several errands in one journey to reduce car usage, using fountain pens and pencils, not flying very often at all, UK holidays and very much not buying things unless absolutely needed.</p> <p><i>Hannah Biggs</i> - I noticed a real shift in how I lived during the first few lockdowns, at first I was more sustainable, but then more fatigued, and low motivation, I became more interested in wellbeing/mental health and inclusivity and accessibility, how to ensure I talk about sustainability in an inclusive manner, taking on board the challenges people grapple with in their daily lives</p> <p><i>Ileana Thomson</i>- I have gone vegetarian and now almost vegan. Planning several errands in one journey to reduce car usage, using fountain pens and pencils, not flying very often at all, UK holidays and very much not buying things unless absolutely needed.</p>	
<p><b>2</b></p>	<p><b>ESD and You: Our Path to the Future</b></p> <p><i>Alex Hedlund, former VP Education, Heriot-Watt Students Association</i></p> <p>A picture of an uphill path framed Alex's inspiring presentation which gave a rounded overview of why ESD is important from a range of stakeholders' perspectives, how this is reflected in guidance, and his experience of pushing for more ESD at Heriot-Watt University. Alex brought a valuable perspective as a recent student himself who sat on the QAA board when the ESD guidance was being produced. He also played an integral role in Heriot-Watt's sustainability strategy creating a toolkit for ESD.</p> <p>Posing questions to us through Mentimeter, Alex encouraged attendees consider the differences between sustainability and sustainable development.</p>	<p>LP: Share Alex's toolkit in follow up resources</p>

	<p>Alex finished by summarizing that his overall message was that ESD is a necessity for students, that we all have a responsibility in institutions to deliver.</p> <p><u>Questions:</u></p> <p><i>'What is the best climate literacy tool?'</i>– Rana Hijazi</p> <p>There's no one best one, look at what's bespoke to you that your staff and students respond to. EAUC has <a href="#">one</a> which can be tailored to institutional groups. – Alex</p> <p><i>'What do you recommend we do about naysayers?'</i>– Christine Calder</p> <p>Showing them the SDGs to combat existing conceptions of what sustainability is, as it's undeniable that at least one goal affects them. – Alex</p> <p><i>'You mentioned students grow in empathy and compassion, have you seen that in practice?'</i>– Christine Calder</p> <p>One of the case studies used from the engineering program has an Engineering Without Borders project where they do the research then mentor the younger year. One aims to provide clean water in Kenya which really challenges perspectives of how the global north can support the global south. – Alex</p>	
<p><b>3</b></p>	<p><b>Introduction to Education for Sustainable Development and the QAA ESD Guidance</b></p> <p><i>Rehema White, Senior Lecturer, University of St Andrews</i></p> <p>Our co-convenor Rehema took us further into the guidance for ESD created by QAA and Advance HE which Alex alluded to. Focusing primarily on the guidance around getting started, she highlighted the actions recommended to best achieve ESD and the competencies which effective ESD helps to deliver: systems thinking, future thinking, critical thinking, strategic, collaboration, integrated problem-solving, self awareness, and normative values. Examples of good practice chosen by QAA were touched upon to provide inspiration for others to begin their ESD journey.</p>	
<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>University of the Highlands and Islands: Developing an Online Sustainable Development Degree</b></p> <p><i>Eilidh Macphail, Programme Leader of BSc Sustainable Development, UHI</i></p> <p>The University of Highlands and Islands has a history of connection to their widespread environment, and as such has had a rural development degree running online for years. Over time this became 'sustainable rural development' and finally the 'sustainable development' degree Eilidh came to share with us. As such, the university wasn't starting from scratch when beginning to embed ESD throughout this course. They already had the funding and the staff but there was a number of internal and external influences that shaped the priorities of its curriculum. Eilidh explored these influences and things to consider when designing curricula with ESD. She also presented a picture of the current situation and the three key points</p>	

	<p>she's taken from her experience beginning with ESD: We're generalists rather than specialists so see beyond our discipline, sustainable development often gets lost in buzzword eg. Climate change and net zero, we need to keep adapting the ctudy mode and content to fit learners needs.</p> <p><u>Questions:</u></p> <p><i>'Some feedback I have had suggests that until explicit pressure comes from the accreditation bodies / standards for the different disciplines, there is little motivation for PLs to embed SDGs... does anyone know if the there are plans to embed ESD at this level?'</i> – Nanna Blomquist</p> <p>ESD is now in all HE subject benchmarks and is required by SQA in all further education. So everyone has a regulatory context to support ESD – Rehema</p>	
<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b>Glasgow School of Art: A creative approach to environmental and social justice</b></p> <p><i>John Thorne, Sustainability Co-ordinator, Glasgow School of Art</i>  <i>Katy West, First Year Experience Co-ordinator, Glasgow School of Art</i></p> <p>John, who is an alumni of the aforementioned UHI Sustainable Rural Development course, exposed us to some thought provoking sustainable initiatives run at Glasgow School of Art that he hopes will lead to systems change rather than just personal change.</p> <p>John highlighted the importance of making students feel like they are part of a community, for example, by showing films that relate both to their subject area and sustainability, as well as providing links to several other fascinating art pieces that focus on themes of sustainability. For John it's about change in depth to teachers' strategic approach that will improve ESD.</p> <p>Katy West led on from this sharing how ESD is embedded in 'The First year Experience', a course taken by all first year students at GSA for three years now in two four-week blocks. This consists of two modules, first 'being human' which is run within their own discipline and second 'our habitat' which is interdisciplinary and collaborative. These convey GSA's 'Graduate attributes' which overlap considerably with the ESD competencies Rehema shared earlier.</p> <p>Katy emphasized she is not an expert in sustainability and nor are the majority of lecturers that will have to deliver ESD, so an experimental approach was been taken at GSA that aims to allow lecturers to focus on sustainability in relation to their subject.</p> <p><u>Questions:</u></p> <p><i>'Have you aligned your graduate attributes with sustainability competencies?'</i> – Rehema White</p> <p>We are currently working on the grad attributes so it's live just now, and it's certainly an important aspect of the discussion. - Katy</p>	

<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>Glasgow Caledonian University’s Strategy for Learning: Working Towards Embedding the SDGs Within our Curricula</b></p> <p><i>Prof. Alastair Robertson, PVC Learning and Teaching, Glasgow Caledonian University</i></p> <p>A holistic approach was taken for Glasgow Caledonian University’s new strategy for learning in order to embed the SDG’s across the University’s curricula. The first action was to map curricula against SDGs, followed by discussions on how to embed the SDGs in their academic quality processes. Other actions planned include engaging students with societal challenges, strengthening their research-teaching nexus, and developing inclusive, enquiry-based, research-led learning approaches. Ongoing engagement with discipline networks and external agencies have also helped push their success so far.</p> <p>Alastair shared a graphic of their ‘Strategy for Learning 2030’ and highlighted additional attributes to the four from the previous strategy – systems thinking, resilience, compassion and empathy – all of which align with the ESD competencies.</p> <p>In their benchmarking they have identified modules that either explicitly, or implicitly address SDGs, or those that don’t at all. A challenge they’ve found is assessing students sustainability literacy, which in the business school they have overcome by regularly using the <a href="#">SuLiTest</a> formative assessment tool.</p> <p>Alastair believes they are at an early stage of embedding ESD in their learning and teaching, next steps are to empower students and broaden reach of teaching staff that are actively progressing this.</p> <p><u>Questions / Comments:</u></p> <p><i>‘Interested in how others are mapping graduate attributes and ESD content and approaches?’ - Rehema White</i></p> <p>We have completed a cross programme collaborative mapping exercise - starting with an appreciative enquiry, followed up by workshops. We then followed a 3 step process, again with workshops and drop ins - to embed ESD/sustainability in every module on aims/LOs and assessment in module descriptors. This is supported by a parallel staff development collaborative learning series. We map the SDGs and the competencies. Very happy to share/collaborate.- Cathy D’Abreu</p>	
<p><b>7</b></p>	<p><b>Demonstrating tools for initiating ESD: Coffee cup game</b></p> <p><i>Lucy Patterson, Sustainability in the Curriculum Project Officer, EAUC</i></p> <p>This interactive workshop played in breakout groups of 5-6 aimed to highlight how themes of sustainability can easily be drawn out from our day to day activities, such as making a cup of coffee, to encourage consideration of how existing curricula may too offer opportunities to explore sustainability themes. Participants were shown actions needed to make a cup of coffee and were tasked with placing these in chronological order, and then reflected on the exercise and its potential for use in their own institution.</p>	

<p><b>8</b></p>	<p><b>Demonstrating tools for initiating ESD: Mapping against SDGs</b>  <i>Rebecca Petford, Scotland Programme Manager, EAUC</i></p> <p>Attendees were provided with a 'Quick Curriculum Mapping' <a href="#">worksheet</a> prior to the session to use in this independent workshop. This activity challenged attendees to assess more explicitly where themes of sustainability featured in their curriculum by comparing to specific sustainable development goals. Considering how goals could be embedded further to improve the quality of ESD in their course was also encouraged in this time.</p>	
<p><b>9</b></p>	<p><b>Conclusions and Next Steps</b>  <i>Christine Calder, Academic development lead, Dundee and Angus College</i></p> <p>After a lot of valuable information in a short time to consider, Christine summarized some key take aways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mapping is a good starting point no matter how you intend to do it whether its individual, per faculty or whole school, it will start conversations.</li> <li>• Training may be a suitable starting point for some institutions, or establishing a sustainability group.</li> <li>• Consider the scale you intend to take action at and the drive for it in your institution.</li> <li>• Pilot initiatives to grow people's confidence.</li> <li>• Use your communities such as EAUC to share experiences.</li> </ul> <p>A huge thank you to all our speakers and facilitators.</p>	
<p><b>10</b></p>	<p><b>Next meeting</b></p> <p>The next Education for Sustainable Development Topic Support Network will focus on implementing ESD, and will take place after Easter. If anyone has any suggestion for its agenda please <a href="#">contact us</a>.</p>	
<p><b>11</b></p>	<p><b>Thanks and Close</b></p>	

Minutes prepared by Lucy Patterson, EAUC-Scotland Sustainability in the Curriculum Project Officer  
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