

EAUC Ireland, in Collaboration with the Union of Students of Ireland, Submission to the ESD Survey by the Department of Education, and the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science: June 2021

Introduction

EAUC Ireland, the lead partner in this joint submission with the Union of Students in Ireland USI welcomes the invitation by the Department of Education, and the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science for contributions to the ESD consultative survey 2021.

This is a response to this survey, specifically to Section 5 which requests detailed submissions on what action can be taken in respect of advancing and further developing the 5 key priority areas identified by UNESCO for the progression of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) to 2030. The EAUC organisation implicitly has had at the core of its goal and objectives, the principle aims of the UNESCO priority areas, and over the years has produced and delivered through its team, a range of events, assets and resources, advancing and transforming the sustainability agenda in higher education. Through the collective skills, expertise and experience of its Irish organisation, EAUC Ireland and the Union of Students in Ireland (USI), we are uniquely positioned to influence the future direction of ESD with all the stakeholders in Irish higher education. The proposal outlines the strategy, actions, necessary resources and synergies between the partners that will accelerate a paradigm shift in sustainability in Irish education.

Giving some background to the genesis of this proposal, EAUC Ireland since early 2020 had been discussing with EAUC UK means and ways of expanding and enhancing its sustainability activities in Ireland. The EAUC UK founder and CEO Iain Patton, Prof James Longhurst Chair of the EAUC Board of Trustees and all board members have been enthusiastic supporters of this initiative and have given the organisation's full commitment to this project.

In November, a short draft proposal had been prepared and approved by the EAUC UK board. One of its main points was the establishment of a full-time office in Ireland to co-ordinate and manage its operations. With permission, one of our member Grace Weldon, IADT, took the opportunity to informally present the draft proposal at a meeting she was attending organised by the HEA. At a follow up on-line meeting in April 2021, between Damian Dalton, Chairperson EAUC Ireland and the HEA represented by Tim Conlon (Head of Policy and Strategic Planning), Dr. Louise Callinan (Senior Manager System Development and Performance Management) and Suzanne Walker SEO, EAUC Ireland was invited to submit a full proposal according to the ESD Survey schedule as a direct submission rather than via the ESD portal.

In parallel to these events, EAUC Ireland have been in consultation with the Union of Students in Ireland represented by Marie Lyons, Vice President for Equality and Citizenship, Megan O'Neill Vice President for Dublin region, Gary Tobin Vice President for the Border, Midlands and Western region, Bukky Adebawale Vice-President for Student Life and Darcy Jade Lonergan, USI Sustainability Manager to solicit their views and opinions, and understand their objectives and agenda on sustainability, with particular interest in greater student engagement and empowerment on the campus and community.

We hope this joint submission, produced in consultation with EAUC Ireland members and the USI will assist in the formulation, content and direction of the new strategy in education. One that recognises that education is a powerful enabler of positive change of the mindsets and worldviews, for the current and future generations that have, and will have, the responsibility of creating a sustainable world for all across all dimensions of human endeavour, economy, society and the environment.

Our submission will present the objectives, activities, expertise and skillsets of EAUC Ireland and its parent organisation, EAUC UK in the context of the key priority areas identified by UNESCO for the progression of ESD to 2030 and which are articulated in the United Nations SDG target 4.7:

1. Advancing policy/policy coherence.
2. Education & Training: Transforming learning and training environments.
3. Youth: Empowering and mobilising youth.
4. Communities: Accelerating sustainable solutions at local level and engaging with the wider community.
5. Culture: Appreciation of cultural diversity, changing attitudes, values and behaviours.

Furthermore, our submission will outline our ambition to establish a full-time Ireland and European office in Ireland, that will build on its foundation and experience, in order to promote and support the aspirations of UN SDG 4.7 and the ambitions and targets of the Irish Governments ESD strategy.

This proposal is structured as follows:

1. The EAUC Organisation

1.1 An Alliance for Sustainability Leadership in Education.

1.2 EAUC Major Activities/Initiatives.

1.3 EAUC: The International Dimension

1.4 USI Major Sustainability Initiatives and Programmes

2. EAUC Ireland Proposal

2.1 Objectives

2.2 Proposed Irish (European Headquarters) Office Functions

2.3 Operational Management of the EAUC Ireland Office

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3.0 Summary

Appendix

1. The EAUC Organisation

1.1 An Alliance for Sustainability Leadership in Education

EAUC is a not-for-profit, member-based charity, run by members for members. From starting out as a voluntary organisation in 1996, it has grown to represent over 4.5 million students and nearly 500,000 staff with a spending budget of over £45 billion. EAUC help leaders, academics and other professionals to drive sustainability to the heart of their post-16 education institutions.

EAUC Mission Statement: Our passion is to create a world with sustainability at its heart. We exist to lead and empower the post-16 education sector to make sustainability 'just good business'.

Beliefs:

1. That UK and Irish education should be a global leader in sustainability
2. That educational institutions have a responsibility as anchors in their communities to be agents of change
3. That education has a unique opportunity to transform lives and communities
4. That education is at the heart of global sustainability
5. That every student should have access to sustainability education
6. That education should reflect best practice in operational sustainability
7. In being flexible and adaptable to find solutions for a resilient future
8. In the value of international collaboration

Values:

- **Pioneering** - driving sustainability through innovation
- **Independence** - our own unique voice
- **Collaboration** - together we go further
- **Role Model** - leading by example
- **Empowering** - supporting and inspiring our members

The EAUC website, www.eauc.org.uk, publicises all its events and activities and is an on-line facility for a range of educational assets and resources and estate support and audit tools.

U.K Membership:

200+ Universities and Colleges in the U.K: Edinburgh, Cambridge, Cardiff etc, and many technical and regional universities and colleges of further education.

Irish Membership

1. Belfast Metropolitan College, N Ireland
2. CAFRE (College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise), Antrim, N. Ireland
3. Institute Art, Design and Technology, Dublin
4. Letterkenny Institute of Technology
5. Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology
6. Institute of Technology, Sligo
7. South West College, N. Ireland
8. Queens University Belfast, N Ireland
9. Royal College Surgeons in Ireland
10. Ulster University, Belfast, N Ireland
11. University College Cork
12. University College Dublin
13. University of Limerick

The Irish membership constitutes approximately 198,000 students.

Company Membership:

A guiding strategic principle for the EAUC in its Company Membership strategy is to integrate thought-leadership between companies, the EAUC, and EAUC educational members to develop strategies and tactics to deal with sustainability problems and develop solutions for the future. EAUC Company Membership Strategy is based on the following principles:

1. A company is prepared to support and develop the EAUC's mission, vision and values.
2. EAUC Education Members benefit .
3. The EAUC will not endorse a company or its products and services .
4. Each company will complete a Sustainability Questionnaire and associated vetting from the CEO before becoming a member .
5. To share its own sustainability journey with the EAUC members .
6. To provide research and knowledge on sustainability to EAUC members .
7. Show trust, transparency and a desire to embed sustainability into EAUC members and the education sector.

1.2 The Union of Students in Ireland (USI)

The Union of Students in Ireland (Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn) is the national representative body for third-level Students' Unions in Ireland. Founded in 1959, USI now represents more than 374,000 students in Further and Higher Education Colleges across the island of Ireland. The goal of USI is to work for the rights of students and a fair and equal post-secondary education system in Ireland. USI is a full member of the European Students' Union

(ESU) which represents students from 46 National Students' Unions in 39 countries, and a member of Eurodoc, the European Council for Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers.

1.3 EAUC and USI Collaboration

USI aims to advocate for all 17 Goals, but it mainly focuses on the following :

- SDG 3: Ensuring Healthy Lives and Promote Well-Being For All At All Ages
- SDG 4: Ensure Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Promote Lifelong Learning Opportunities for All
- SDG 5: Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls
- SDG 7: Clean and Affordable Energy
- SDG 10: Reduce Inequalities Within and Among Countries

Building on these key areas USI have identified six distinct areas in which they will coordinate and collaborate with EAUC Ireland. They are:

1. Developing national and international networks
2. Embedding Sustainable Development Education within the Curriculum
3. Awareness Campaigns
4. Active Citizenship
5. Data collection and Research
6. Sustainability in action

These areas will be included and an integral part of EAUC Ireland's partnership with the USI outlined in this proposal. This partnership is also reflected in the management of the proposed EAUC Ireland office.

1.2 EAUC Major Activities/Initiatives

EAUC AGM

The EAUC Conference and AGM is a significant event held every year virtually or on a university campus, comprising of talks, presentations and workshops involving several hundred international students, academics and sustainability-focussed businesses. The agenda is very extensive, including such themes and topics as teaching sustainability case studies, student projects, urban community initiatives and discussion groups on local and national issues.

EAUC United Nations SDG Accord

The EAUC, launched the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Accord in Vancouver, Canada in 2017. This global initiative is to ensure the SDGs are embedded across the third level education sector.

The purpose of the SDG Accord is to inspire and advance the critical role that education has in delivering the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and highlight the value it brings to governments, business and wider society. Furthermore, the Accord is a commitment learning institutions make to deliver the goals and to share the learning experience and annually report on each other's progress. An objective is that sector SDG reporting metrics will be presented at the annual UN High Level Political Forum.

EAUC Future Business Council

A council comprising executives from leading businesses and universities and colleges that meets regularly to review and address the skills gap in sustainability.

EAUC Leadership Lab and Leadership Academy

Launched in an innovative partnership with Harvard University and based at Cambridge University, the Lab and Academy prepare institutional and sustainability leaders to take the agenda to the heart of education. Including Resilient Leadership, Leading in a Virtual World, Leading During Challenging Times and Adaptive Leadership, these executive education sessions are led by the faculty team with leaders and alumni across the sector to share lessons from practice. Launched in 2015 this Programme is for senior and Executive-level change agents in the higher and further education sectors who are working to accelerate sustainable development through the teaching/learning, research/innovation and campus /community /service work of their institution. This Leadership lab includes:

- Strategic Leadership Sessions, covering some of the key learnings from the Leadership Lab materials
- Strategic Leadership Workshop Sessions
- 1 to 1 virtual coaching / mentoring sessions
- Peer to Peer group mentoring / coaching sessions

Green Gown Awards

The International United Nations Green Gown Awards are founded and administered by the EAUC. The Green Gown Awards recognise the exceptional sustainability initiatives being undertaken by universities and colleges across the world in partnership with UNEP. Senior members of the EAUC are involved in judging the national and international submitted at the student and organisational level.

Living Labs

Living Labs are at the heart of the new EAUC 2021 strategy and provide the practical means to make sustainability not only ‘good business’ but the new norm in how we all work.

A university or college Living Lab is where real-world institutional problems are addressed in new dynamic partnerships between all the institution's stakeholder groups. A Living Lab facilitates a bridge of collaboration which liberates intellectual potential to address its own practical challenges.

The potential is transformational. Living Labs promise the opportunity of applied learning and employability skills for students, problem-solving for campus managers, a rich and real-world learning experience for academics and a redefined student experience and new levels of student retention and satisfaction for managers.

Recognising this, the EAUC has invested into in-depth, world-leading research and delivered a series of guides and case study reports.

Sustainability Leadership Scorecard

The Sustainability Leadership Scorecard is delivered by EAUC, partnering with AUDE (Association of University Directors Estates) and Arup. It allows a coordinated whole-institution approach to sustainability, providing inspiration, action and reporting across all disciplines to communicate performance success, set new targets and monitor and improve progress.

The Sustainability Exchange

An on-line resource of over 4000 items covering lecture materials, academic papers, case studies and MOOCs on all aspects of the UN SDGs, aggregated from worldwide contributions by leading universities and sustainable organisations.

The Climate Commission

A unique partnership between Association of Colleges, EAUC - The Alliance for Sustainability Leadership in Education, GuildHE and Universities UK, is coordinating action across the further and higher education sector to produce a clear, consistent and cohesive response to the climate emergency ahead of COP26. The Climate Commission have launched a Climate Action Toolkit to help Vice-Chancellors, Governors and Senior Leadership Teams in universities in tackling the climate emergency.

Further Examples of some of the Reference and Learning materials, Webinars, and Workshops Produced by the EAUC UK :

- **A Governors Body's guide to Sustainability:** The Guide is designed to provoke discussion and reflection on the opportunities associated with embedding sustainability at a strategic level in a educational institution.
- **A Guide for Making the Business Case for Sustainability:** Provides critical opportunities for value creation and risk mitigation at a time when universities and colleges are looking for ways to become more resilient in an increasingly volatile environment.
- **On-line Carbon Literacy Course:** This online Carbon Literacy course is a blended learning experience, with self-study elements alongside 2 half days virtual training, and **is** relevant climate change learning for everyone. The engaging and interactive training allows delegates to map their own carbon footprint, and gain an understanding and motivation to reduce personal and work-place emissions.

The comprehensive extent of EAUC's expertise, competence and involvement in promoting and advancing the UN SDGs and the five UNESCO key priority areas in the third-level education sector is illustrated in the table below.

A whole-institute approach is the hallmark of EAUC's ESD strategy. Best practices in governance and estate management, improving the students' learning experience and employability through their courses and curricula, and enhancing the interaction and influence between the campus and the local and national communities are key development areas which have been the focus for the many courses, webinars, on-line support materials and software tools that EAUC UK have produced. The target outcomes and objectives are primarily to educate and inform students on the UN SDGs, and generate the leadership in teaching and academia that will drive the transformative processes in society necessary to attain a sustainable world.

UNESCO Key Priority Areas

EAUC Activity	Advancing Policy	Education: Transforming learning environments	Youth empowerment	Community	Culture
AGM	√	√	√	√	√
UN Accord	√	√			
Future Business Council		√	√	√	
Leadership Academy	√	√	√		
Green Gown Awards		√	√	√	√
Living Labs		√	√	√	√
Sustainability Leadership Scorecard	√	√			
Sustainability Exchange		√	√	√	√
Climate Commission	√	√			
Governor's Guide Sustainability	√				
Business Case Sustainability	√				
Carbon Literacy	√	√	√		√

1.3 EAUC: The International Dimension

The role of education is to be a foundation and driver for building a better and more sustainable future. Following the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, EAUC is committed to bring about change to deliver the UNESCO Education for Sustainable Development Global Action Plan.

Working closely with our international partners, EAUC aim to bring together resources from education institutions across the world. These partnerships provide us with the opportunities to radically increase the sharing of the Southern and Northern Hemispheres understanding on what sustainability means for an education institution.

Partnering with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and its Youth and Education Alliance (YEA!) EAUC brings together the latest news, resources and case studies across the world.

The **Platform for Sustainability Performance in Education** (www.eauc.org.uk/theplatform/home) brings together organisations which have created sustainability assessment tools designed to support universities and colleges around the world.

Along with EAUC's sister organisations, AASHE (USA) and ACTS (Australasia), we are dedicated to sharing the knowledge and experience of education institutions. The International Green Gown Awards are testament to this, which brings together the good practice that is taking place globally and sharing this knowledge.

1.4 USI Major Sustainability Initiatives and Programmes

Details of the major environmental, social and other sustainable actions and programmes are in the proposal Appendix.

2. EAUC Ireland Proposal

2.1 Objectives

Sustainability has to be the guiding principal in all our considerations and actions concerning our economy, society and environmental, if we wish to avert a climate crisis and a world that has a compromised future. Education is pivotal in generating the society that will respect the principles of sustainability and producing the leaders that have the courage and insight to inform and motivate the societal changes that are necessary for these goals. There are enormous technological and political challenges needing resolution for a sustainable, carbon-neutral Earth, that will tax and confront the brightest minds of science, medicine, engineering, politics and art over the next decade or more. Developing a holistic, educational approach that will produce a sustainable society, requires a learning experience where the campus, curricula and community are bound together by a culture (4Cs) where sustainability is the central ethos. EAUC Ireland is committed to supporting and enhancing this ethos and the ongoing process of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), through the various programmes, materials and courses that it designs and delivers for university and college management, academics and students.

EAUC as indicated by its membership, meets the needs of all colleges and universities in Ireland, while recognising and respecting political boundaries, traditions and heritages to work to bring all institutions together to find solutions to a common objective—A sustainable world

Our general pedagogy is practically orientated, with learning outcomes aligned with the following UNESCO's key competencies for sustainable development:

- Systems thinking
- Anticipatory thinking
- Normative competency
- Strategic thinking
- Collaborative competency
- Critical thinking
- Self-awareness
- Integrated problem-solving competency.

Collectively, these competencies cover the cognitive, affective and action-based domains of Bloom's taxonomy; the imperative skillsets that are necessary to comprehend the connectivity, inter-dependence and responsibilities of communities at a local, national or international level.

We further believe that ESD is best achieved when:

1. ESD objectives, targets and KPIs are part of the institution's strategic plan
2. Embedding ESD within the curriculum is part of the assessment and validation of new and existing courses.
3. ESD is central to staff induction, appraisal and promotion.
4. ESD is articulated within quality assurance of universities and colleges.

5. Staff development to enable ESD is fully supported at an institutional level.

There is a common objective for all education systems across the world regarding sustainability. Furthermore, many of the pedagogical tools and methodologies are similar particularly in Europe and the U.K. For these reasons, it is highly effective and efficient for EAUC Ireland to address the needs of its current and future members by availing of EAUC UK resources and where appropriate customising and aligning them to the Irish context taking into account the recent Irish Government's Climate Action Bill, and the HEA strategy that will ultimately be outlined in its new ESD for Ireland policy document.

The customisation of these resources to accommodate the Irish education sector's ambitions and objectives will be a co-development process between staff and students and community actors and organisations involved in sustainability. While an integral body of EAUC UK, EAUC Ireland will enjoy a federal status, with a large degree of autonomy recognising the unique culture, social, economic and political attributes of Ireland, both north and south, and the priorities and impacts that this will impose on sustainability policies and issues for the All Ireland organisation.

As is evident (see Appendix), there is already a vibrant and dedicated EAUC Ireland organisation. Combining the collective energies, skill-sets, networks and resources of the UK, Scottish and Irish organisation and the USI will undoubtedly lead to a symbiotic relationship benefitting all parties, and a unique proposition for promoting the ESD 2030 agenda in the higher education arena.

2.2 Proposed Irish (European Headquarters) Office Functions

The office will build on the strengths and successes of EAUC UK in the following:

- Administration of EAUC Ireland activities in co-ordination with EAUC UK.
- Co-ordinate initiatives and programmes with the Union of Students in Ireland (USI), and National Unions Students (NUS) in Northern Ireland and all relevant Irish national organisations and agencies.
- European Headquarters of EAUC, developing policy and coordinating activities for the entire organisation with all relevant EU agencies and programmes. Expand links to other similar international organisations such as the International Sustainable Campus Network (ISCN).
- Support and promotion of sustainability in all third level institutes.
- Support of innovation and entrepreneurship in student sustainability projects. These could be on-campus or community focussed. Students will be encouraged to work in inter-disciplinary groups and even across college boundaries where possible. This activity could be undertaken in collaboration with An Taisce, USI and NUS. Projects attaining a high standard would be recognised in the Green Gown Awards and

potentially a focussed Irish national awards event to highlight in particular student achievements and encourage future student engagement.

- Provide courses/workshops for university management, academics and students on sustainability for third-level institutes. Amongst some of the courses, would be the translation of the following activities and training programmes into an Irish context;
 - a. Carbon Literacy training.
 - b. EAUC Leadership and Emerging Leaders Programmes
 - c. UCC's UN SDG Toolkit. This could be augmented with The EAUC UK experience and participation in the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAAHE) and Advance HE publication ESD Guidance for Higher Education.

In time, other major initiatives that EAUC UK have launched and others of EAUC Ireland origin will be introduced.

- Management of the Irish section of the EAUC website. This will be curated by a committee composed EAUC Ireland and student nominees.
 - a. To publicise national and international projects, goals and achievements.
 - b. Utilise social media to maximum effect to engage students in a sustainability-orientated community.
 - c. To be a source of practical and factual information for sustainability in the student community.
 - d. A portal for links to communities and organisations around the world involved in sustainability.
- Organisation of an annual all-Ireland student sustainability summer school.

2.3 Operational Management of the EAUC Ireland Office

The EAUC Ireland office, similar to EAUC UK, will be an Irish registered not-for-profit charitable organisation with a board of elected trustees and other members and a National Director reporting the EAUC UK and Ireland CEO. Other members will include representatives from student union organisations and key strategic bodies including the HEA. Four regional EAUC Ireland committees, Connaught, Leinster, Munster and Ulster will also have a nominee on the board. The office itself will have three full-time staff members delivering the strategy plan of the Board and be directed by the Director.

One staff member will be based and supported within the Union of Students in Ireland and focused on developing student facing campaigns and events and supporting the Union of Students in Ireland executive team, staff and member organisations in meeting the USI goals.

The office will be assured of the continuous support of EAUC UK staff, and avail of the lessons and experience learnt in establishment of the EAUC Scotland office.

In general, EAUC operates an employment and board selection policy promoting social, cultural and sexual diversity and inclusion.

2.4 Funding of the EAUC Ireland Office

An indicative figure of €350-400K/annum is the estimated cost of running the office and its activities, inclusive of salaries and all overheads. It is requested that the HEA will give this level of funding for a period of three years. Within this timeframe, one of EAUC Ireland's top priorities will be to explore and secure funding from alternative sources from the various EU sustainability/green programmes and corporate sponsorship, and to generate a significant revenue stream from membership fees and the delivery of courses and workshops to university and colleges.

3 Summary

Ireland's commitment to the climate crisis is a reduction of green house gas emissions by 51% by 2030. Worldwide, within this time frame emissions must decrease by 26 Billion CO₂e tonnes/year and to net zero by 2050. We are facing existential challenges unprecedented in history. We must acknowledge this challenge, and use all the talents of human creativity and innovativeness to seek and find solutions. Solutions that will need to transform society's attitudes, expectations and norms, and produce technologies some of which already exist and others which have yet to be discovered. We have to realise that we are not the dominant animal with all other creatures, animals and nature subservient to our needs and desires, but live in a highly connected and fragile, biodiverse world where we all depend on each other for survival. Even in our human race we need to embrace and liberate diversity in all its forms.

Education is the enabler for all of these goals. We have seen in the current Covid-19 crisis that research and science-based informed decision making, accepted by an educated society with sufficient knowledge to understand the complexities of the issues, has lead to the best outcomes. The same principles have to be applied, if the UN SDGs are to be embraced and implemented by every nation. This is the global social, economic and environmental imperative for the next decade and beyond.

EAUC Ireland in conjunction with its parent organisation and USI partners, has the strength, competency and capacity to be a major force driving of the ESD 2030 agenda, in consultation with the HEA, and all the staff and students representative groups and bodies of the Irish higher education sector.

In the meantime, we appreciate the opportunity to present our proposal, and thank the HEA for the interest that they have shown in the matter.

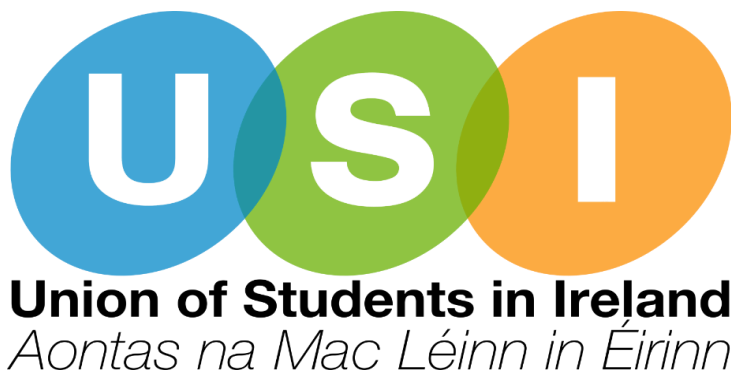
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APPENDIX

- **USI Submission**
- **EAUC Scotland: An EAUC Success Story in Organisational, Regional-Sustainability Development**
- **Activities and Achievements of EAUC Ireland Members**



**The Union of Students in Ireland and Alliance for Sustainability
Leadership in Education Written Submission to the National
Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) to 2030
June 2021**

The Union of Students in Ireland (USI)

The Union of Students in Ireland (Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn) is the national representative body for third-level Students' Unions in Ireland. Founded in 1959, USI now represents more than 374,000 students in Further and Higher Education Colleges across the island of Ireland. The goal of USI is to work for the rights of students and a fair and equal post-secondary education system in Ireland. USI is a full member of the European Students' Union (ESU) which represents students from 46 National Students' Unions in 39 countries, and a member of Eurodoc, the European Council for Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers.

1. Union of Students in Ireland as an Environmental Champion

SAVES 2 (Students Achieving Valuable Energy Savings 2)

The Union of Students in Ireland (USI) was the national led on the SAVES 2 (Students Achieving Valuable Energy Savings 2) project between 2017-2020. SAVES2 was an international campaign aimed at third-level students, targeting a measurable and significant reduction in energy use amongst students. In 2017, Ireland joined an international coalition of universities from around Europe, to bring SAVES "Student Switch Off" to four Universities in Ireland:

- Dublin City University,
- National University of Ireland, Galway,
- Maynooth University,
- University College Cork.

The SAVES 2 projects educated and supported students and Colleges across Europe to reduce their exposure to energy poverty. This was achieved through encouraging students living in purpose built on campus accommodation, to adopt energy saving habits, raising awareness on how to interpret energy bills and change tariffs, use smart meters, and seek out energy efficient properties. Advice was also given on low-cost energy efficiency measures within their college dorms. The SAVES2 programme was funded through the Horizon 2020 programme.

The SAVES 2 project rolled out the Student Switch Off campaign which was a not-for-profit international campaign encouraging student action on climate change, running energy-saving, water-saving and recycling competitions within halls of residence at universities in Ireland, the UK, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Lithuania and Romania. This campaign reached 25,435 students in halls of residence across 27 Higher Education Institutions. Within this project we secured sponsorship from SSE Airtricity to run a '21 Day Energy Challenge'. The campaign was launched by Richard Bruton, T.D., Minister for Communications, Climate Action and aimed to inform and empower students to make more sustainable choices in their everyday lives through making small changes to daily habits with daily tips on how to save energy. During the 21 day challenge, students were encouraged to take a photo or video carrying out the action and were entered into a competition for prizes. The "21 Day Challenge" campaign reached over 10,000 students alongside gaining national and local media coverage.

In Ireland, this project was supported by SEAI, SSE Airtricity, Dublin City University, National University of Ireland, Galway, Maynooth University, University College Cork, Gaelectric Holdings PLC and Ben and Jerry's. As the campaign progressed more third level institutions got involved & disseminated the information & content to their students.

2. Sustainable Development Goals Champions Programme

The SDGs Champions Programme was established in 2019 by the SDG Unit in the Department of Communication, Climate Action, and Environment. The Union of Students in Ireland are one of twelve champions in a very competitive programme. USI are joined as SDG Champions alongside An Post, BIM, Carow County Council, ECO-UNESCO, GAA, ICTU, Irish Men's Shed Association, Musgrave's, Smart Farming, NWCI and Vodafone. The main aim of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Champions Programme is to raise public awareness of the goals and to illustrate practical ways in which organisations and individuals can contribute to achieving the SDGs, using Champion organisations' practices as examples. USI aims to advocate for all 17 Goals, but it mainly focuses on the following goals:

- SDG 3: Ensuring Healthy Lives and Promote Well-Being For All At All Ages
- SDG 4: Ensure Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Promote Lifelong Learning Opportunities for All
- SDG 5: Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls
- SDG 7: Clean and Affordable Energy
- SDG 10: Reduce Inequalities Within and Among Countries

Therefore, throughout all of our work we incorporate the Sustainable Development Goals into our work. Through lobbying, campaigning, and events, USI promotes sustainable communities, affordable energy, climate action, and responsible consumption and production. USI works with key stakeholders towards strategies to reduce inequalities, promote good health and well-being, provide quality education to our members, and promote a sustainable way of life.

This academic year, USI worked alongside STAND on an SDG awareness campaign titled "the ABCs of the SDGs" which focused on educating students on the SDGs and including to national and international statistics relating to each SDG. Alongside this USI and STAND developed a resource kit which translated the SDGs into Gaeilge.

3. Leading Fairtrade Workplaces

The Union of Students in Ireland have worked with Fairtrade Ireland to become a Leading Fairtrade Workplace. Through this we ensure all of our events and campaigns proudly display your commitment to a more ethical and sustainable future through having Fairtrade tea, coffee and sugar and Fairtrade certified textiles for use in our campaigns. USI teamed up with Fairtrade Ireland to roll out 'Fairtrade Fortnight' to our member organisations, throughout the two weeks our members hosted events such as 'bake off' with Fairtrade ingredients, Tea, Coffee & chocolate tasting, as well as, inviting guest speakers from Fairtrade Farms & Tony's Chocoloney talk to students. Additionally, we have worked with Colleges and Students' Unions across the country to support them in becoming Fairtrade Colleges. While also supporting Students' Unions and colleges become Fairtrade Colleges, we also supported many in rolling Fairtrade events and campaigns on their campuses alongside Fairtrade Fortnight.

4. Sustainability and Environmental campaigns

USI for a number of years has rolled out sustainability awareness campaigns in the areas of plastic consumption, fast fashion and ethical consumption and continue to educate students about the climate crisis alongside supporting students to be key drivers in climate action. Annually, USI organise training sessions for incoming and returning Students' Union officers with a session focusing on sustainability and active citizenship which equips Students' Union officers with the knowledge and tools to run these sustainable campaigns. This year USI created a USI Student Climate Action Network which will compose of Students' Union leaders, students and environmental and sustainability societies to lead the student movement in climate action across the island. We also offered an audit for Students' Unions which focused on energy consumption, food waste, ethical consumption and feedback educational campaigns and events run by Students' Unions. This auditing project provided Students' Unions with a report on areas in which their individual union could carry out more sustainable practices. Alongside focusing on supporting Students' Unions, during the lifetime of the SAVES 2 project, USI and the USI Sustainability Manager were approached to consult and advice college staff on sustainable practices and policies they could introduce.

5. Education sector response to Climate Action

Education Sector as a Leading Voice in Climate Action

In order to address the climate emergency we all need to act urgently and collectively to ensure the education sector plays an important role in leading climate action. Therefore, EAUC and USI have come together for this joint application in order to have staff and students come together to support a whole of sector approach to climate action. Research undertaken by Students Organising for Sustainability International found that 90% of the students who completed their international survey were concerned about the effects of climate change and agree that governments from across the world should do whatever it takes to address climate change.¹ Within the same research, SOS International found that 40% report low or no coverage of sustainable development concept in their course curriculum. Globally we have seen a massive shift in terms of climate change with young people demanding climate action globally. Young people are aware of their active role in stopping climate change and global warming and are calling on our political leaders across the globe to act. Young people are increasingly aware of the importance of public engagement in climate dialogue and actively support discussion on climate issues.

Despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, more than 1 million young people around the world urged world governments to prioritise measures to protect against the ravages of the climate crisis in January ahead of the Climate Adaptation Summit. Young people have led the way in addressing the inaction on climate changes for many years. As a group, young people and students will be most impacted by the inaction on climate change. The youth voice cannot continue to be ignored, youth voices have become more pressing than ever as young people, who are acutely aware that their futures are threatened by the accelerating global warming and climate inaction by global governments. Young people are continuing to demand action towards a more just, equitable, and climate-resilient society.

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6. Importance of Education for Sustainable Development

Young people have a good understanding of the climate crisis and will be the cohort most impacted by our collective inaction over the coming years. As stated by UNESCO Education is an essential element of the global response to climate change. Education supports people understanding and addresses the impact of global warming, increases ‘climate literacy’ among young people, encourages changes in their attitudes and behaviour, and helps them adapt to climate change related trends.² Research undertaken by Students Organising for Sustainability shows that there is a very strong student demand for education to be repurposed in this way. With 92 percent of the respondents in their recent research agreeing that sustainable development should be universally taught and promoted by colleges across the globe. Alongside this, 85 percent conveyed that they would like to learn more about sustainable development, and 73 percent outlined that it should be actively incorporated into and promoted by all courses.³ The value of climate education can be seen from the success of UNESCO Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development (2015-2019) in which Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) was recognised as a key component of quality education and a crucial enabler for sustainable development globally.⁴ A large volume of work has been undertaken in Ireland around Education for Sustainable Development including the development of the ‘Education for Sustainability’, the National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development in Ireland, 2014-2020⁵ launched in July 2014 and the subsequent review, the National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development in Ireland Report of Interim Review and Action Plan for Q4 2018-Q4 2020⁶ which identified eight priority action areas to advance the Education for Sustainable Development agenda in Ireland:

- Leadership and coordination
- Data collection and baseline measurement
- Curriculum at pre-school, primary and post primary
- Professional development
- Further Education and Training
- Higher Education and Research
- Promoting participation by young people
- Sustainability in action.

Building on these key areas USIs and EAUCs work would consist of six distinct areas of focus outlined below:

1. Developing networks
2. Embedding Sustainable Development Education within the Curriculum
3. Awareness Campaigns
4. Active Citizenship
5. Data collection and Research
6. Sustainability in action

Further outline of the areas of focus:

1. *Developing networks*

Developing and supporting meaningful conversations and groups around climate action is vitally important and bringing staff and students together can allow for greater climate actions in HEIs across the island. Through this project we would aim to develop staff and student networks within HEI campus and nationally between USI and EAUC. Developing networks ensures the work of this joint work would be sustained throughout the academic year and into successive academic years.

2. *Embedding Sustainable Development Education within the Curriculum*

Embedding development education and global citizenship within the third level curriculum would ensure of future graduates and leaders of across Irish society would be aware of the development and global citizenship issues impacting so many across the globe. By targeting students in third level and linking their area of study and interests to development and global citizenship issues will result in more students being aware of the role we all play in addressing development and global citizenship issues alongside developing skills of analysis and understanding, empathy and efficacy, as well as promoting sustainability and justice.⁷

Recent research highlighted the inclusion of development education and global citizenship gives students the opportunity to address the inequalities and injustices present across our globe, and to advocate action for global social justice to increase awareness and understanding of a rapidly changing, interdependent and unequal world.⁸

3. *Awareness Campaigns*

As a result of COVID-19 and the move to online teaching, learning and assessment and the move to online work has meant that for many people they now spend much of their time on social media and online. A greater emphasis on online educational campaigns on the importance of development and global citizenship issues and raise awareness of issues globally.

Targeted awareness campaigns for students and staff in third level will support them in linking their area of study with sustainable development education and global citizenship issues to ensure our graduates are aware of the climate crisis, knowledgeable in the latest research in their field of study relating to sustainable development education alongside an awareness of the issues impacting people across the globe. Through joint work between the Union of Students in Ireland, EAUC, local Students' Unions and College staff across island on developing and rolling awareness campaigns locally and nationally.

4. *Active Citizenship*

For many students, the transition to college is a time of massive change including becoming eligible to vote and living independent of their parents for the first time. As they progress

through college students gain knowledge, skills, attitude and political familiarity to participate in more complex political activities. Higher Education “does not only prepare a citizen to vote, but also helps them to have ‘a reasoned and deliberative decision making’ process and could promote the cognitive skills that are necessary to gain, process, and analyse political information”.

In this project USI and EAUC would work to encourage students and staff to be active citizens and use their voice and sphere to address the climate crisis through a focus for third level to supporting lifelong learning and focus on the importance of development and global citizenship. Empowering students and staff through awareness campaigns and linking active citizenship and climate justice with climate action. The creation of an activist academy open to staff and students would bring together those with an interest in climate action and those with a passion for activism. Ensuring we tackle the climate crisis through a climate justice lens is vitally important to support those who are least responsible but most impacted by the climate emergency.

5. *Data collection and Research*

An important area of this project will involve gathering Irish research and data relating to the attitudes and trends of students and staff within Higher and Further Education institutions. Through research, monitoring and evaluation, the effectiveness and impact of this work on staff and students can be monitored through the three years of the project and aim to collect data on the shifts in behavior change and further understanding of sustainable development.

6. *Sustainability in action*

In bringing staff and students together for this project it has the potential to see considerable changes on Irish campuses in higher and further education. Through addressing curriculum design, developing networks, empowering active citizens and comparing this against data collection it will ensure greater climate action within Irish campuses. Developing local and national networks will allow for greater dissemination of the newest research and projects in the area of climate action and sustainable develop alongside providing the opportunity to collaborate on research and projects across the island.

1. Department of Education and Skills, [National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development in Ireland Report of Interim Review and Action Plan for Q4 2018-Q4 2020](#), 2018
2. Hillygus, S. D. [The missing link: exploring the relationship between higher education and political engagement](#). *Political Behavior*, 27(1), 25–47. (2005)
3. Irish Aid. [Irish Aid and Development Education Describing, Understanding, Challenging the Story of Human Development in Today's Work](#), 2006
4. J. O’Flaherty, Liddy, M, [The impact of development education and education for sustainable development interventions: a synthesis of the research](#), 2017
5. Jinyu Yang and Bryony Hoskins, [Does university have an effect on young people's active citizenship in England?](#), 2020
6. Students Organising for Sustainability, [Students, Sustainability and Education](#), 2021
7. UNESCO, [Education for Climate Action](#), 2021
8. UNESCO, [Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development \(2015-2019\)](#)

EAUC Scotland: An EAUC Success Story in Organisational, Regional-Sustainability Development

The EAUC Scotland chapter has a full-time office employing three staff located in Edinburgh. The office was established 6 years ago and is primarily funded by the Scottish Funding Council. It has a number of roles, fulfilling essential sustainability related tasks for the Government, academia and industry. The success of the office in major part is due to the dedication of the staff and the support and guidance of the EAUC UK. The EAUC Scotland model could potentially be emulated in whole or part in the EAUC Ireland office proposal.

EAUC Scotland's Mission is to inspire, empower and support leadership and collaborative action for sustainability across the Scottish further and higher education (FHE) sector. The core work of the Scotland team centres around the current Programme **Accelerating action and leadership in Scotland's universities and colleges** a response to the Climate Emergency, Scotland running from April 2020 to March 2023. EAUC Scotland enhance Sustainability Leadership within Scottish institutions by providing support, guidance and assistance to develop the capacity of university and college Sustainability Committees. EAUC Scotland has been collaborating with sector partners in order to provide the Scottish universities and colleges with support for auditing their scope 1 and scope 2 carbon emissions as required under Public Bodies Climate Change Duties (PBCCD) reports as named 'major players' within the public sector.



The Leadership Outcome has three activity areas:

- Strengthening Sustainability Committees.
- Supporting staff working in different support and academic roles to feel engaged and empowered to take action.
- Encouraging senior-level commitment to address climate change and sustainability issues.

The Skills and Knowledge Outcome has three outcome areas:

- Reporting on Higher Education sustainability progress.
- Strengthening individual skills and knowledge around carbon and sustainability.

- c. Being responsive to sector needs and aspirations.

The Partnerships and Representation Outcome has three activity areas:

- a. Facilitating sharing of knowledge of Best Practices and experience within and beyond the Higher Education sector.
- b. Representing the sector voice on relevant committees and in consultations.
- c. Supporting Scotland's Higher Education sector to develop a reputation for leadership in carbon management and sustainability.

The Teaching, Research and Engagement Outcome has two activity areas.

- a. Facilitating sharing of knowledge and experience on embedding sustainability in teaching, research and engagement.
- b. Supporting students to develop graduate attributes which further their skills, interest in, and knowledge about sustainability issues.

The advice and guidance of EAUC Scotland will also be an invaluable asset in the development of the Irish office.

Activities and Achievements of EAUC Ireland Members

- Quarterly meetings discussing developments, projects and achievements of the members' senior management, estates, academics and students.
- Participation in the National and International Green Gowns, An Taisce awards and Green Campus programme.
- Belfast Metropolitan College is leading the way securing the £8.4 million (€9.39 million) aimed at delivering Europe's future energy requirements in its **smart hydrogen-based energy** GENCOMM project working in conjunction with nine universities and private companies across Europe to deliver the project and partners include Northern Ireland organisations Viridian, TK Renewables, and Williams Industrial Services as well as the National University of Ireland in Galway.
- **CAFRE is committed to the principles of sustainability in all of its operations, across the three campus sites.** A reduction in water use and achievement of the Water Champions Award. Achievement of **LEAF Marque**. LEAF (Linking Environment and Farming) Marque is held by farm businesses which meet rigorous standards of sustainable farm practice. Achievement of **BREEAM** excellence accreditation at our recently constructed Food Innovation Centre.
- **GMIT** were **awarded SATLE 2020 and 2021** funding for projects entitled 'Embedding Sustainability across the Curriculum' and Sustainability Literacy to Sustainability Leadership'.
- **GMIT launched a new Centre for Sustainability**, January 2021 with the official launch expected in early September.
- During the **IADT Green week competition**, students from all courses are invited to enter any project that they have completed as part of their course work which had a theme centred on environmental, conservation or energy awareness issues. Film & Animations, Sculpture & Visual Communications, Concepts and Media.
- **LYIT's Annual Green Day** has generated a huge interest with businesses, households and students from all over Donegal, Derry and Strabane.

- **LYIT €1.6m SMARTERenew project** researching how renewable energy can help achieve Ireland's Climate Action targets consists of an international consortium of partners from Finland, Norway, Iceland and the Faroe Islands together with Donegal County Council, Derry City and Strabane District Council and LYIT.
- **Queen's 'Nurture and Grow: Connecting People through Nature'** Programme has allowed staff, students and residents from the local community to join forces in an effort to enhance the range of habitats within Queen's community.
- **Queen's Environmental Leadership Programme** where students play a key role in helping Queen's University, and the wider community, reduce their environmental impact. The Environmental Leadership Programme provides students with the opportunity to gain practical experience in sustainability and improve their employability prospects.
- **I.T Sligo held the first international Education with Sustainability Conference**, jointly hosted by the Centre for Environmental Research Innovation and Sustainability (CERIS) Research Centre at and Mid Sweden University, Sundsvall, Sweden.
- **IT Sligo** formally signed up to the Green Campus Ireland programme in April 2019 under the themes of Waste and Energy.
- The **RCSI Green Campus Initiative** is aimed at enhancing sustainability on campus. The Green Campus committee comprises volunteer staff members and students, with every effort made to ensure that the committee is as representative of the campus community as possible. Student projects have been shortlisted in the Green Gown awards, while RCSI itself gives annual awards in recognition of exceptional student endeavour in sustainability.
- **South West College's** new Erne Campus has recently been announced as the winner of the Public Sector Project Design Stage Award at the prestigious BREEAM Awards 2021.
- **South West College's** Centre for Renewable Energy and Sustainable Technologies (CREST) is an exciting venture that has been set up to help small businesses in Northern Ireland, the border counties and Western Scotland to develop and adopt renewable energy and sustainable technologies. CREST is helping to stimulate innovation and to improve competitiveness of the small business sector in the region.

- **UCC Gold STARS** award 2018, from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education.
- **UCC 2020, release a SDG Toolkit for Colleges:** Developing a Connected Curriculum, Integrating the U.N Sustainable Development Goals within the Curricula.
- Students of the **UCD Enviro-Tech Bootcamp** module organises the inaugural **EAUC UCD4Sustainability** day 2019, attracting over 1200 attendees and commendation from President Higgins. The core of this module is Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Sustainability.
- **UCD 2020, introduce their B.Sc Sustainability degree and an on-line Masters degree** in Environmental Sustainability in collaboration with its Earth Institute and Lyons research Agricultural Estate.
- **UL has climbed to 17th** out of over 900 universities worldwide in the **UI GreenMetric World University** rankings, which measure each participating university's commitment to an environmentally friendly future.
- The **UL Kemmy Business School** has been a signatory to the United Nations Principles for Responsible Management Education (**PRME**) since 2008, longer than any other Irish Business School, and has taken an active role in the initiative from the beginning, backing its aims to embed principles of responsibility and sustainability in our teaching, research, outreach and practice.
- Fortnightly Zoom sessions during the Covid-19 pandemic on key sustainability topics to maintain momentum and identify new opportunities at this disruptive time.