

What happened at

University Footprints Community Handprints: How Can We Create Low CO₂ Universities?



Students and staff from 12 universities!

Friday 26th March
2010, University of
Edinburgh

A day of workshops and discussion about students and staff using practical projects to make our Universities fit for the future.

The event was organised by
NUS Scotland
(<http://www.nus.org.uk/>), People
& Planet
(<http://peopleandplanet.org/>),

and Transition Edinburgh University (<http://www.teu.org.uk/>) with support from the Climate Challenge Fund (<http://www.climatechallengefund.com>).

On the day 43 people attended from 12 universities: University of Aberdeen, University of Dundee, Edinburgh College of Art, Edinburgh Napier University, University of Edinburgh, Glasgow Caledonian University, Glasgow College of Art, Heriot-Watt University, University of Kingston, University of St. Andrews, University of Stirling, University of Strathclyde, and from two external organisations, National Union of Students (NUS) Scotland, People & Planet Network (P&P).

We're Moving Fast

The day began with an outline of exciting projects and schemes already up and running in Scotland and the UK:

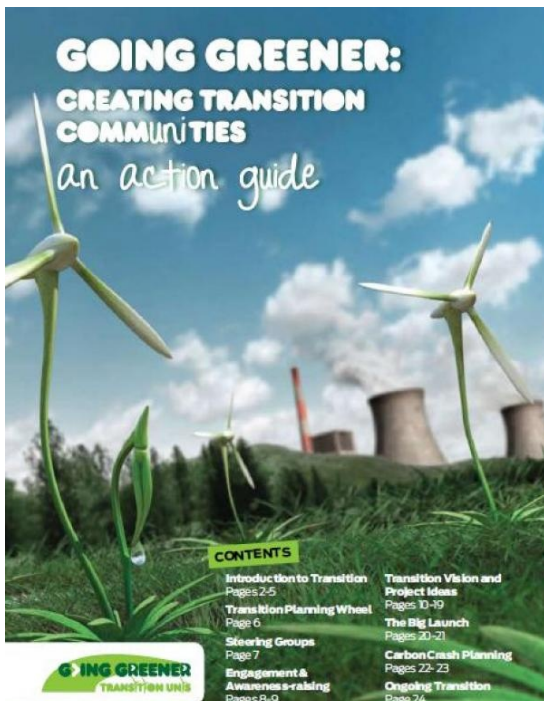
- The **People & Planet Green League**, awarding universities for all-round environmental performance. Many student groups have used it to put pressure on their Universities to do more. Find out how your uni did here [<http://peopleandplanet.org/green-league-2009>]. Next years will be published in the Times Higher Educational Supplement and on-line July 2010.

- Many universities, colleges and schools have signed up to the **10:10 campaign** to cut CO₂ emissions by 10% in 2010. Find out which at [\[http://www.1010global.org/uk/education/universities\]](http://www.1010global.org/uk/education/universities).



The NUS are working with college students.

- The **Universities and Colleges Climate commitment for Scotland** is well subscribed to and gives an ambition of what can be done. Find out if your uni is signed up to the UCCCfS at [\[http://www.eauc.org.uk/file_uploads/ucccf_s_signatories_march_2010.pdf\]](http://www.eauc.org.uk/file_uploads/ucccf_s_signatories_march_2010.pdf).
- The **NUS Student Footprints** project [\[http://www.nus.org.uk/footprints\]](http://www.nus.org.uk/footprints) has been training Carbon Ambassadors to audit Students Association buildings in colleges. See *Student Footprints*, below.
- The **Going Greener: Transition Universities** campaign [\[http://peopleandplanet.org/goinggreener\]](http://peopleandplanet.org/goinggreener), supported by People & Planet, is going strong at a number of Universities, encourage cross-campus involvement in making a transition to low-carbon living. See *Going Greener* below.
- Lots going on at the **Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges** [\[http://www.eauc.org.uk/scotland\]](http://www.eauc.org.uk/scotland) and in the **Transition movement** in Scotland [\[http://www.transitionscotland.org/\]](http://www.transitionscotland.org/).



The *Going Greener* guide has inspired People & Planet groups.

Session 1: Going Greener: Transition Universities

Adam Ramsay, People & Planet, presented an introduction to the *Going Greener* campaign. Inspired by the fast-growing Transition Movement [\[http://www.transitionnetwork.org/\]](http://www.transitionnetwork.org/) which brings communities together to develop and implement their own responses to peak oil and climate change. Villages, towns and cities across the globe are running local practical projects designed to dramatically reduce their energy-usage and climate impact. Universities differ from most communities because of their transient student populations, but with P&P's *Going Greener* action guide [\[http://peopleandplanet.org/dl/goinggreener/actionguide.pdf\]](http://peopleandplanet.org/dl/goinggreener/actionguide.pdf) shows how you can help your university make a sustainable transition into a future-proof community. Get the *Going Greener* campaign rolling at your college or uni with People & Planet [\[http://peopleandplanet.org/goinggreener\]](http://peopleandplanet.org/goinggreener).

Session 2: Knowledge Café Case Studies

Ruth Bush from NUS Scotland led contributors on short “knowledge café” discussions on a variety of practical carbon-cutting case studies:

- Ben Miller presented Edinburgh's award winning Freeshop scheme run by the People & Planet Society, where they collected unwanted clothes, household items, and books and shared them with freshers. More info can be found at [http://bit.ly/teu_freeshop1] and [http://bit.ly/teu_freeshop2].
- Cameron Munroe, Aberdeen Shared Planet Society, presented “Becycle”, a community-based workshop which lends out bikes for free and offers tools, spare parts, and help to anyone wanting to fix or build their own bike, help out with the project, or just hang out. Read and see more at [<http://becycle.org.uk>].
- Ruth Bush, NUS Scotland, led a workshop on the Student Footprints project which empowers students to take a leading role in reducing the carbon footprints of the communities in which they live. Students are given carbon management training to carry out campus and community carbon audits that result in significant carbon savings and positive behaviour change. There's more info on-line at [<http://www.nus.org.uk/footer/footprints>].
- Arthur Vincent, Aberdeen Shared Planet Society, presented Aberdeen's Veg Bag scheme, where students buy vegetables as a cooperative. Find out more at [<http://abdn-vegbag.wikispaces.com/>].
- Siôn Lanini, Transition Edinburgh University, led a workshop on where CO₂ comes from in a University community, based on Edinburgh University's Carbon Footprint study published in Autumn 2009. Read it yourself at [http://bit.ly/teu_resources].



Learning more about Aberdeen's successful veg-bag scheme.

Session 3: How to Get Funding For Practical CO₂ Projects

Ben Miller, Transition Edinburgh University, and Ruth Bush, NUS Scotland, led a workshop on how a community group can put a funding application together. They discussed how you can hone a good idea for a project into something that is fundable, and how to write an application, using the example of the Climate Challenge Fund (CCF). Read Edinburgh's CCF bid at [http://bit.ly/teu_resources] and find out more about the fund at [<http://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/ccf.asp>].

Session 4: Building a Movement and Working Together

Ric Lander, Transition Edinburgh University, facilitated a brainstorm session and discussion on how those present could make their projects more effective and how those present could work together better in the future.

Round table discussions were recorded on flip-charts as follows:

What do we have in common?

- We want to create a community pro-active on global problems.
- We all live on the same planet with limited resources.
- We are based at educational institutions, predominantly universities.
- We're concerned about the future.
- We want to build positive solutions.

How can we build on what we already have?

- University staff in catering, estates, academic departments, management.
- Courses on product design, business, economics, politics, renewable energy and the environment.
- Students Associations with sabbatical officers, staff, and student representatives, as well as links with the NUS.
- The Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges, of which many University Sustainability Managers are members.
- Student and staff societies and clubs on topics such as politics, geography, engineering and sport.
- Local communities and community organisations.
- The People & Planet Network and P&P groups at many Universities.
- Transition initiatives and networks.
- A mix of generations and skills.

How can we reach new people?

- Be inventive – events should be fun and cool!
- Important to Welcoming and friendly, open and “low-commitment” (i.e. not require people to do anything extra at first).

- Interactivity and conversational style is preferred to “lecturing”. “Don’t lead, show.”
- Meet people where they are, in lectures and knocking on doors.
- Catch the attention of the media and public with high-profile events.
- Publicise to people who are already sympathetic.
- Use the web, social networking, emails, student papers, Youtube, Facebook, and nings.
- Use existing easy-to-communicate campaigns such as 10:10.
- Show popular documentaries.
- Build momentum through your campaign and gain support from other organisations, such as the Universities and Colleges Union.
- Give incentives such as prizes, and show how people can save money by being green.
- Use recycling and art to convey radical ideas.



Practical, fun activities like guerilla gardening, seen here at the Shared Planet 2009 event, can bring in new people (Photo (c) People & Planet).

How can we communicate and share with each other?

- Work with existing networks, in particular People & Planet and NUS, for students, EAUC, for staff, and Transition.
- Keep a directory of initiatives.
- Organise linked events, such as during Go Green Week, and inter-university competitions.
- Hold further meetings, gatherings, video conferences, and visits, similar to this, but also university to university.

What should the government be doing?

- Funding insulation and environmental education.
- Disincentivising flights and offering incentives to take lower-CO₂ alternatives.
- Reward universities who cut their CO₂, as hinted at in Higher Education Funding Council (England) policy.
- Green universities by offering incentives and use the tax system rather than being directive.

- Use the government bail-out of the banks to fund green projects rather than fossil fuel extraction [<http://peopleandplanet.org/ditchdirtydevelopment>].
- Improve infrastructure such as bike paths.

What did should we do?

After round table discussion the session convened as a single group. It was agreed to that everyone should work together more and continue discussion; that current forums on offer from NUS, P&P etc., weren't sufficient; and that we should support each other with group-to-group mentoring either on-line using tools such as Skype, or through occasional visits, as well as future similar events.

What's Next?

The day ended with an outline of what the next steps can be:

- Conversation continues on the on the Going Greener Universities list - if you're not subscribed get to [<http://lists.peopleandplanet.org/listinfo/goinggreener>]. To send to it, just email [goinggreener@lists.peopleandplanet.org].
- Keep up to date on Facebook [<http://facebook.com/transitionuniversities>].
- Come to the Transition Network gathering, 12-13 June in far-away-but-sunny Newton Abbot, Devon [<http://www.transitionnetwork.org/news/2010-04-01/transition-network-uk-conference-date-and-location-finalised-last>].
- Students come to the People & Planet Summer Gathering [<http://peopleandplanet.org/summergathering>], 27 June - 1 July 2010, a training event that is intense yet chilled-out at the same time, with project workshops on permaculture and freeshopping, skills workshops on using video and facilitation, and plenty of time to network and share ideas.
- Transition Edinburgh University to organise similar event in 2011.

People & Planet Scotland Gathering

The end of the day led into the weekend student event, the P&P Scotland Gathering, with which the conference was co-publicised. Sessions included:

- Human Rights, Climate Change, and our Money - Adam Ramsay, People & Planet UK, and Amnesty International. More information at [<http://peopleandplanet.org/ditchdirtydevelopment/>].
- Facilitation Skills - Tripod Training Collective. More information at [<http://tripodtraining.org/>].
- Buy Right: Cleaning University Clothes - Daniel Fisher, People & Planet UK. More information at [<http://peopleandplanet.org/buyright>].

- Changing Student Politics – Arthur Vincent and Adam Ramsay, People & Planet UK.

Key contacts

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