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# ECSCA Go Green

## FINAL REPORT SUMMARY

2020-2022



# Starting Point

## How did the project come about?

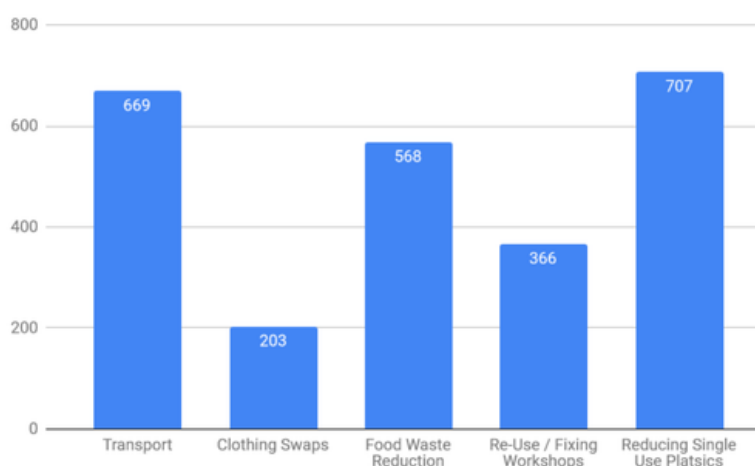
The basis of this project was born out of a partnership between Edinburgh College Students' Association, Edinburgh College's Sustainability Team, and the Edinburgh College Development Trust back in 2017. This came through a desire for an increased capacity for sustainability work at the College that would directly and tangibly benefit our students. As ECSA had identified the significant issue of travel and its associated costs as a barrier for students staying at College, our first CCF project that ran from 2018-2020 focussed specifically on sustainable travel.

Through the success of our first project, we were able to see the appetite for sustainability events and activities in our student population, both related to travel, and to other aspects of sustainability. Throughout the first project, students regularly flagged waste at the College as an area of concern, which increased our desire to expand our project focus to include supporting students to reduce waste on campus and beyond.

Two years since we first gathered data on it, at our October 2019 Class Rep conferences, student reps made it clear that travel remained a major issue for many students. The financial and time costs of transport are barriers to a positive student experience, and can even lead to students considering dropping out of education. Furthermore, when we surveyed students during the 2019 Registration Week, asking what ECSA's sustainability priorities should be, 52% cited travel.

This confirmed for us that future projects needed to continue to support sustainable travel and tackle the high levels of car use among students. The activities, resources, and infrastructure around sustainable travel that we developed in our first project has meant that we have been able to continue many elements throughout this second project as well as develop new activities and increase engagement over the past 2 years.

Our various data gathering from students also highlighted single-use plastic and waste more widely across the campuses as a major issue that students wanted us to prioritise. Part of the planning around the second project was to ramp up the promotion of our reusable coffee-cups and water bottles as well as regularly offering a range of other sustainable or plastic-free products as prizes throughout the project in order to engage students on the issues around single use plastics more widely.



*Results of student responses to the question "What do you think ECSA's sustainability priorities should be?" in Welcome Week Survey 2019*





After trialling some pop-up clothing swap shops towards the end of our first project (shown in image above), it was clear that establishing a physical sustainability space on each campus would help to deliver waste reduction initiatives, and engage more students in discussions and activities around the project. With food waste also featuring heavily in our data gathering on student priorities, the development of Community Fridges on campus alongside our Swap Shops would help us enhance the offering and engage more students in waste reduction in their daily lives.

All of our core objectives for this project have added benefits to students in relation to physical health, wellbeing, and helping them to reduce the burden of cost to accessing education. The project has therefore reduced carbon, whilst also reducing expenditure. This

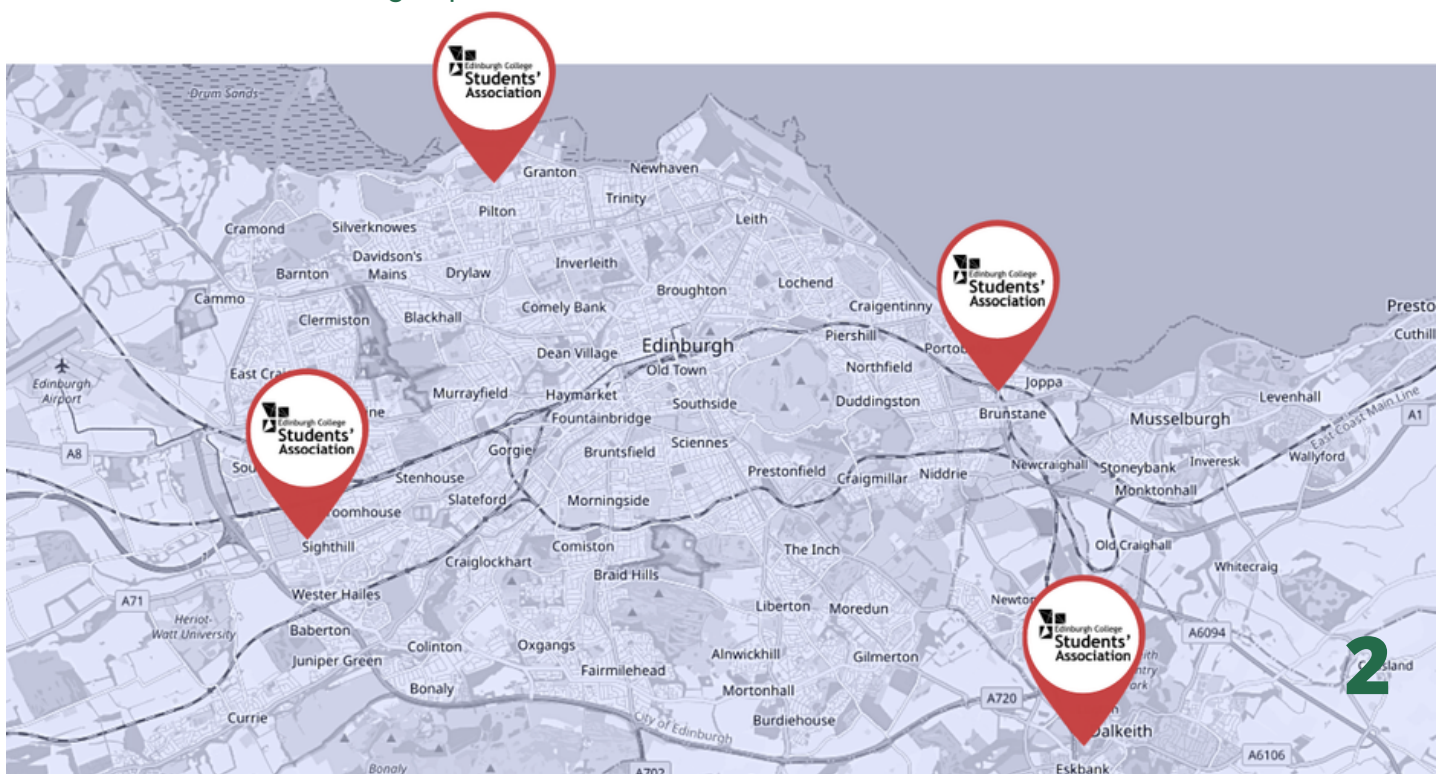
has been important to the project as SIMD data shows that many of our students come from relatively high areas of deprivation in and around the city.

Edinburgh College is spread over four different campuses, which all vary in the size of the student body and the courses offered. The four campuses are:

- Sighthill Campus - West Edinburgh
- Granton Campus - North Edinburgh
- Milton Road Campus - East Edinburgh
- Midlothian Campus - Dalkeith

Due to the fact that not all campuses teach the same courses, students don't necessarily travel to the campus nearest their home postcode. On top of this, the level of deprivation in areas where our students live is higher than Edinburgh as a whole, and the Scottish average.

With all of these factors in mind, the project has had to engage with an extremely wide range of people from all walks of life, many with multiple barriers to education, finance, and time to engage with sustainability activities. We believe our project has managed to thread these issues and challenges together, providing engaging activities that help our community to improve their lives as well as reducing carbon.



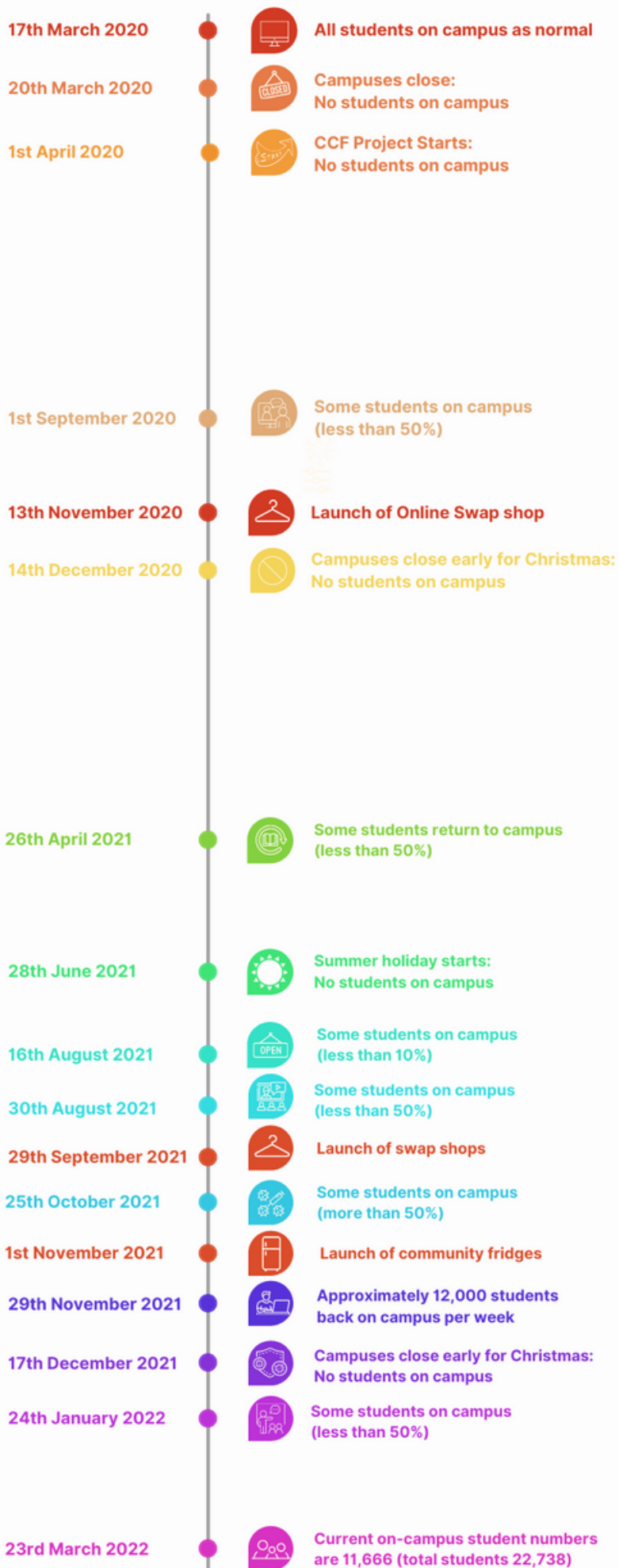
# Project Backdrop

It's important to note that at no point during this project did we have all students on campus, due to Covid-19 restrictions. There were times when there were no staff or students allowed on campus during stages of lockdown, and even in times when Government restrictions have eased we have never exceeded more than around 50% of students coming onto campus at any given time. In total, 12 months out of the 24 project months saw no students on campus at all. A timeline of the levels of students on campuses over the duration of the project can be seen in the timeline on the right. This has obviously shaped the project significantly, as we had to adapt our approaches to engaging our students with project activities and outcomes that could be delivered remotely.

As we function within Edinburgh College buildings, decisions on numbers of students on campus outside lockdown periods were outwith our control. This meant that we had to continue to run both online and in-person events once there were some students on campuses, in order to target as many students. We were also required to book our access to campus buildings at least 48 hours in advance for a considerable amount of time, which reduced the amount of flexibility we had for changing things like, for example, students' collection times for online swap shop orders. Despite these external challenges, we have still engaged more students than we originally set out to, and achieved virtually all of our original targets.

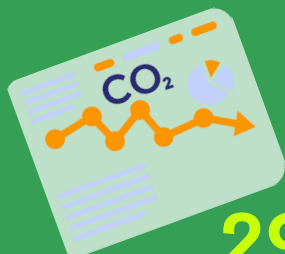
## Covid-19 timeline.

MARCH 2020 - MARCH 2022



# Headline Achievements

Here are some of our key project achievements:



**105%**  
of project target  
achieved  
Lifetime saving of  
**298 tCO2e**



**217.2 tCO2e**  
lifetime saving  
from travel outcome alone

**16**  
subject specific class  
workshops circulated to  
Sustainable Education  
Group

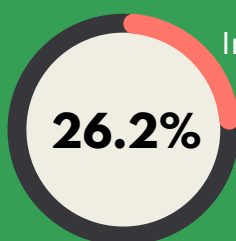


**720 students  
across 50  
classes**

took part in our Climate  
Change 101 workshops



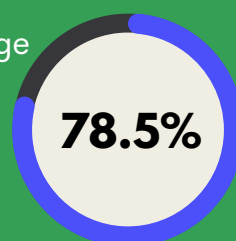
**921**  
hours of paid work  
for students through  
our Sustainability



Increase in climate change  
knowledge from

**26.2%**

**26.5% to  
78.5%**



**78.5%**

**4 Go Green Hubs**

set up housing our  
Swap Shops and  
Community Fridges

**£14,526**

spent on physical  
infrastructure for the  
long-term running of the  
Go Green Hubs



**3152.48kg**

saved from going to  
waste through our  
Community Fridges



**978.85kg**

of textiles and books  
donated to our Swap  
Shops



**Net Zero  
Champions**

award received from the  
Edinburgh Chamber of  
Commerce



**1601 views**  
of our Zero Waste  
Cooking Series

**£3500**

fundraised for  
ongoing project  
costs





# Outcomes

Our project had four key outcomes. This section summarises our achievements for each one:

## **Outcome 1 (Climate Awareness): Outcome exceeded**

**Target:** Supporting 1500 people in our community to increase their awareness and understanding of Climate Change and enabling them to make informed choices on how to move to low-carbon lifestyles.

**Result:** 2810 project participants, 720 of which received direct Climate Literacy training

## **Outcome 2 (Low Carbon Travel): Outcome exceeded**

**Target:** 260 people in our community will reduce their carbon emissions by a total of 48.9 tCO<sub>2</sub>e over the project, by switching to public transport, active travel, and lift sharing.

**Result:** 303 participants, project carbon saving of 72.4 tCO<sub>2</sub>e

## **Outcome 3 (Community Fridges): Outcome exceeded**

**Target:** Reduce food waste from college canteens, teaching kitchens, and local supermarkets by creating community fridges. Each week, these will divert 50kg of food from landfill, saving 10.98 tCO<sub>2</sub>e over the project. We will run complimentary activities to further raise awareness of food waste.

**Result:** 165.78kg of food saved from waste per week, project carbon saving of 15.1 tCO<sub>2</sub>e

## **Outcome 4 (Swap Shops): Outcome partially met**

**Target:** Reduce the consumption of new clothes, textiles and books by establishing regular swap shops and a textbook exchange. This will lead to 2020kg of new goods not being consumed, and a carbon saving of 34.66 tCO<sub>2</sub>e. We will foster a culture of sharing, re-use, and buying second-hand amongst our community.

**Result:** 987.85kg of donations, project carbon saving of 11.2 tCO<sub>2</sub>e

**105%**

**progress against our carbon saving target  
in a global pandemic**

Achievements against these targets can be seen in the table below:

Key Indicator	Activities	Outcomes
Increasing Climate Change awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class workshops</li> <li>• News articles and social media content</li> <li>• Film screenings</li> <li>• Publicising national events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2810 overall participants</li> <li>• 50 class sessions delivered to 720 students in total</li> <li>• 34 news articles created</li> <li>• 187.3% progress to target</li> </ul>
Encourage more sustainable travel methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bike maintenance sessions</li> <li>• Liftshare platform</li> <li>• Travel planning tool</li> <li>• Free bike and walking equipment</li> <li>• Challenges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 303 participants</li> <li>• Lifetime carbon saving of 217.2tCO<sub>2</sub>e</li> <li>• 147% progress to target</li> </ul>
Reduce food waste through Community Fridges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Fridges</li> <li>• Zero Waste Cooking Video Series</li> <li>• Food waste diaries</li> <li>• Cook-along</li> <li>• Campaigns and news articles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 165.78kg of food saved from waste per week</li> <li>• Lifetime carbon saving of 45.3 tCO<sub>2</sub>e</li> <li>• 137.5% progress to project carbon saving target</li> </ul>
Reduce textile and book waste through Swap Shops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online and on-campus Swap Shops</li> <li>• Parents &amp; Carers swap shop events</li> <li>• Sewing projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 978.85kg of donations</li> <li>• Lifetime carbon saving of 33.7 tCO<sub>2</sub>e</li> <li>• 48.5% of target donations made across limited timeframe</li> </ul>

**187%**

**progress against our participant number target in a global pandemic**

# Summation

## **Audrey Cumberford MBE, Principal & Chief Executive of Edinburgh College:**

"This end of project report fills with me great pride as its content shows just how hard the Students' Association have worked to deliver on this project's key objective of waste reduction – preventing tonnes of food, clothing, books and other accessories from going to landfill, during the length of the project.

It has been fantastic to see the development of the Go Green Hubs which house Community Fridges and Clothing and Accessory Swap Shops on each of our campuses. These spaces are big, bold and vibrant, and not only stop a range of materials from being wasted, but also constantly ensure that Sustainability is on the mind of staff and students when they're on campus.

Engaging students in sustainability has also been critical, and again ECSA's Go Green team has led the way, delivering Climate Change Workshops right across our curriculum, and supporting safe and accessible active travel for all.

This report also signifies the end of four years of funding, and brings about an end of an era in which we have enjoyed working with the full-time and student staff across those years from the ECSA Go Green Project – the College has benefited hugely from their passion and expertise, and my thanks goes to them for their hard work since 2018."



## **Al Wilson, Edinburgh College Students' Association Director**

As Association Director, I am incredibly proud to have been part of this project for the last 2 years and help our project staff deliver and, in the vast majority of areas, exceed, both targets and expectations, despite working through the challenges of a global pandemic. We were writing our last end of project report when the UK went into lockdown in March 2020, with our campuses being deserted and our students learning remotely. We have, therefore, never had full levels of the student population back on campus to engage in our activities at any stage over the past 2 years – In fact, we still don't – so it is even more impressive that our incredible project staff have delivered on so much from this project.

Despite most of our target audience living in full lockdown, or, at least partly learning remotely for the entirety of the project, it is even more remarkable that we have exceeded our original carbon reduction target by 5% and our levels of student engagement have surpassed our target by a massive 87%.



These and all the other outcomes contained throughout this report, are testament to the drive of our incredible project staff who have adapted and changed approach in order to continue to deliver. The development of climate workshops delivered directly in classes in such a wide variety of curriculum areas, has given us the opportunity to really discuss what the climate emergency means for students and their chosen sectors for future employment. The physical space developed housing our Swap Shops and Community Fridges are a gateway for daily behaviour change and further sustainability discussions. The active travel campaigns and competitions, coupled with our on-campus bike maintenance sessions, have highlighted changing travel behaviours to lower carbon alternatives as a normal part of students' daily lives.

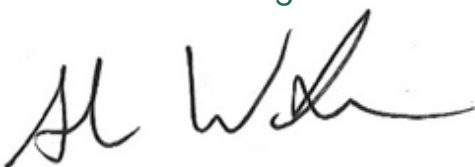
The c.50,000 people who have been students at Edinburgh College since 2020 have had at least passive exposure to our work. Sustainability has become a much more prominent and relevant part of their lives because of this project and the massive amount of work delivered by our project staff.

It has been incredible to be able to employ a wide variety of student-staff over the course of the last 2 years in Go Green and they have added so much to our offer. A special thanks from me to Alex Leutchford, Grace Fisher, and Izi Robe as full-time project staff at various points since 2020, and a specific thanks and recognition to Claire Furniss who has been working with us on CCF-funded projects since 2018. Be sure to know that you have all made a lasting positive impact on the culture and approach to sustainability activities across Edinburgh College.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Climate Challenge Fund, Keep Scotland Beautiful, and the Scottish Government for their support throughout – we simply would not have been able to deliver change on this scale without it. We hope that the legacy of this project has provided us with the infrastructure, knowledge, and networks to be able to continue to positively influence students and local decision-makers on sustainability and carbon-reduction activities for years to come.

The challenges we face going forward are many and varied, but I am confident that the culture we have built around our sustainability work thought this project will continue to succeed for students at Edinburgh College now, and how they impact their chosen sectors in the future.

Thanks for reading.



Al Wilson, ECSA Director

