

Scottish IDG Hub First online event – a summary and initial reflections

Earlier this week, on 20th February, a group of curious and inquisitive individuals came together to explore the possibilities for embedding the [Inner Development Goals](#) (IDGs) as a way of being in a variety of contexts in Scotland.

As is happening around the world, local IDG hubs are emerging in response to the growing awareness that to tackle the complex challenges we face right now and in the future we need to turn our attention inward and develop our capacity to navigate those challenges in a sustainable, conscious and compassionate way.

This first online event in Scotland demonstrated that there is a need and a desire to move in this direction and an energy and wish to do that in collaboration with others.

What happened at our first event?

Close to 50 people joined the event and engaged in conversation about what is already happening in Scotland and what is possible in the contexts of education, business and consulting/coaching. The session was opened by Valerie Jackman who invited everyone to share why they had chosen to join the event. The responses included:

“Interested in learning more and understanding the practical application of the IDGs”

“Looking to meet like minds!”

“I hope to be inspired by new possible collaborations on the IDGs”

“Connecting with people and finding practical applications of the IDGs”

“Great to connect and hear what others are doing”

“Deepen my knowledge, curious about developments to date and how to apply to practice”

“Looking to understand more about IDG and how I might integrate them into our approach to leadership for sustainability”

“Interested in how IDG can be spread more widely”

The event officially started with a one minute pause, led by Cath Cooney, to allow us all to become more present to ourselves and each other before handing over to Roddy Millar who took us through a potted history of how the Scottish connection with the IDG’s has evolved - from initial conversations in mid-2020 with the founders of the IDG movement and involvement in the research phase of the project, to an initial in-person event during COP26 and a subsequent event in Stirling in

2022, funded and supported by the College Development Network, which ran in tandem with the global IDG summit running online..... and so to the first online event this week.

Mindful that for many people attending this event the IDG's are a new concept, Roddy also gave a brief overview of the framework and its overall intention to support the ongoing achievement of the [UN Sustainability Development Goals \(SDG'S\)](#).

Our guests

The floor was then handed over to our two sets of guest speakers – Sarah Jane Linton, Louise MacDonald and Ally Robertson from West Lothian College and Graeme and Lisa Blackett from BiGGAR Economics – both of whom spoke about how they are integrating the IDG's into the work they do.

From an educational perspective it was inspiring to hear how West Lothian College have successfully developed and rolled out an online training programme to support all students and staff to develop the IDG's and to hear the impact that is already having.

From a business perspective, we heard how BiGGAR Economics recognised the need to do the inner work on themselves in order that they could successfully deliver their purpose of helping to develop a Wellbeing Economy and from that are developing programmes to support staff to create their own personal development plans.

Both speakers offered us lots of insights which clearly stimulated food for thought and created an energy to explore the possibilities further:

“Great to hear that young people have taken hold of the reigns of IDG so enthusiastically, looks like a great development toolset”

“I am very inspired by the breadth of application for the IDGs as witnessed by all those who have kindly shared their stories so far”

“Super and suitably inspired! Pages and pages of notes! My work in the early years building future frameworks has been energised and I will absolutely be incorporating the IDGs in future thinking. Look forward to, being part of, and following this movement. There is a real sense of collaboration.”

Opening up the conversation

We were then invited to take those insights and reflections into breakout rooms to explore the question “What would you like to see happen next as we look to embed the IDG's in the context of education, business and consulting/coaching?”. People self-selected their breakout room based on which of those contexts felt most aligned or of most interest to them.

In just 20 minutes rich conversations, potential collaborations and questions emerged. Members of the core Hub team (Kirsty, Valerie, Susan, Cath and Roddy) facilitated the breakout conversations with a very light touch and with the intention to allow the group to guide the conversation and to follow the energy coming from the participants.

The intention was to see what themes emerged and to use those as a guide for what happens next with the Scottish IDG Hub. Below are the key themes, questions and reflections that emerged from the overall discussion:

- Case studies and examples of where and how the IDG's are being applied would be helpful
- We need success stories of visible people saying the right things about the positive impact of IDGs/SDGs
- Seeing people living and being the IDG's not just hearing about them at the conceptual level
- Tools to help with application are welcome (*NB there is an IDG toolkit which is in its 2nd phase of development which will meet this need*).
- Is there scope for case study materials that show how IDGs help with finance - the bottom line?
- It's important to demonstrate the value of IDGs/SDGs in more "classical" terms of success, e.g. financial success
- I'm up for being part of a group, need friends in this space - a desire to connect with others

Some more specific themes, questions and reflections emerged from each of the three breakout rooms in relation to the specific context people were coming from.

Education themes:

- Looking at introduction to earlier years - pre school - primary school and also Higher Education - a holistic approach
- Consider integration and alignment with Curriculum for Excellence - does this need reenvisioned?
- Future proof them - develop them further - sponsored research/inquiry
- End to end 'cradle to grave' approach - integrated throughout human development journey - not seen as an add on or a course - complete integration in curriculum and workplace learning journey's
- Ideas on linking this to assessment
- Start with staff development
- Many employers are looking to recruit for attitude, train for skills
- Where is the best point in a person's life to introduce the IDGs?
- Clearly embed IDGs in the thinking around ESG, DEI and other key drivers for business
- The IDGs represent the 'skills' that will be necessary if greater sustainability and resilience are to be achieved. If greater sustainability and resilience are not achieved, we will all be in a lot of difficulty...
- UK has historically low productivity. IDGs are also important to address this issue in terms of boosting the quality of education

Business themes:

- We need to continue to promote IDG framework within HR and Personnel Depts/HR managers in small organisations, as still new
- Businesses need convinced of the commercial opportunities to make the shift
- Much work to be done before this way of thinking is mainstream
- Work-based apprenticeships based around the IDG framework

- A mis-match between young peoples' aspirations and motivations, coming into the workplace and being confronted with 'dinosaurs' – businesses who are slow to change
- We need lots of people making small steps
- Reminder that businesses must change now, voluntarily, before change is forced upon us by the planet – that time is fast approaching
- RBS' purpose-led strategy example
- Embedding IDGs into organisational culture / not an add-on, but rather a new way of doing business

Consulting/Coaching themes:

- I'd be much more interested in an 'outer development goals' version. 'Inner' things tend to be seen as hidden and mysterious. The 'outer' correlates may be easier to work with, see in action and teach?
- How might we be able to use all the material we've seen with/for the people and organisations with whom we all work?
- The IDG framework brings legitimacy
- Show case that it's not just fluffy
- IDGs framework becoming more visible - how to grow awareness
- Glad to see that attention is being paid to the inner life
- And, the drive for hard targets is part of the problem
- Carl Rogers: 'it's a curious paradox, when I accept myself, change comes about un-noticed'

Roddy closed the event with final comments, a huge thank you to everyone who attended and those who registered but couldn't make it on the day and an invitation to offer feedback, reflections and a sense of if and how people would like to be involved in the evolution of the Hub from here (see the link below to offer feedback if you haven't done so already).

What next?

The answer to that question will emerge over the coming days and weeks as everyone reflects on the conversation and we receive feedback and suggestions on what feels like the next step to take. At this stage it feels clear to us in the Scottish Hub that there is a desire for more conversation and application of the IDG's in different ways around Scotland and so we have an intention to enable that to happen.

The Scottish IDG Hub's purpose is to champion the IDG's framework as a movement for change in support of the delivery of the SDG's and beyond. Our aim is to bring IDG thinking to a wider audience, inspiring others to adopt them in their work and daily lives whilst connecting Scotland to the global network of IDG knowledge, best practice and change makers so we can all play our part in creating a fairer, sustainable future.

We want to offer a space to share experiences, a melting pot for ideas, giving energy to the practical application of the IDGs through events, workshops, co-creation of programmes and the dissemination of knowledge drawing in experts from academia, policy makers, industry and civil society. And we will seek to amplify the work already happening on the IDGs across Scotland so that the IDG narrative becomes mainstream in purpose-led businesses and organisations, supporting them on their journey to address the problems of people and planet in a just and compassionate way.

You are invited to be a part of this journey with us and we look forward to connecting with you in the very near future.

With warmth,
The Scottish IDG Hub Core Team
(Roddy Millar, Valerie Jackman, Cath Cooney, Kirsty Innes, Susan Grandfield, Doug Morwood and Judith Parke)

Useful links and resources:

[Inner Development Goals framework](#)

[IDG report - background, methods and framework](#)

[UN Sustainability Development Goals website](#)

[Scottish IDG Hub website](#)

[Feedback survey](#) – if you attended the event on 20th February please take a few minutes to offer us some feedback.