

# University of Edinburgh

Delivering Positive Change for Local Communities



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH  
Social Responsibility & Sustainability



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**“4th in the UK for research power** in the Research Excellence Framework”

**49,065 students** with 49% of students from outside the UK

Annual turnover of more than **£1.3 billion**

**£332 million total research income**



**116 start up companies** supported this year

More than **4 million MOOC** learners since 2012

**11,357 staff (FTE)**

**Over 500 Buildings**

**£541M endowment fund**



Value and Impact



# Strategy 2030

## Social and Civic Responsibility



Our vision is to make the world a better place, so we will ensure that our actions and activities deliver positive change locally, regionally and globally.



# Students as Change Agents

A safe 'living lab' approach for students, staff, and challenge hosts to tackle real-life challenges and generate fresh thinking. It involves students from multiple disciplines, who want to make a social impact.



# Basics

- Over 600 students and 21 challenge hosts benefit from its innovative approach since 2019
- Challenge hosts benefit from approximately 900 hours of student time per challenge topic over a 8 to 12 week period
- Small student groups receive skills training and are supported by a coach to help work effectively together and provide recommendations to hosts
- Students gain recognition for participating, either via a SLICC (Student-Led, Individually Created Course) or an Edinburgh Award.



# Challenges



STUDENTS AS  
**CHANGE**  
AGENTS



**Rowan Alba**  
More than just a roof

## CHALLENGE #1

### HOW CAN WE MAKE ROUGH SLEEPING A THING OF THE PAST?

Partner: Rowan Alba

Rowan Alba is a charity dedicated to end and prevent homelessness in a compassionate, human way without judgment, by providing services to help people live off the streets for life.

<b>1</b> NO POVERTY 	<b>10</b> REDUCED INEQUALITIES 	<b>11</b> SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 
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STUDENTS AS  
**CHANGE**  
AGENTS



**ROBERTSON**

## CHALLENGE #3

### What can construction businesses do to minimise their environmental impact and change behaviours across the industry?

Partner: Robertson Group

Robertson Group is one of the UK's largest family-owned construction and infrastructure businesses. Their main objective is to make progress towards a sustainable future for people, their partners and our planet.

<b>9</b> INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE 	<b>11</b> SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 	<b>12</b> RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION 
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# Student experience

- Over 90% satisfaction rate and over 88% of participants would recommend to their friends.
- Real world application of knowledge and skills.
- The most important impact on all participants was increased self-awareness.

“Students as Change Agents simply means realising the impact one can make and that having a position of authority is not the only way to expect change in this world.”



# Students applying their learning

- One of our first Change Agents went on to become a Consultant with UNICEF, having capitalised on the connections she made during SACHA with the challenge host, UN's Global Partnership to End Violence against Children.
- From our recent spring programme, a Change Agent secured employment with the partner they had been working with, Pivot Earth.
- Another Change Agent used their SACHA experience across two programmes to secure a job at a charity which later became a challenge host after hearing about how they could benefit from the programme.
- Some students have started working with Edinburgh Innovations to develop their ideas into businesses.





# Community impact

- The Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children incorporated students' ideas into a framework which was presented to the United Nations.
- Alcohol Focus Scotland used their groups' ideas to contribute to a collective response to the Scottish Government Alcohol Marketing consultation.

“When there are just so many challenges for the music industry, having such insightful and articulated ideas has given us food for thought, and it will inform our work so, please recognise the importance of this work, especially at this time for our industry.”



# Looking forward and reflections

- Embed within the academic curriculum and increase challenge based learning opportunities for students
- Gateway for host organisations into the University, providing links to research, innovation, community and broader partnership work
- Replicable multi-disciplinary approach that demonstrates to students and communities the positive societal impact universities can deliver.

