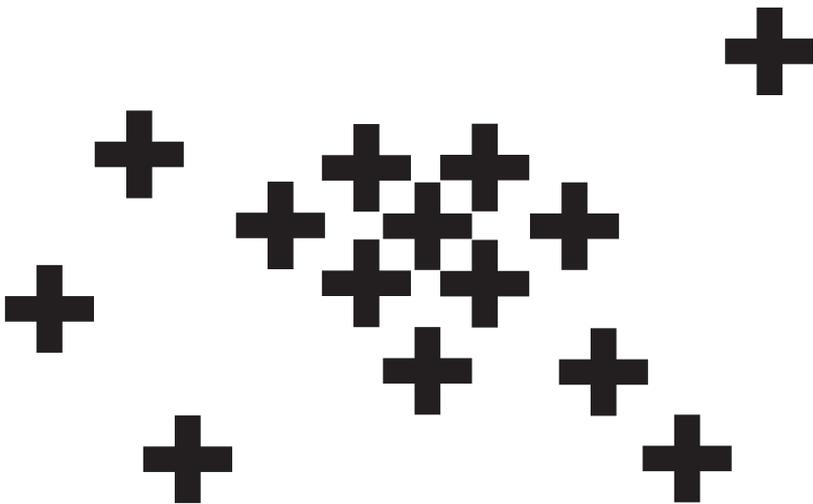


# A Climate Conversation Handbook

Designed by hairdressing, beauty and  
aesthetic therapies, and marine science  
students



An output of the 2023-2024 UNDER THE SCISSORS project  
funded by the Climate Engagement Fund

# Meet the team

We are a multidisciplinary group of students and staff who worked together on a climate conversation pilot project which connected technical, academic, and public spheres.



## + UHI Moray

**Hairdressing Students:** Neal Thomson, Sarah Marshall, Tegan Reid

**Beauty and Aesthetic Therapies Students:** Lauren Brown

**Staff:** Christine Anderson, Donna Mackie, Hazel Maguire, Helen Williamson, Kerry McInnes, Mia Lalanne, Mike McGlynn, Rachel Miller, Samantha Scott

## + Scottish Association of Marine Science

**Students:** Caitlin Lamb, Danny Morrison, Hannah Towns, Kate Fraser, Robyn Gilfillan

**Staff:** Ben Wilson, Bernadette Snow, Euan Paterson, Iona Harvey, Kristin Burmeister, Robyn Tuerena

# What is the purpose of this handbook?

This handbook describes the process and results of the “Under the Scissors” student climate conversation project, including the lessons we learned along the way.

We hope that this handbook will inspire you to start your own climate conversations, whether it's in your classroom, in your hairdressing or beauty salon, or beyond!



# What is a climate conversation?

A climate conversation is a peer-to-peer chat about our changing world. There are no experts involved: it is a friendly discussion about the impacts of climate change and possible solutions. Every single climate conversation will be different, and anyone at any age can have one!

It can be difficult to have a conversation about climate change. Many people find it a big, confusing or anxiety-causing topic. However, just one climate conversation can help people feel less alone and feel more knowledgeable and hopeful about the future. This can be the start of a possible ripple effect, where one person's sense of togetherness and empowerment can lead to amazing collective action!

Sometimes, it is easier to have a positive discussion about climate change after people watch a documentary or video, play a game, or read a book or article together.

For this project, we created flash cards with facts about climate change, which students could talk about with clients as they start their own climate conversations.



# What we did (in a nutshell)

- + First, the marine science students came up with flashcards explaining in simple English what is happening around Scotland because of climate change.

**The tide is high**

When water warms up, it expands. A warming ocean, coupled with melting sea ice and glaciers, has raised average global sea level by 20 centimetres, increasing flood risks.



Scan to find out about climate change research at SAMS



**On the boil**

There was a marine heatwave off northern Scotland that lasted 237 days, from August 2022 to April 2023. A marine heatwave occurs when the temperature is in the top 10% of recorded sea temperatures for at least five consecutive days.



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**On the move**

As the Earth warms, animals are gradually moving northwards or southwards away from the equator. Cod and haddock, a staple for Scottish fishers, are being located further north.



Scan to find out about climate change research at SAMS



**Got an umbrella?**

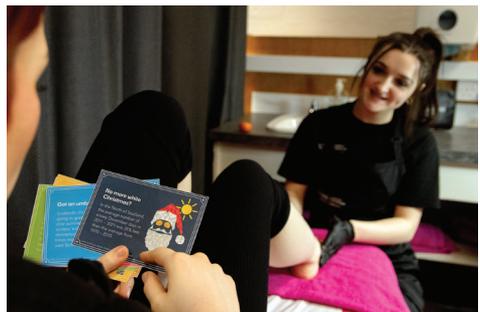
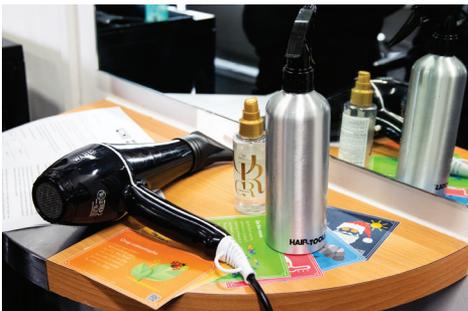
Scotland's climate is going to gradually have drier summers and wetter winters, with extreme downpours becoming 10 times more likely in north west Scotland by 2080.



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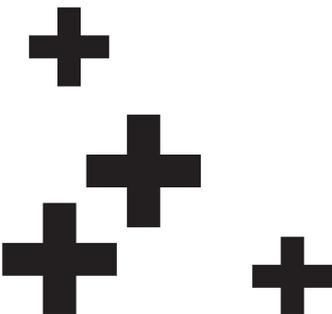
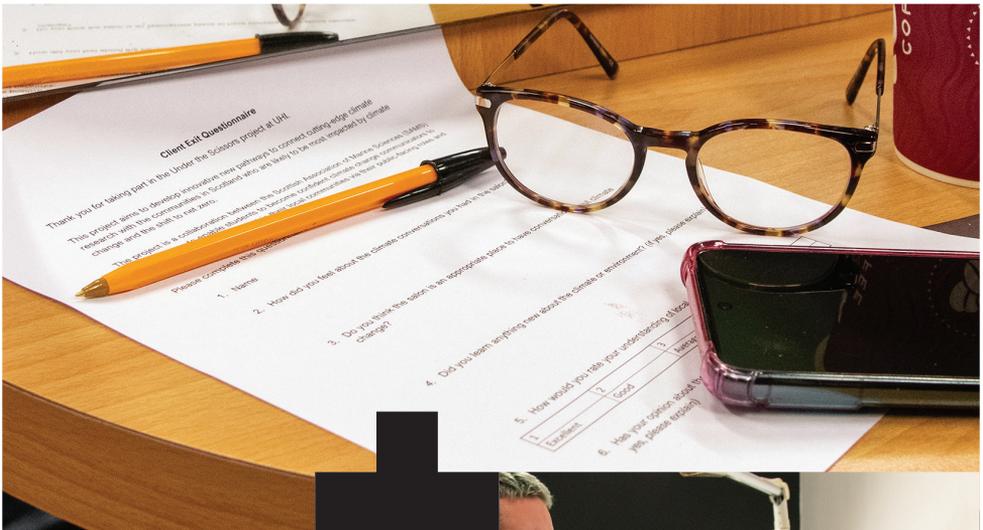


- + Then, the hairdressing and beauty students used the flashcards as conversation starters with their clients.



+ Finally, we asked the clients to return for a second appointment.

We collected information in two questionnaires to learn how the clients felt before and after their climate conversations. This data, combined with students' feedback, allowed us to see what went well and what the opportunities for improvement were.



# Here's how we did it...

## + **August 2023**

Research Fellows from the UHI Moray Just Transition team submitted a grant application to the Scottish Government's Climate Engagement Fund for a pilot student climate conversation project involving both students and members of the public. The application was successful, and the 6-month project began in October!

## + **October 2023**

The UHI Moray and SAMS faculty and support staff came on board to offer their students the opportunity to join.

## + **November 2023**

11 students from UHI Moray and SAMS met in Oban on 20th - 21st November for a workshop to co-develop the material and approaches for new successful student-led climate conversations.

## + **December 2023**

The hairdressing and beauty therapies students began climate conversations with clients prior to the Christmas break.



## + **January – March 2024**

The UHI Moray students each engaged with up to 5 clients for two appointments several weeks apart, collecting the project data whilst also gaining experience and confidence.

+ **February 2024**

The students from UHI Moray and SAMS met again on 26th - 27th February for a second workshop, to review how the project went, share learnings from along the way, and help design this handbook!



+ **December - March 2024**

Meanwhile, research team worked behind the scenes to report on the project progress to the Scottish Government. As part of the team's wider Just Transition research, the results fed into a larger review into how science, education, and the local community can work together for a fairer and greener future for everyone in Moray.

+ **March 2024**

Finally, all students and staff co-organised a public engagement event to share the final results from the project. This event was attended by over 50 guests including guest speakers, members of the public, and hair, beauty, and barber businesses from across Moray!



# And why we did it

“I enjoy learning better pathways to  
**communicate**  
**climate science**  
**in everyday**  
**conversations.”**

- Student

“I think **everywhere** is  
appropriate to discuss climate  
change.”

- Client

“There are currently **very few** structured opportunities for students to share knowledge, skills and experience across campuses, disciplines and different levels of study.

Additionally, by using students engaged in public-facing roles as part of their studies, **we have an opportunity to engage communities** who would not normally engage with UHI events in an informal and convivial setting.”

- Researcher

“I learned about ways **I can help** with climate change.”

- Client

# The results spoke for themselves

Before the climate conversations:



**58%** of clients said action against climate change was "important"



On average, the clients reported an "**average**" understanding about climate change



**33%** of clients mentioned a personal interest in local news stories about climate change



The majority of clients described "climate change" as changes to weather, seasons, and temperatures. Only **16%** of clients mentioned the links to human activity

## After the climate conversations:



**100%** of clients said action against climate change was "important"



On average, the clients reported a "**good**" understanding about climate change



**66%** of clients mentioned a personal interest in local news stories about climate change



**100%** of clients agreed the salon was an appropriate place for a climate conversation



66% of clients confirmed that they each spoke to **up to 6 others** about the climate conversation experience they'd had in the salons, including to family members, work colleagues, neighbours, classmates, and friends

# We learned a lot ourselves, too

About preparing together for climate conversations:

The most enjoyable part of the first workshop was meeting new people and learning about climate change and what we can do.

It would have been better with possibly more facts about positive action that is happening against climate change.

I think maybe student groups of 4 are a perfect small-sized group for discussions.

I enjoyed learning the small facts and getting a more general awareness and understanding.

## About having conversations with clients:

Speaking to clients was easy enough!

It would have been better with less admin (forms, etc.)

Very interesting to hear about the positive results of the conversations with the clients.

I felt very prepared for my climate conversations with clients.

I enjoyed hearing stories from clients of an older vintage.

The hairdressing students seemed not to have had a hard time having the conversations with their clients.

We also discussed together how the project overall went...

The most enjoyable part of the entire project was meeting other UHI students.

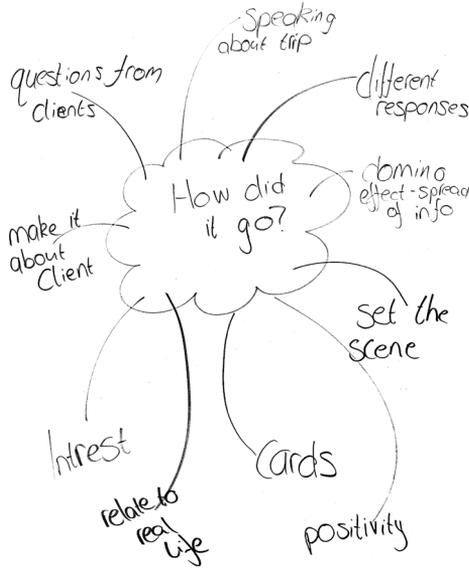
I enjoyed just the exchange between so different student groups.

This project could have been improved by doing it over a longer period.

SAMS could have prepared maybe more visual aids the hair and beauty students can use, and more fast facts for local areas impacted.

I feel like it has helped to make better communication and interest between science and the general public!

...with lots of collaborative brainstorming involved.



**WHAT WOULD / DOES WORK**

- TURN TAP OFF BETWEEN WASHES
- **ASK IF PRODUCT IS WANTED**
- **KEEP TOPICS POSITIVE**  
(not just bad stuff happening)
- **START WITH THE WEATHER**
- **COMMUNICATE TO COMMUNITY ABOUT AVAILABLE HAIR TRIMMINGS**
- **ADDRESS CONSUMER CONFUSION/ QUESTIONS ABOUT PRODUCTS**  
↓  
RE. AMOUNT OF PRODUCT = LESS NEEDED WITH GOOD PRODUCTS!
- **MORE VISUAL CUES including QR CODES**
- **BRING IN THE SCIENTISTS!**  
(+ OTHER DISCIPLINES e.g. Psychology)
- **LOCAL FLOODING MAP AS CONVERSATION STARTER**

questions from clients  
 Speaking about trip  
 Different responses  
 coming effect - spread of info  
 set the scene  
 Cards  
 positivity  
 relate to real life  
 Interest  
 make it about Client  
 beauty appointments make a bit harder → promotional terms etc. to expect as well  
 Flashcards went down very well  
 Timing of appointments + marketing 2nd appointment → price versus reality  
 keep it casual.  
 1st visit + 1st shampoo + 1st haircut  
 not really  
 1st visit really  
 1st visit really  
 Everyone believed in climate change.  
 better than talking about the Kardashians!!  
 sense happy to learn  
 ok with knowledge level because clients had similar level of knowledge.  
 clients very positive

# Now it's your turn

Here are the most important things to remember when having your own climate conversations:



Don't do it alone! Ask your lecturer, classmates, and even students from other disciplines to help you prepare and arrange climate conversations together. Making this a collective project to do together with friends old and new, instead of making it an individual mountain to climb, keeps it more fun!



Use visual cues (flashcards, a flyer, or even this handbook!) to kickstart the climate conversation! It really helps to have something in your hands to introduce and discuss together.



Don't feel you need to be an expert about climate change! Of course, it's nice to be able to speak with confidence, but remember that good conversations are not one-sided, and you might even end up learning a lot from the clients.



Keep conversations casual and comfortable for both yourself and your client. If the conversation is in a salon, remember that they are paying for a relaxing experience!



And finally, be proud of yourself! Every small step taken to normalise talking about, and caring for, people and planet, is a success of its own!

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For more details about the “**Under the Scissors**” project, vist:



[moray.uhi.ac.uk/cef](http://moray.uhi.ac.uk/cef)



*This document is available in both English and Gaelic.*