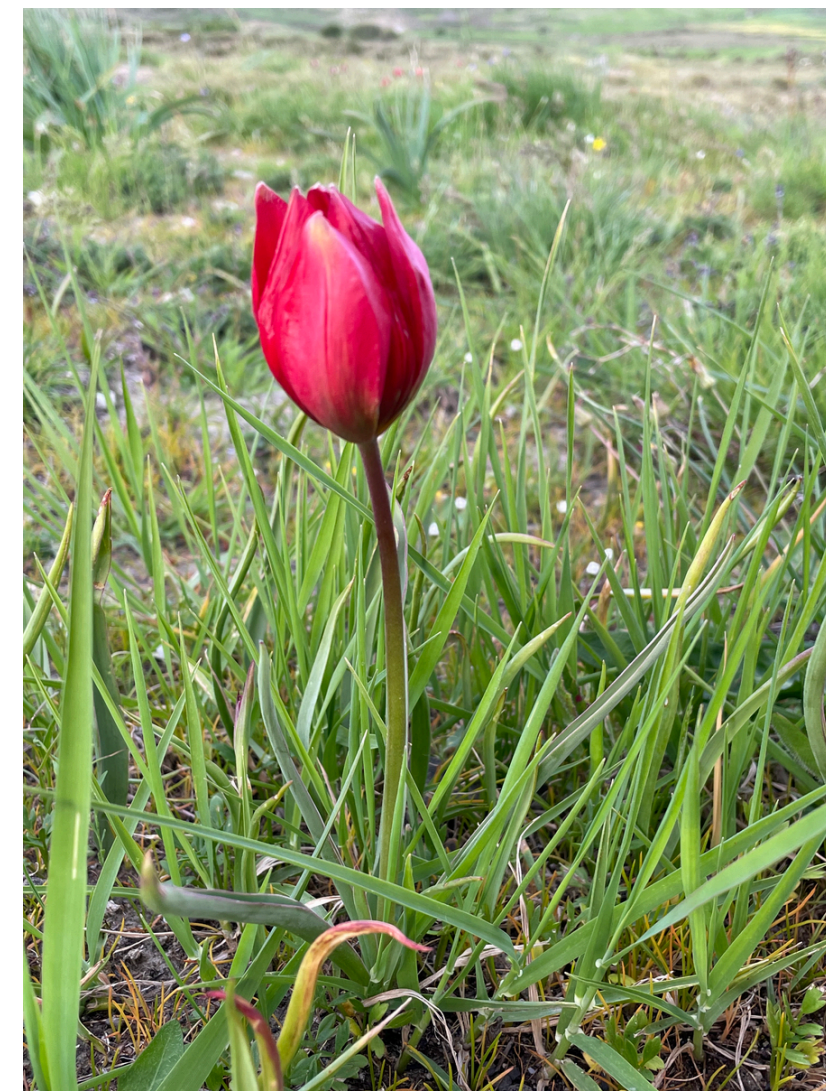


# Cultivating a nature-focused curriculum for sustainable futures

## About

Dr Jennifer Patterson has developed a legacy of nature-focused education through the integration of sustainability and outdoor learning into early years education at the University of Greenwich. Running impactful, co-constructed projects with students that contributed to the University receiving the No.1 Green People and Planet award in 2012.



## Work

Today, her work continues through research and in the Early Years BA (hons) module in outdoor play, developed in collaboration with Jill Harrison, which immerses students in experiential learning and equips them with the tools to instill conservation and environmental stewardship values in young learners.

Jennifer's contributions include the creation of Outdoor Learning and Educating for Sustainability – the first undergraduate Education modules in UK HE. Her curriculum went beyond the classroom by engaging students with community-focused projects. Students applied sustainability principles by reducing carbon footprints in family businesses, organising recycled and upcycled fashion shows, establishing school gardens and improving nutritional options in school lunch boxes. Teaching future teachers cultivates children's relationships with nature.

In today's Early Years practitioner curriculum led by Louise Atkins, students co-create outdoor learning spaces in collaboration with communities and local institutions. Key projects have included developing a sensory path at the Horniman Museum, an inclusive learning area at Mudchute Farm, the outdoor area at the Maritime Museum and growing gardens with parents.

Jennifer's contributions have extended beyond the university, initiating an established network of practitioners and alumni who participate in annual workshops led by Jill Harrison's team. These workshops provide a platform for practitioners to advise on curricula, reflecting a community-driven approach to ongoing education.

Internationally, Malaysian partnership students completing the Early Years course also further their understanding of diverse ecological and cultural approaches to sustainability. These projects cultivate hands-on sustainability skills while encouraging students to work collaboratively with communities and families.

## SDGs



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