

“Think Global, Act Local:

Finding Solutions for Sustainability Challenges”

Instructor:	Ursel Biester
Format:	Online Course
Duration:	7 weeks
Language of Instruction:	English

Description

Sustainability is intricately linked to the overall well-being of people and the planet. But what does it mean to be sustainable? How can we as individuals, businesses, or society create a common future that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs?

This course will help you build a foundational understanding of sustainability. You will explore its social, economic, and environmental dimensions using the framework of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This will equip you with the knowledge and tools to define and tackle one sustainability challenge in your sphere of influence, and help you find impactful solutions. For example, how could you redesign one of your professional projects to address one or more SDGs? Or is there one aspect of your personal life, e.g. your housing situation, that could be managed in a more sustainable way? We will engage peer-support from the group and use Design Thinking as a process for working on your challenge. By the end of the course, you will be able to apply your new sustainability mindset and skills to other projects in your life or career.

Learning Objectives

This seminar will equip you with knowledge on sustainability that will enable you to reflect and act on areas of change in your sphere of influence. You will first enhance your macro understanding through a comprehensive overview of complex sustainability challenges, their effects and consequences on people and the planet, including knowledge of the UN SDGs. This knowledge will then support you in developing and prototyping one action towards sustainability on a micro level, in your organization or personal life. You will be empowered to recognize the complexity of systems, to engage multi-stakeholder approaches, and to reflect on your own role in your local community and in global society.

Throughout the program, you will be introduced to examples of good practices from different regions of the world to bring an intercultural flavor to the learning process. Through an approach strongly focusing on practice and reflection, you will deepen your knowledge on sustainable decision-making and on acting sustainably in daily life as well as your profession. You will be introduced to practices from Design Thinking and guided to work iteratively through the phases of inspiration, ideation and implementation for prototyping your own case. You will engage with other course participants from different regions of the world, and support and challenge each other in your practical challenges as much as in your mindsets with which you look upon your cases.

Target Group

Young professionals, graduates, postgraduates, early-career CSR (corporate social responsibility) professionals and/or aspirants, professionals from all fields, advanced students.

General Requirements

Participants need to possess English language abilities in speaking and writing on the Upper Intermediate Level (at least B2). Attendance of the live sessions is essential for your successful and meaningful completion of the course. To receive a certificate for this course, you will need to attend at least two of the three live sessions. These live sessions will be combined with additional material and intensive work through the online course platform, both individually and in groups. Please see course requirements for the various assignments.

To ensure a comfortable learning environment for all, please adhere to our [Code of Conduct](#).

Technical Requirements

Stable internet connection.

Fully functional device, such as computer, laptop or tablet (use of smart phones is not recommended) with camera and microphone, headset recommended.

Recommended operating systems: Windows 10 or higher or MacOS 10.13 or higher. Avoid using a VPN.

Software: Webex Meetings. Please log in to Webex at least a day before course start in order to avoid any technical delays on the first live session.

Course Requirements

Assignments & Readings

Readings, listening and watching material will be available online on particular topics; smaller assignments (such as creating Mindmaps, practical tasks) will be provided weekly to strengthen participative approaches towards sustainability.

A concrete professional or personal challenge/case is welcome, but not a requirement and can be developed during the course.

Literature

Provided online.

Modules

Module	Topics, Guiding Questions, Reading, Assignments
1	<p>LIVE SESSION // Introduction: The 21st Century – Setting Ground for a Sustainable Future?</p> <p>With the opening online session of the course, we will open the scope with the 21st century’s challenges for the planet and introduce the concept of sustainability. We will expose the (societal) challenges and possible solutions using the framework of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and discuss its relevance and impact to our daily life.</p>
2	<p>Asynchronous Work // Topic: Overview on implementation of the AGENDA 2030 in respective countries of the participants</p> <p>Get familiar with the implementation of the Agenda 2030, the SDGs, in your country.</p>
3	<p>Asynchronous Work // Topic: Design Thinking stage 1&2: Define a question & gather inspiration</p> <p>Learn about the process of Design Thinking. Relate the SDGs to your own institution/profession/personal life situation and define your challenge/case to work on during the rest of the course. Learn more about your challenge/case through small practical exercises.</p>

4	<p>LIVE SESSION // Topic: Regenerative Entrepreneurship</p> <p>As one example of a local multi-stakeholder action that addresses multiple SDGs, we will focus on regenerative entrepreneurship. Through a case study you will explore the fundamental questions pertaining to the ‘purpose of business’ and the role of business in sustainability transformation. The relationship between business and society and the role of multi-stakeholder partnerships in advancing positive change will be a key focus area.</p> <p>Short presentation of the challenge/case of each participant and potential re-framing.</p>
5	<p>Asynchronous Work // Topic: Design Thinking stage 3&4: generate ideas & make ideas tangible</p> <p>Find solutions for your challenge/case and prototype them in real life. Reflection questions.</p>
6	<p>Asynchronous Work // Topic: Design Thinking stage 5&6: test to learn & share the story</p> <p>Gather feedback, experiment forward and craft a story to inspire action in others. Reflection questions.</p>
7	<p>LIVE SESSION // Topic: Presentation of your challenges/cases</p> <p>In our last meeting, we will present each participant’s challenge/case and engage peer-support from the group to leverage further implementation. Final reflection on new insights with the whole group.</p>