

Responsible Futures: Learning from Practice

How can we better embed sustainability in higher education?

March 2025



STUDENTS
ORGANIZING FOR
SUSTAINABILITY
INTERNATIONAL



Housekeeping

- The session will be recorded and shared
- The slides will be shared
- Please keep your microphone muted if you are not speaking
- Please use the “raise hand” function if you’d like to ask a question
- Please use the chat box to introduce yourself and ask questions throughout the session

Agenda

- Welcome, icebreaker
- Embedding sustainability in teaching and learning
 - What is ESD?
 - Embedding in all student learning
- Case studies from IAU members
- Responsible Futures overview

Introductions

Lead RF Contacts



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Students Organising for Sustainability

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Students Organising for Sustainability charity, launched by the student movement. We've been delivering student-led programmes and campaigns since the early 2000s.

SOS engages, inspires and empowers students to lead on sustainability. Ours is a long-term investment in education today for a better future tomorrow.



Our Mission

- Getting more students **leading on**, and **learning about**, sustainability.
- Embedding sustainability in education, **from early years to adult learning**.
- Making sustainability **more inclusive**, for everyone.

International Association of Universities

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IAU in a nutshell

- Global NGO created by UNESCO in 1950, based at UNESCO HQ in Paris, France
- Global Membership (HEIs, Organisations, Affiliates): 600 Members in 120+ countries
- Global Database of Higher Education with 20k+ accredited institutions: The IAU World Higher Education Database (WHED.net)
- Advocacy to UN/UNESCO for an inclusive and value-based approach to HE, 2030 Agenda and UNESCO ESD
- Research, Publications, Monitoring and Networking
- Four key thematic priorities:
Leadership, Internationalization, Sustainable Development (HESD) & Digital Transformation

Objectives for IAU HESD (Higher Education and Research for Sustainable Development)

- Enhance engagement of HEIs with sustainable development
- Create a network of good practices (IAU HESD Cluster)
- Organise events and expert exchanges
- Research and monitor developments (Surveys, publications)
- Position Partnerships as key enabler for positive impact

International Association of Universities

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- RF International presents a unique engagement opportunity for HEIs/IAU Members to put strategy into action, network and find synergies in their existing or emerging work for sustainable development/SDGs

Embedding sustainability in all student learning

Education for Sustainable Development

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A process of education that focuses on ensuring graduates have the knowledge and understanding, skills and attributes needed to contribute positively to holistic sustainability and climate justice by integrating it into their curriculum. ESD focuses not just on what students learn, but how they are learning and the environment in which they are learning.

ESD is transformative; it can and should be used to support the systemic changes needed to realise climate justice and progress approaches to decolonising and decarbonising education.

Students want to learn for sustainability!

slido

Please download and install the Slido app on all computers you use

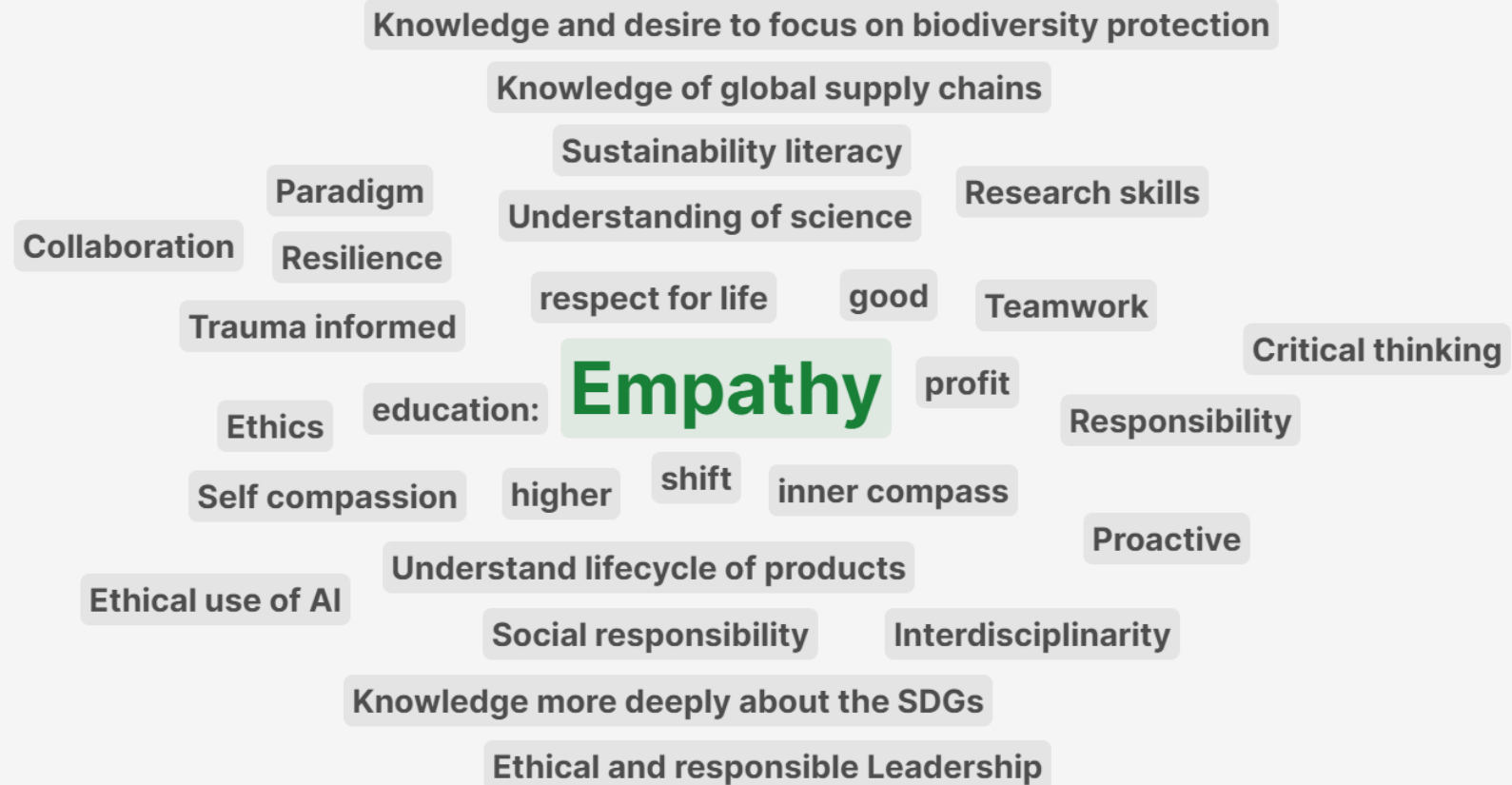


What are sustainability knowledge, skills, attributes, and competencies?

Title of Presentation Here

① Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

What are sustainability knowledge, skills, attributes, and competencies?

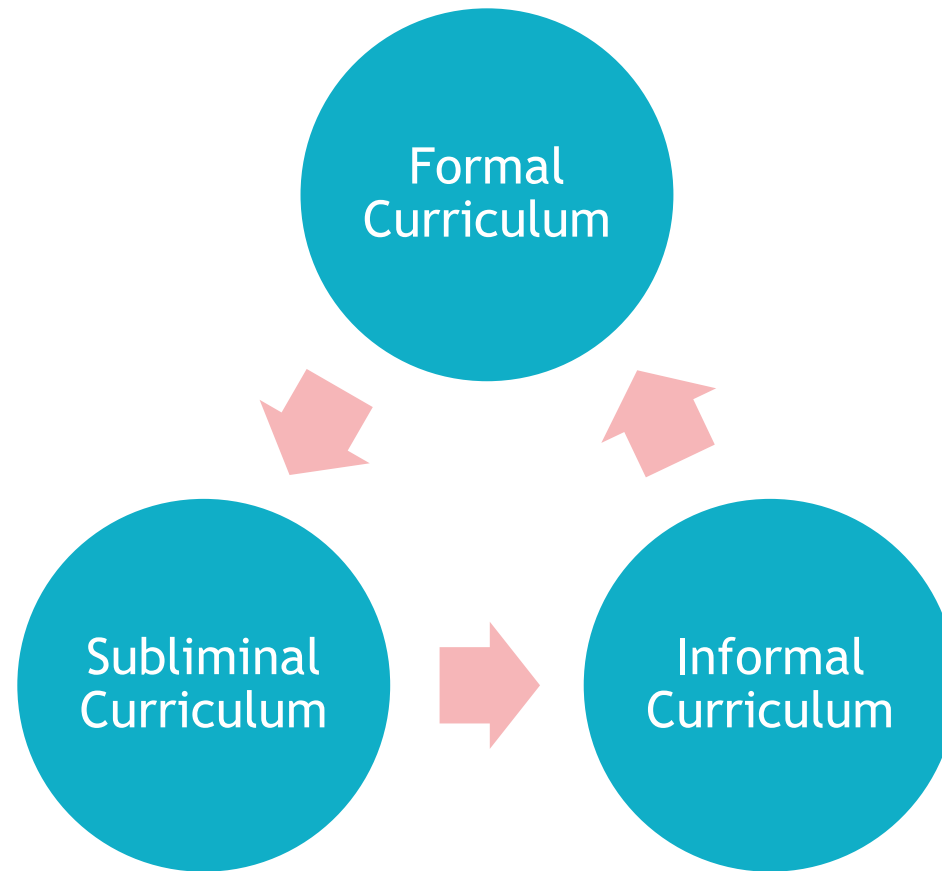


(Source: Responses from attendees)

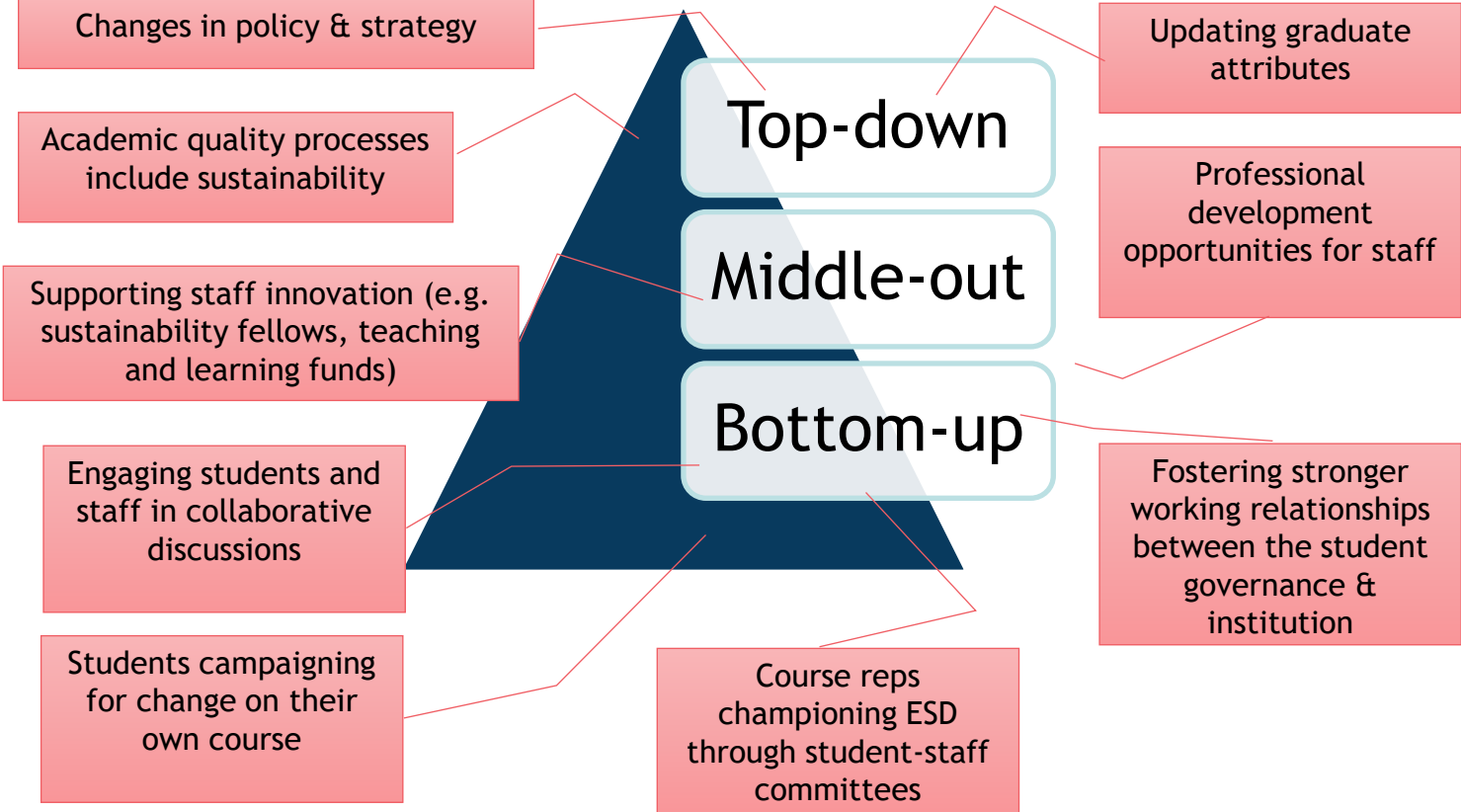
Sustainability “skills”

Using resources efficiently to limit the impact on the environment and other people	Looking at global problems from the perspective of people from around the world	Considering ethical issues linked to your subject	The causes of inequality in the world
Thinking critically about information presented	Understanding how human activity is affecting nature	Challenging the way we do things now (like business, politics, education)	Solving problems by thinking about whole systems - including different connections and interactions
Communicating complex information clearly and effectively to different types of people	Understanding how to create change	Looking at a problem using information from different subjects or disciplines	Planning for the long term, as well as the short term

Embedding ESD into all student learning



Embedding ESD across all levels



Ensuring...

- **What students learn**
- **How students learn**
- **The skills, attributes and values they develop and**
- **Their learning environment**

Supports them to shape a more sustainable and just world.

What is Responsible Futures?

Introduction to Responsible Futures

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- An accreditation mark, audited by students
- A supported change programme for sustainability
- A whole-institution approach
- A partnership between students and institution
- A framework for good practice
- A global network of institutions embedding sustainability in learning

What is Responsible Futures?

Responsible Futures is a **whole-institution approach** to embedding holistic sustainability across the formal and informal curriculum in universities and colleges. Responsible Futures is a supported change programme and accreditation mark that works to put **sustainability at the heart of student learning**.

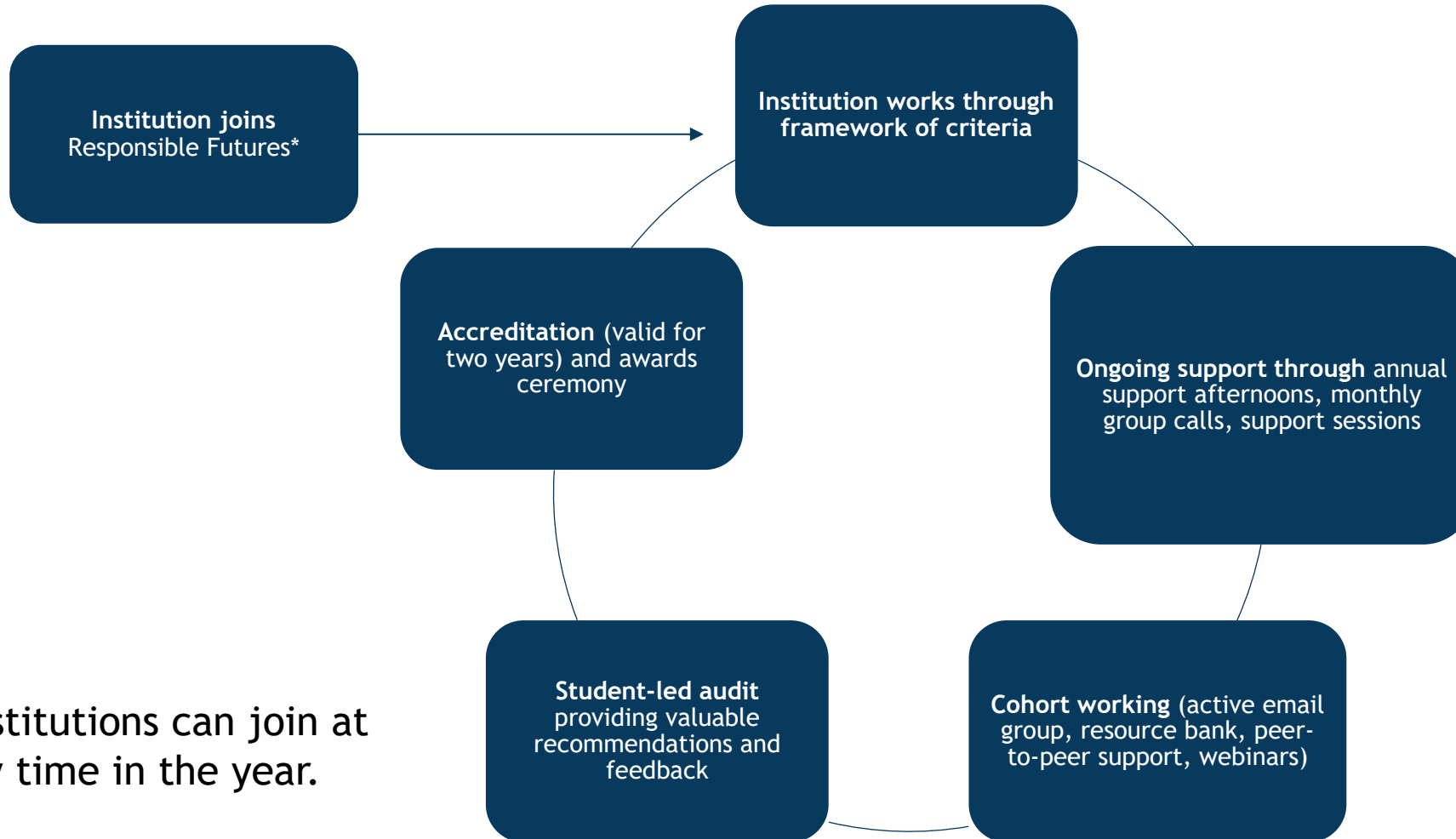
Responsible Futures provides a framework and accompanying support to foster **an enabling environment** for staff and students to work together to embed sustainability into teaching and learning.

A student-led audit provides the institution with valuable feedback and recommendations from students, and determines responsible futures accreditation.

The programme **legitimises** and **mainstreams** education for sustainable development, ultimately helping to ensure students leave education with the knowledge, skills, and attributes needed to create a more just and sustainable society.

The programme has been delivered in the UK for 10 years, and the international pilot began in October 2023. **The international programme is launching October 2024, open to all institutions.**

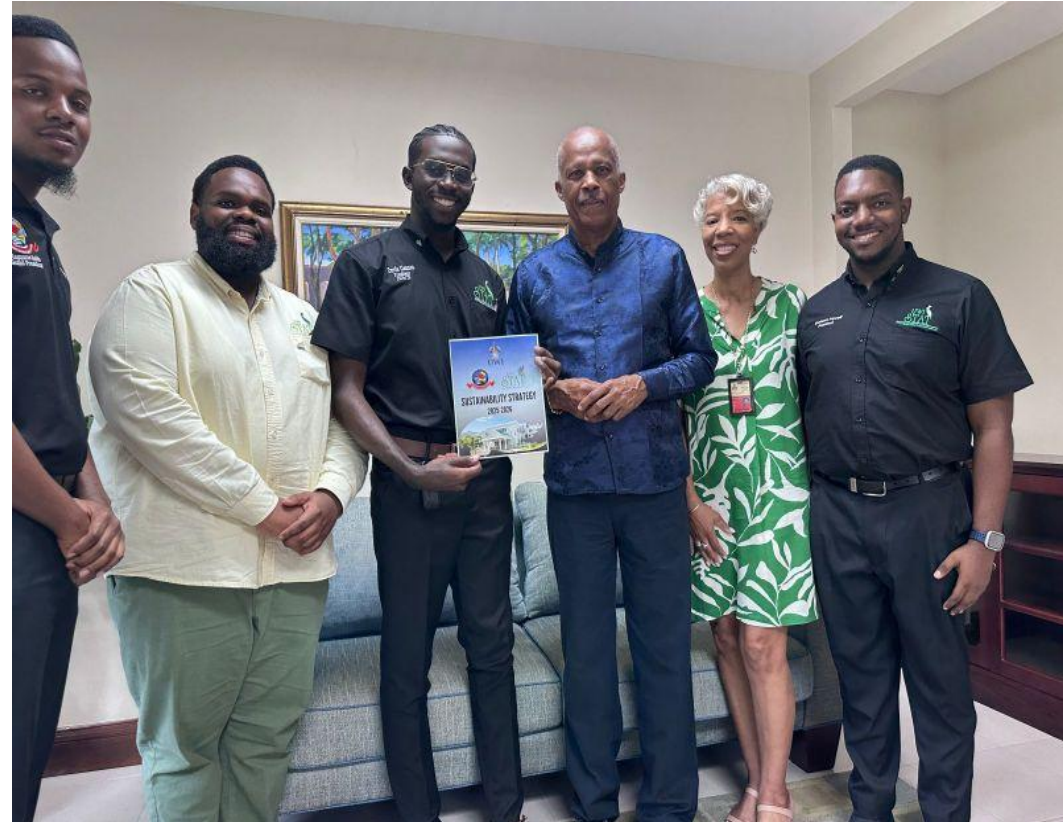
Programme cycle



*Institutions can join at any time in the year.

Outcomes to date

1. Improved whole-institution approaches for sustainability
2. Increased student leadership for sustainability
3. Developed connectivity and collaboration between institutions for sustainability
4. Enhance Innovative initiatives for sustainability in learning
5. Broaden buy-in for sustainability in institutions and the wider sector



Student ambassadors, VC Sir Hilary Beckles and Celia Davidson Francis (UWI Alumni Relations Director and RF lead)



“I'm really grateful to have had the opportunity to participate in such an eye-opening and rewarding experience.

Ultimately, Responsible Futures shows that progress is possible, but it requires continued momentum, collaboration, and institutional commitment to truly embed sustainability into every aspect of student learning.”

**Student Auditor, Trinity College
Dublin**

Supporting universities globally



Key figures to date

Over 50 institutions
reaching nearly
1,100,000 students
globally

Over 50 student-led
audits

Over 3100 actions
taken for ESD

Over 220 student
auditors leading
audits

Over 75 network
learning
meetings/events

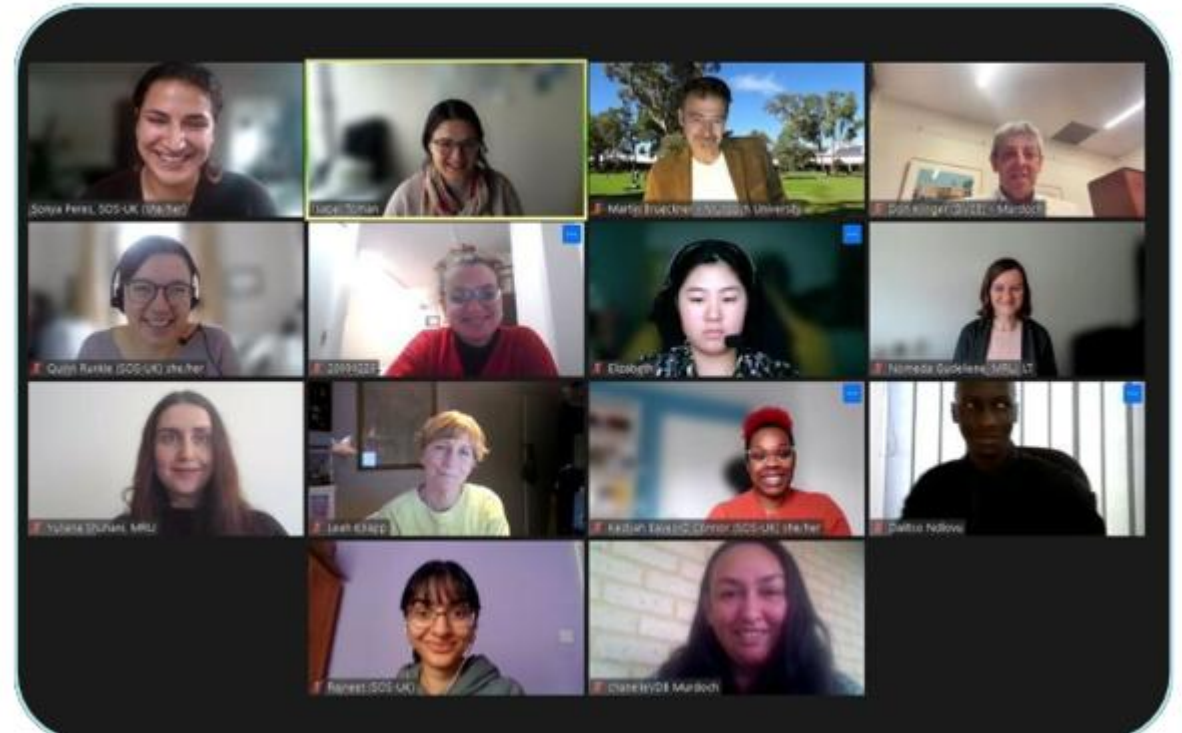
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What are the next steps?

Next steps

- Get in touch to discuss your institutional context
responsiblefutures@sos-uk.org
- Look through the programme overview for more information
- Visit the Responsible Futures website to access the impact report and international pilot impact report
- Join our student sustainability showcase on 9th April 1430-1630 UK time



Programme fee includes:

- Access to RF online framework and resource bank
- Global network learning
 - Regular informal catch ups
 - Support sessions
 - Webinars
 - Online email list
- Bespoke support days for institution
- Two-day student led audit
- RF accreditation subject to audit results
- Ongoing SOS and IAU ad hoc support

Programme costings 25/26

We ask institutions to select which tier best reflects their context. We are using a tiered approach to:

- Ensure the programme is **accessible** to institutions with varying resources and capacities;
- To **address global power dynamics** in our mission to create a sustainable and just education system and world;
- Cover delivery costs.

<p>Tier 1 - \$5,570 USD One or more of the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low-income country• Country currently experiencing significant social/political instability• No endowment funds• Experiencing financial instability	<p>Tier 2 - \$6,345 USD One or more of the following criteria:</p> <p>Tier 2 exists for institutions that exhibit criteria from both the low and high tiers.</p>	<p>Tier 3 - \$7, 295 USD One or more of the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• High-income country• Has endowment funds• Private institution• Generally stable finances	<p>Subsidised - \$3,090 USD</p> <p>The subsidised rate is available for institutions who would benefit significantly from participation, but who have financial barriers preventing their registration.</p> <p>We have a limited number of places at this rate.</p>
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We are open to discussing this further to ensure the programme is accessible to your institution. [Please get in touch.](#)

Thank you! We look forward to
working with you.