

SDG Accord Case Study

Summary:

[The Future Pathways ESD Project](#) was the first project at OBU to embed ESD into teaching and learning using an appreciative inquiry approach and mapping process, the QA annual review to refresh and revalidate programme and module level descriptors and a weekly collaborative sustainability lecture and discussion series. The project launched in 2020 with a 'sustainability for everyone' workshop - offered to all staff on OBU Pathways programmes.

The Future Pathways 3 Steps was designed to;

1. embed Sustainability/ESD/SDGs in *all* programme specifications & module descriptors
2. develop & align Learning Objectives (with step 1)
3. develop & align Assessments and Rubrics (with steps 1 & 2)

[Working groups](#) collaborated on each of the programmes and module leads self-audited 40 modules for SDGs *and* ESD competencies.

This was dovetailed with a series of *participatory, collaborative staff development sessions*: [the Learning Lunches](#); hosted to share and develop innovative pedagogies and practice under the sustainability umbrella.

A '*Toolkit*' was also created; *The Future Pathways website* to house all slides, session recordings, resources and materials.

Outline the 3 key benefits of integrating this theme:

1. Embedding sustainability into Programme specifications and module descriptors established ESD in the curriculum as pivotal to staff, students and senior leadership.
2. The Learning Lunches engaged educators at all levels of their ESD learning journeys, forming a community of practice, fostering ideas and expertise.
3. The Project impacted the wider university by triggering our educational development team, OCAED, to include a sustainability domain into their inclusive curriculum development '[The IDEAS framework](#)' now reported on across all faculties at annual review. An ESD steering committee is now adapting 'the 3 steps' to roll out across the business school.

Outline the barriers or challenges encountered in integrating this theme and how you overcame these:

1. **Time and workload** were key barriers. However, by using quality assurance processes, workload was distributed among module leads.
2. **ESD lexicon** is not always digestible or perceived as subject relevant. Encouraging and embracing individual interpretations and engaging a consultation process around sustainability language created more buy in.
3. **Lack of ESD understanding.** Providing a multidisciplinary platform engaged dialogue around sustainability education.

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Please outline your conclusions and recommendations to others (Max 200 words):

- Senior management 'buy-in' is essential - one voice is enough to get the ball rolling!
- Focus on doors that are part open, not closed. Use 'visioning' to gather the views, needs and values of all participants.
- Being an expert in ESD is not necessary; buddying in teams, collaboration and sharing good practice is. Celebrate the excellent work that is already being done to build on.
- ESD competencies are often a more universal starting point than SDG topics for educators.
- Stress that ESD is a work in progress - messy, iterative and challenging at times - keep eye on the greater picture - change is not linear and 'slow burn' often gets better results.
- The 'one-stop' Website, a central 'poolkit' is essential for accessibility, but also as a participatory tool (697 users and 4,847 page views to the Future Pathways website as of 28/05/23 illustrate its value).

The overall take away from the project is that developing sustainability teaching and learning is inherently a collaborative and participatory process that needs to include top down design; through quality assurance processes, middle out; through highlighting and sharing good practice, and bottom up; inviting dialogue and collaboration through existing channels.