



The Professional's Handprint: Sustainability online courses



SDG focus

- ☒ Goal 4 - Quality education
- ☒ Goal 9 - Industry, innovation and infrastructure
- ☒ Goal 12 - Responsible consumption and production

What did you do?

Professional's Handprint[™] is an online learning platform developed by SYKLI Environmental College to promote sustainability across diverse professional sectors. This case study focuses on the sector-specific sustainability courses within the *Professional's Handprint*[™] platform. These courses are tailored to the practical needs of professionals in fields such as food services, travel, retail, cleaning services, and property maintenance. In addition to these, the platform also features a broader selection of courses, including those aligned with formal vocational qualifications.

Learners are encouraged to start with *the Introduction to Sustainable Development* course and then deepen their expertise through other courses. Each course empowers professionals to understand and strengthen their positive environmental impact—known as their “handprint”—while providing practical tools for implementing responsible practices. Through real-world assignments and case examples, the platform ensures that both individuals and organizations stay equipped with the skills and knowledge needed in a rapidly evolving world.

What were the benefits and outcomes?

1. The platform currently has 14 616 students. Our most popular course, Introduction to Sustainable Development, has been completed 7880 times.
2. There are currently 15 educational institutions and 9 other organizations utilizing the Professional's Handprint online courses to educate their students and staff.
3. Savo Consortium of Education has been a customer of The Professional's Handprint since 2022. They have a vision of being "the makers of a sustainable future". The foundation of their sustainability work are skilled and trained teachers and other staff. The Professional's Handprint online courses are one important tool in achieving this.

Päivi Kekäläinen is a teacher of Cleaning and Property Services. She has utilized the Sustainable Food Services, Sustainable Cleaning Services, Sustainable Property Maintenance and Sustainable Travel Handprint courses in her teaching. According to her, it is easy to integrate the online courses as part of the curriculum. She recommends The Professional's Handprint to others. "The Professional's Handprint is well thought out. The material is comprehensive and good."

What barriers or challenges did you encounter in embedding sustainability into your learning and teaching practice and how did you overcome them?

1. Sustainability is a broad, complicated and systemic issue. It is difficult to explain it in a simple manner. The Professional's Handprint has resolved this issue by building a separate Introduction to Sustainable Development course, which aims to familiarize students with all the basic concepts. The follow-up courses then build on this knowledge. Also, since the courses are aimed towards people working in the field, at the grassroots level, they include very concrete examples of how to implement sustainability in their job.
2. The workers of an organization are the ones who carry out sustainability actions in their everyday work. However, they do not have much power over decisions that really bring about sustainability in the organization. Yet it is important to foster a sense of active agency and hope. In addition to learning concrete actions they can apply in their daily work, students of the Handprint courses are also encouraged to take initiative beyond their immediate tasks. This includes influencing decision-makers, making suggestions for improvement, and actively bringing sustainability topics into discussions within their organization.
3. Traditionally, online course completion rates are low. They can be as low as 3 %, and a 25 % completion rate is considered good. With no-one to make one go to class and overseeing the progress, the motivation for completing a course can be pretty low. In this light, The Handprint has a good completion rate. For example, Introduction to Sustainable Development has an 84 % completion rate. The key is to include sustainability in the strategy of the organization. The courses are not random or disconnected from the normal work, but an integral part of it. High-quality courses with strong connections to everyday work also increase motivation.
4. With a lot of free online material, it is difficult to build a business case for online courses. Developing new courses and keeping the existing ones up to date, and upkeeping and developing the technical platform all require resources. Yet the courses also need to be affordable to many different kinds of organizations, for them to achieve maximum impact. This barrier has been overcome by partnerships, well-

curated content that cannot be found free online and building long customer relationships, where customers have a say in the development of the platform.

What are your conclusions and recommendations for others?

Investing in staff training is essential—sustainability skills are becoming a fundamental part of professional competence. People learn in different ways and at different paces, so flexibility is key. One of the strengths of the *Professional's Handprint*[™] platform is that it supports learning in small, manageable segments—even just 10 minutes at a time. This makes it easy to integrate into daily routines. The feedback we've received has been overwhelmingly positive, highlighting the courses as motivating, practical, and relevant.

An effective learning experience must also be technically smooth and accessible. *Professional's Handprint*[™] runs directly in a browser—no separate app download is required. The platform offers intuitive navigation, simple administrative tools, and responsive technical support, making it easy for both learners and organizations to adopt.

The content of *Professional's Handprint*[™] is both scientifically validated and professionally relevant. All courses are developed in close collaboration between sustainability experts and professionals from each sector. This ensures that the learning materials are grounded in research and best practices, while also reflecting the real-world needs, challenges, and opportunities of each industry. The result is content that professionals can trust—and apply directly in their work.

Web link to further information:

<https://kadenjalki.fi/en/home/>