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# **Sustainability School Strategy**

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# **Sustainability Manager Project**





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# 00 - Introduction

Welcome to the “Sustainability managers @ school” world!

If you are here, it is likely that you work in a school and that you are interested in implementing good practices related to sustainability in your educational environment.

In the following pages, we will present the overall idea of “School Sustainability Strategy”, including the proposal of a step-by-step process and introduce the roles of those who will be involved, the Headmasters and the new Sustainability Manager and his/her team.

The idea behind this project is to develop a European level “whole-school approach” to sustainability.

That is why we would like to provide schools, especially high schools, with a set of tools and the knowledge to facilitate such processes and their evolution into “green-sustainable schools”.

The process to embrace sustainable principles and good practices have often been linked to class-projects or single activities promoted by very active teachers. Such actions represent very positive practices, but at the same time take a lot of energy and produce limited results.

The “whole-school approach”, which is very popular in Australia and the US, aims at creating Sustainable School communities, where the whole school moves in the same direction: implementing a “School Sustainability Strategy”.

We understand that not every school will be able to implement all the activities that we will propose, but the main idea is to start thinking of Sustainability as an overall school strategy, regardless the number of actions put in place by each school. Once students and teachers start practicing sustainable approaches, it will become second nature.

SCHOOL  
SUSTAINABILITY



## Project presentation

The project “Sustainability Managers @ School” is made possible by the financial support of Erasmus+ and the collaboration of 5 partners: Euphoria Net (Italy), Formethic (France), Logopsycom (Belgium), Smart Nest (Latvia) and Europe for You (Czech Republic).

The partners are all experts in Corporate Social Responsibility and creation of educational tools.

In the project, we are going to create a benchmark analysis and materiality report to base our work on a genuine analysis, incorporating the real needs of schools; an e-learning to prepare teachers regarding sustainability and what it really means in practice; last but not least, a model and toolkit to develop a sustainable strategy at school level.



## **Why this document?**

### **For whom?**

This document is a key part of the “model and tool-kit to develop a sustainable strategy at school level”.

But why do we need it, and why do we focus so much on the word “strategy”?

Our project is very ambitious, as we expect schools to undertake an overall change, not just embracing single activities, but interconnected actions on sustainability.

We are proposing a model, e.g., a set of actions that, taken together at school level, can really let the schools be an agent of change towards a sustainable world.

Such objectives cannot be met without acknowledging the important connection between educational development and a sustainable learning environment. Our project idea is based on the fact that schools must act within their communities with coordinated actions in order to play an effective role in this field. Schools will lead the way.

As with any given strategy, it will need to be coordinated, developed and monitored. As a result, it is essential that this approach is firstly endorsed by the headmaster. Secondly, we believe that he/she will need to be supported by a manager, or better said, a Sustainability Manager at school.

The role of sustainability manager is among the top searched professions worldwide. Our project partners believe that it is also time for European schools to act in this direction and assign such a role within its staff.

We are aware that this is something extremely new for schools, and for this reason, we aim to support them and facilitate this new adventure providing a definition and job profile of the sustainability manager, tools to put the strategy in practice, and to monitor and evaluate it.

Although in the future we expect such approaches to be developed among schools of any level, this first attempt will focus more on high schools.



# 01 - Sustainability at school

## General definition of Sustainability

When speaking of sustainability, people often connect it automatically to the environment and green practices. The concept of sustainability is certainly related to the environment, but it is not limited to it.

In 1987, the United Nation (UN) Brundtland Commission defined sustainability as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

This definition includes a broader and integrated approach, where environmental concerns are taken into consideration along with economic development.

Indeed, sustainability is made up of three pillars: the economy, society, and the environment. These principles are also informally used as 3P: profit, people and planet.

Starting from this first definition and embracing a forward-looking approach, in 2015 the UN adopted the agenda for 2030 with 17 sustainable goals (SDGs).



As can be seen in the picture, the 17 SDGs concern many aspects of human life, like education, poverty, human rights, climate change etc.

It will be important to take into account this integrated approach when thinking of the sustainability strategy at schools

## Sustainability at school level - Why is it important?

The publication of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and especially SDG4 "Quality Education for All", which gives a new dimension to education for sustainable development, and a global meaning to the mission of schools.

First of all, education for sustainable development enables the complexity of the world to be understood in its scientific, ethical and civic dimensions. It is cross-cutting and it must be included in teaching programmes. Teachers and supervisory staff have to be trained in it and have to integrate it into the operation of schools.

The mission of school is to prepare pupils for the future and to make them understand the relationships between environmental, economic, social and cultural issues to help them to better perceive:

THE  
INTERDEPENDENCE  
OF HUMAN SOCIETIES  
AND THE PLANET

THE NEED TO MAKE  
INFORMED AND  
RESPONSIBLE CHOICES  
AND TO ADOPT  
BEHAVIOURS THAT  
TAKE THESE BALANCES  
INTO ACCOUNT

THE IMPORTANCE OF  
SOLIDARITY ON AT A  
GLOBAL SCALE

Beyond the educational mission, a high school is an organisation, which employs many staff, welcomes and addresses many stakeholders, manages buildings and material flows. It therefore has an economic, social and environmental impacts. From the perspective of a sustainable world, the school must be exemplary. It must recognise and respond to the interests of its internal and external stakeholders. The fundamentals of sustainability must be embedded in the school's project and involve all stakeholders.

In addition to the mission of education for sustainable development in all its dimensions, schools are then invited to reflect on their practices in terms of governance, ethical and fair practices, equal opportunities, working and learning conditions and ecology. To embrace their social responsibility and be an active contributor to a sustainable world, schools need to engage in a process of continuous improvement.





## **02 - Steps to build up your sustainability school strategy**

As any global project that we wish to implement at school level, developing a sustainability strategy with an integral approach seems to be a challenge. In this section we will present all the necessary steps to be taken with the objective of designing the sustainability plan that adapts the most to the context and circumstances of your school.

First, we will describe how to get organised in terms of management: what is a Sustainability Manager and a Sustainability Team? How to select them? What must be their skills and tasks? How to establish a decisional process and share the work?

Later, you will find all the steps related to the design of your own strategy, starting from the communication plan, the analysis of your situation and needs, setting goals and priorities, defining your timeline, and finally, how to report your activities and control the progress of your sustainability actions and impacts.





## **The sustainability team and the role of the Sustainability Manager**

This section defines the general governance of an educational institution's sustainability project, followed by the organisation and the expected profile of the sustainability manager.

First of all, it is important to make clear in the introduction that for the success of a sustainability strategy it is essential to bring together a team that can participate in the decisions, plan, carry out and/or monitor the actions that will be decided. The sustainability process requires the use of multiple skills, and it must be carried out over a long period of time and step by step. The sustainability team could be composed of, for example, of the Sustainability manager (see below), the Headmaster, Head of technical aspect of the school, Head of Programmes, School Caretaker etc.

The people making up this team (often called the sustainability project steering committee) do not necessarily have hierarchical links between them. The project team brings together people with skills that can contribute to the success of the project (in communication, financial management, pedagogy, etc.) and quite often student representatives. The work is carried out over several months (typically from a school year to 24 months between the initial diagnostic and the first publication of results). People must therefore be able to be present throughout the implementation of the project and participate very punctually in follow-up meetings.

The most important decisions are taken by the steering committee, for example: validation of the stakeholder's map of the institution, validation of the vision and priority issues, validation of the action plan, identification of the human, technical and financial resources required, distribution of tasks within the action plan, identification of indicators, etc.

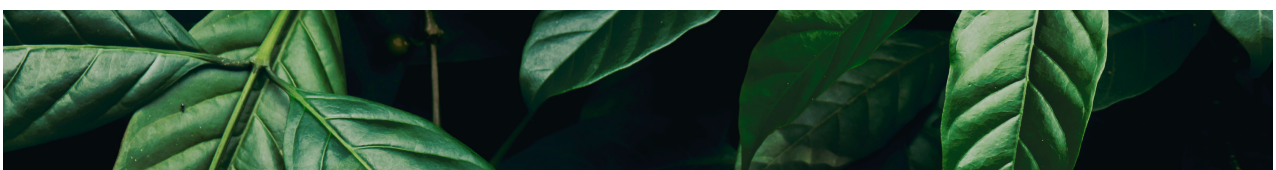
This steering committee takes into account the expectations of the various stakeholders in the institution.

In this committee, at least one representative of the institution's general direction must be present to monitor the work and influence it if necessary, depending on the constraints inherent of the direction. Otherwise, the sustainability manager will be responsible for interfacing with the school's management.

But who is the Sustainability manager and why do we foresee this profile?

The school's Sustainability Manager is the person that manages strategies and the school's actions related to sustainability in collaboration with a multidisciplinary team.

We believe that it is critical to have a person or a team in charge of the overall process in order to have someone accountable and responsible for the final results to be achieved. It is relevant to have a leader or a leadership team to guide the sustainability strategy. In the next section we will identify how to select the Sustainability manager according to the main skills and job profile, as well as the expected tasks and responsibilities of him/her and of the sustainability team.



## How to select the Sustainability Manager(s) and the Sustainability team?

First of all, the Sustainability Manager (SM) could be either a single person or such leadership could be shared among more people.

The Sustainability Manager (s) is/are not only responsible for leading and boosting sustainable projects at school. This role can be unknown and that is the reason why we will expose in this section the set of specific competencies that should be present in your SM's profile.

From a governance point of view, it would be a great asset if he/she had a transversal view of the school, was familiar with the curricula prepared by the students, the different teaching sections, the premises, the staff and the school's environment and history.



It also would be ideal that he/she had a permanent job in the school, as teacher, or as administrative staff, or as manager, in charge of health or equipment and so on. It may happen that he or she has voluntarily chosen this mission because he or she is convinced of the need to act within the community and particularly with the pupils. In any case, he/she/them must be committed.

Since it implies additional workload, the position of Sustainability Manager must be clearly identified in the institution's organisation chart, and the missions must be well defined. Time must be set aside for steering the sustainability project, which also includes time dedicated to internal and external communication.

Moreover, we expect the SM to be selected according to the following skills and competencies.



## General Knowledge

First, and before making any decisions or implanting any sustainable practices at your school, it is essential to make sure that the candidate **understands the topic of climate change and environmental impacts**. It is also crucial that the SM is aware of the **social framework and potential issues existing within the communities** where the school resides. .

Once this basic knowledge is guaranteed, the SM must know **how to carry out an audit** to learn how school impacts its environment from different points of view such as:



For this, it is important to have **research and analyses competencies**; to know how to **collect and report your data** is essential to assess the current performance and effectiveness of your strategy. In addition, in terms of soft skills, a sustainability manager must be **flexible** and present **good relational abilities** to be in contact with different services.

A school sustainability manager needs to prove an **extensive knowledge of the different departments of the school**, their challenges and processes, and finally their functions and goals, in order to efficiently decline the sustainability strategy from a relevant and global approach.



## Leadership skills

A good manager needs to know how to be a **good leader** and a sustainable manager must do the same with the extra responsibility of involving and motivating their team in what could be a new process in their daily activities. The SM needs to ensure that the challenges and changes are adequate and adapted to their collaborators, so they feel active actors of the sustainable process at their school.

This requires him or her to be able to **delegate tasks empowering the team** to deal with them themselves. Also, **communicate efficiently** about changes and **support the team** in the process of adaptation to the new practices. In terms of soft skills, **empathy, attentive listening, and authenticity** to stay in sync with their colleagues become essential.

A strong leader must be able to **make decisions bearing in mind the best interests** of the school but also its stakeholders and the environment.



## Progressive, creative and open to opportunities

The SM must be open minded and able to notice how the world evolves with the objective of **chasing the opportunities** that will avoid that the school is left behind.

Seeing **sustainability as an opportunity for the school** is essential in order to develop an effective strategy. The sustainability manager will be able to bring together the efforts on sustainability and a better general performance of the school which requires **anticipation and planning competencies**. In addition, it is crucial to keep **a global strategic mindset** to accept the current investment of time and resources and wait for their positive impacts and results for the school, the environment and the community that will arrive later.

**Innovation and creativity** will be valuable to face new challenges and find solutions for them. Brainstorming with the team, students and other stakeholders, and share different creative ideas will lead the school to find their best way towards sustainability. As Albert Einstein said, "If you always do what you always did, you will always get what you always got."





## Analytic skills

As we already mentioned, for a good sustainability manager it is essential to present **research and analytic skills** to assess if the results are valuable enough compared to the sustainability efforts.

The track of the school performance will influence the decisions that will shape the continuation of the sustainability strategy, if some initiatives must disappear, be adapted or if we should include new actions to reach our goals.

Before implementing our different sustainability actions, it is also necessary to **evaluate the resources** (budget, time, staff) that we'll need to invest to put them in place and assess if the **expected benefits and results are advantageous enough** for the school and its purpose.



## Good communication skills

**Transparent and efficient communication** is very important for the SM. He/she must be able to clearly present the sustainability strategy and how it is embedded in the global strategy and purpose of the school.

**Internally**, the school staff, education team, students and families must understand the objectives and their role and contribution to the strategy. Also, its status, where we are and where we are going, what are our goals and why we are pursuing them.

**Externally**, the community and other stakeholders should easily comprehend why sustainability is important for our school and the initiatives and efforts that we are making to have a positive impact on society and the environment, which will lead to a good reputation of our school.



## Profile description of a sustainability manager

### HARD SKILLS



General knowledge on sustainability and environmental issues



Sustainability risk management



Knowledge of the community where the school resides



Extensive knowledge of the school departments



Teaching and educational skills (to train teams, staff...)



Evaluation, analytic and research and monitoring skills



Project management competencies



Decision making



Brainstorming and creational process techniques



Planification and foresight



Global strategic mindset

## SOFT SKILLS



Flexibility



Good relational abilities



Excellent communication competencies



Leadership (ability to make people work together)



Empathy, attentive listening, and authenticity (emotional intelligence)



Innovation and Creativity



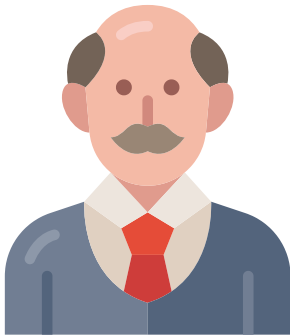
Capability to update and review the acquired knowledge continuously

## **Set up the Sustainability Steering Committee**

As said in the introduction, it is not feasible for the Sustainability Manager(s) to work alone. First, because sustainability is an articulated phenomena and more skills and competencies are needed to deal with it.

Second, because schools are complex systems and in order to reach coherent results, it is crucial to involve the main actors playing a role in the school.

The final decision over the composition of the sustainability Steering Committee will depend on the specific organization of the school. Nevertheless, we can identify some profiles that may be involved:



**The headmaster**, or someone representing the governance, as we are talking of a school strategy, and the decision must be approved by the management



**Administrative staff**, as some strategy may require some budget or some authorization



**Some teachers** representing other teachers and the person/people representing non-teaching employees of the school. The sustainability plan can have impacts on all the departments (teaching and not) of the school, this makes the participation of staff representatives essential to consider the decisions that will affect them.



**Students** could be an interesting idea!

## Identify tasks and responsibilities and divide them

Once the Headmaster or its delegates select the Sustainability Manager (s) and the sustainability is in place, it is time to identify the main tasks and actions and allocate them among the Sustainability Manager (s), the sustainability team and stakeholders. First, the Sustainability Manager (S) will **research and analyse the framework** in which they operate and study the externalities and impacts caused by the school through the implementation of their activities (transfer of knowledge, development of competencies and skills, values' transmission, extracurricular activities...). This task may include:

Creation of a stakeholder map, e.g., all the persons and organizations that must be involved in the process and that have an interest or an impact in school's activities related to sustainability

Identification of school's activities with an impact on sustainability.

Analysis of the current actions/projects undertaken by the school.

With this information, the SM will be able to **set up relevant and adapted goals** and **develop different sustainability strategies** for the school with the aim of:

- ➡ Ensuring that their practices and activities are environmentally friendly,
- ➡ Reducing their negative externalities and
- ➡ Enhancing their positive impacts creating value for the school and for society and contributing to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN-SDGs). **The SM will collaborate with other members of the team** and colleagues responsible for the different services and activities of the school, such as the director, the head of curriculum and programmes, the person/people responsible for the provision of materials, energy, food, transport services...etc. The objective is to **identify, select and then implement the most relevant strategies, processes and actions** that will lead to the improvement of their sustainable performance from a global approach.



The Sustainability Manager will describe the school's sustainability strategy to both, internal and external stakeholders. He/she will explain the reasons why this strategy is selected, the steps and actions to put in place, each stakeholder's contribution, the goals and expected results, and the benefits of its implementation.

The SM will have the important role to monitor the strategies and **report to the director** or board of directors, who will approve the budget and actions to be undertaken in order to be in accordance with the global strategy and the school's purpose.

He/she **manages the leaders** of the different actions **to ensure that the projects are running** correctly, that milestones and goals are being reached, to detect any kind of issue in the process and **find solutions and alternatives** in a collaborative way while the budget is respected.

The sustainability manager will **gather the necessary data** and oversee developing **reports** tracking the progress of the school's sustainability performance. These data and reports will not only be a valuable tool to understand how well the sustainable process is going but also an essential element for the **decisions to be made** for the continuation or/and adaptation of the strategy and goals achievement.

In order to identify the tasks and allocate responsibilities, we suggest each school to prepare a RACI (Responsible Accountable Consulted Informed) matrix. Thanks to this process, it is possible to organize the step-by-step tasks to undertake, and to implement the strategy and establish who does what. An example of RACI matrix follows, but please bear in mind that it may be adapted according to the organization of your school.



## RACI matrix

As you can see, we specify the level of involvement of each stakeholder for each task being: R for Responsible, A for Accountable, C for Consulted and I for Informed.

Task	Sustainability manager	Headmaster	Head of programmes (pedagogy)	Head of technical aspects of the school	Stakeholders (parents representatives/others)
Creation of a stakeholder map	R	A and C	C	C and/or I	C and/or I
Identification of school's actions with an impact on sustainability	R	A and C	C	C	I
Analysis of the current actions/projects undertaken by the school	R	C	C	C	I
Set up relevant and adapted goals	R	R and C	C and I	C and I	I
Create a plan for the strategies to reach the goals	R and A	C	C and A	C and A	I
Monitor the strategies and report	R and A	I	C	C	I

## Setting up a sustainability dialogue with stakeholders and communication plan

Communication is one of the most essential aspects we need to think about when working on our Sustainability strategy. It is particularly important to establish a communication plan in order to spread the word and let all the stakeholders know what actions we are undertaking to protect the environment, our society and the future generations. In addition, the objective of communicating is also it to involve the stakeholders in the sustainability process.

Talking about the goals and efforts that a school is planning to preserve the planet and have a positive impact in their students and communities not only allows to inform about their initiatives, but it can also be a source of inspiration for other schools, companies and households.



We can differentiate 2 main kinds of communication:

## **DISCLOSURES**

This type of communication aims to inform about the school's actions and their progress. We can imagine many means to disclose relevant information about our sustainability process such as a newsletter, releasing information in our website and/or social media, celebrating conferences, publishing reports.

## **DIALOGUES**

On the other hand, we have the communication option where stakeholders actively participate in a dialogue. This allows their feedback to be heard regarding different implemented actions and decisions. Also, their contributions can represent a source of ideas for new initiatives or to improve the strategic plan. We can encourage all school staff, students, families and members of the community to participate. These dialogues can have very different shapes depending on our needs and envies: we can organise debates, meetings, roundtables, and also, we can establish a method where stakeholders can express themselves either in person or with an online mailbox or questionnaire.

It is important to precise each time what the objective of our communication is and who our main target group is so that we can choose the most effective communication method to meet our goal.

Furthermore, we recommend establishing a calendar to disclose or dialogue regularly with all the stakeholders to ensure clear transparency, that everyone is informed about the progress of your initiatives, about the challenges that are still present and finally, to motivate the education community to get involved in the sustainability process.

## Current situation analysis

The Current Situation analysis focuses on how to understand what is happening in your school at the moment, how to rate its effectiveness in terms of sustainability and to gauge the atmosphere of teachers, students and stakeholders in regards to sustainable practices.

Let's start with Materiality as the principle of defining the social and environmental topics that matter most for your school.

A materiality assessment was carried out in the early stages of the project to define the needs of schools, educators and stakeholders, in order to help understand, organize, and prioritize material topics and themes.

A similar assessment can be worked on within your school. An assessment will help to find issues within the school that need addressing. Areas to control, such as: the environment, social equality in the school and governance, which will inevitably lead the school onto a more sustainable path.

Sustainability issues cover a large range of topics. Some common, and easy to remedy ones, such as the school commute, school lunches, local suppliers and waste management can be a great start.

A materiality assessment, carried out by the Sustainability Manager and their team will bring up a range of topics that can be addressed. It is important to identify which issues affect the running of the school and create a list of achievable targets.

When the Sustainability Manager and the team is organised, they can assess different areas of the school and its members through surveys and questionnaires, monitoring and observing the current trend, in order to get a better view of pressing issues.

Once the assessment has been carried out and the achievable issues agreed upon, it is important to establish and maintain communication with other teachers, parents, stakeholders and suppliers. Issues that have an impact, or are impacted by parents and students, should be widely advertised and reported on to disseminate the on-going progress of the project.

The establishment must therefore carry out a diagnosis of the initial situation, by questioning the internal and external players about what already exists. Then, it is necessary to question them to find out their expectations and prioritise the issues that will have to be dealt with subsequently. This initial diagnosis also makes it possible to define the general Sustainability policy in collaboration with the stakeholders, as they must be involved in the process from the outset.



It is important to remember, each school and its community are different. Each school will have different answers for the same questions, there is no wrong or write answer, as long as the school moves towards a positive outcome.

Some schools may discover that their priority areas are more linked with environment and of their students' and staff's health and well-being, while others may understand that they are quite advanced with environmental issues and lack attention to the governance and social equality. For more example on priority areas for school, please check the materiality report produced in this project: **Materiality Report |**

**SchoolSustainability (school-sustainability.eu)**

The Current Situation analysis will allow each school to monitor its current behaviour and also, once strategies are put in place, will act as a reminder of how far the school has come on its journey.

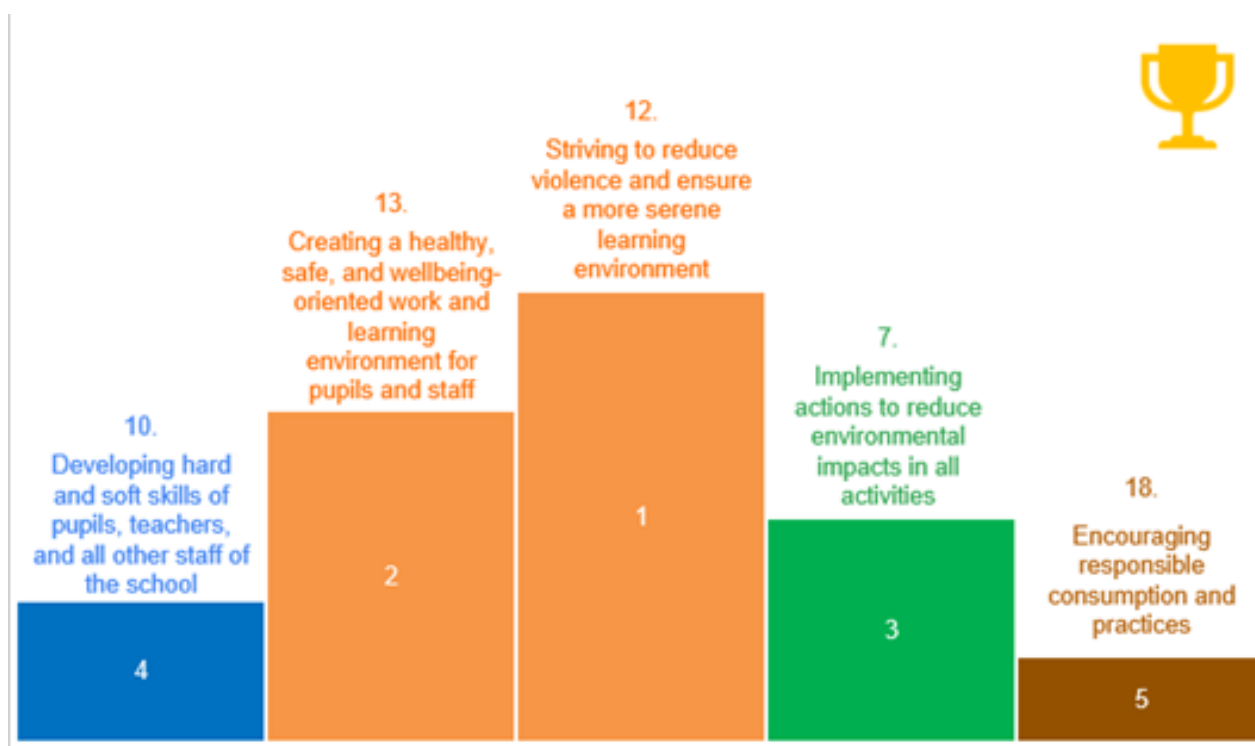


## Goal Setting

As in any strategy, one of the key steps is to **set goals to be achieved**. First of all, what is a goal?

A **goal** represents the **vision and the result** that your school wants to make true when implementing its Sustainability strategy. The goal is the end of your journey. In order to identify what you want to achieve, you first need to know what your starting point is. You will have your current situation very clear once you have finished analysing it (in the previous step: Situation analysis).

Then, you will have to select the **relevant areas where you want to intervene**. According to the European materiality report, we have seen that the 5 top issues at European level are the following:



You can discover other relevant areas focusing on your country and be more inspired looking at the complete report: [link once available on the website](#).

Of course, you will need to identify your key areas according to your own situation and the feedback received by your stakeholders.

The goals you wish to achieve must have some specific features to be significant for your organization. It is very common to talk about **SMART objectives (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound)**. We suggest you consider such aspects, but we want also to underline some. Indeed, your objective should be:

### Purpose-driven

e.g., the Sustainability team should understand which are the values of the school and of its stakeholders, and such values should be included in your goals;

### Short/medium/long term

e.g. you should estimate how much time is required to reach a given goal: a lesson is sufficient, or maybe you need a semester or an entire academic year;

### Actionable

as your goals should be operational. you should say "we want our school to be plastic-free" or "we want to achieve a zero-violence school environment";

### Measurable

the more precise you are and the more you set quantitative goals, the more you can measure your actions.

Let's give you some examples:

- ➡ Our school wants to develop the soft skills of pupils by training at least 30% of the staff and providing at least 50% of students with additional activities by the end the academic year.
- ➡ Our school wants to improve the awareness of 70% of students and teachers over sustainability practices by the end of semester.

As you can see, setting the goals is very much linked with indicators. That is why in the next chapters we will develop the definition of the KPI (Key Performance Indicators).

Please, follow the process step-by-step until you will arrive to the practical tools that will help your strategy happening successfully.

# KPI's

First of all, you must distinguish between two types of indicators:

- **Key performance indicators (KPIs)**
- **Indicators for monitoring the process, also known as means indicators**



What is a KPI?

A Key Performance Indicator (KPI) is measurable data that analyses how effectively the school is achieving its goals (refer to 2.7 goal setting).

Key performance indicators must be clearly thought out and well-structured. They allow the impact of actions to be measured in order to achieve goals set. They help everyone to know what is expected of them and to adjust the action plans: choose or maintain those that strongly contribute to achieving the goals and drop those that do not work or work only slightly.



What is a monitoring indicator?

A monitoring indicator gives a true picture of the progress of your action plan and your sustainability process.

To coordinate your sustainability approach, the sustainability manager needs to put in place both types of indicators. One will allow you to animate the community and the implementation of actions (monitoring indicators), the other (KPIs) will allow you to measure the impact of the action plan on your stakeholders and Society and the achievement of the goals.

Following is an example to make these concepts clearer:

The school has set the goal of zero violence throughout the establishment during the next year and intends to implement an action to raise awareness of non-violent communication among all students.

The monitoring indicator could be the percentage of pupils made aware of non-violent communication, which measures the deployment of the action during the year.

The KPI could be the number of incidents of violence it measures as a result.



## How do you set the perfect KPI?

The ideal is to set one KPI per objective. Sometimes it can be interesting to have several, but be careful, select only those that really measure the **result**, i.e., the **impact** of your actions.

This indicator must therefore be quantified in order to measure the effectiveness of actions in relation to your sustainability strategy and your specific goals (refer to your previous step).

Think “simplicity”. The KPI must be easily understandable and measurable. To choose KPIs, SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound) criteria can be used to ensure that they are well adapted to the objectives, well thought out and achieved.

To be sure that a KPI is relevant, you can check that it will drive decisions, not other issues.

i.e.: For example, if your goal is to reduce pollution, the pollution rate is a very complex KPI to measure, but you can choose several simple KPIs such as energy consumption, water consumption, waste production...



## How do you set the best monitoring indicators?

Monitoring indicators must make it possible to follow the progress of the sustainability approach. They may cover indicators of resources (human, material, financial resources) or deployment indicators (% of tasks carried out, % of people involved, etc.).

Monitoring indicators are linked to the action plan. They should make it possible to see whether the school is doing what it said it would do on time.

The panel of monitoring indicators must be analysed with the Sustainability steering committee on a regular basis (monthly or quarterly for example), while the performance indicators are analysed on a yearly, half-yearly basis and lead to strategy and action plans adjustments.







Prioritize the actions to be implemented in accordance with the objectives, think about the means to be associated (financial, human, technical, organizational...)

We know that all your goals are relevant for your school. But it is unrealistic that they can be achieved simultaneously taking into account different features:

### **Human resources**

how many teachers are available to work on that project? How many people are already prepared on a specific topic? Maybe some needs, training, some others are ready.

### **Budget at your disposal**

the actions that will lead you to achieve the goal require some budget or are they completely free? In the former case, how much time do you need to find such a budget?

### **Time needed**

as said before, some actions can be immediate, some others take more time. According to the time needed, you can organize several actions in different moments of the academic year.

### **Urgency**

how much do you feel that it is very urgent to intervene on a specific area?

Considering all these elements, you will realize that you need to prioritize the actions you intend to undertake. Your actions could have a **high, medium or low priority**. The fact that an action has a low priority does not mean that it does not have a value for the school. It may mean that other areas are more dramatic than others, or that other areas need to be faced preliminarily to prepare the ground for next actions.

We try to give you a visual example to carry out your analysis. This table is also a tool you can use to build your Sustainability strategy:

Need or area to be tackled (resulting from the need analysis)	Goal	KPIs	Activity (ies) to reach the goal*	Human resources involved in the activity	Budget needed	Time to implement the activity	Urgency	Priority
	Reduce the cases of bullying in the school and create a better environment							High Medium Low

\*You can find many examples of tools and activities in the section 3

Here is another example of how to prioritise your issues.

**First step:** you identify the issues or questions and themes you need to address in your organisation. For this, you have already carried out your materiality study, and you have selected some issues, and discarded others.

For example:

- ➔ Q1 = reduce canteen waste
- ➔ Q2 = reduce hydrocarbon consumption for heating
- ➔ Q3 = providing social or medical assistance to disadvantaged pupils
- ➔ Q4 = welcoming anti-violence associations into the classroom
- ➔ Q5 = develop dialogue with employees
- ➔ Q6 = train employees in first aid
- ➔ Q7 = train teachers in non-violent communication
- ➔ Q8 = organise teachers' schedules so that they can work as a team

**Second step:** Complete the table by indicating the importance of each issue to your organisation and your organisation's current performance on that issue.

You can use the following scale:

**For importance (increasing order from 1 to 5):**

- ➔ 1 = The issue has little impact on the organisation, or on its stakeholders, society and the environment
- ➔ 2 = Failure to address this issue may jeopardise the organisation's functioning, or failure to address it will have a limited impact on its stakeholders
- ➔ 3 = Addressing this issue is essential for the project to proceed
- ➔ 4 = Controlling this issue is essential to the achievement of the whole project
- ➔ 5 = Control of this issue is essential to the organisation's existence or to the sustainability of a stakeholder

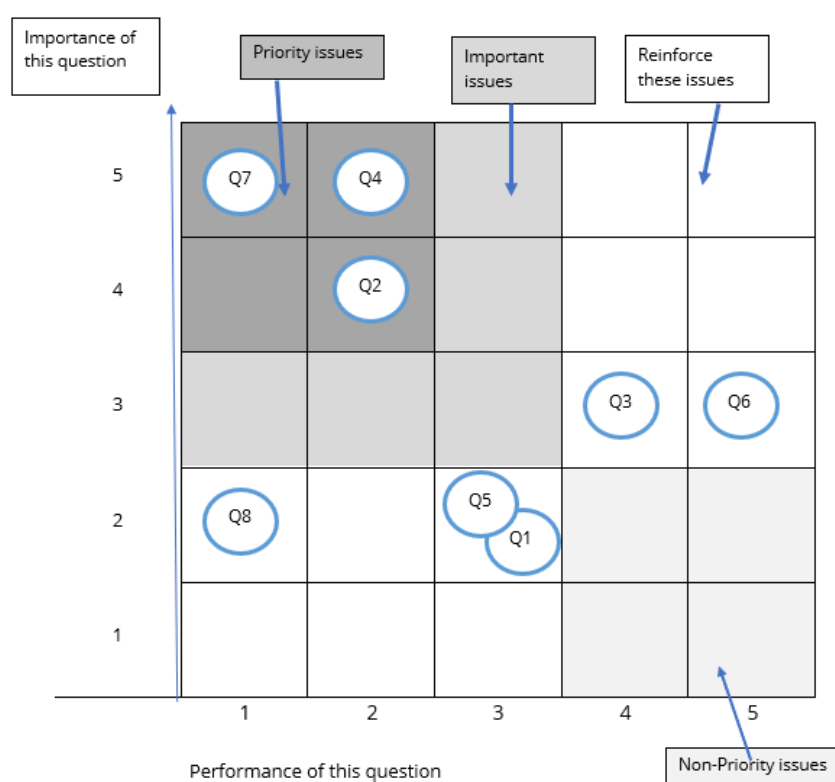
**For performance, you can use this scale:**

- ➔ 1 = non-compliance with the state of the art, the organisation does not know how to do and does not do
- ➔ 2 = deviations from what is expected are observed
- ➔ 3 = the organisation has already identified improvement actions that could be taken
- ➔ 4 = the organisation is monitoring the issue and planning its actions
- ➔ 5 = The organisation is exemplary on this subject

Question	Importance to your organisation	Current performance
Q1 = reduce canteen waste	2	3
Q2 = reduce hydrocarbon consumption for heating	4	2
Q3 = providing social or medical assistance to disadvantaged pupils	3	4
Q4 = welcoming anti-violence associations into the classroom	5	2
Q5 = develop dialogue with employees	2	3
Q6 = train employees in first aid	3	5
Q7 = train <del>teachers</del> in non-violent communication	5	1
Q8 = organise teachers' schedules so that they can work as a team	2	1

### Third step:

You plot the questions on the graph and draw conclusions :



## Conclusion:

In our situation, and for this year, the priority issues to be addressed are:

- ➔ Q2 = reduce hydrocarbon consumption for heating
- ➔ Q4 = welcoming anti-violence associations into the classroom
- ➔ Q7 = train teachers in non-violent communication

and it is necessary to reinforce the issues:

- ➔ Q3 = providing social or medical assistance to disadvantaged pupils
- ➔ Q6 = train employees in first aid



## Define the planning and milestones

Focus is the most critical skill for any organization (school) in today's society. In a world of information overload and distraction after distraction, it requires focus to accomplish anything worthwhile. Nowadays, schools are flooded with a variety of competing priorities, but in order to be genuinely effective, they must have a strong sense of direction and purpose. This means they must comprehend:

- **WHAT** they want to accomplish (their goals)
- **WHY** they want to accomplish these goals (their philosophy, vision, and mission)
- **HOW** they intend to accomplish them (their strategic plan).

A structured planning process is vital for schools to drive future success, increase value, and impact. The sustainability strategy planning process in schools should be considered as a dynamic force that will provide new opportunities, identify sustainable and valuable initiatives that will capitalize on them, and implement those initiatives quickly and efficiently. Schools must be adaptable enough to deal with fast change. In this instance, planning should take place once within the school year, considering new challenges that may have an impact on the newly developed sustainability strategy.

A structured planning will determine how a school will achieve the milestones of its sustainability strategy while maintaining its vision and values. Without a plan to reach these milestones, they will remain abstract and unattainable, and progress would be improbable. In this situation, a strategic plan will serve as a road map to help schools achieve where they want to go with their sustainability strategy.

A sustainability strategy should be planned by bringing together all of the school's stakeholders to assess present circumstances and outline the school's vision for the future. Stakeholders are individuals and any other organization on whom the schools may have an affect or who may have an impact on the school.

For three reasons, stakeholder input is critical to developing a successful strategy – to begin, reacting to stakeholder concerns can result in a more beneficial strategy since listening to the issues that shareholders, students, and other members of the school's personnel believe are important can help the school better satisfy the demands of its significant groups. Second, stakeholders serve as an early warning system. School will be able to reduce risks and react to shifting expectations more quickly if it responds to stakeholder concerns about new and rapidly emerging challenges, considering the sustainability strategy. Finally, stakeholders can bring a level of challenge that is rarely found within a school.

To establish the strongest sustainability strategy feasible, the school and its shareholders should analyse its strengths, weaknesses, available resources, and opportunities. As previously stated, during the planning phase, the school will develop a vision, describe the strategy's purpose, and establish long-term and forward-looking milestones.

The strategy's objectives should include operational goals and incremental milestones that must be met. The strategy must have clear objectives and supporting actions that are linked to metrics that everyone is held accountable for. The milestones should be adaptable enough to allow for recalibration and resource redistribution based on internal and external forces.



It should be noted that the sustainability strategy's milestones will fluctuate from school to school due to various external and internal variables. However, there are some commonalities that all schools should consider and evaluate at least twice a year. The well-being of students, teachers, and other school personnel, environmental aspects such as consumption and resource usage, and general satisfaction following the implementation of the sustainability strategy could be evaluated milestones. The milestones must be:

### **Meaningful**

milestones should specify measurable improvements in performance (a change in a KPI) over a specific time period (e.g., school will reduce carbon emissions by X% over the next X years).

### **Material**

milestones should be clearly related to the school's primary strategic goals and impact areas.

### **Complete**

milestones should address the school's most significant social, environmental, and economic impacts.

### **Consistent**

milestones should be reasonably stable throughout time so that internal and external stakeholders may examine how performance changes year after year.

### **Ambitious**

schools should create goals that go beyond the scope of the typical academic year.

A planning approach for the sustainability strategy will enable schools to motivate the entire community to take action and make change. By making the goals of the school's sustainability strategy tangible rather than abstract, the school will be able to engage its shareholders and help them own their role in the process.

This type of planning approach will serve to capture the hearts and minds of everyone in the community and allow them to be a part of something bigger, while also offering a purpose and process. This motivation can be a critical component of a thriving school community, leading to favourable results such as strong teacher retention and student engagement. Even the collaborative process of developing a sustainability strategy can have a significant impact on school community.



## Control reports

The previous sections have introduced the reader to a step-by-step guide to building a sustainable development strategy. To complete the work program, we now need to show you how to organise the content of the report.

Before specifying what the report should contain, we must talk about its readers.

## **Who is going to read the report?**

First, it will be read by students, teachers, families, and school staff.

For this target audience, it is necessary to record the activities carried out, the contexts, periods and partners involved, and to value the people, the successes, the atmosphere, and the conviviality. The aim is to show that the project is a vibrant venture, that it appeals to the educational community and the pupils, and that it brings together the energies of young people and adults to achieve a global objective that goes well beyond individual interests to serve the collective. The message to be passed on is essentially this: this project has a purpose, and the young people are actively involved in it. The teachers and the staff are providing guidance, they are committed and agents of change.

Secondly, you should also target your school's external stakeholders, such as institutions, financial partners, suppliers, government officials, representatives of other schools you work with, companies that receive your students on placement or internship...

These stakeholders, who have normally been invited at the beginning of the project to give their opinion on the issues and priorities, want to know if tangible results are being achieved. It is therefore necessary to provide them with the results indicators (KPIs) on a regular basis, once a year or every two years at the most. For them, what really counts is progress in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions or energy consumption, reducing violence and incivility, and increasing the quality of life and working and teaching conditions... they will essentially look at the figures to measure whether their investments (political, financial, personal) are bearing fruit.

In short, the report must indicate:

#### **FOR WHOM?**

All stakeholders, internal AND external.

#### **WHY?**

To inform, raise awareness and educate, to share and continue emulation, to continue to bring together energies around a global cause.

#### **WHEN?**

Sustainability strategy reports are usually produced every year. However, as these reports require time and skills, a two-yearly publication may be a solution.

#### **WHAT?**

Part I presents the project, the vision and the specific objectives dealt with during the year, as well as the actions carried out; Part II includes the result objectives and the statement of indicators at the end of the period.

#### **HOW?**

This report can only be published online, to reduce costs and carbon footprint; however, be careful not to send it by email if it is too heavy; it may also be interesting to publish some of it in paper format to reach some important external stakeholders. It will be up to the steering committee to decide.

**A last tip:** you can take inspiration from reports published by companies or colleagues and choose a format.



### Key success factor

The sustainability approach can be initiated in any type of school, small or large, with a general or technological and professional education vocation. But whatever the school, we suggest working as a team, bringing together people who can relay information and become referent for students, teachers, and staff.

It is essential that the institution's culture is based on shared values that are consistent with the founding principles of sustainability: ethics, human rights, respect for the law, listening to stakeholders and accountability.

The institution's project must integrate sustainability into its vision, policy and action plan.

During the analysis of the issues at the start of the process, it is necessary to consult the stakeholders and then engage with them regularly.

While it's important to identify the legal requirements and standards related to sustainable development (for example: relative to human rights, environmental trade) that apply to the institution it's also important to turn the constraints they create into opportunities for change and development.

With regards to the way in which a sustainability approach is conducted, it's recommended that the participation of as many people as possible be favoured; to this end, collaborative tools make it possible to increase the amount of information, knowledge, and exchanges.

Organised and facilitated cooperation is based on collective intelligence techniques that encourage discussion, debate, and consensual and engaging decision-making. Leadership can be shared that leaves room for initiative and innovation.

Finally, any establishment entering a sustainability process can aim to become a learning organisation, in which everyone progresses and participates in the success of the project.



# 03 - Tools to implement your Sustainability Strategy

In Sustainability Manager we developed a set of practical tools to assist schools with the implementation of their sustainability plan. On this chapter you will get to know what tools we developed and what they consist of.



## Escape Rooms

First of all, we worked on 3 different Escape Rooms which promote Sustainability Development Strategies at school.

Escape rooms are games that consist of simulating a trap from which the participants need to get out. To do so, they have to solve all sorts of riddles and questions that will lead them to the exit.

Through these games, we want to help students and the school staff achieving several objectives like working collectively, improving communication and strengthening their memory thanks to creative approaches.

The first Escape Room is titled **SDG at your school** and is designed to be implemented in the classroom to raise awareness among students on the UN sustainable development goals and how to apply them as initiatives for their schools.

The second one is addressed to the school's staff and aims at testing their knowledge and helping them to elaborate their own sustainability strategy. Your sustainability team members will have to reply to all the questions of this online Escape room here:

<https://view.genial.ly/63189d1712236a00121dee8d/interactive-content-plan-your-sustainability-strategy>.

Finally, we designed a Escape room as a board game that can be printed to be played in the classroom with the students or online through this link: The Rings of Earth - Escape room board game (<https://view.genial.ly/632ac94c21924b001866e650>).

Its objective is to teach students about environmental impacts of Climate Change and how these different topics can be addressed to preserve the planet.





## Challenges

The challenges are ready to implement activities for teachers to work and progress on their sustainability plan objectives with their students. These challenges aim at being an inspiration for schools to work on different areas of sustainability in a more dynamic and engaging way, since students will be the main actors of these activities.

They can be classified in long, medium and short length, which means that depending on the objectives, the challenges can be implemented during a longer period of time (the school year, a quarter...), medium if the event or activity will take one or several punctual days, and finally, short if they can be carried out in a class or as a complementary initiative of the students daily routine. Among these challenges you can find inclusive workshops, debates, cleaning up activities, social media actions... and many more! Which ones could be a good tool to reach your school sustainability objectives?



## Practice Sheets

The practice sheets are additional documents and resources to support the Sustainability Team to implement the strategy in practice.

You will find templates to write down the strategy, to carry out surveys or interviews to understand the needs of the school, tips to implement the overall activities.

The objective of the practice sheets is to facilitate the implementation phase of the strategy and to have ready-made documents to replicate and reuse.



## Track Tool

A tool for monitoring the results obtained is necessary to correct the strategy if necessary. By measuring progress on a monthly or quarterly basis, we can look ahead to potential medium-term results, and question the relevance and effectiveness of the concrete actions taken.

## What can we measure regularly ?



some results indicators (KPIs) (the volume of canteen waste which must be reduced because one of the strategic axes is to control food consumption / the number of meetings with the educational advisor to declare an incident of violence between young people, because one of the strategic axes is to achieve zero violence in the school...)



some follow-up indicators (the degree of progress of certain actions / the satisfaction rate of the pupils in a class concerning a project or whether the deadlines announced for certain key actions are met)



some means indicators (the rate of participation in steering committee meetings, the number of trained student delegates, etc.)

## **How can these indicators be measured?**

By keeping a scoreboard. This dashboard is an Excel file that describes all the results and monitoring indicators, each associated with a strategic axis defined in the overall sustainability plan.

For some indicators, an online questionnaire can be used (to measure satisfaction, involvement and the needs of project stakeholders).

For other indicators, the sustainability pilot will have to meet with the various actors concerned (canteen manager, education manager, etc.) to collect the measurements.

How often should these indicators be measured?

Depending on your availability and the importance of the strategic areas, some indicators should be measured very often (once a month, but perhaps twice a month at the beginning of the action), and for other indicators once a quarter will be sufficient.

## **How to use these measures?**

A meeting of the sustainability steering committee should take place at least once a quarter.

# 04 - Examples of sustainability in education

Sustainable initiatives at school are not just a topic; it should be a lifestyle. It is about having a well-balanced economy, ecology, and society. It comprises the capacity to fulfil current needs without jeopardizing the next generation's ability to meet future demands. Sustainability managers might inculcate the fundamental notion of requirements and constraints by getting various sustainable initiatives at school. When discussing sustainability, students should be taught that special consideration should be given to specific demands, such as poverty for instance. It should be tempered with the concept of limits, which states that people cannot devour all resources without considering future generations.

The decisions made today should consider the coming years. As a result, current and future sustainable initiatives carried out by schools and managed by sustainability managers must be addressed in light of the need to innovate and execute measures that will make life on Earth meaningful for its inhabitants now and in the future. Schools and educational institutions are already pushing for more sustainable practices,

however more proactive initiatives and insistent sustainable managers are needed, as can be seen. In terms of this concept, the role of sustainability managers should be to assist students in connecting knowledge, inquiry, and action toward a healthy future for their communities and the planet.

When schools and other educational institutions seek to develop and implement a sustainability initiative, they either add sustainability as a new function to an existing position or create a completely new one. Organizational leaders must determine where to place this individual, what the individual's aims should be, and how his or her position should be evaluated if they choose the latter course.

Schools are already attempting to implement various sustainability initiatives based on recently gathered information. Of course, not all of the schools are taking the same steps, but they are all working toward the same objectives – to instil in students the necessity of preserving the environment and society as a whole in order to create a better future. There have already been outstanding sustainability efforts at schools and universities in Europe that can serve as models for other educational institutions.



## The Eco-schools

The Eco-Schools Program is an international movement that began in 1994 in response to the identified needs of the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro. The program was developed by the Foundation for Environmental Education with the support of the European Commission, initially involving four countries: Denmark, Germany, Greece and the United Kingdom. For a quarter of a century, the Eco-Schools programme has been engaging young people in taking positive actions that transform their lives.

The program is one of the most comprehensive and popular models of environmental education in the world. It promotes the understanding of the environment, linking it to the subjects, creates attitudes and values, interest in the environment, involving not only those involved in school life, but also the surrounding society, thus strengthening the overall development of environmental awareness.

This programme involves 59 000 schools in 72 countries. The Eco-Schools programme is designed to suit all schools whether they are a nursery, primary school, secondary school, further education college, university or a school with special status. After completing the seven-step process, schools can then apply for Eco-Schools Green Flag accreditation, which recognises, rewards and celebrates the environmental achievements of young people.

Many outstanding initiatives have already been launched through the Eco-Schools Program, which have altered environmental education. "The "Litter Less Campaign," "The Great Plant Hunt," and " Warming-Waste-Water-Watts-Wildlife" are three of the program's most essential initiatives.

For instance, The Mars Wrigley Foundation and the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) collaborates on the Litter Less Campaign (LLC). It has been running for 11 years all around the world, emphasizing the necessity of addressing the issue of litter and waste. Since its inception in 2011, more than 4,6 million school pupils from 35 countries have taken part in the program. The development in students' knowledge and conduct about trash and waste management, as well as their vibrant enthusiasm and eagerness to learn, has been demonstrated through constant evaluation. Each school is required to track the amount of garbage and litter produced in order to improve waste management. Each school also organizes one Community Action Day, which involves the entire school as well as parents, community stakeholders, and Mars Wrigley employees. Schools share their achievements through Green Flag applications. The best stories are reported to FEE.

Likewise, The Great Plant Hunt – this campaign is a joint initiative of Toyota Motor Europe and the Foundation for Environmental Education. It concentrates on biodiversity, with an emphasis on plants and their associated species. The Great Plant Hunt is now taking place in 14 European countries (Latvia, Italy, Belgium and others). In each of the participating countries, the National Operator selects schools.



The initiative encourages students to become conservation advocates, promotes local biodiversity actions, fosters critical thinking through a "go and see" study approach, and helps reach EU/UN biodiversity education targets.

Besides, Eco-Schools has also started a global K-12 environmental literacy initiative centred on Green STEM, thanks to the support of the Alcoa Foundation. The project's goal is to use science, technology, engineering, and maths skills to teach youngsters about environmental challenges. Twenty thousand pupils will have the opportunity to examine, create, and build innovative solutions to environmental concerns in schools as part of this project. Furthermore, the Alcoa W5 initiative will improve teachers' knowledge of Green STEM. It allows students to engage on real-world sustainability challenges and contribute to the solution of specific problems in their school and society via collaboration and critical thinking.



## Sustainable initiatives at university

Furthermore, there have been other outstanding sustainability efforts in universities throughout Europe. These initiatives can be used as brilliant ideas that can be adapted for usage in schools to meet the needs and interests of pupils. As for example, since 2017, **Wageningen University** in the Netherlands has been ranked as the world's "greenest" university.

Wageningen is particularly interested in the topic of " healthy food and living environment." As a life sciences institution, all of their programs focus on environmental, agricultural, and sustainability issues.

As another example, **The University of Groningen** has an entire department dedicated to their green initiatives – the “Green Office”. They seek to enhance and integrate sustainability across the university, as well as to assist staff and students in becoming more environmentally conscious. They also have a strong network within the field of sustainability, known as the Sustainability Sounding Board. There is a range of courses relevant to sustainability including a range of science courses and for the business-minded, Global Responsibility and Leadership.

Similarly, another example is The **University of Nottingham** in the United Kingdom which can be considered as a true sustainability champion. For the past ten years, they have been named among the top five most environmentally friendly schools. This is due to their goal of “keeping environmental sustainability firmly on the university's agenda”. A woodland, as well as substantial green spaces and parkland, can be found on the university's award-winning campus. Nottingham University has a number of sustainability courses and the Centre for Sustainable Chemistry, a first-of-its-kind carbon-neutral lab.

Likewise, University of **Southern Denmark** is yet another example. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations are being pursued by University of Southern Denmark. They encourage "climate-friendly conduct" among their employees and students, and they have a sustainability plan that includes suppliers, procurement, and disposal. Through a coordinated and interdisciplinary effort, their new Climate Centre targets "long-term societal, technological, and political climate concerns."

Furthermore, **The University of Bologna** is the oldest university in the world – and with a 1,000-year history, sustainability is obviously important. Beyond Bachelors and Masters in “green” subjects such as Sustainable Agriculture or Resource Economics they have implemented various successful projects to protect the environment. They encourage students and staff to live more sustainably, for example by gifting reusable water bottles or by offering subsidized public transport.

On top of that, **Dublin City University** in Ireland instils a sustainability attitude across the institution. They have a green campus group that supports several programs that promote environmental awareness and sustainability. Their Climate Action Plan identifies measures for the university to reduce energy consumption, water consumption, recycling and trash management, and biodiversity enhancement. Environmental Science, Global Challenges, Mechanical and Sustainability Engineering, and Climate and Environmental Sustainability are all courses connected to sustainability.



## Sustainable initiatives at school

It was interesting for us to talk to two different types of schools to compare their action plans when it comes to Sustainability. Private schools who could promote themselves as GREEN to generate business. And Public schools that follow the state curriculum. After approaching both groups, it was noticeable that not one thing that can be defined as the cause of, or lack of education towards sustainability. Both groups had young and older teachers, both groups taught Climate Change as a subject as if it is fact, (like a history lesson) as if nothing can be done about it. Both groups had ideas that could be done if time allowed for it, or if there was a certain 'someone' enlisted to take control. The role of Sustainability Manager, perhaps!

We discovered a long running methodology taught in the Czech Republic called EVVO (Environmentální vzdělávání, výchova a osvěta) In English: Environmental Education and Awareness. After reading a report about environmentally friendly methodology, it too points out the lack of practical engagement in educational facilities, where students may study the theory but have no chance of fulfilling their new knowledge.

It was inspiring to see that some schools are taking the initiative to care for our environment into their own hands. With no government outline or guidance on this matter, schools rely solely on their own creativity.

The role of the Erasmus Project, Sustainability Manager @ Schools, will hopefully co-ordinate these practices and create an approach recognizable on European level.

In The Czech Republic, (and we are sure in other countries too) a lot of kindergartens start the process of sustainability by encouraging pre-schoolers to plant seeds, water them and nurture them to fruition. This initial lesson (often easy for the teacher) is then lost as students start first grade with very little focus on the simple act of garden sustainability. This is also true with languages. A lot of state kindergartens have a second language program, but in Primary school, that second language isn't taught again until the 3rd grade. That's two years of loss where students forget what they have been taught.

In our findings we have discovered that we are initially going to meet several dead ends to a lot of initiatives we think as simple ideas to implement. The lack of outdoor space, the lack of enthusiasm, or the idea that saving one piece of paper isn't going to save the world. These are the old mind-sets that have to be changed. But we are happy to announce that these schools in the Czech Republic (and others) are already implementing some solutions and boast about it proudly.

**ZS Oskava, Oskava:** School with so called EVVO methodology focused on environmental matters. In its syllabus, there is a one hour a week lesson incorporated into the timetable, purely for environmental education. Furthermore, the environmental thinking is implemented across the whole school and all its aspects.

**ZS Stankov, Stankov:** project Recycle-playing. Its aim is to increase students' knowledge in recycling, its importance and to let the children experience and do the actual recycling of various waste, including batteries, toners and other non-everyday disposable waste. Throughout the school year, there are various competitions organized by the school for its students with the recycling topic.

**ZS Milin, Milin:** project Young environmental journalists. The children (age 11 -25 years) learn to recognize, analyse and map the problems of the environment in their own surroundings. They propose solutions for it and write a report about it for the public in the media of videos, articles and photo.

**ZS Wonderland Academy, Prague:** Several teachers were upset to see food waste thrown away, so took it upon themselves to create compost bins in their kitchen and canteen. The students willingly participate and can then use the compost in their own small school vegetable patch.

**SS, Agriculture College, Klatovy:** project Ecological Students Garden. To create a garden with the following parts - educational ecological vineyard, herb garden, edible forest and with a house for insects. The garden will serve as a place for learning about the plants in the garden and also as a place for relaxation. It is open to the public as well as to the other schools.

**ZS Zinkovy, Zinkovy:** Stopped due to Co-vid, the local high school works with the council to organize litter picking days in early Spring. They happily announced the return of this annual event for this year.

**ZS Mníšek pod Brdy, Mníšek pod Brdy:** project Truly healthy school - education about ecological farming. The project gives options how schools in general can introduce principles of ecological farming to the children. Trips to an eco-farm take place, to co-ordinate with another project 'School Farm Market', which is focused on involving the local community in market idea and teach the children advantages about environmentally friendly farming, and importance of the locally produced products. The projects introduce ways how to efficiently use the school gardens.

In conclusion, it is absolutely necessary for schools to implement a sustainability manager, or team, to co-ordinate theory and application of any sustainable plan. This plan must be accepted across the whole school for it to work and the mindset of the teaching staff must also change for it to be a success. I would only ask: Why are we starting the process at secondary level education? As teenagers are self-conscious when going against the flow of their peers, (i.e., to engage in sustainability if it's not a cool current trend) teaching primary school children the first concepts of sustainability could be more beneficial.



## Other sustainable initiatives in Europe

There are many individual programmes in EU countries striving towards sustainability. Not all go as far as incorporating the complete set of the seventeen UN Sustainable Development Goals. (SDGs)

In 2020 Italy became the first country in the world to make sustainability and climate crisis compulsory subjects for schoolchildren. Italian state schools incorporate the UN's 2030 agenda for sustainable development into as many subjects as possible, with an additional one hour a week dedicated to themes including global heating and humans' influence on the planet.



Environmental tuition, education and public awareness (EVVO) in certain Czech schools puts emphasis on getting to know our environment and its relationship with man, thus becoming aware of the necessity to preserve conditions for life. Constant care of our environment is closely linked to the state of the environmental awareness and the educational level of the population. Research into this practice points out that although the theoretical side is taught in schools, it lacks the practical teaching to reach its goals.

Sustainable development is adopted by the Ministry of National Education in France, its approach looks to restore the dynamic balances between the environment, the social world, the economy and culture. Starting from this definition based on the interaction between these different fields, education for sustainable development (ESD) is a cross-cutting education, which integrates the challenges of sustainable development into teaching programs and into the curricula. ESD explicitly intersects with other cross-curricular education, including education for development and international solidarity, health education, artistic and cultural teaching. Complacency is not welcome at ESD schools, as each year schools must showcase their actions in order to receive the label for the following year. This approach helps to maintain high standards across the whole school.

Dreamland.be is an example of stakeholders showing a vested interest in sustainability. 'Sustainability starts at school' and DreamLand continues to give customers the chance to make a conscious choice. It therefore substantially expanded its range of sustainable school supplies. Parents can choose from 125 sustainable alternatives made of recycled or environment-friendly material. Last year, backpacks made of recycled plastic or polyester appeared. They are joined this year by sustainable drink bottles, lunch boxes, stationery and so much more.

Taking such examples as basis, more schools could implement similar practices. It is not necessary to begin with major changes; even little steps can make a difference and help to emphasize the need of a sustainability manager. As a role model, a sustainability manager could pave the way for others. "Powering down electric equipment" could be a good practice to start in schools that could be managed by the sustainability manager. When computers, lights, and projectors are not in use, the school's electricity bill is reduced, and energy is conserved. To get the entire school on board, sustainability manager could create a measurable goal with clear rewards, such as "If everyone turns off the light when they leave the room, the school will have enough energy savings to modernize the gym."

Another initiative could be “waste-free lunches”. Since about half of school-aged children eat breakfast and lunch in cafeterias. As a result, meal waste and single-use lunch containers account for a significant portion of the waste generated by schools. Even though recycling these materials appears to be the answer, just 29% of recyclables are recycled. Plastics, on the other hand, have a finite lifespan and can only be recycled 7-9 times before the fiber break down. A waste-free lunch, in which students and employees are encouraged to bring reusable containers, water bottles, and cutlery to the cafeteria, is one option for reducing cafeteria waste. Offering a free lunch on the last Friday of every month when students and staff bring their own reusable containers could be one approach to start the shift and develop excitement for the effort. As your school community becomes more comfortable with the notion of litter-free meals, you might provide a small discount (e.g., 25 cents off) to encourage students to bring reusable containers every day.

There are numerous examples of excellent sustainability initiatives that may be implemented in schools and overseen by sustainability managers. The most crucial part is to determine which initiatives align with the school's overarching aims and values. In most of these cases, the sustainability manager's or team's responsibility is to serve as a model for others, demonstrating how to behave responsibly in order to create more sustainable schools.

# 05 - Conclusion

This document contains a step-by-step proposal for schools to embrace a whole-school approach on Sustainability from the Governance point of view.

It showcases the entire model.

We hope you will be using it as a starting point, and you will be implementing the Sustainability Strategy in your school using the other results of the project:

- the e-learning on Sustainability and how to implement the School Sustainability Strategy
- the challenges to involve the entire school and motivate students
- the practice sheets to replicate in your strategy
- the monitoring tool to assess you strategy

All the resources will be available on the website: **HOME | SchoolSustainability (school-sustainability.eu)**

Your journey into Sustainability at school has just started!

Enjoy it!

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