



# Student Sustainability Symposium 2025

a zine!

Responsible  
Futures





STUDENTS  
ORGANISING FOR  
SUSTAINABILITY  
UNITED KINGDOM

**UWE  
Bristol**

University  
of the  
West of  
England

THE STUDENTS'  
UNION  
AT UWE





The first-ever Responsible Futures Student Sustainability Symposium took place from 8 to 10 April 2025. Envisioned by the University of the West of England (UWE) Bristol and The Students' Union at The UWE Bristol, and co-delivered with SOS UK, students and staff worldwide explored a variety of student-led sustainability projects and good practice.




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Zine writing and design: CJ Watson and Hridita Afsana

Curators of the symposium: Georgina Gough, Rosa Mumford-Turner, Sandrine Simon, (UWE Bristol), Rachel Colley (The Students' Union at UWE Bristol), Sonya Peres, and Oliver Yu Hurst (SOS-UK)



This zine has been created as a legacy resource of the Responsible Futures Student Sustainability Symposium 2025

## Co-author: Hridita Afsana



Hridita Afsana, originally from Bangladesh, is a Master's in Management graduate from Keele University. Alongside her academic focus on business management, she has a strong interest in sustainability, education and ethical business practices. She works with SOS-UK as a Programme Coordinator, Student Staff for Responsible Futures, supporting student-staff partnerships to embed sustainability across curricula. Passionate about climate justice and amplifying student voices, Hridita found co-organising the first-ever Student Sustainability Symposium a proud and inspiring experience. Outside of work and study, she enjoys painting, cooking, and spending time with her family and cats.



## Co-author: CJ Watson



CJ is a Philosophy and Theology graduate of the University of Exeter passionate about social and climate justice. They have a background in research and communications, previously interning for the University of Exeter in their Responsible Future's programme. CJ is active in student advocacy for climate justice, currently working as a Responsible Futures programme co-ordinator at SOS-UK. In their work they organise events and supporting initiatives that empower students to lead on sustainability. They found creating the Student Sustainability Symposium zine a particularly rewarding experience in spotlighting student's hard work. In their free time, they enjoy hiking, playing rugby and mastering the art of vegan cooking!



# Zine contributors and student showcase presenters

Comfort Onyaga - Murdoch University, Australia

Fathima Anowar & Dr. Shourov Barua - American International University Bangladesh

Jessica Bennett & William Himawan - Manchester Metropolitan University, UK

Kezia Myles & Theo Panter - University of Derby, UK

Leila Laco & Jethro Tieman - The Open University, UK

Mollie Lester & Adam Sandy-Kyari - De Montfort University, UK

Kudakwashe Brendon Musoni - Women's University in Africa, Zimbabwe

Olivia Mottley - Mohawk College, Canada

Ramtin Mojtahedi - Queen's University, Canada

Rol-J Williams - University of the West Indies, Trinidad & Tobago

Rachel Korchinsky, Queen's University, Canada





# Student Sustainability Symposium agenda recap




## Day 1: Tuesday 8 April

- Keynote introduction by The UWE
- Workshop: students as change agents

## Day 2: Wednesday 9 April

- Student Sustainability Showcase and Q&A

## Day 3: Thursday 10 April

- Workshop: green skills and green careers
  - Plenary and closing remarks by The UWE and SOS UK
- 

At the start of the symposium, participants were asked to share what sustainability meant to them. This was to create a collective understanding about the diverse field of sustainability, before exploring these ideas in further detail during symposium sessions.



What does sustainability mean to you?



balance understand empower preserve  
explore social take come planet  
lead climate educate long move term  
relationship power people  
nature critical resource  
education spaces water  
place reflect ecological together  
sustainability connected  
problem transform sustainable safe  
healthy life changemakers happy  
engage fair action educator  
love encourage fulfilling support  
justice promote issues world facilitate  
parent enthusiasm thinking equal  
better student young  
leave real address natural depletion  
build change society  
make solving clean



# Symposium attendee's *vision for the future*

Attendees were then prompted to imagine their ideal world. This was to help attendees understand what their overall aims are for taking action on sustainability. Examples of their fabulous response are illustrated below.

When reflecting on where I want to live, I want to feel...

*“Safe comfortable, and at home”*



How I'd like to spend my time...

*“Swimming in clean water, bird watching, serving my community and other animals, and cooking”*

Spending my day doing this would make me feel...

*“Whole, fulfilled, happy, energised, and content”*



While I'm out in my community, I see...

*“Biodiversity, clean and green spaces, public murals and poetry painted everywhere”*





# Workshop recap: Students as agents for change

The symposium kicked-off with a warm welcome from SOS UK and keynote talk from The University of the West England and Students' Union.

During the Students as agents for change workshop, attendees explored examples of the why students are pivotal in transforming education.

## Topics covered:

- 1 Exploring the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
- 2 Intersectionality of climate justice
- 3 Students and Sustainability
- 4 Leadership skills
- 5 Practical ideas

## Key messages

- Students are the future generation so their voices must be heard
- Importance of framing and tailoring our communication style with different audiences
- Students have diverse forms of power to enact change



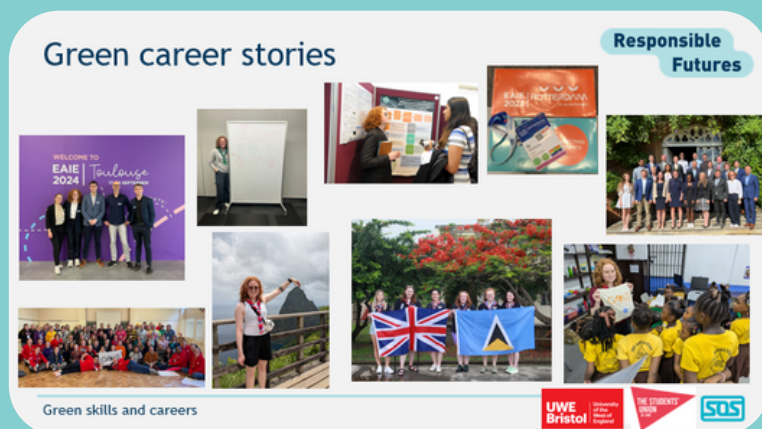
[Watch the workshop recording](#)

# Workshop recap: Green skills & careers

During this workshop, students and staff explored how to embed sustainability into any profession and learned practical tips for navigating green career paths.

Topics covered:

- 1 Student demand for green jobs and sustainability
- 2 Types of green skills
- 3 Application and interview advice
- 4 EAUC Green Career Guides
- 5 Green career stories



Student staff, CJ Watson shared their story of starting a sustainability career

## Key messages

- Any job can be a sustainability job
- Young people should feel confident in applying knowledge and skills
- Staff can support green upskilling with creative and bespoke methods
- Use your privilege to support others



[View the watch the workshop recording](#)

# Showcase student leaders worldwide

**Ramtin Mojtahedi**

Queen's University, Ontario, Canada

"Fostering sustainable change at Queen's: Reflection on leading a Responsible Futures audit and the potential of AI-driven energy savings solutions"

**Mollie Lester & Adam Sandy-Kyari**

De Montfort University, UK

"The importance of different background in sustainability"

The Showcase featured student sustainability leaders presenting their impactful projects to an audience of over 100 people worldwide.

**Olivia Mottley**

Mohawk College, Ontario, Canada

"Empowerment through curiosity"

**Rol-J Williams**

University of the West Indies (UWI)

"The One UWI Responsible Futures Program: Strategies, Challenges and Campus Specific Solutions at the UWI St. Augustine"

**Kezia Myles & Theo Panter**  
University of Derby, UK

"Environmental sustainability surrounding the University of Derby Hiking Society"

**Kudakwashe Brendon Musoni**

Women's University in Africa

"Decolonising education from a youth-led approach in Zimbabwe"

# Showcase student leaders worldwide

**Jessica Bennett & William Himawan**  
Manchester Metropolitan University, UK  
“Engaging with Greater Manchester sustainability initiative”

The Showcase featured student sustainability leaders presenting their impactful projects to an audience of over 100 people worldwide.

**Fathima Anowar & Dr. Shourov Barua**  
American International University of Bangladesh (AIUB)  
“Students’ community engagement initiatives”

**Comfort Onyaga**  
Murdoch University, Australia  
“Leading sustainability change: empowering student-led initiatives for a Responsible Future at Murdoch University”

**Leila Laco & Jethro Tieman**  
Open University Student Union (OUSU), UK  
“Connecting for change: engaging distance-learning students in sustainability”

# Student presentation summaries

Rol-J Williams, The University of the West Indies, Trinidad & Tobago

**“The One UWI Responsible Futures Program: strategies, challenges and campus specific solutions at the UWI St. Augustine”**

Rol-J contributed to the integration of sustainability across five campuses and co-authored the student sustainability strategy. Despite challenges like post-COVID disengagement and leadership buy-in, Rol-J helped secure strategic adoption at the highest institutional level by forging strong partnerships with Alumni, students, and staff.

## Recommendations and Advice

Responsible Futures or any sustainability initiative at any university should be student-led. Therefore, as students, if you want to get involved:

- take a proposal to your student government: guild, students' association, union.
- form a club or association or partner with an existing one to begin or to amplify climate advocacy on your campus.
- Reach out to SOS UK for them to use official channels to begin the process.

Rol-J gives advice for students on kick-starting sustainability projects in their institutions

The Showcase featured student sustainability leaders presenting their impactful projects to an audience of over 100 people worldwide.

Comfort Onyaga, Murdoch University, Australia

**“Leading sustainability change: Empowering student-led initiatives for a Responsible Future at Murdoch University”**

Comfort has championed sustainability throughout Murdoch's Responsible Futures programme, including by securing funding for reducing food waste and repair projects, which is being implemented by the Vice President of the SOS Club at Murdoch, strategic leadership, and mobilising students to elect sustainability representatives at the Guild.

Comfort discusses student-led food and gardening initiatives





# Student presentation summaries

Ramtin Mojtahedi, Queen's University, Canada

## “Fostering sustainable change at Queen’s: Reflections on leading a Responsible Futures audit and the potential of AI-driven energy savings solutions”

Ramtin led Queen’s University first-ever international Responsible Futures audit, uncovering key gaps in energy use. This inspired them to develop an Artificial Intelligence-driven app to optimize the energy efficiency of buildings. Ramtin reflected on navigating data access barriers and highlighted the audit’s role in enhancing skills in communication, collaboration, and institutional engagement.

### Reflections

#### Challenges Within the University Setting

- The Responsible Futures (RF) Sustainability Auditors Workshop at Queen’s University was broad in scope, emphasizing campus-wide sustainability
- I noted issues like fragmented building data, limited resources, and the need for a cohesive vision among facilities, sustainability officers, and students.

#### Skills & Knowledge Gained

- Strengthened auditing techniques, project management abilities, and effective communication with diverse university audiences.

#### Key Takeaways

- The RF framework’s emphasis on incremental, audited steps shaped my approach, ensuring accountability and clear impact.
- I strengthened project management and communication skills, which are crucial for aligning stakeholders and expanding data-driven solutions across campus.

Fostering Sustainable Change at Queen’s: Reflections on Leading a Responsible Futures Audit and the Potential of AI-Driven Energy Solutions



Olivia Mottley, Mohawk College, Canada

## “Empowerment through curiosity”

Olivia led Mohawk’s first-ever international Responsible Futures audit. When interviewing senior leadership by themselves, Olivia overcame nerves and self-doubt, discovering that “curiosity doesn’t wait for confidence” and is vital for student-led changemaking.



Olivia reflects on the student-led audit at Mohawk College

Ramtin reflects on the challenges faced and lessons learnt from the energy efficiency app.

# Student presentation summaries

Kezia Myles & Theo Panter, University of Derby, UK

## “Environmental sustainability surrounding the University of Derby Hiking Society”

Kezia and Theo co-founded a hiking society to connect students with nature and promote wellbeing. They shared challenges such as planning routes, creating risk assessments, and balancing responsibilities while gaining skills in teamwork, communication, and leadership through nature-based engagement.



Kezia and Theo discuss outdoor methods to promote Nature connection and student wellbeing

Kudakwashe Brendon Musoni, Women's University in Africa, Zimbabwe

## “Decolonising education from a youth-led approach in Zimbabwe”

Musoni shared a youth-led approach to decolonizing education, calling for the integration of Indigenous Knowledge into curricula. Drawing from their activism as a junior MP and community advocate, Musoni highlighted the importance of inclusive, culturally grounded education reform through mutual learning by building from the philosophy of Ubuntu, “I am, because we are.”



Musoni presents about the importance of youth inclusion in decolonising education

# Student presentation summaries

Fathima Anowar & Dr. Shourov Barua  
AIUB, Bangladesh

## “Students’ community engagement initiatives”

Students from the Master of Public Health programme and the Department of Architecture at the American International University-Bangladesh (AIUB) explored community-centered and eco-friendly interventions to address the health, hygiene, and wellness challenges of adolescents in the Korail informal settlement. Students involved with the initiative including, Fathima, Shourov, Ishmam Bin Zaman, Maimuna Ferdousi, and Samia Zaman developed critical skills in health communication, intervention planning, and impact assessments.

**Introducing work/initiative**  
Part of AIUB's commitment to the "Responsive and Responsible University" – a Magna Charta Observatory (MCO) Initiative:

- As part of this initiative, we, AIUB Architecture students, addressed real-world urban challenges through sustainable, low-cost design interventions.
- Korail, Dhaka's largest informal settlement, faces overcrowding, poor ventilation, lack of natural light, and environmental vulnerabilities.
- We conducted site visits and identified four houses (from East, West, North, and South zones) for remodeling.
- This intervention helped AIUB to achieve SDG 11 (Sustainable cities and communities).

**Responsible Futures**  
Name: Md. Shourov Bin Zaman  
Department: E.Arch  
Name: Maimuna Ferdousi  
Department: E.Arch  
Name: Samia Zaman  
Department: E.Arch  
Name: Fathima  
Department: E.Arch

Students' Community Engagement Initiatives: American International University-Bangladesh



Fathima and Shourov present a collaborative, student-led course project to enhance social and environmental sustainability in informal settlements

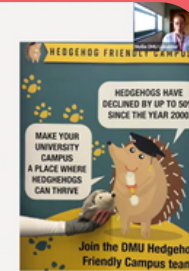
Mollie Lester & Adam Sandy-Kyari,  
De Montfort University, UK

## “The importance of different backgrounds in sustainability”

During their time as sustainability interns, Mollie and Adam utilised social justice and data-driven perspectives to lead diverse projects—from swap shops to carbon literacy training. They highlighted challenges with student engagement, imposter syndrome, and public speaking, but stressed the power of collaboration, skill-building, and cross-disciplinary teamwork.

### Reflections and challenges

- Mutual challenges:
- Student engagement
  - Communication challenges when engaging with TNE partners
  - Presenting
- Personal challenges:
- Mollie
    - Advocating for myself in situations I am not used to being in
    - Terminology
  - Adam
    - Imposter syndrome and nerves
    - Confidence to trust my own work



Mollie and Adam reflect on the power of multidisciplinary approaches to building a hedgehog friendly campus and other sustainability challenges



# Student presentation summaries

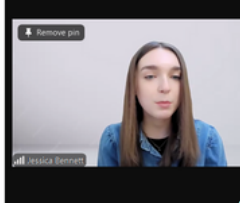
Jessica Bennett & William Himawan  
Manchester Metropolitan University, UK

## “Engaging with Greater Manchester Sustainability Initiative”

Jessica and William shared their experience with participating in the Greater Manchester Green Careers Mission and Summit. Jessica’s team proposed a sustainability app for student housing, while William’s team addressed air pollution using smart technology and transport incentives. They highlighted the value of cross-disciplinary collaboration, youth leadership, and public speaking as empowering tools for climate action.

### Skills we developed

- Firstly, we got placed into working groups to research and develop a solution and presentation to industry leaders within a specific deadline, improving our teamwork, time-management, and communication skills.
- The workshops provided the space to network and gain feedback from industry professionals - this improved our projects and has inspired us to explore career pathways we may not have known about!
- Developing ideas in a team of students studying different degrees provided different perspectives on our challenge brief. This increased our project development time as we assigned roles that suited our unique skills.



Jessica and William talk how they developed skills in leadership and public speaking

Leila Laco & Jethro Tieman The Open University Student Union, UK

## “Connecting for change: Engaging distance-learning students in sustainability”

As distance learners, Leila and Jethro tackled the challenge of engaging online students in sustainability. For the University’s Have Your Say Day they used interactive tools like Mentimeter to gather feedback on sustainability in learning. They also revived the University’s Hedgehog Friendly Campus efforts, empowering students worldwide to take part in biodiversity actions—from writing for the student magazine and social media to organising local litter picks.



Leila and Jethro share their experience of practical, hands-on sustainability projects for distance learners

# Student presentation summaries

Rachel Korchinsky, Queen's University, Canada

**“Youth outreach initiative on environmental contaminants with The Contaminants of Emerging Concern - Research Excellence Network (CEC-REN)”**

Volunteering at [Science Rendezvous Kingston 2024](#) inspired Rachel to develop a youth outreach initiative on environmental contaminants with [The Contaminants of Emerging Concern - Research Excellence Network \(CEC-REN\)](#). Collaborating with organisations, the CEC-REN strives to create interactive, curriculum-aligned online resources to increase accessibility for educators. This initiative raises awareness on SDG Goal 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) and empowers educators to inspire environmental responsibility.

“

“If everybody came into the sustainability sector with the same abilities, then we’re going to get nowhere. As we’ve seen today, it’s important to advocate from different backgrounds and cultures - that’s what is going to create the most long-term and accessible impact.” - Jessica Bennet, Manchester Metropolitan University

”



[Watch the showcase recording](#)



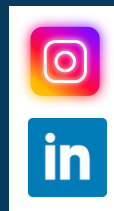
Thank you, to the student presenters,  
The University of the West of England  
Bristol, and the Students' Union at The  
UWE Bristol for a fantastic and  
memorable symposium!

## Further resources

[Learn more](#) about CJ Watson's and Hridita Afsana's experience of co-creating the Symposium as SOS UK student staff.

Learn more about Responsible Futures and how it can support student leadership at your university on the programme [website](#).

[Students as change agents workshop](#) recording  
[Green skills and careers workshop](#) recording  
[Student Sustainability Showcase](#) recording



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