

Sustainability Starts with You

Green Skills in Humanities & Social Sciences



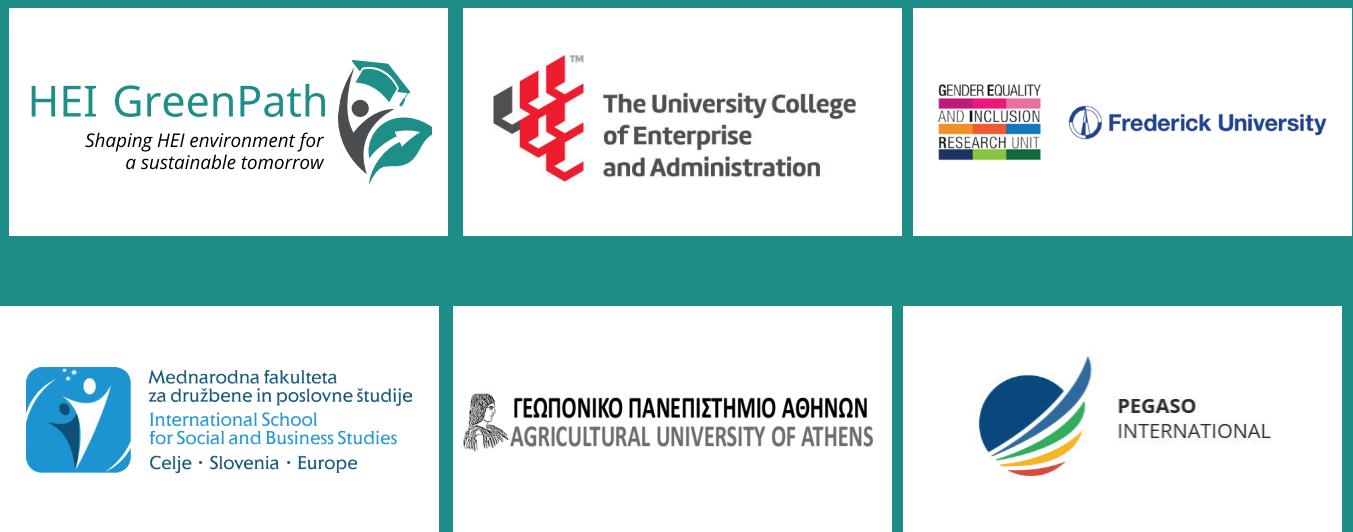
HEI GreenPath
*Shaping HEI environment for
a sustainable tomorrow*





Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

**Project: “HEI GreenPath:
Shaping HEI environment for a sustainable tomorrow”**
Agreement no: 2024-1-PL01-KA220-HED-000244946



This project is co-funded with the support from the European Union (project no 2024-1-PL01-KA220-HED-000244946). The materials developed as part of the project are views only of their authors, which do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Commission and the Foundation for the Development of the Education System (National Agency). The European Commission and FRSE are not responsible for the content of the materials developed as part of the project.



HEI Green Path:

Shaping HEI Environments for a Sustainable Tomorrow

Empowering students in Humanities & Social Sciences
with green skills for a sustainable future!

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About the HEI Green Path

Project Aims

The main objective of the project is to develop materials and find solutions that will actually contribute to increasing social and ecological awareness and responsibility of students and academic staff.

Specific objectives

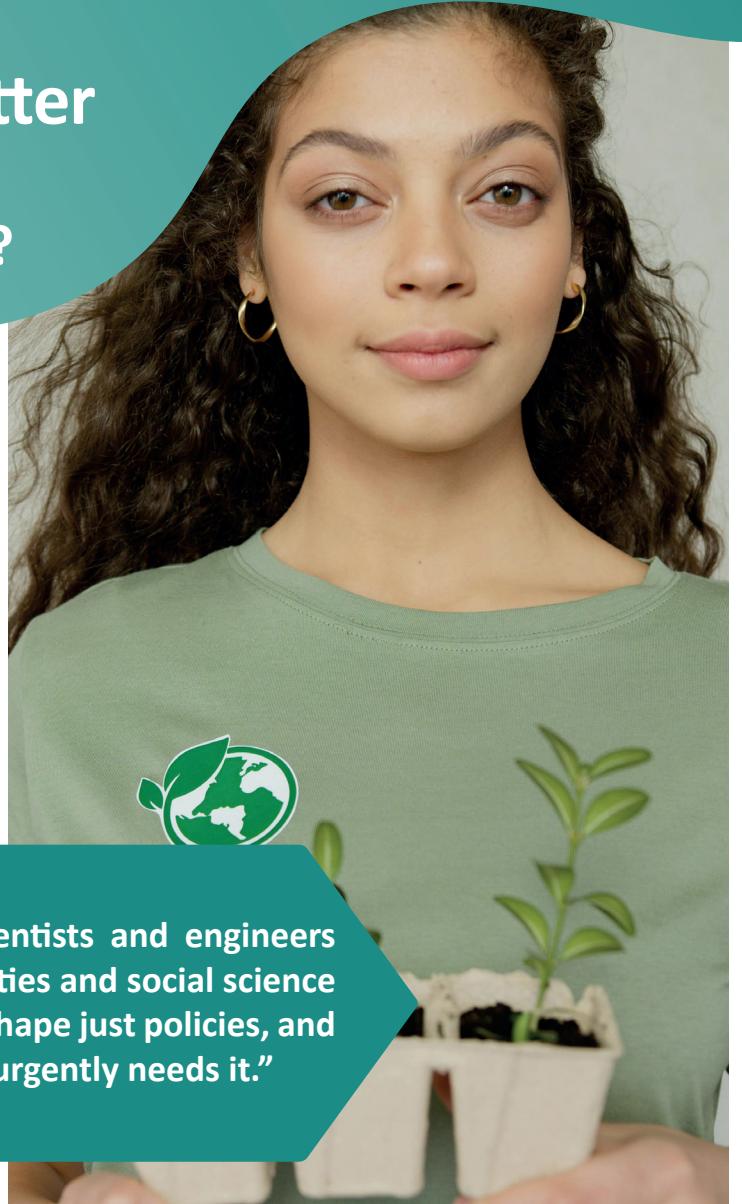
- Integrating ecological skills and the concept of sustainable development into existing study programs in many disciplines.
- Equipping lecturers with knowledge and tools to effectively shape ecological skills among students.
- Supporting cooperation between universities, industrial partners and environmental organizations to increase the importance of ecological skills.
- Encouraging research initiatives focused on ecological skills, sustainable development and environmental innovations.
- Raising students' awareness of environmental problems and the importance of ecological skills.
- Introducing ecological skills and sustainable development issues into institutional policies and management structures

What is HEI Green Path

HEI Green Path is a European project aimed at strengthening ecological awareness and integrating green skills into higher education curricula across disciplines. It seeks to equip faculty and students with the knowledge and tools needed for a sustainable future, improve collaboration between universities and the job market, and promote sustainable practices within the academic community.



Why Green Skills Matter for Humanities & Social Sciences Students?



“Green skills are no longer just for scientists and engineers – they are the bridge that allows humanities and social science students to turn knowledge into action, shape just policies, and drive meaningful change in a world that urgently needs it.”

1.

Professional Competitiveness in a Changing Workplace

Multidisciplinary competency is becoming more and more valued in today's labour market. Employers need policy analysts, communicators, and educators who understand the human side of sustainability, not just engineers with green system design skills. Today's philosophical, political science, and anthropological students need to understand ecological policy frameworks, climate justice, and environmental ethics. This green literacy enhances employability and positions graduates as forward-thinking contributors across sectors.

2.

Developing Governance and Policy for a Green Future

Humanities and social science disciplines are foundational to the development and implementation of sustainable policies. Green transitions require not only technical solutions but also ethical discussion, cultural adaption, and democratic legitimacy. Students may make significant contributions to climate policy, just transition frameworks, and sustainable urban design by having a thorough understanding of governance, public administration, and political processes.

Without the capacity to critically examine societal narratives, power dynamics, and values, green governance cannot be successful. That's where HSS students come in.”

3.

Communicating Sustainability: Media, Advocacy, and Public Engagement

Social scientists and humanists are uniquely positioned to craft and disseminate the stories that move people. Climate change communication, environmental journalism, and sustainability marketing require not just facts, but framing. The ability to narrate complex global challenges in accessible and culturally resonant terms is a skill grounded in disciplines such as linguistics, literature, and media studies.

4.

Sociology, Urban Studies, and the Design of Resilient Societies

Design that is inclusive and egalitarian is essential to sustainable urban development. Critical understanding of the distribution of environmental advantages and burdens among various people is made possible by sociology, human geography, and urban studies. For social scientists striving to create resilient and habitable cities, ideas like environmental racism, gentrification, and sustainable mobility become crucial analytical tools.

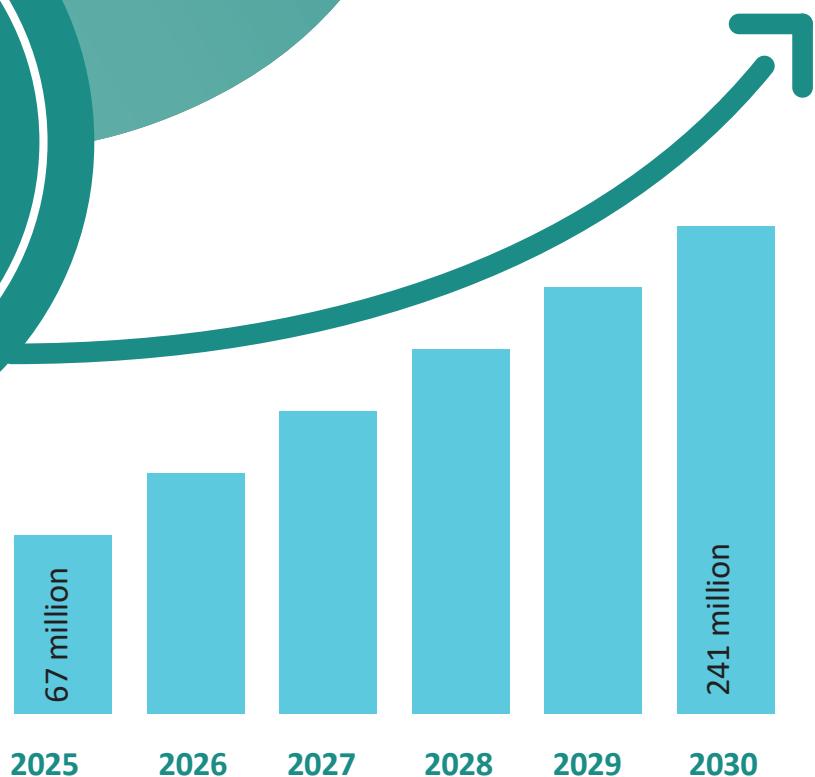
5.

Psychology and Education: Promoting Eco-Friendly Practices

Long-term sustainability solutions necessitate behavioural change, which has its roots in psychological knowledge. Psychology students can be instrumental in creating interventions that promote mindful consumption and group responsibility, ranging from eco-anxiety to pro-environmental behaviour. Likewise, educators trained in environmental pedagogy shape the next generation of green citizens.



Did you know?



Employment Trends

- 241 million green skill vacancies projected by 2030, up from 67 million in 2025.⁹
- Green job postings increased by 22.4% between 2022 and 2023, outpacing the 12.3% growth in green-skilled talent.¹⁰
- Possessing green skills boosts hiring chances by 29% compared to the average workforce.¹¹

⁹ Market Research Report. (2025). The Green Skills Gap 2025: Forecasts Key Workplace Demographic and Recruitment Changes Up to 2030. Retrieved from <https://www.researchandmarkets.com/reports/5955204/the-green-skills-gap-forecasts-key-workplace>

¹⁰ World Economic Forum (2024). Green jobs grow twice as fast as workers with green skills. Retrieved from <https://www.weforum.org/stories/2024/02/green-jobs-green-skills-growth/>

¹¹ The Economist Impact. (2024). Green skills: driving the transition to a more sustainable future. Retrieved from https://impact.economist.com/sustainability/green-skills-outlook/downloads/Iberdrola_GreenSkillsOutlook_report.pdf



In-Demand Green Skills for HSS Professionals

- Environmental Law & Policy:** Understanding regulations and their societal impacts.
- Carbon Footprinting:** Measuring and managing carbon emissions.
- Sustainability Communication:** Translating complex issues for public engagement.
- Behavioral Change Strategies:** Using psychological knowledge to encourage environmentally friendly practices.

Sectors Seeking HSS Expertise

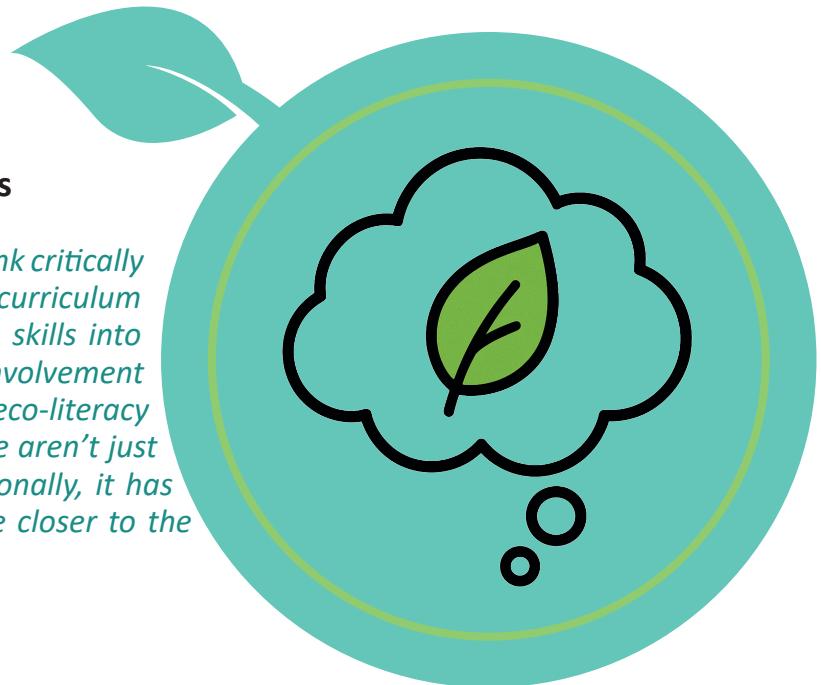
- Public Policy & Governance:** Crafting equitable sustainability policies.
- Education:** Including sustainability in pedagogy and curriculum.
- Media & Journalism:** Contextualising and clearly reporting on environmental challenges.
- Urban Planning:** Designing inclusive, sustainable communities.

Statements from professionals.

How green skills have influenced their careers:

**Petra Horvat, 42 years,
primary school teacher from Slovenia
Background: MA in Pedagogical Studies**

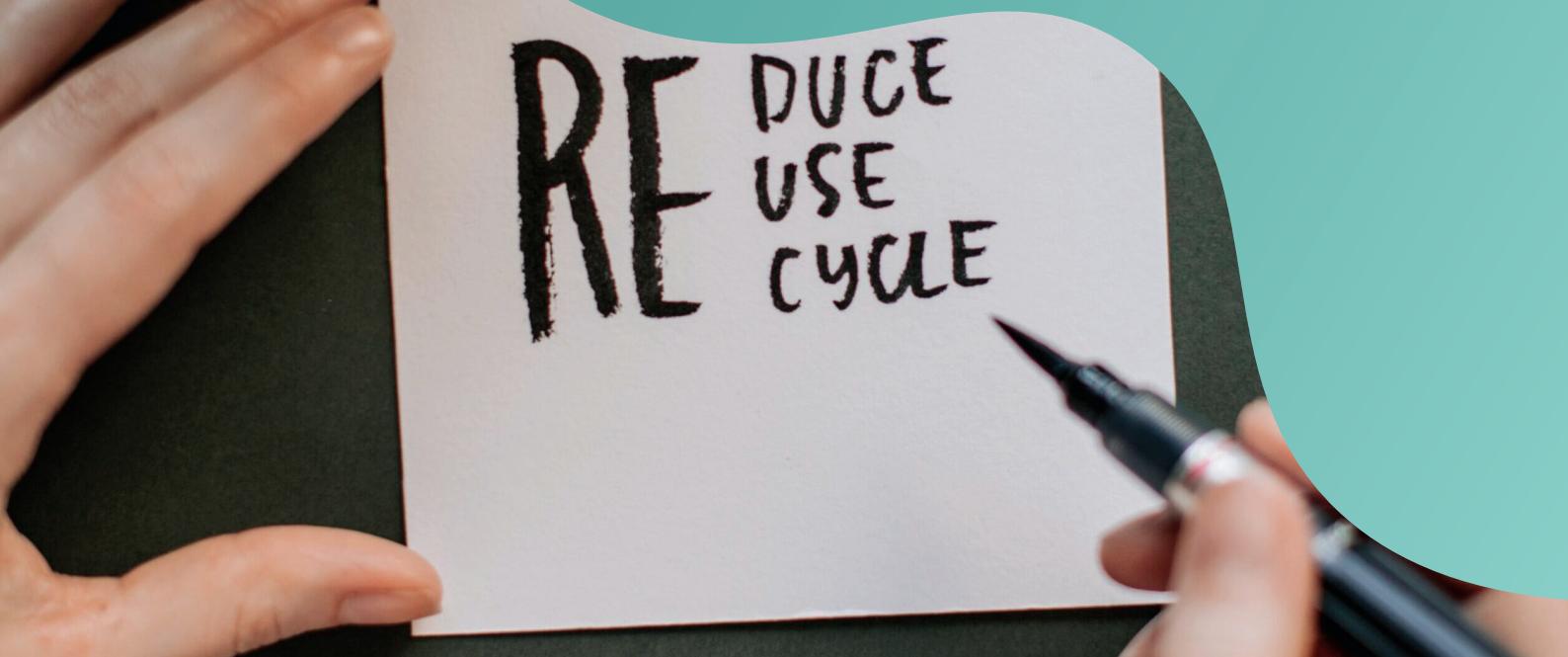
"My students are now better equipped to think critically about their role in the environment, and the curriculum has been enhanced by incorporating green skills into my teaching practice." I increased student involvement and social responsibility by implementing eco-literacy activities and a school garden project. These aren't just science lessons—they're life lessons. Additionally, it has improved me as a teacher and brought me closer to the issues facing the world today."



**Alen Ježovnik, 55 years,
Head of Publishing House from Slovenia
Background: Humanities Studies (BA),
and Management (MPhil)**

"Integrating green skills into our publishing work has transformed not only the topics we cover but also how we operate as a business. We began prioritizing publications that raise awareness about sustainability, climate change, and social responsibility. This shift attracted a new generation of conscious readers and collaborators. Internally, we adopted sustainable printing practices and digital-first strategies, which reduced our environmental footprint. Embracing green skills has made our publishing house a more responsible and forward-thinking platform, aligned with global sustainability goals."

Essential Green Skills & Eco-Friendly Activities for Humanities & Social Sciences Students



Essential Green Skills for Humanities & Social Sciences Students

Why green skills matter?

In the face of climate change and environmental challenges, the labor market is undergoing a dynamic transformation. More and more organizations – from public administration to the private sector – are looking for employees who understand the importance of sustainable development. Green competences are a set of skills and attitudes that support ecological changes and socially responsible actions. Humanities scholars have enormous potential to become leaders in the green transformation. Thanks to their communication skills, empathy, and critical thinking, they can influence social attitudes, design changes, and support institutions in making more informed and sustainable decisions.

The job market is waiting for students with green skills.

Among the “green” professions that will gain increasing popularity on the job market are those that use soft skills to a significant extent. On one hand, there will be a need for engineers familiar with new technologies; on the other, for professionals such as auditors, marketing experts, and management staff who understand the challenges businesses face. These individuals will play a key role in communicating the societal and consumer benefits of the changes being introduced.

Key competencies:

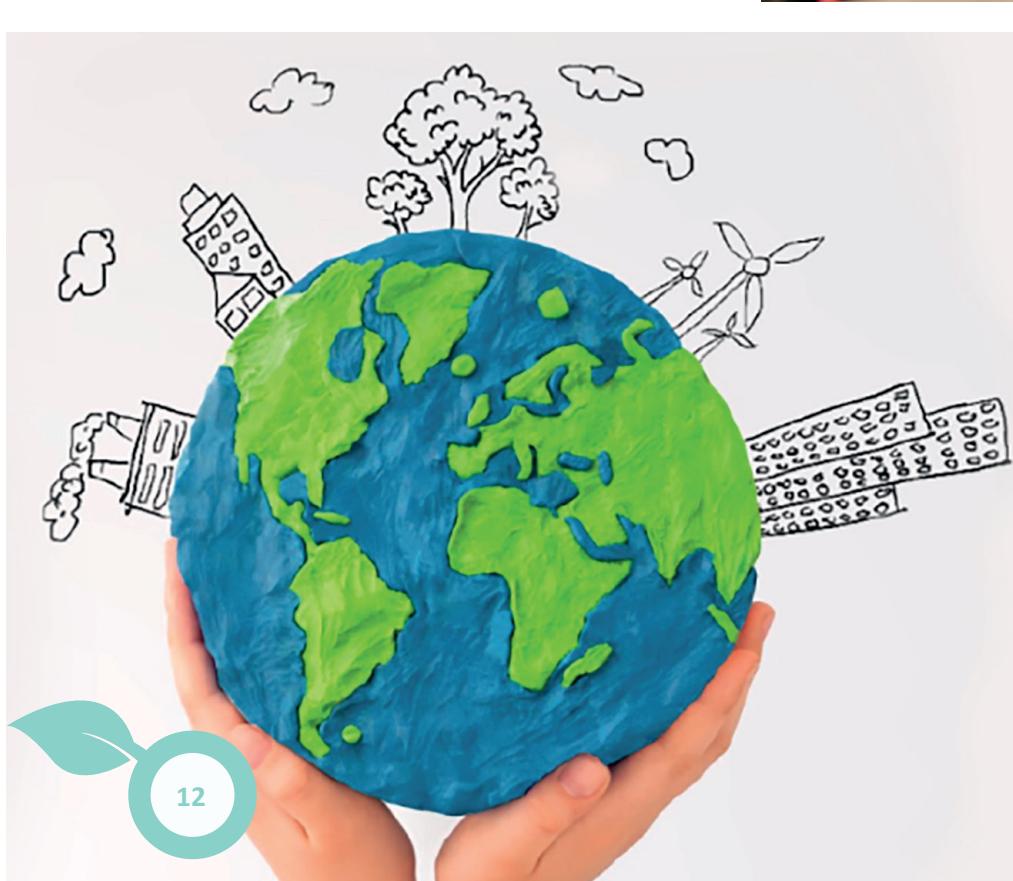
Creativity and Critical Thinking

Among the key competences of the future are creativity and critical thinking, especially when combined with environmental awareness – together, these form the foundation of what are known as green competences.



Creativity

allows you to see opportunities where others see problems. In the context of the green economy, it enables the design of innovative solutions that reduce the negative environmental impact. A humanities graduate who can approach environmental challenges creatively can co-create social campaigns, ecological education programs, or civic initiatives.



Critical thinking

helps assess the effectiveness of the methods used, identify potential risks, and make informed decisions - whether it involves optimizing production processes or minimizing waste.

7 green skills in demand for positions requiring medium and high qualifications



Analytical thinking, needed to both interpret and understand the need for change, and to select appropriate means to implement it.



Coordination, management, and business skills applied with a broad perspective to support the achievement of economic, social, and ecological goals.



Innovation to identify opportunities and create new strategies for addressing challenges related to environmental protection.



Marketing skills, useful in promoting environmentally friendly products and services.



Consulting skills, to advise consumers on ecological solutions and to promote environmentally friendly technologies.



Networking, IT, and language skills that facilitate effective operation in global markets.



Leadership skills and strategic thinking will be particularly useful for politicians and managers in creating the right incentives and conditions for implementing green production and transport.

New model – The Technological Humanist

In a world of advancing technological development and automation, skills related to cooperation, communication, and creativity are becoming increasingly valuable.

The traditional role of the engineer, primarily focused on technical aspects, is evolving into a new model: the Technological Humanist.

It is similar to green competences - in an era of rapid technological change, the importance of competences that allow for quick and flexible adaptation to new tasks or to acquire new qualifications is growing.



Representatives of new professions related to the "green lifestyle" – such as new approaches to dietetics, transport, and education – will have growing employment opportunities. You do not have to be a specialist in renewable energy to contribute to a green and sustainable future. As a humanities or social sciences student, you can:

- Advise companies and institutions on social responsibility,
- Promote pro-ecological attitudes through media and public communication,
- Support sustainable development in the public sector, NGOs, or businesses.

Employers will also expect candidates to have the ability to resolve conflicts, communicate effectively both in writing and orally, and cooperate within teams, including international contexts.

All this creates new job opportunities for humanities and social sciences students – especially those open to new technologies, creativity, and innovation!



Eco-Friendly Activities for Students in Humanities & Social Sciences

Sustainability starts with action!

As students of the Humanities and Social Sciences, you're already engaged in understanding people, cultures, and societies. Why not take that one step further by integrating **eco-conscious practices** into your academic and everyday life?

**Start where you are. Use what you have.
Do what you can.
Get involved: Easy & Impactful Activities**

On-campus initiatives:

- **Paperless Projects & Notes**

Go digital! Use apps like Notion, Google Docs, or OneNote to reduce paper usage in essays, readings, and notes.

- **Eco-Themed Research & Discussions**

Choose sustainability-focused topics in your essays or projects. Explore themes like environmental justice, climate change communication, or eco-literature.

- **Organize a Clothing Swap or Book Exchange**

Combat fast fashion and reduce waste by co-ordinating sustainable events with your department or student group.



- **Green Your Events**

If you're planning lectures, workshops, or conferences, opt for digital flyers, reusable materials, and locally sourced snacks.

- **Join or Start a Sustainability Club**

Form a group focused on the intersection of environment and society. Collaborate on campus-wide initiatives like waste reduction or climate activism.

 **Frederick University**



Personal Actions:

- Carry a reusable water bottle or coffee cup and use eco-friendly stationery.
- Reduce food waste, opt for plant-based meals, and shop locally.
- Walk, bike, carpool, or use public transport when heading to campus.
- Practice energy-saving habits like switching off lights and using cold water for laundry.

Community Engagement and Careers:

- Research and support green social enterprises and fair-trade brands.
- Engage in climate advocacy, policy discussions, and local environmental activism.
- Use sustainable media and storytelling to educate and inspire action.
- Choose green-aligned internships and career paths that prioritize environmental values and sustainability.



... reducing just **1 kg** of daily waste per student could eliminate over **300 kg** of waste per year?¹²

... switching from paper to digital textbooks can **save up to 400,000 trees** annually across university campuses?¹³

Did You Know that...



... eco-friendly commuting choices, such as biking or public transportation, can **save an average student 1,200 pounds of CO₂ emissions** each year?¹⁴

... campuses with widespread recycling programs divert up to **60% of waste from landfills**, helping to preserve natural resources?¹⁵



...small steps lead to a big change.

Take the 30-day Green Challenge and pick 3 of the above actions to complete this month!

¹² According to estimates on paper use in universities, students consume over 4,000 sheets of paper per year, which can be translated to approximately 300 kg of paper waste annually per student. (Iqbal, M., & Ahmed, F. (2015). Paperless campus: The real contribution towards a sustainable low carbon society. *Journal of Environmental Science, Toxicology and Food Technology*, 9(8), 10–17. <https://doi.org/10.9790/2402-09811017>).

¹³ Although the exact number varies, it is estimated that one tree can produce around 8,000 sheets of paper (Iqbal & Ahmed, 2015). Large-scale transitions to digital textbooks across campuses can result in hundreds of thousands of trees saved annually.

¹⁴ Taking into account that the average passenger vehicle emits around 400 grams of CO₂ per mile, replacing a 4-mile everyday car trip with biking or public transit can reduce emissions by around 1,200 pounds of CO₂ per person annually (<https://www.epa.gov/greenvehicles/greenhouse-gas-emissions-typical-passenger-vehicle>).

¹⁵ For example, Stanford University (<https://sustainable.stanford.edu/>) and the University of Washington (<https://facilities.uw.edu/files/media/uw-recycling-annual-report-2021.pdf>) have reported diversion rates around 60%, meaning that around 60% of campus waste is recycled or composted rather than sent to landfills.

Best Practices in Green Education & Sustainability for Humanities & Social Sciences Students?

Now that you know why green skills matter and what they are, let's explore how they are being put into practice. The green transition isn't just a future concept; it's happening right now in universities and professional fields worldwide. This chapter highlights the pioneering initiatives and career pathways that are turning sustainability from theory into action.



University Initiatives & Campus Sustainability Programs

Universities are no longer just places of learning; they are becoming living laboratories for sustainability. Here's how Higher Education Institutions are integrating green principles directly into the student experience, with a special focus on Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS).

Eco-Conscious Campuses

Universities are transforming their physical spaces to reflect their commitment to the planet.

- **Green Infrastructure:** Campuses are adopting solar energy, green roofs, and rainwater harvesting systems.
- **Zero-Waste Policies:** Initiatives like comprehensive recycling programs and campus-wide composting are becoming standard.

Example in Action:

The University of Copenhagen's "Green Campus" sustainability plan aims for a 65% CO₂ reduction and integrates sustainability into all campus operations, from energy to food services.



Green Curricula

Your HSS degree is getting a green upgrade. Universities are embedding sustainability directly into coursework, ensuring graduates are prepared for the challenges of tomorrow. Look for programs and courses such as Environmental Law & Policy, Sustainable Tourism Management, Green Media & Environmental Journalism, Circular Economy & Social Enterprise, Ecological Anthropology & Sociology.

Example in Action: MSc in Environmental Policy at LSE

The MSc in Environmental Policy and Regulation at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) is a perfect illustration of a green curriculum for HSS students. The program is designed to equip future leaders with the social science tools needed to address complex environmental problems.

Students learn to analyze and design environmental policies by studying: political and economic drivers of environmental change, the role of international law in climate governance, the application of economic principles to environmental management.

Get inspired by having a look at these real-world great initiatives:

- **Urban Farming Initiative:** The U-M Campus Farm at the University of Michigan. What began as a grassroots student project has grown into the **U-M Campus Farm**, a thriving source of fresh produce for campus dining. It doubles as a hands-on learning lab for exploring **food systems, public policy, and social equity**.
- **Sustainable Fashion Campaigns:** Cambridge University Sustainable Fashion Society. The Sustainable Fashion Society hosts clothing swaps, upcycling workshops, and expert talks on ethical supply chains. This creative initiative blends activism, design, and community building to challenge fast fashion on campus.
- **Waste Reduction Programs:** The "Green Dorm" Competition at the University of Virginia (UVA). The "Green Dorm" competition motivates students to cut energy and waste through friendly rivalry. Powered by behavioral psychology and peer engagement, it turns sustainability into a measurable, campus-wide movement.





Student-Led Sustainability Projects

Students are the most powerful agents of change. Across the world, HSS students are leading impactful projects that create real change on their campuses and in their communities.



Real-World Professionals Applying Green Skills in HSS Careers

Green skills aren't just academic—they are transforming careers. Your background in understanding human behavior, culture, and society is exactly what the green economy needs. Hear from HSS professionals on the front lines.

Sustainable Journalism

“A powerful climate story doesn’t just inform—it humanizes. By weaving data into narrative, journalists can shift hearts and minds.”

— Pippa Neill, environmental journalist and COP26 contributor

Photo: Pippa Neill LinkedIn



Green Policy & Law

“The earth is being injured and harmed—and the law must speak for it. We need legal minds ready to criminalize ecocide.”

— Polly Higgins, Scottish barrister and advocate for ecocide law

Photo: Wikipedia

Sustainable Urban Planning

“Cities must be part of the solution—not just combat climate change, but improve lives. We bridge sociology and design to shape liveable, resilient spaces.”

— Dr. Jan Gehl, urban design expert renowned for ‘people-first’ cities

Photo: Abril Felman



Leading Organizations & Networks for Green Careers

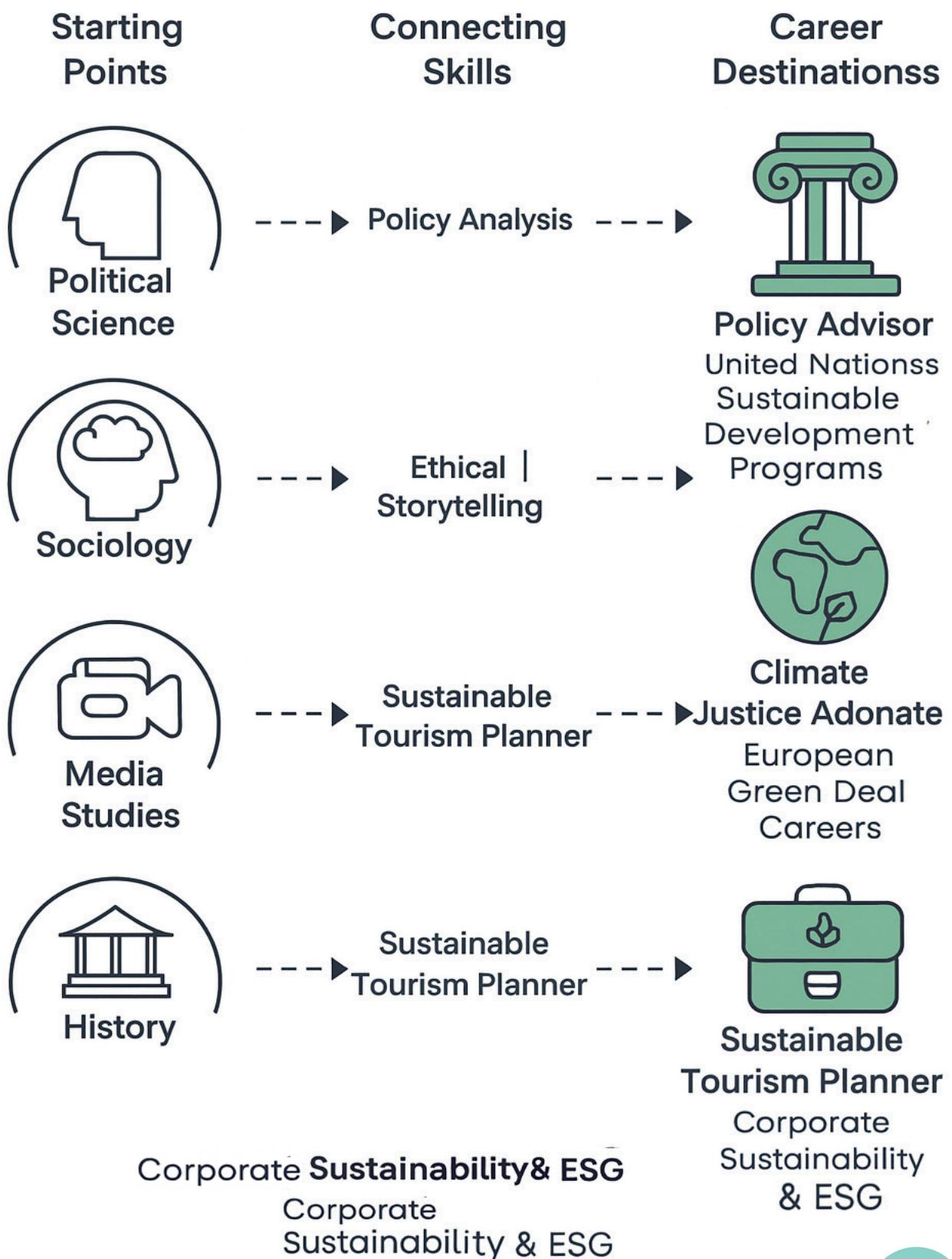
Ready to turn your passion into a profession? Your skills in critical thinking, communication, and policy analysis are in high demand. Many organizations are actively seeking HSS graduates to help lead the green transition.

- **United Nations Sustainable Development Programs** – Green policy research, human rights & climate justice.
- **European Green Deal Careers** – Jobs in policy analysis, law, environmental economics, and urban planning.
- **NGOs & Think Tanks** – Opportunities in environmental advocacy, sustainable media, and public communication.
- **Corporate Sustainability & ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance)** – Careers in sustainable business, ethical fashion, and green tourism.

This is your road map for a successful Green Career:



YOUR HSS PATH TO A GREEN CAREER



Website of the Project: hei-greenpath.eu

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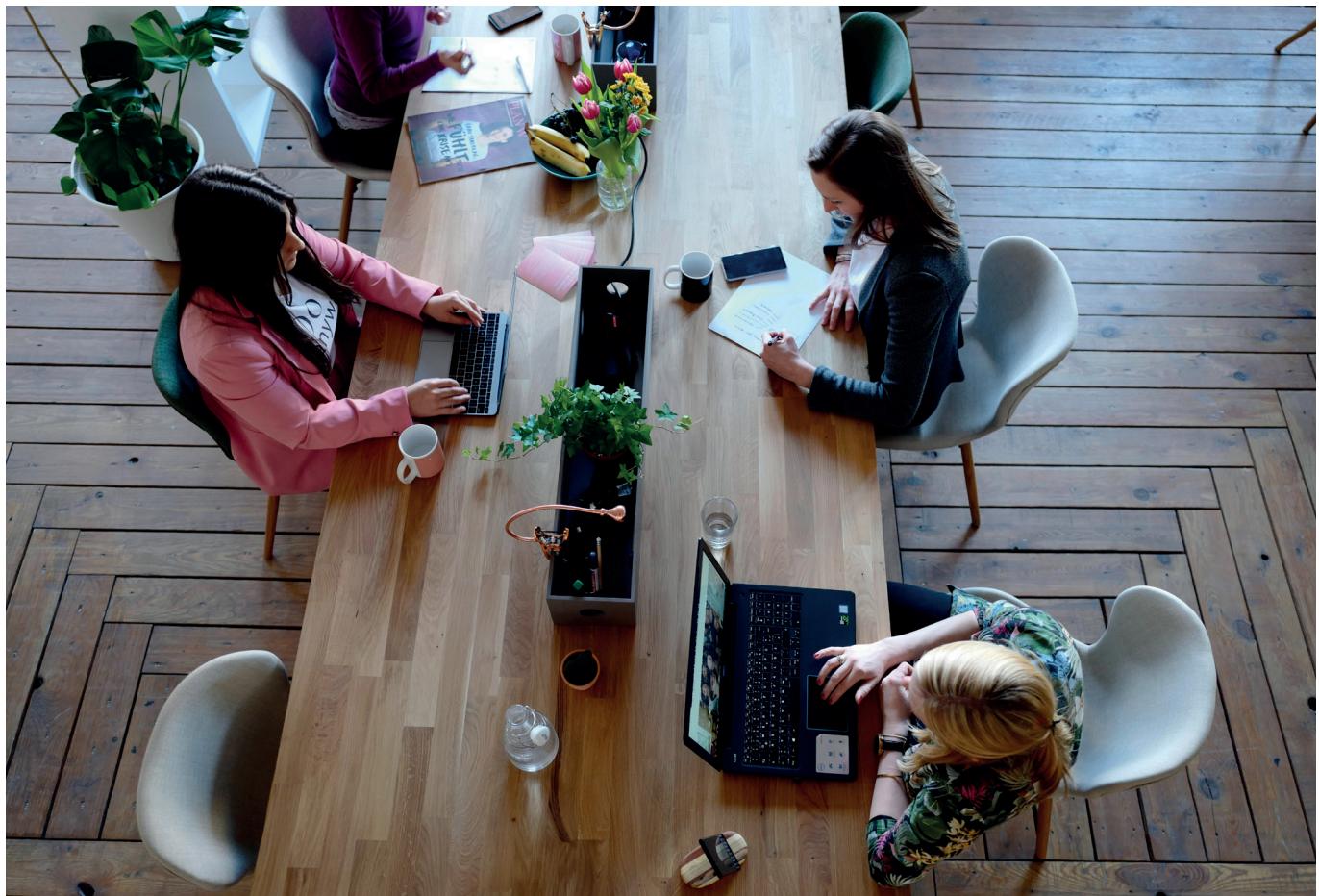
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Declaration of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process

During the preparation of this work the authors used ChatGPT to improve language and readability. After using this tool/service, the authors reviewed and edited the content as needed and they take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

Some photographs used in this brochure are sourced from Pexels (www.pexels.com).

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