Photo credits: Justin Kauffman

Applying Design Thinking to Advancing SDGs in South Asia

INTRODUCTION

We invite applications for a three-week online academy aiming to contribute to a better understanding of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and for the better translation of this knowledge into action.

Using key concepts from design thinking in combination with peer to peer learning (across contexts and disciplines) we will enable converting cutting edge-knowledge pertaining to SDGs into action. The program will involve essential voices from South Asia, of academicians, decision makers, civil society, and importantly, from the grassroot level as well as excellent communicators coming in as skill trainers.

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Why is this relevant?

South Asia's economic dynamism has triggered fast and deep social and ecological transformations alongside uneven development across the region. This has often occurred at the cost of environmental degradation, significantly affecting those at the margins of society. The UN Agenda 2030 – SDGs represent a globally negotiated agenda to address these (global) challenges including those related to poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice. This academy will help to understand what sustainable development means and how to contribute to its advancement in the landscape across South Asia, especially in the post pandemic context.

The objective of the online academy is to build skills enabling the participants to contribute to, and take leadership in the achievement of the SDGs with special focus on climate action, waste management and biodiversity.

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ABOUT THE ACADEMY

The academy spreads over three weeks and is organised in 4 hour online contact modules on three days per week, starting from 24th January- 11th February 2022. Contact modules are designed in an interactive manner with space for interaction, creative thinking and feedback by the faculty and other knowledge holders. Selected participants will be based in their home location and will be expected to participate over the online platform Zoom.

Potential outputs and benefits:

The program aims to develop the capacities of early career researchers and professionals in learning and applying design thinking principles, skills that enable converting knowledge into action. Participants can expect to work with cross-regional & disciplinary teams and learn to appreciate the voices from the field as well as the potential and benefits of working with multiple stakeholders.

Key skills to be learned are:

- Design thinking skills to find innovative solutions
- Appreciate voices from the field regarding local issues
- How to build a foundation from which to design inter-disciplinary actions to promote SDGs
- Understand, analyse and identify interconnected challenges overlapping in local and global dynamics in South Asia and Switzerland .

Pedagogy

The pedagogical approach will be interactive with a mix of course lectures, interaction with voices from the field, interactive skill training workshops and also, apply the learned skills in the context of the academy. We expect and encourage peer to peer learning and stimulating knowledge exchange throughout. Assignments are designed to be completed individually, we however encourage collaboration and discussion on the way to completion. Lecturers and other facilitators will provide regular feedback on outputs.

Faculty are from renowned universities across South Asia and Switzerland. The academy content will further be facilitated by experienced resource persons, grassroot leaders, founders and entrepreneurs of unique initiatives.

Means and criteria of assessment

Participants will be assessed based on attendance and timely submissions, engagement with the resource persons and final outputs. A certificate for completion will be provided for submission of assignments and active participation in the academy with at least 80% attendance. Outstanding assignments will be chosen for further collaboration or curation on platforms of CLOC partner institutions.

Eligibility

We encourage Master students, early career researchers (PhD & Post-docs) and junior professionals to apply. This course is open to individuals from all subject areas.

Participants from Switzerland and other South Asian countries like Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Maldives, and Myanmar are eligible to apply.

The academy will be held in English. Proficiency in oral and written English is mandatory. Basic computer and internet skills, familiarity and comfort working with online platforms such as Zoom and other collaborative online tools will be an advantage.

Certification

Participants on completion of the online academy will receive a Certificate of Completion from The University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Western Switzerland (HES-SO.ch) on successful completion of the K2A program. Completion refers to 80% of attendance of all modules and completion of all assignments.

Fee

The program has no tuition fees and is scholarship based for selected participants.

Timeline

Registration and application deadline ....10th Dec 2021

Intimation of shortlisted candidates ....20th Dec 2021

Registration of selected candidates ....10th Jan 2022

Preparation material online ....17th Jan 2022

Program start dates ....24th Jan 2022

Program end dates ....11th Feb 2022

Duration: 3 weeks (4 hours/day of contact classes, 3 days/week for 3 weeks). Inaugural and valedictory events will be held at the beginning and end of the program.

Click here to download the K2A Academy Schedule.

Application details

Applications must include
1. A complete application form
2. A Curriculum Vitae
3. A letter of motivation
4. A reference letter from the direct supervisor/professor /whom the applicant reports at university/work recommending the candidate

Women, minorities and those working in conflict/fragile contexts are especially encouraged to apply.

Applicants will be selected based on merit, motivation level, equitable representation of regions and preferably, a diverse disciplinary background. Please note that selected candidates will be notified by email. Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

Selected candidates will then be required to register by submitting a No Objection Certificate from your current employer/supervisor (if applicable) or a statement on a letterhead granting time to participate in the online academy.

Click here to apply.

SPEAKERS & FACILITATORS

Rory Truell
Secretary-General
IFSW

Sobia Rafiq
Architect/ Urban
Planner

Wolfram Thurm
Head of Design
Gojek

Swetha Rao
Sociologist/ Teacher
Haute Ecole de
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Lena Robra,
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Know more here. For enquiries academy.india@swissnex.org.

The program is offered by the Clusters of Cooperation in the Global South (CLOC) and is sponsored by Swiss Universities Development and Cooperation Network (SUDAC). Know more about the K2A network and its partner institutions here.