# THE BRITISH ACADEMY AND SOS-UK: SHAPE IMPACT PROJECTS 2021-22

We are currently seeking institutions across the UK to take part in the second year of our **SHAPE Sustainability Impact Projects** initiative. Institutional leaders will pitch real-world local sustainability challenges to interdisciplinary teams of their students. The students will then work over the following months to problem-solve these challenges, with support from SOS-UK and the British Academy. Find out more about the project below…

## BACKGROUND & SUMMARY

**SHAPE Impact Projects** are a collaborative initiative between the British Academy and Students Organising for Sustainability (SOS-UK) which uses an applied learning 'living laboratory' model to demonstrate the importance of the arts, humanities and social sciences in tackling sustainability challenges. Following on from the successful conclusion of the 2020-21 pilot (see report here), we are launching Phase II for 2021-22 and **we are seeking 4-5 universities to take part this year**!

The project aims to engage students and academics in realising the relevance and impact of their disciplines in tackling environmental, social, and economic sustainability challenges. Students' and academics' own institutions, as well as the local community, will serve as the testbed for their ideas, enabling an understanding of the impact of their field of study in a local and hands-on context. The project adopts British Academy's use of the term SHAPE to describe Social Sciences, Humanities and the Arts for the People and the Economy/Environment. Project outputs will offer tangible examples of how students from these disciplines can, and are, demonstrating this.

Institutional leaders from each participating university will recruit and support student project leaders to problem-solve real-world sustainability challenges facing the university and/or local community. The students will then work in interdisciplinary groups over the following months to problem-solve these challenges and come up with innovative solutions. Support and training will be coordinated by SOS-UK and the British Academy.

There is **no cost** to institutions or students for participation and there will be **grant funding available** to ensure project implementation and legacy locally, but spaces are very limited. We will be selecting the final institutions based on regional diversity and the potential to reach a diverse range of students from across the arts, humanities and social sciences. **If you think your institution might be interested, please email Rachel.Soper@sos-uk.org to express your interest.**

# PROJECT OVERVIEW

4-5 universities will be recruited, with 2-3 groups of students to be recruited at each institution to develop their own projects to address the challenges they have been set. The projects will run simultaneously, with student groups and institutional stakeholders coming together (virtually and/or in-person) for the launch, workshops and final conference.

SOS-UK and the British Academy will provide support to participating institutions and student project leaders, in order to help them develop impactful, meaningful and long-lasting projects. Support will include scheduled skills workshop, remote reactive project-based support, resources, and grant funding. Examples of the type of support that will be offered include:

- Support to build and maintain links with the local community within the context of the projects, which could include FE institutions, community groups and local businesses.
- Project-based support to maximise the impact of projects, which will be bespoke and reactive to the students' project plans (such as team work, monitoring impact, presenting findings).
- **\*new this year\*** Grant funding for projects and some ongoing support for legacy implementation (grant amounts TBC).
- **\*new this year\*** Support to champion equality diversity and inclusion within the projects (including the student recruitment phase).
- **\*new this year\*** **Carbon Literacy training** and certification (approved by the Carbon Literacy project) offered free of charge for all student project leaders.


## Types of challenges

Each institution will pose 2-3 challenges that their students will problem-solve as part of the project. These challenges should be real-world challenges that the institution is facing or working on, and could relate to environmental, social or economic sustainability (ideally a combination of all three!). Some themes that your challenges could be centred around are:

- Local action for COP26 and beyond
- The UN Sustainable Development Goals
- A just and sustainable recovery from COVID-19
- Your local sustainability strategy implementation
- Student learning and education for sustainable development (ESD)
- Student engagement with sustainability issues
- Biodiversity and nature
- The local community
- Welfare and wellbeing
- Equality, diversity and inclusion

# PROJECT TIMELINE

The project will take place between September 2021 and April 2022. The exact timeline will be confirmed with input from the participation institutions.

| STAGE ONE: PREPARATION AND STUDENT RECRUITMENT | |
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| September 2021 | • University recruitment, and recruitment of student project leaders within each institution.<br>• Baseline survey of students participating in the project.<br>• Universities confirm the sustainability challenges they'd like to pitch to their students. |
| **STAGE TWO: PROJECT LAUNCH** | |
| Mid Oct (date TBC) | Online pitch event to launch the project with participating universities, students and academics, including:<br><br>• An overview of the project.<br>• Pitching the challenges.<br>• Introductory training from SOS-UK. |
| **STAGE THREE: ONGOING SUPPORT** | |
| Oct 2021 – March 2022 | Student teams work with university leads who set the initial challenge, with support from SOS-UK staff and the British Academy.<br><br>Student learning and development workshops will be delivered by SOS-UK, which could be delivered in-person or virtually (including Carbon Literacy training). |
| **STAGE FOUR: PROJECT CONCLUSION AND CONFERENCE** | |
| April 2022 | Project conference (expected to be held in-person):<br>• Conference where participating students present their learning, projects and recommendations.<br>• Panel of high-profile academics and leaders who work with the British Academy will evaluate and feedback on students' proposals for addressing the sustainability challenges they were set.<br>• University leads provide feedback on feasibility and discuss possible local implementation and legacy.<br>• Project leaders will pitch for funding to continue or implement their projects. |
| **STAGE FIVE: PROJECT EVALUATION, REPORT AND DISSEMINATION** | |
| Spring/Summer 2022 | Evaluation activities completed with participating students and universities:<br>• Post-intervention survey and focus group completed with subset of student participants to gain feedback and evaluate programme.<br>• Feedback secured from university staff involved in setting sustainability challenges and overseeing student involvement.<br>• Students receive their digital badge and employability support.<br><br>Sector-wide dissemination activities will follow. |

# RESPONSIBILITIES

We expect local engagement and support from academic staff members from arts, humanities and/or social science faculties, the institution's sustainability team, and the Students' Union (and any other relevant stakeholders).

**Each participating institution will:**

- Promote the opportunity and identify students from relevant disciplines to participate, with a strong focus on equality, diversity and inclusion. They are encouraged to connect with their students' union on this, for a collaborative approach.
- Attend the virtual launch event and pitch key sustainability challenges that are relevant to the university and local community.
- Each student group should have a dedicated supervisor from the university to support them as they develop their projects including check-ins and ad-hoc reactive support.
- Attend the final conference and provide feedback on their students' projects.
- Where relevant, hold and administer grant funding for the projects.
- Commit to ensuring legacy and dissemination of the projects.

All students will receive a digital badge and certificate of participation, but we encourage the university to suitably recognise their participation at a local level (e.g. through HEAR record recognition, local employability award, formal course credit or payment).

**SOS-UK and the British Academy will:**

- Provide resources to promote the opportunity to staff and students.
- Provide training and ongoing support for students and staff throughout, as listed in the project overview section.
- Manage the monitoring and evaluation process.
- Administrate the final conference.
- Facilitate networking and collaboration between participating institutions and relevant local community groups.
- Provide additional grant funding for projects (grant amounts and number of projects to be funded TBC).

This is an exciting new initiative funded by the British Academy with no participation fee for institutions, staff or students.

# FURTHER INFORMATION AND NEXT STEPS

Please email Rachel.Soper@sos-uk.org to discuss the project or express interest in taking part before Friday 10th September 2021.