

Sustainable Innovation 2025

Sustainable Innovation in Products, Services and Business Models

Past, Present and Future

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University for the Creative Arts

Epsom

Surrey

UK

<https://cfsd.org.uk/>

Vodafone Germany & Closing the Loop

One for One: Bringing over 1 Million Scrap Phones Back into the Cycle Each Year.

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The built environment and fashion industries have a profound impact on the planet, contributing significantly to resource consumption, energy demand, and greenhouse gas emissions. However, these sectors also present the opportunity to drive positive change by advancing global climate initiatives and supporting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Regenerative design provides a transformative framework for this shift, moving beyond merely minimising harm to actively restoring ecosystems and creating positive outcomes for both people and the environment.

Addressing climate, ecological and social challenges requires preparing graduates with strong competencies in sustainability and regenerative design. Academia plays a critical role in this effort, equipping future designers with the tools, knowledge, and confidence to lead transformative change. These graduates must develop technical expertise while also becoming advocates for sustainability and agents of meaningful societal and environmental impact.

As educators in design disciplines—where spaces and garments are major contributors to environmental issues—we share a responsibility to address these challenges collaboratively. UNESCO emphasises the need for education that integrates global perspectives with local insights, aligning with its Climate Change Education for Sustainable Development program.

This research establishes a framework for incorporating regenerative design into design education, integrating storytelling, experiential learning, co-design, and systems thinking to equip students with the skills needed to implement regenerative principles. By addressing design lifecycles, circularity, materials, and systems, the framework prepares graduates to approach sustainability holistically and take on leadership roles in driving change. This approach fosters interdisciplinary education and regenerative principles, enabling students to create innovative, sustainable, and socially equitable solutions.

The framework was tested through the interdisciplinary REGEN workshop at a higher education institution's School of Architecture, Art, and Design, in 2024. The four-day workshop emphasised holistic, interdisciplinary thinking, encouraging participants to balance societal and ecological needs in response to the climate emergency. Its collaborative structure dismantled disciplinary boundaries, embodying UNESCO's vision for real-world, problem-oriented education. Students engaged with practical tools and regenerative design practices, enhancing their readiness for professional and community roles.

The workshop brought together students and researchers from Interior Architecture, Architecture, Fashion Design, Textiles, and Fashion Marketing. By focusing on design processes and lifecycles, the workshop instilled regenerative design principles and raised awareness among diverse audiences, highlighting the interconnected nature of design disciplines and their shared responsibility in addressing environmental challenges.

Using qualitative methodologies and a case study strategy, the research incorporated ethnographic and autoethnographic approaches along with a qualitative questionnaire. Findings demonstrate that the framework is adaptable to various educational settings and has significant potential for application in professional practice. It also highlights the value of transferable practices across design disciplines, showcasing the impact of holistic, interdisciplinary education.

Ultimately, this framework aims to inspire educators, designers, and researchers to adopt interdisciplinary approaches that advance sustainability and regeneration in the built environment and fashion sectors. By transforming the practices of future professionals and shifting market perceptions, it seeks to promote sustainable and regenerative design in interiors, architecture, and fashion.