

# LSBU Sustainability and Climate Action Event Series

## Part Two – Consumption, Economics, Education and Wellbeing 4–6 November 2020

**We want our community and beyond to know that LSBU is dedicated to protecting our planet. We promise to become a university of the future - one that is conscious, one that is responsible and one that is sustainable. We're proud of the progress we have made, but we're not even close to done!**

We produced a take-away document for Part One of this event series with key messages, myth busters and practical take-aways from all of our speakers. And as this was SO well received, we decided to do it again! Have a read through and we hope you find the contributions useful in helping you to make more sustainable choices in your studies, careers and daily lives. Together, we can and continue to make a difference!

### Key messages

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#### Consumption

- Check out Dillie Kean's hilariously informative eco-blog: <https://shityoudontneed.blog/>
- There is a huge pleasure to be found in fixing things or upcycling.
- Global brands want us to buy more of their products and they do not care if we really need/use them. Governments must do more to regulate the free market of consumption by requiring companies to produce less and/or better quality.
- Treat retail spaces as another marketing channel, a store is a highly visible billboard to powerfully communicate sustainability stories.
- The shift to more extensive online consumer behaviour will have a significant impact on a sustainability agenda unless we begin to unpack a wider set of forces around why we consume.

- Look behind the tempting images and the marketing speak... and leave a gap between wanting and having.
- We are all creative enough to change what and how much we consume. Those little acts of creativity everyday, can lead to the great big paradigm shifting acts of creativity that change the world.
- Conscious consumers are on the rise, they are searching for extra meaning in the products they purchase. If your product, initiative or brand can make a real difference you need to communicate this with maximum impact.
- Consumer decisions need to be based on understanding our ecological relationships with the Planet.
- We all, as consumers, can create demand for sustainable solutions and sustainable development to accelerate the sustainability movement.
- In order to have a climate safe future – Londoners need to reduce their consumption related emissions from 12.6 tonnes each per year to around a third of that by 2030 and only 0.7 by 2050. The circular economy is the way to achieve this – and it means our future will be better and not worse.



## Economics

- The global collapse of biodiversity and the ongoing extinction crisis can be addressed via the financial markets.
- The Covid 19 pandemic has created a space for us to organise economics and politics in a more sustainable way. But to make that change we all need to take action - the public, academics and policy makers.
- Institutional investors can lead on saving species and protecting biodiversity.
- The challenges the circular economy faces can be approached through a psycho-social examination of our relationship to time and consumer behaviour.

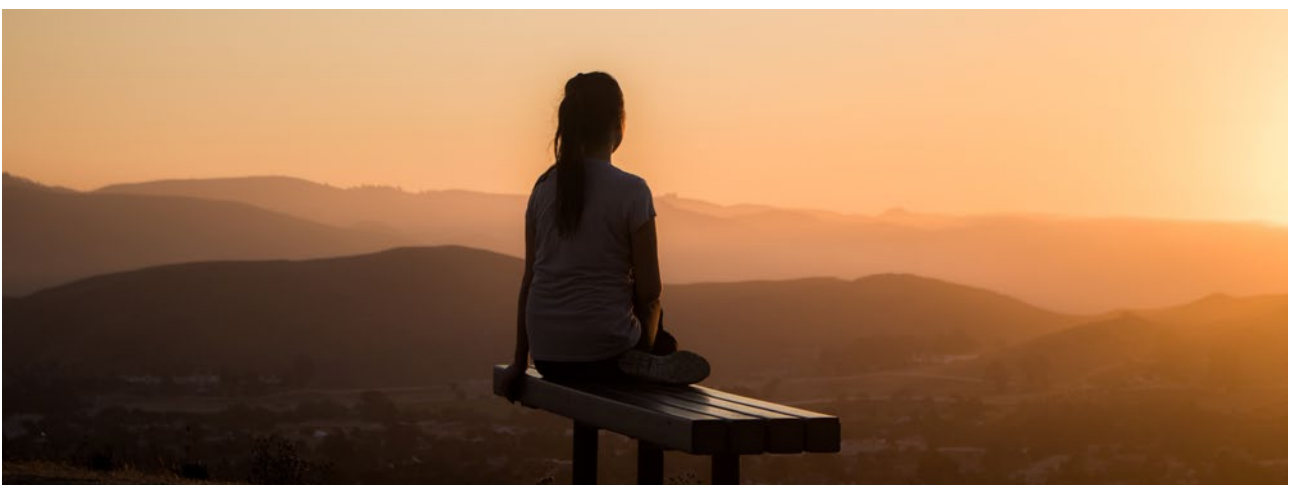
## Education

- There needs to be a systematic process to embed sustainability to degree programmes.
- By using the SDGs as a framework in its 2025 Strategy, LSBU have demonstrated how it will make an impact on sustainability over the next 5 years.
- Positive action by the university on social responsibility and sustainability is reported to be a factor influencing students' choice of place to study.
- Sustainability is a huge challenge that can't be tackled by one person but we can tackle it collectively and enjoyable education is a great starting point!
- In their present form, our formal education systems cannot deliver a sustainable future.
- Business Schools play a vital role in educating and encouraging students to think through the current environmentally unsustainable corporate culture of profit-marking at any cost.
- Developing skills and competencies in social responsibility and sustainability enhances the wellbeing for staff and students and increases student employability.

## Wellbeing

- Gardening and connecting with nature, is not only good for your physical health but reduces your stress levels and improves mental health and well-being.
- The self-critic can be a useful tool to motivate oneself and improve performance when utilised productively.
- As a home organising expert, I guide my clients on how to implement some simple, efficient organising solutions which will make their life easier and their home more peaceful - Isabelle Lamy, decluttering and home organising expert.
- Ikea's 'Live LAGOM' Programme was centred around co-creation with its co-workers and their customers.

- An ecological approach to the study of mental health may challenge us to think in ways that are more sensitive to the contexts of living and their relationship to our well-being.
- Attenuation of daylight is key – too much and glare can be an issue, too little and visual strain may be an issue.
- Alcohol harms fall along a broad continuum, with addiction being at the extreme end. It is important that more people become aware of the serious risks that heavy drinking can cause over a lifetime, so that we can minimise personal and societal costs and harms.
- Often the most disabling aspect of mental distress is the bad attitudes of others.
- Taking action locally can make a huge difference. Start with something small and see the project grow and flourish.
- The biggest predictor of a fierce self-critic is the self-fulfilling belief that these thoughts are uncontrollable.
- What's better electric light or daylight? There is no competition – daylight is key for a happier healthier lifestyle.
- A tendency to assume that your own drinking is normal and that only 'other people' have a problem is a big barrier to taking meaningful steps to change your own relationship with alcohol. Being willing to accept that your relationship with alcohol can be more or less problematic – and that this can even change over time and in different situations – will help more people to consider many of the different strategies and techniques which can be used to reduce alcohol harms.
- At Mind we have produced a coronavirus information hub, with information ranging from self-care tips to accessing treatment during the pandemic, to managing feelings about lockdown for young people ([mind.org.uk/coronavirus](https://mind.org.uk/coronavirus)).
- Mind conducted a survey of over 14,000 people during lockdown. More than 60% told us that their mental health had got worse – but a third of those said that they didn't try to get help for their mental health because they didn't think they deserved it. So our key message to everyone is: your mental health is a priority.



## Myth busters

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### Consumption

**Myth:** Individuals cannot do anything about saving the natural environment.

**Fact:** Of course we can, as our consumption contributes to resource depletion.

**Myth:** Website and social media are the best way to educate customers on sustainability policies.

**Fact:** Communicating a brand's sustainability initiative, or teaching customers how to change their behaviours, on their website and social channels isn't enough, it needs to be woven into their physical spaces too, e.g. customers can learn by exploring a store.

**Myth:** That we are more conscious than ever about our fashion choices and their impact on the planet.

**Fact:** That in relation to fashion consumption 350,000 tonnes of used clothing goes into landfill each year.

**Myth:** Brands need a unique display to sell each product or campaign.

**Fact:** Brands don't need to create an excess of displays to promote different products, installations can be created to evolve multiple times to tell different stories.

**Myth:** That a growing culture of sorting and tidying initiated by Marie Kondo means we are in control of our wardrobes.

**Fact:** Around 30% of clothing in wardrobes has not been worn for at least a year.



## Economics

**Myth:** Biodiversity is just a conservation and science issue.

**Fact:** It is also a financial issue for financial markets.

**Myth:** Sustainability is only about environmental issues.

**Fact:** Sustainability is about delivering social good; environmentally, economically and equality.

**Myth:** Sustainable Living is time consuming and costly.

**Fact:** Once you educate yourself about authentic sustainable choices, you just need to practice sustainable living to make it into a habit. Sustainable living if done correctly can actually save money in the long run.

## Education

**Myth:** Sustainability is taught to all business school students.

**Fact:** Initial findings from our study show that sustainability is often an after-thought to traditional business subjects.

**Myth:** Sustainability is the responsibility of a designated team.

**Fact:** It has to be embedded throughout an organisation or institution.



**Myth:** There's nothing I can do to make a difference.

**Fact:** The challenge of 'sustainability' can be perceived by many people as so overwhelming that they feel helpless and develop 'eco-apathy'. We can change this perception by being subversive and using fun!

**Myth:** Degrading ecological systems do not impact people living in cities.

**Fact:** We are all dependent on ecological systems to support our lives.

**Myth:** It is not possible to embed social responsibility and sustainability across the curriculum.

**Fact:** It can and needs to be done!

**Myth:** Carbon offsetting is about planting trees.

**Fact:** Carbon offsetting is about investing in projects that reduce carbon emissions. There are a number of different types of carbon offsetting projects such as protecting carbon-rich ecosystems like rainforests and wetlands and providing cleaner energy alternatives, such as low smoke cookstoves, in developing communities.

## Wellbeing

**Myth:** I cannot grow plants. I am not green fingered.

**Fact:** Don't be scared to fail and try again. Growing plants is a skill that you learn with practice and develop and get better at over time.

**Myth:** If I beat myself up when I make a mistake, I'll learn not to do it again.

**Fact:** Beating yourself up does not guarantee that you learn from mistakes. It is far more useful to accept the mistake, forgive yourself for being human and consider what you might do differently next time.

**Myth:** I don't have enough space to store my belongings.

**Fact:** What if you have too much unnecessary stuff? Or maybe the way you store your possessions is not optimised or not organised enough?

**Myth:** Sustainability is a luxury and not accessible for the many.

**Fact:** Healthy and sustainable living is affordable for the many. And saves our participants on average £1440 per year per household.

**Myth:** Shading stops daylight.

**Fact:** Venetian blinds can be used to redirect daylight deeper into rooms and screen fabric roller blinds allow diffuse daylight through.

**Myth:** So long as I'm not drinking all day every day, I don't have an alcohol problem.

**Fact:** Alcohol problems come in many forms, and even if you are not experiencing problems right now, heavy alcohol use over many years can cause serious health problems in later life.

**Myth:** People cannot recover from mental distress.

**Fact:** They can and they do. With the right support and treatment.

**Myth:** I have always been hard on myself. It's impossible for me to change.

**Fact:** Shifting your attention away from your self-critic is a skill and some people have to practice more than others. You may not control the thoughts that come into your mind, but you do get to control how long they stay there.

**Myth:** I have never been organised; I don't see how this could change.

**Fact:** By using my simple steps, I bet you can become more organised! - *Isabelle Lamy, Decluttering and home organising expert.*

**Myth:** Shading blocks views out.

**Fact:** This is true for some products, but certain dark coloured screen fabrics are woven with tiny holes to allow more daylight through and also provide occupants with a view out. It's a win – win!

**Myth:** A few drinks now and again is actually really good for your health - especially red wine!

**Fact:** The latest evidence shows that there is no such thing as a completely 'safe' amount of alcohol - the more you drink, the more your overall risk of harm increases. Alcohol is certainly not to be considered as one of your Five a Day!

**Myth:** People living with mental distress are dangerous. **FACT:** People living with a mental distress and receiving effective treatment are no more violent or dangerous than the rest of the population. They are more likely to harm themselves – or to be harmed – than they are to hurt other people.

**Myth:** The NHS is over-stretched dealing with the pandemic right now and so I shouldn't bother them with concerns about my mental health.

**Fact:** Your mental health is always a priority. If you're struggling with difficult feelings then it's always ok to reach out.

**Myth:** You can't recover from mental health problems.

**Fact:** They might not go away forever but lots of people with mental health problems still work, have families and lead full lives.





## Practical take-aways

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### Consumption

- Ensure your sustainability policy is clearly communicated throughout your physical space by weaving sustainable processes throughout your consumer journey.
- Buy fewer items and save money. How many pairs of shoes do you really need?
- Utilise smart approaches like evolving displays to tell multiple stories with one installation, keeping costs and environmental impact down.  
*Visit: <https://studioxag.com/>*
- We need to explore our relationship to online consumption practices and how this increasingly becomes a way to fill time rather than originating out of true need.
- Buy locally produced, not just locally sold whenever possible.
- Each time you're about to buy something, make sure you ask yourself a few questions: "do I need this item or do I want it?", "will I truly use it?", "do I already have something very similar?"...
- Check out the LWARB Advance London website for a list of some of the circular businesses we have supported and USE them! <https://advancelondon.org/our-impact/meet-the-businesses/>

### Economics

- Contact your pension fund to see if they are engaging actively with companies on biodiversity loss.



- That a true circular economy can only ever be successful if we move away from a culture of wanting the latest model. So 'if it ain't broke - don't buy another one!' Brands must work to this ethos too.
- Politics and economics are about well being, not just economic growth.
- The current economic and political system is not working and we can change it.

## Education

- If you want to learn new skills, the internet is a brilliant way to do it. From YouTube videos to tutorials on Pinterest, there is pretty much a tutorial for everything!
- Capitalist ideology remains at the heart of business school education. This needs to be challenged, in so far as students must find a way to make business operations compatible with long term environmental sustainability.
- Course revalidation, with adequate advice and support, is a pivotal time during which course changes in favour of our planet, can occur at an institutional level.
- Have a read of the United Nations SDG website, to learn more about the breadth of the SDGs. Visit: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>
- Think about the challenge of Education for Sustainability from a young person's point of view: imagine you are 6 or 10 or 15 years old and think about the kind of world you would like to live in for the next 70-80 years and use this as a starting point to reconsider the status quo and make positive changes.
- To understand sustainable consumption and know how's of sustainable living, visit: <https://www.sustainabilitytribe.com/>



## Wellbeing

- Next time you feel stressed, take time out to walk in your local park or local green space and notice how it has improved your well-being. *Visit: <https://www.bost.org.uk/>*
- The mind is like a panel of advisors and you are the CEO who gets to decide who gets the floor. The internal critic, like the worrier and the pessimist, has a permanent seat at the table. You can learn to separate yourself from your thoughts, though, and, like a difficult employee, manage the contribution of the critic at the meeting.
- "A place for everything and everything in its place" (Benjamin Franklin) is my favourite motto. Having a place for everything helps to put things away without draining our brainpower. *Visit: <https://www.ideaforyourspace.com/>*
- Did you know that by changing all your light bulbs to LED can save your household on average £261 per year?
- Environments are improved when they allow us to connect with others.
- Small changes to our daily routine can be vastly beneficial – open the blinds, let the light in, start the day right!
- If you want to cut down your alcohol use, but don't want to give it up entirely, try thinking about the situations where you drink and could cut back most easily. Drinking at home is often a good place to start, as people sometimes find it harder to cut down in social situations.
- The goals to which most of us aspire, and that are fundamental to our mental health and wellbeing: paid, productive occupation, social support, safe, secure shelter, freedom from fear, discrimination and prejudice are central to the lives of people living with mental distress, let's start prescribing these.
- Live LAGOM brings people together in a community of like minded people. Join our IKEA Live LAGOM Facebook group and share your stories. "I can .. You can". *Visit: <https://www.ikea.com/gb/en/this-is-ikea/sustainable-everyday/>*
- Let's work towards improving environmental design by keeping people in mind.
- Ensuring you make the most of natural daylight by opening blinds and curtains during the day not only improves your well-being, but it also helps reduce the energy you use on lighting and heating in winter months.
- If you feel like taking a break from alcohol, campaigns such as Dry January, Sober October, or One Year No Beer might be worth considering. Removing alcohol entirely for a while can help you reflect on your drinking, and decide if and how you want to drink in future. However, ensure that you don't use these as opportunities to 'detox' or as an excuse to drink lots more before or after!
- "All are mad, to be not so, is a form of madness itself"
- Find ways to connect with other people, even if you can't physically be with them. If you don't know how to start, then there are tips on Mind's website: [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)
- Find ways to relax or switch off from the things that are causing you stress.

## Parting words of wisdom

- You don't need to sleep up a tree or tear down a statue to be part of a movement that can change the world.
- If you have an overdraft, would you be trying to get back to £0 or back to having £100? That's the difference between living in a carbon-neutral world (£0) and living in a carbon positive world (£100). Visit: <https://terraneutra.com/>
- We are all creative and it doesn't mean you have to be able to play an instrument perfectly or paint a masterpiece. Just choosing your outfit or throwing ingredients together for dinner is being creative.
- Everyone needs to take action to save species from extinction: stop using weedkillers, pesticides, insecticides.
- Explore how your personal values align with the principles of social responsibility and sustainability.
- Complete an on-line ecological footprint calculator and act on the results. Visit: <https://www.footprintcalculator.org/>
- Identity two right now actions you can take which match with social responsibility and sustainability themes.
- You can make a big difference to your local environment. Talk to your neighbours, council and local organisations. There is lots of support out there to help you get your community project off the ground.
- "Be prepared to become a nuisance!"

**A HUGE thank you to all of our speakers for sharing their thoughts, tips and words of wisdom! And also to you for taking the time to support this event and in doing so, helping to create a greener, more sustainable future.**

**To find out more about what LSBU is doing to tackle sustainability and climate issues, please visit: [www.lsbu.ac.uk/about-us/sustainability-at-lsbu](http://www.lsbu.ac.uk/about-us/sustainability-at-lsbu)**

**The final part of LSBU's Sustainability and Climate Action Events Series will focus on Equality: Food, Water and Politics and will run from 13-15 January 2021.**

**Start off your new year right and register here! –**

**<https://lsbu-sustainability-climate-action-pt3.eventbrite.co.uk>**