

MODULE 1- SDGs through Design Thinking – An Introduction

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Guide for the course

Welcome to the course about developing and implementing socially innovative solutions for Sustainable development goals (SDGs) by using Design Thinking method.

We are looking forward to embarking on this learning journey with you!

In this course, you will explore the Sustainable Development Goals in details and equip yourself with design thinking skills to develop your own solution.

We anticipate that the online course will create an immersive learning experience for you to become more effective and creative problem solver.

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For each module, you are expected to go through the associated reading list, answer the related questions and submit your assignments in due course.

Let's get started!

Why Sustainable Development Goals?

A growing number of countries realize that there is an immense need to move from the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) driven development paradigm to development thinking, which focuses more on social progress. This is simply because plain economic activity measured by GDP alone is not enough to represent the well-being of citizens. Achieving a prosperous society as a whole is more complicated than increasing GDP since it necessitates considering several other elements besides robust GDP growth, such as peace and happiness, economic and financial well-being, and individual freedoms and liberties.

Given the rapid urbanization and its associated challenges, the present time entails creative and proactive societies, a new community of leaders to introduce citizen-led innovative responses by thinking, innovating, and working together to improve social and individual well-being.

There are number challenges today's societies are confronted with: socio-ecological transformations, a democracy that fails to provide for all persons within a country, an aging society, unequal distribution of wealth, and exclusive growth, etc.

Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are intended to improve the lives of future generations through partnership and pragmatism by offering a framework of goals, targets, and indicators that each country can adapt to suit its development context.

SDGs, also called "Global Goals", aim to bring the countries and citizens of the world together and establish a peaceful and prosperous world by eradicating poverty and protecting the planet.

This program is based on 17 interrelated goals.

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Main aim of this course is make you aware of major role you can play in contributing to the future of your community and to support guide you in taking actions that can help achieve the SDGs.

Small size social innovations driven by the member of the respective 'maker society' are making and will make incremental changes in our daily life. On top of that, small but steady improvements that incorporate minute activities from daily life bring society closer to the idea of collective wellbeing and suit human nature better than radical changes.

As proven by the promising examples of grassroots initiatives, without taking the society on board, and without challenging the current conventional understanding of development, there is a limit of economic or social development that can be achieved. That can also be seen as a distinctive feature of this new era.

There are various kinds of untapped resources, workforce, physical infrastructure, limited but enough funds on the one hand, and immense need for innovative solutions to the challenges we face with as the society on the other hand.

One of the characteristics of today's world is a rapid change in almost every area of life, which entails prompt, customized, proper, innovative, and sustainable solutions.

In this sense, resilient societies that are capable of adapting themselves to the changing environments by introducing permanent solutions are seen as a key component of the new era.

There are several challenges today's societies are confronted with: socio-ecological transformations, a democracy that fails to provide for all persons within a country, an aging society, unequal distribution of wealth, and exclusive growth.

Therefore, when it comes to "development", we need to have a balanced approach towards GDP growth along with the Social and Human Development.

Given its complex nature and the interdependencies of today's challenges, achieving social and human progress requires a new mind-set, new approaches, collaborative actions, and a 'maker' mind-set. Tackling these challenges requires not only top-down actions from the government but also bottom-up engagement and innovative local actions from citizens, like you.

Scale and Scope of the SDGs

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted at the United Nations Summit in New York from 25 to 27 September 2015. The Agenda is a broad and universal policy agenda, with 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with 169 associated targets which are integrated and indivisible. Building on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the 2030 Agenda seeks to guide Member States to transform their approach to achieve inclusive, people-centred and sustainable development with no one left behind (*Social Development for Sustainable Development* | DISD, n.d.).

Assignments/Deliverables

As highlighted above, wellbeing of a country is closely associated with growth of the Gross Domestic Production along with the level of Social and Human Development. In some cases, pace of social and human development is slower than the GDP growth.

Please first go to web portal of Social Progress Index (<https://www.socialprogress.org/>) and click on your country from the map. After going through the indicators making up Social Progress Index, please name and elaborate two sub-indicators where your country is not performing well compared to pace of GDP growth. Please discuss possible reason/s. (200 words)