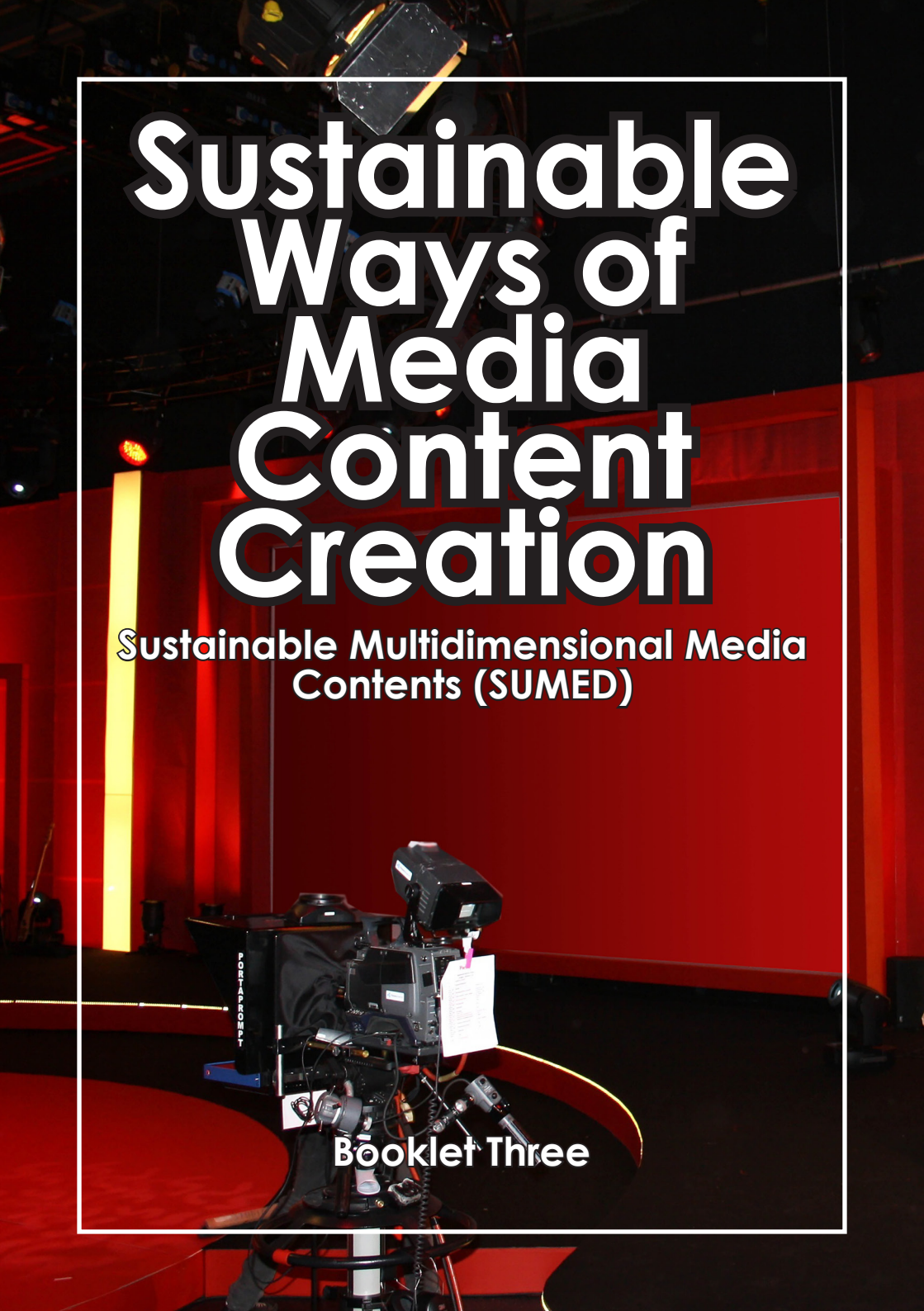
Sustainable Ways of Media Content Creation

Sustainable Multidimensional Media Contents (SUMED)



Booklet Three

Sustainable Ways of Media Content Creation

Sustainable multidimensional media contents (SUMED) booklet three

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SUMED

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Contents

Introduction:
Sustainable Ways of Media Content Creation

Dr Monika Maslowska
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This final booklet presents a comprehensive overview of the SUMED project's efforts to integrate sustainability and well-being into media education. The project recognises the critical role that media professionals and institutions play in shaping public narratives and cultural values amid ongoing environmental and social challenges. In response, SUMED supports the development of future media practitioners by equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and ethical grounding necessary to address these challenges through their work. The articles collected here reflect the varied dimensions of sustainability within media practice and education, offering both conceptual foundations and applied approaches. Each contribution examines a different aspect of sustainable practice—from institutional communication and curriculum design to emotional well-being in creative work—revealing the breadth and complexity of sustainability within contemporary media landscapes.

The first article, From Greenwashing to Solutions: The Case for Solution Journalism in a Changing Media Landscape, by Dr Adam Jagiello-Rusilowski of INNOCAMP.PL, explores the intersecting crises of climate change, inequality, and economic instability, and the implications these hold for journalism. It identifies a widespread erosion of public trust in media and institutions, exacerbated by greenwashing and superficial communications. The dominance of digital content formats, which often prioritise reach over depth, further compounds the issue. Jagiello-Rusilowski advocates for a shift in journalistic practice towards solution journalism—an evidence-based mode of reporting that focuses on credible responses to societal problems. This approach is defined by its analytical rigour, transparency, and engagement with complexity. It is not 'good news' reporting, but a form of journalism that interrogates the effectiveness of solutions, acknowledges their limitations, and considers their applicability across different contexts. The article calls for the integration of solution journalism into newsroom culture and media education, underpinned by ethical reflection and data-driven evaluation.

The second article, Sustainable Museums: How to Create Social Media Content That Promotes All Dimensions of Sustainability, by Dr Julio González-Liendo of Universitat Politècnica de València, investigates sustainable communication practices in cultural institutions. Focusing on museums as active participants in sustainability discourse, the article presents the Huella M framework, which encompasses environmental, social, economic, cultural, and communicational dimensions. It argues for the use of social media not merely as a broadcasting tool, but as a platform for dialogue and institutional transparency, embedding sustainability in both content and process.

The third article, Less Noise, More Impact: Sustainability in Podcast Creation, authored by Raúl Terol, examines the potential of podcasting as a sustainable medium. It considers the pedagogical, organisational, environmental, and ethical dimensions of podcast production and proposes collaborative, audience-focused methodologies. The article also revisits the concept of solution journalism in this context, suggesting it as a method for addressing social and environmental issues through storytelling that is both critical and constructive.

The fourth article, Educating Journalists and PR Professionals in

> “The project recognises the critical role that media professionals and institutions play in shaping public narratives and cultural values amid ongoing environmental and social challenges. SUMED supports the development of future media practitioners by equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and ethical grounding necessary to address these challenges through their work.”

Sustainable Development: Experiences and Challenges, by Dr Beata Czechowska-Derkacz of the University of Gdańsk, outlines the pilot training phase of the SUMED project. It details curriculum innovations designed to embed sustainability into journalism, advertising, and public relations education. The training addressed professional ethics, the environmental impact of media production, and socially responsible communication practices. The article also considers the importance of student wellbeing and the role of institutional and external collaboration in sustaining such curricular change.

The fifth article, New Approaches to Sustainable Media at Turku UAS: Tools and Methods, by Anna Kuusela and Pentti Halonen, presents a case study of the Mediatila (Media Space) learning environment developed at Turku University of Applied Sciences. Here, sustainability is approached through the lens of social responsibility, with an emphasis on inclusive, respectful, and emotionally intelligent working cultures. Key tools such as the Feedback Tree are used to facilitate reflective practices, psychological safety, and clear communication within creative teams. The article highlights the importance of clearly defined roles, iterative feedback, and structured collaboration with external partners in supporting both learning and professional development.

The final article, Sustainability in Media Education: From Research to Practice, by Dr Monika Maslowska of the University of Malta, explores how sustainability and wellbeing are being embedded in media education through the development of two MOOCs on sustainable video production and magazine and digital publishing. These courses apply problem-based learning and address themes such as ethical storytelling, carbon footprint analysis, accessibility, and cultural representation. Despite facing infrastructural and contextual challenges, the initiative has had a positive impact on student creativity and educator confidence. The article closes with a reflection on the need for collective responsibility in incorporating sustainability and wellbeing into media education.

Together, these contributions show that sustainability in media education requires a multidimensional approach—one that moves beyond content to include ethics, pedagogy, institutional culture, and emotional resilience. They show how meaningful change can be achieved when media institutions and educators critically engage with sustainability as a dynamic and evolving framework.

As this booklet reveals, the SUMED project has developed theoretical insights, practical tools, and pedagogical strategies that support a media sector grounded in responsibility, resilience, and ethical practice. The approaches presented here form a basis for further development and dialogue, contributing to a future media landscape that supports both planetary and human wellbeing.

From Greenwashing to Solutions: The Case for Solution Journalism in a Changing Media Landscape

Adam Jagiello-Rusilowski
INNOCAMP PL

Introduction & Context

Contemporary society stands at a crossroads. The escalating climate crisis, deepening social inequalities, and economic instability are no longer abstract threats—they are everyday realities. Media, traditionally tasked with informing the public and holding power to account, is central to navigating these turbulent waters. Yet, the way journalism approaches these complex challenges is itself under growing scrutiny.

The Paradox of News in the Age of Sustainability

In the digital era, audiences are more connected than ever. Paradoxically, this has not resulted in a more informed or empowered public. Instead, as research highlights, relentless cycles of negative news—especially on daunting issues like climate change—are causing widespread 'news fatigue,' anxiety, hopelessness, and even active avoidance of the news altogether.

A relentless focus on negative news… can lead to audience fatigue, anxiety, hopelessness, and even active news avoidance," notes one academic analysis. This presents a significant challenge for communicating the urgency and complexity of sustainability issues in a way that empowers rather than paralyses.

A Crisis of Trust—And an Opportunity

With the growing importance of sustainability narratives, organisations are racing to shape public perceptions. This has given rise to a proliferation of greenwashing—communications that present organisations as environmentally or socially responsible without substantive evidence. The rise of sophisticated PR strategies and new digital formats (short videos, branded content, influencer campaigns) only amplifies this risk, as surface-level positivity increasingly masks deeper systemic problems.

The consequence is a growing crisis of trust in both the media and in organisations seeking to promote sustainability. Audiences, bombarded with competing claims and wary of 'good news' that feels manufactured, often feel powerless or cynical—precisely when society needs collective action the most. Yet, this moment of crisis also presents an opportunity: to reimagine journalism's mission for the 21st century, moving from merely spotlighting problems to rigorously investigating and communicating credible responses. This is the promise of solution journalism.

The Call for Change

Both the SUMED project and leading academic research urge a transformation of journalism education and practice. 'Journalism should function as a kind of guide dog, also pointing in the direction of what is going well in the world… writing about them in depth,' reflects one expert from the SUMED focus groups. The aim is not to avoid difficult truths, but to foster a culture of engagement, hope, and action—a journalism that meets the challenges of sustainability head-on.

As we embark on this exploration, we ask: How can journalism evolve beyond greenwashing and negativity? What does it mean to rigorously report on sustainability solutions in a rapidly changing media landscape? And how can educators, journalists, and institutions rise to this challenge?

Changing Media Formats & the Rise of Greenwashing

The ways organisations and media communicate sustainability are evolving at breakneck speed. The digital age has not only multiplied media channels but transformed the style, pace, and nature of storytelling itself. From slick social media posts to fleeting video snippets, sustainability messages are now delivered in ever-shorter formats designed for maximum shareability—but often at the cost of nuance and depth.

As organisations compete for positive visibility, greenwashing has become increasingly sophisticated. What once may have been a vague promise in a printed brochure is now a high-definition mini-documentary, a viral TikTok, or a polished press release. PR teams are adept at harnessing emotional appeals, eye-catching visuals, and the language of progress. But beneath these surface narratives, critical scrutiny is too often lacking.

The SUMED project and its research partners heard this concern repeatedly. As one expert stated in a focus group: 'Greenwashing, that is, forcing journalists, including precisely spokespersons, people in charge of public communications, to portray their institution in such a way that just… whitewashes it, that's where the whitewashing comes in, and not always following the truth and reality.'

Digital Formats: Speed, Scale, and Superficiality

Today's formats are optimised for speed and reach. Tweets and Instagram Reels can reach millions, but their brevity often leads to oversimplification. Sustainability claims are boiled down to slogans or hashtags—easy to remember, but hard to verify. The problem is not simply that messages are positive or hopeful; it's that they are often detached from real evidence, presented without context or acknowledgement of limitations.

One expert noted: 'The rise of short-form and influencer-driven media has created a paradox. We see more "good news" than ever, but so little that is critically examined or connected to meaningful change.'

Even in more traditional settings, sponsored content and 'brand journalism' blur the boundaries between independent reporting and corporate storytelling. This undermines the very trust audiences place in the media and makes it increasingly difficult to discern which claims are credible and which are mere marketing. While there is some appetite for hopeful stories, there is also deep wariness of anything that smacks of spin. As the SUMED focus group participant observed, 'When you see the same company featured over and over for their sustainability awards, you start to question what's really going on behind the scenes.' The proliferation of formats and voices has thus created an environment ripe for both innovation and confusion. The line between authentic, evidence-based sustainability journalism and PR-driven greenwashing is now thinner than ever—and the stakes for society, the environment, and trust in the media could not be higher.

Defining Solution Journalism

The concept of solution journalism is rapidly gaining traction among educators, newsroom leaders, and social innovators as a vital response to the pitfalls of both negative news cycles and corporate greenwashing. Solution journalism is a rigorous, evidence-based type of reporting that focuses not only on societal problems but on credible responses to those problems. Unlike promotional PR or advocacy, it interrogates solutions: exploring what works, how, for whom, and under what conditions. Importantly, it does not shy away from the limitations, failures, or complexities of proposed answers but treats them with the same critical scrutiny as problems.

A leading definition, cited in both academic literature and by practitioners, states: 'Solution journalism is not advocacy. It is not just good news. It is reporting on how people are responding to problems, what is working, what is not, and why. It is as much about investigating limitations and failures as it is about documenting success.'

The SUMED project focus groups echoed these distinctions. As one

expert explained:

'It's not about intentions. It's not about some great program that might work. These are programs that are already working and have evidence of impact. Journalists who work with data are particularly good at solution journalism because it is data-driven. We don't just create a nice story because we hope that if it can work in ten years, it's already working, and there is data to back it up, both quantitative and qualitative.'

Four Pillars of Solution Journalism

Drawing from academic research and practice, solution journalism is typically defined by four pillars:

1. Focus on a Response to a Problem: The story investigates an initiative, programme, or approach designed to address a social or environmental challenge.

2. Evidence of Impact: The reporting includes data, testimonials, or case studies that show whether and how the response is working (or not).

3. Insight: The story explains what can be learned from the response, highlighting factors that enable or inhibit its effectiveness and how it might be adapted elsewhere.

4. Critical Approach: The reporting acknowledges limitations, trade-offs, or even failures, resisting simplistic or promotional narratives.

Beyond "Good News" and PR

One recurring challenge is the confusion between solution journalism and either "good news" stories or PR-driven content. Academic studies caution:

'Solution journalism is not just highlighting positive events or feel-good stories; it is a methodical, investigative approach that reveals the mechanisms of social progress, with all their complications and imperfections.'

In contrast, PR content—even when branded as "solutions-oriented"—often avoids hard questions and paints an unrealistically rosy picture. This is why, as noted in the SUMED report, solution journalism must "not just create a nice story," but also investigate what's missing, what's failing, and what can be learned.

The Role of Data and Evidence

A key strength of solution journalism is its insistence on evidence. Stories are grounded in data—both quantitative and qualitative—rather than anecdotes or intentions.

As one SUMED participant emphasised: 'The most powerful solutions stories are those backed by numbers and lived experiences. This is what builds trust.'

By setting clear standards for evidence and transparency, solution journalism raises the bar for both audiences and practitioners, offering a crucial antidote to the risks of greenwashing and information overload.

Why Solution Journalism Matters for Sustainability

The significance of solution journalism extends beyond improving newsroom practices—it directly addresses the urgent needs of our era. With sustainability challenges becoming more complex and urgent, the media's approach to covering these issues can either empower society to act or deepen the sense of crisis and inertia. Solution journalism offers a path toward greater public engagement, trust, and meaningful change.

Addressing Climate, Social, and Economic Challenges

The interconnected crises facing humanity—climate change, environmental degradation, inequality, and economic instability—demand more than raising alarms. While watchdog journalism is essential for exposing failures and holding power to account, an exclusive focus on "what's wrong" can lead to public paralysis or fatalism. The academic literature and SUMED findings both emphasise that effective sustainability communication must also illuminate credible pathways forward.

As noted in the SUMED focus groups, 'If we only talk about problems, it becomes overwhelming for the public. People need to see that solutions exist, that progress is possible, even if it's not perfect.'

Impact on Audiences: Hope, Agency, and Engagement

Research from both the SUMED report and academic studies shows that solution journalism has unique psychological and civic effects on audiences. When people read stories that not only highlight problems but show evidence-based responses, they feel more hopeful and motivated to take action themselves. A key finding cited in the academic report states: 'Solutions reporting is associated with increased trust in the story and the news organisation, more optimism, and a greater sense of efficacy among audiences.' This means readers are more likely to believe sustainable change is possible and to see themselves as potential contributors, not just passive witnesses.

Overcoming Cynicism and "News Fatigue"

Today's audiences are bombarded with dire headlines and scandal, leading many to disengage entirely from the news. This 'news fatigue' is particularly acute around sustainability and climate issues, where the scale of problems can seem insurmountable. Solution journalism counters this by showing complexity: It acknowledges problems honestly, but also investigates credible attempts to solve them. It balances scrutiny

with hope, without glossing over the hard realities. It creates space for agency—helping people understand what actions are working and why. As one SUMED expert concluded, 'We need stories that help the public imagine a better future, not just report on what's broken in the present.'

Rebuilding Trust in Media

Perhaps most importantly, solution journalism can help rebuild trust between media and society. By focusing on evidence, transparency, and practical insight, it creates a more constructive relationship with audiences. Trust is not restored by avoiding difficult topics, but by approaching them with honesty, rigour, and a commitment to progress.

Solution Journalism in Practice—SUMED and the European Context

While the foundational principles of solution journalism are global, their most powerful expression often emerges from local contexts and collaborative European networks. In the last decade, the movement for solution journalism has grown rapidly across Europe, with organisations run by Ashoka fellows like Jeremy Druker, Executive Director of Transition, or Adam Jagiello-Rusilowski leading projects like SUMED that make paths for integrating evidence-based, solution-oriented approaches into journalism education and newsroom practices.

Best Practices: Curriculum, Newsroom Culture, and European Collaboration

European institutions are increasingly embedding solution journalism into both curricula and newsroom routines. The SUMED project, for example, has developed learning modules and practical exercises for students to evaluate sustainability responses critically, examining real-world data, stakeholder perspectives, and ethical implications. Other partner organisations in Europe are collaborating on shared resources, workshops, and editorial standards to ensure that solution journalism is not just a teaching topic but a living newsroom culture. Expert Quote from SUMED: "Solutions journalism, when rooted in strong evidence and open questioning, becomes a tool for accountability and hope—especially in the context of European public debate, where polarised narratives are common." One of the strongest findings from SUMED research is that solution journalism helps bridge gaps with marginalised and underrepresented groups. By investigating credible local responses to issues like climate adaptation, social inequality, and environmental justice, journalists can amplify stories that might otherwise be overlooked.

Embedding Solution Journalism in European Practice

For solution journalism to take root, SUMED partners recommend:

- Making evidence-based reporting a core value in both education and newsroom workflows.
- Including solution journalism in regular editorial planning, not just as an occasional feature.
- Encouraging ongoing reflection on ethical questions, data sources, and audience needs across all stages of the reporting process.

As affirmed in the SUMED project: "The practice of solutions journalism… must be embedded in the whole journalistic process, from pitch to publication, with ongoing reflection on ethics, evidence, and audience impact."

Overcoming Barriers to Solution Journalism in European Newsrooms

Despite the growing momentum for solution journalism across European media and academia, significant obstacles remain. Transitioning from problem-focused to solution-focused reporting is not just a matter of editorial choice; it requires addressing structural, cultural, and educational barriers within newsrooms and journalism schools. One of the most common barriers identified by SUMED partners and European focus groups is the persistence of a "default negativity" in newsrooms.

Many editors remain sceptical of stories that focus on solutions, viewing them as "soft," less newsworthy, or dangerously close to advocacy or public relations.

Expert View from SUMED: "Newsrooms in Central and Eastern Europe especially are deeply rooted in the tradition of the watchdog, which is vital. But solutions journalism is not about abandoning critical scrutiny—it's about adding a layer of accountability, asking what's being done and if it works." A shift toward constructiveness requires a rethinking of what constitutes journalistic rigour. Solution journalism, when done well, is every bit as demanding as investigative reporting. It relies on robust data, critical analysis, and transparency about limitations, failures, and trade-offs.

SUMED participants noted the pressure journalists face from PR departments and organisational spokespeople who are eager to promote "good news" about sustainability. The risk is that journalists may be pushed into acting as amplifiers for organisational narratives, rather than independent investigators. A workshop participant warned, "When a journalist only reproduces claims from company reports or press releases, we risk turning into mouthpieces. Solution journalism demands we dig deeper—ask for data, check for unintended consequences, look for who benefits and who does not."

Educational Gaps: Building Skills for the Next Generation

Finally, the skills and mindset needed for solution journalism must be nurtured early—ideally in journalism schools and ongoing professional development. SUMED's curriculum modules aim to address these gaps by training students to:

- Rigorously evaluate claims and evidence,
- Apply critical thinking to all sources,
- Balance hope with honesty and transparency.

From SUMED Curriculum Lead: "We are not training journalists to become advocates or PR people. We are training them to investigate what works, why, and for whom, with as much rigour as they investigate what fails."

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Measuring the Impact of Solution Journalism

As solution journalism gains traction across European newsrooms and universities, a vital question emerges: How do we measure its effectiveness? For both educators and practitioners, assessing impact is essential—not only to justify investment in new approaches, but also to refine and improve them over time. Traditional journalism often measures success in terms of audience reach, clicks, and ratings. Solution journalism, by contrast, is designed to produce deeper and longer-lasting effects: renewed public trust, improved civic engagement, and more informed debate on critical sustainability issues.

Expert Insight from SUMED:

"Solution journalism is about moving the audience from cynicism to agency. We look for changes in attitudes and behaviours, not just consumption of content."

Key Dimensions of Impact

Based on findings from the SUMED report and supporting academic literature, the impact of solution journalism can be assessed along several dimensions:

- Audience Engagement: Are readers, viewers, or listeners more likely

to engage—comment, share, or act—after encountering a solutions story versus a conventional news story?

- Trust and Credibility: Does solution journalism foster greater trust in media organisations? Are audiences more likely to view these outlets as transparent and accountable?

- Civic Participation: Is there evidence that exposure to solutions stories increases people's willingness to get involved in their communities, adopt new practices, or participate in democratic processes?

- Diversity and Inclusion: Are stories reaching marginalised or underserved audiences, and do they elevate underrepresented voices and perspectives?

- Narrative Change: Are journalists and newsrooms more frequently shifting from problem-only reporting to a balanced approach that includes credible responses?

Methods for Evaluation

The SUMED project, along with other European initiatives, recommends both quantitative and qualitative approaches to evaluating solution journalism:

- Surveys and Focus Groups: Measuring changes in attitudes, knowledge, and sense of efficacy among audiences exposed to solutions stories.

- Analytics: Tracking how solutions stories perform compared to standard news (time spent reading, sharing, engagement rates).

- Case Studies: Documenting real-world examples where solution journalism led to policy discussions, social innovation, or institutional change.

- Newsroom Self-Assessment: Encouraging editorial teams to review and reflect on their coverage balance, sourcing diversity, and use of evidence.

Ongoing Learning and Improvement

Perhaps the most important aspect of measuring impact is commitment to ongoing learning. As SUMED partners emphasise, evaluation is not about seeking easy wins or perfect scores, but about continuous improvement: Quote from SUMED Evaluator:

"Our goal isn't to show that every solution story changes the world overnight, but to understand what works, what doesn't, and how we can do better next time." By embedding reflection and evaluation into the newsroom and the classroom, European journalism can ensure that the shift toward solutions is meaningful, credible, and sustainable.

Case Studies – Solution Journalism in Action Across Europe

Case studies offer the most vivid illustration of how solution journalism is transforming sustainability communication. Within the SUMED project and its European partners, a number of pilot stories and newsroom experiences demonstrate the value—and complexity—of applying solution journalism in practice.

A SUMED partner in Poland piloted a newsroom collaboration to explore how cities were adapting to increasing heat waves and flooding. Rather than only highlighting the failures of urban policy, the reporting team focused on:

- Community-driven rainwater harvesting projects,
- Evidence from city planning documents and climate models,
- Interviews with both local government and activists on what worked, what stalled, and lessons for other municipalities.

Expert quote from a Polish newsroom partner:

"By showing both the measurable successes and the obstacles, our audience realised that climate adaptation is not an abstract policy—it's happening, imperfectly, in their own neighbourhoods. We asked not only what's working, but why some models thrive in one city and fail in another. That transparency built more trust with our readers."

Cross-border Collaboration: European Renewable Energy Solutions

A multi-country team involving SUMED educators, journalists, and students developed a feature series on sustainable fashion, well-being, museums or innovative renewable energy projects. What set these stories apart was the rigorous focus on evidence—financial data, community testimonials, regulatory challenges, and measurable environmental impacts. SUMED editorial insight:

"Readers responded strongly to stories that didn't shy away from the messiness—failed experiments, policy setbacks, and community disputes. That honesty made the real successes stand out."

Lessons Learned: The Power of Transparency

Across all SUMED partner case studies, several themes recur:

- Transparency: Audiences value seeing not just what works, but also what is difficult or uncertain.
- Local Voices: Community perspectives and underrepresented voices are crucial for credibility and engagement.
- Follow-up: Revisiting previous "solutions" stories to track long-term

outcomes is essential for trust and learning.

These experiences show that solution journalism is not a panacea—it is a method that, when used rigorously and ethically, can transform how societies understand and address sustainability challenges.

The Future of Solution Journalism—Trends and Opportunities

The adoption of solution journalism in Europe is not just a trend, but a sign of a deeper transformation in the media landscape. As newsrooms, universities, and audiences demand more constructive approaches, several forward-looking developments and opportunities are emerging. Digital platforms have the potential to enhance solution journalism in powerful ways:

- Interactive Features: Data visualisations, maps, and infographics can help audiences better understand the complexity and scale of successful solutions.
- Podcasts and Video: Audio and visual storytelling brings voices and stories to life, making sustainable solutions more tangible and relatable.
- Social Media Engagement: Journalists and outlets can use platforms to crowdsource local responses, invite public participation, and extend the reach of credible solutions.

Expert comment from SUMED partner:

"Digital tools let us show not just tell—solutions can be visualised, debated, and adapted in real time by audiences and stakeholders."

Focusing on Media Literacy

Another major trend is the integration of solution journalism into media literacy programs. When audiences understand the difference between evidence-based reporting and PR, they become more discerning consumers and sharers of information.

Quote from a SUMED educator:

"We teach students—and the public—not just to spot fake news, but to ask: 'Is this story grounded in credible solutions and does it help me understand my role in positive change?'"

While the momentum is clear, barriers remain: funding, editorial skepticism, and the ongoing risks of greenwashing and superficiality. SUMED's research calls for:

- More support for investigative training in solution journalism,
- Rigorous ethical guidelines,
- Continued sharing of best practices across borders and languages.

The SUMED project and its partners see solution journalism as a living practice—evolving, debated, and improved through experience. As one participant concluded:

"Our work is never finished. Every story is a test: Are we helping people see credible ways forward, or just repeating the old mistakes?"

Recommendations and the Way Forward for SUMED and European Partners

The journey toward embedding solution journalism in European sustainability reporting is ongoing. Drawing from the SUMED project's research, focus groups, and practical experiences across partner countries, several actionable recommendations emerge for journalists, educators, newsrooms, and policy stakeholders.

For Newsrooms and Media Organisations

- Adopt Editorial Guidelines for Solution Journalism:

Develop internal policies that require evidence-based assessment of sustainability responses, balancing scrutiny with hope and honest acknowledgment of complexity.

- Invest in Training and Professional Development:

Provide journalists with resources and workshops to build solution-focused skills—interviewing for evidence, measuring impact, and reflecting on ethical challenges.

- Dedicate Space for Solutions Reporting:

Make solution journalism a regular part of coverage, not just a "special feature." Assign editors or teams to champion constructive stories and follow-ups.

SUMED partner recommendation:

"Editorial leadership must signal that solution journalism is not a luxury, but a core part of how we serve society."

For Journalism Educators and Universities

- Integrate Solution Journalism into Curricula:

Teach students not only how to uncover problems, but also how to rigorously investigate and communicate credible solutions. Use real-world case studies and practical assignments.

- Foster Cross-disciplinary Collaboration:

Partner with researchers, NGOs, and local communities to provide journalism students with first-hand exposure to evidence-based sustainability initiatives.

- Assess Outcomes:

Regularly evaluate the impact of teaching approaches on student attitudes, skills, and employability in constructive and sustainability journalism.

Educator insight from SUMED:

"We want students to leave our programmes equipped to ask: 'Who is trying to solve this, what works, what doesn't, and what can others learn?'"

For Funders and Policymakers

- Support Innovation in Solution Journalism:

Offer grants and incentives for newsroom projects, investigative training, and collaborations that focus on sustainability solutions and community engagement.

- Promote Diversity and Inclusion:

Encourage projects that amplify marginalised voices and address the needs of underrepresented groups through rigorous reporting.

- Establish Shared Standards:

Work with media associations and educators to define and disseminate best practices, ensuring consistency and credibility across borders.

Conclusion: Building a Culture of Constructive Journalism

The shift toward solution journalism is not a single destination but a cultural change—one that demands persistence, openness, and reflection. By acting on these recommendations, SUMED and its partners can help ensure that European media not only hold power to account, but also illuminate credible paths forward for a more sustainable and hopeful future.

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Educating Journalists and PR Professionals in Sustainable Development: Experiences and Challenges

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Almost ninety students, five university teachers, and five external experts took part in six pilot trainings at the University of Gdańsk, developed as part of the international SUMED project: Sustainable Multidimensional Media Contents. The main conclusions drawn from the course are the need to continuously raise awareness of sustainability among both students and university teachers, the need to continue the course incorporating the lessons learned so far, and the potential for positive long-term change in student education in journalism and more broadly in media, advertising, and PR.

**Media relations workshop in the university's modern TV studio.
Photo by Sebastian Jętczak, DZiKS UG.**

Insect hotel in the campus green zone.
Photo by Zofia Przybysz and Dagmara Mika, DZiKS UG.

Course name	Participants	Study field/level	hours/ ECTS	Academic Year	Instruction language	Lecturer
MEDIA RELATIONS	15	Journalism and social communication master's degree studies	30/3	2023/2024	Polish	Beata Czechowska-Derkacz, PhD
PROJECT SEMINAR	9	Journalism and social communication, bachelor's degree studies	30/3 90/4	2022/2023 2023/2024	Polish	Beata Czechowska-Derkacz, PhD
PUBLIC RELATIONS	21	Journalism and social communication, bachelor's degree studies	60/3	2023/2024	Polish	Grzegorz Kapuściński, PhD
TABLOIDS AND TABLOIDISATIONS	23	Journalism and social communication, bachelor's degree studies	30/2	2023/2024	Polish	Dominik Chomik, PhD
SUSTAINABILITY AND MARKET-DRIVEN JOURNALISM	10	Journalism and social communication, bachelor's degree studies	34	2023/2024	Polish	Dominik Chomik, PhD
STUDENT MEDIA: JOURNALISM IN A FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT	10	Journalism and social communication, bachelor's and master's degree studies	30	2022/2023 2023/2024	Polish	Beata Czechowska-Derkacz, PhD Cooperation: Monika Białek, PhD Dominika Rafalska, PhD Konrad Knoch, Prof.

Table 1

Good sustainability practices have been introduced at the University of Gdańsk over many years in an evolutionary way that takes into account all areas of the university: science, teaching, organisational resources, and infrastructure development.

Currently, these activities are coordinated and initiated by the Centre for Sustainable Development, established at the University of Gdańsk as a separate unit. In general terms, these activities can be placed into several areas, which include: programmes and projects, including the flagship "Green University"; environmental and sustainability education, including education courses; raising cultural awareness and disseminating information for sustainability and environmental protection; wellbeing

Hands-on media relations training in the TV studio.
Photo by Sebastian Jętczak, DZiKS UG.

and a culture of respect; implementing the university's principles of social responsibility; and working with external stakeholders for sustainability. The university's sustainability directions, on the one hand, facilitate the work and design of pilot courses, but on the other hand, pose quite a challenge in meeting the University of Gdańsk's adopted intentions.

The work carried out under the SUMED project on the preparation of the pilot classes began with a review of the courses and syllabuses of the journalism and social communication studies at the Institute of Media, Journalism and Social Communication at the University of Gdańsk. Out of dozens of courses, four were selected where changes were made to programmes and learning outcomes.

A total of four modified syllabuses were prepared and six pilot courses were conducted in the areas of media relations, public relations, tabloidisation of the media, student internships in external organisations, and workshops in university media. These ranged from traditional lectures and exercises, through internships in an outdoor environment, to other mixed forms of activity, also involving media market employers and the wider social environment.

The main areas of change in programme content included: green transition of media work; carbon consciousness; social responsibility in the functioning of companies and institutions in accordance with the principles of sustainable development; social responsibility in tackling socially important issues; environmental protection; professional ethics; sustainable ways of working in the media; and work-life balance. Basic

EcoPark at the University of Gdańsk campus.

information on the pilot courses at the University of Gdańsk is presented in table 1.

During the Media Relations pilot training, students learned about media relations techniques (communication tools necessary for working with journalists) and the press officer's workshop. Students learned not only how to create media strategies using MR tools, but also how to incorporate sustainability principles, including the environmental aspects of institutions' and companies' activities, and ESG (Environmental - Social

- Governance) reporting skills into their information campaigns. As part of the training, communication strategies were developed for Pomeranian companies and institutions, taking into account the areas of sustainable development.

The project seminar involved work on student projects, which were also diploma theses. The classes resulted in radio and television reports, interview series, podcasts, and public relations and media relations strategies. These included a TV report on the pros and cons of electric cars, a podcast series on sustainable tourism, an interview series on Muslim women in Poland, and radio reports on abortion and on finding casual relationships on dating sites. The students included topics covering environmental aspects, but also tackled socially relevant issues, and worked on projects according to the highest journalistic standards and professional ethics. Importantly, all these projects/reports, videos, and podcasts have premiered and been broadcast in university media, as well as on online platforms and social media (in the latter they remain open access).

The lecture "Tabloids and Tabloidisation" points to negative practices in the media. The main objective was to learn more about the tabloid medium: the ways of working in tabloids, the relationship with the

Gallery 301 PhotoMedai+ - student art space, Faculty of Social Sciences.

Student-friendly spaces for work and study, Faculty of Social Sciences. Photo by Bartosz Blachowski and Julia Malinowska, DZiKS UG.

audience, and the perpetuation of stereotypes, among other things. The university should not only promote sustainable content, but also perform a gatekeeping function: identifying obstacles to its implementation, stigmatising them to future media professionals, and shaping among them the skills to overcome these obstacles.

The main focus of the Public Relations classes was to introduce students to the basic research problems of public relations as one area of communication that takes into account the common good of the organisation and the external environment. An important aspect was to prepare students to use methods and tools to create a public image for the organisation and how to form relationships with internal and external environment groups with a particular focus on sustainability principles. The class resulted in PR strategies for Pomeranian companies and institutions, which the students prepared in cooperation with these companies, using the knowledge and experience of external experts.

Classes in which students worked in a natural journalistic environment (learning environment pilots) were "Sustainability and Market-driven Journalism" and "Student Media - Journalism in a Friendly Environment." The classes created a platform for the exchange of experiences of students doing internships in student media and in external (professional) editorial offices. Students were introduced to practical journalistic skills and tools for professional media assignments. Importantly, they were guided to address socially relevant topics in their journalistic work, primarily sustainability - from ecology to wellbeing. They independently implemented PR strategies for events taking place at the University of Gdańsk, providing at the same time media support for scientific conferences and other activities relevant to the university.

All pilot training prepared and conducted at the University of Gdańsk as part of the SUMED project had a practical dimension. The project method proved to be the most effective in achieving the learning objectives, but other didactic methods were also used, including individual and team work, discussion, problem solving and crisis situations, multimedia presentations, and simulated work situations (workshops). Practical classes were largely conducted in the modern laboratories of the University of Gdańsk: a television studio, a radio studio, a multimedia studio, and a photography studio. Meetings with external experts who conducted open workshops proved to be an effective way of educating students. Journalists, PR experts, and media content creators were invited to the classes.

An important part of the project was the evaluation of the activities carried out. It took place at various stages of the tasks. The idea behind the project, as well as the open, activating formula of the classes, allowed for student feedback to be taken into account early in the programme.

This made it possible to react early and effectively consider the needs regarding the mode, time needed, and conditions for the tasks. According to the trainers' observations, openness to student comments and needs also had a positive impact on students' motivation, activated them to work more effectively, and influenced their creativity, which was particularly evident during the internship and the project seminar.

The main standardised and systemically implemented evaluation tool was the surveys completed by students after the training. Forms were completed by 84 people, representing 95% of all participants (88 people).

The surveys were anonymous and consisted of two main parts. The first contained closed questions that had to be answered on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 meant "not at all" and 5 meant "very much." In this way, students' opinions were tested regarding their increased awareness of sustainability in seven specific problem areas.

The data from this part of the surveys made it possible to compare the degree to which the various areas of sustainability were implemented in the classes. They showed that, in the opinion of the students, this was most effective regarding the issue of social inequality (average numerical score from all surveys: 4.1). The relatively low score is puzzling in this context: 3.5 on the related issue of social sustainability. This may indicate that certain areas of sustainability are less understood by the students and that more time should be spent in the future to consolidate their knowledge.

The first part of the surveys also proved to be a good tool for comparing the effectiveness of the implementation of sustainability content in individual classes. The joint discussion of their results by the trainers showed that it was also relevant to the evaluation when a section explaining the ideas of sustainability appeared in the course. If these issues were only discussed in a comprehensive and structured way at the beginning of the training, the numerical results were lower than for the other courses. It should be noted that if the level of students' awareness of implemented issues is dependent on this parameter, it means that the general awareness of Polish students on sustainable development still needs to be improved. This is an additional indication of how valuable the SUMED project is and how necessary it is to continue the programme changes initiated in it.

The second, open-ended part of the surveys provided the trainers with detailed opinions on the sustainability issue being implemented, student expectations, and their assessment of their own performance in this area.

In conclusion, it is worth emphasising that the evaluation indicated the degree of effectiveness of the classes taught and the changes needed.

Campus green areas promoting biodiversity. The sign translates: "We don't rake leaves here. They provide shelter for animals."

In the following years, more time should be devoted to discussing and learning about sustainability in the trainings: it is mostly associated only with ecological aspects, which greatly narrows the perspective of understanding the issue. It is also worth continuing to work with students using the project and workshop method: it is the most effective in achieving learning outcomes and training students' skills. Working with external experts, introducing students to the realities of the journalism

Wellbeing area in the campus green zone.
Photo by Bartosz Blachowski and Julia Malinowska, DZiKS UG.

and PR professions, is also proving valuable. Changes in educational content and reprogramming of learning outcomes in the education of future journalists and PR experts will allow for a better understanding and practical implementation of activities in the areas of sustainability, not only environmental protection, but also wellbeing at work, journalistic and PR ethics, and social responsibility in the exercise of these professions.

All photos by Journalism and Social Communication students at the University of Gdańsk (DZiKS UG), taken during media relations workshops led by Dr Beata Czechowska-Derkacz, as part of the SUMED project.

Sustainable Museums: How to Create Social Media Content That Promotes All Dimensions of Sustainability

Dr Julio González-Liendo
Universitat Politècnica de Valéncia

In an era marked by ecological crises, social inequalities, and unprecedented digital transformation t, museums face a crucial question : How can they actively contribute to sustainable development while truly connecting with their audiences? T The answer lies where institutional strategy meets digital communication, with social media emerging as a powerful ally:

Huella M, a framework model for sustainable museum action by helping institutions diagnose, measure, manage, and report on sustainability across five key dimensions:

environmental
social
economic
cultural
communicational

Often relegated to a secondary role, the latter is a transversal and strategic axis for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGS) and reshaping museums' relationships with society.

This article explores how museums can—and should—create social media content that informs, educates, inspires, and drives sustainability efforts through compelling, community-connected narratives.

Museums are no longer just guardians of heritage. Today, they are active agents of social, educational, cultural, and environmental transformation The International Council of Museums (ICOM) acknowledged this in its updated 2022 definition of a museum, highlighting its commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and sustainability.

The communicational dimension of the Huella M model embraces this perspective, treating communication not just as a messaging tool but as a means of fostering transparency, participation, and accountability. Within this framework, social media platforms become powerful tools for extending museum actions to diverse and global audiences.

To achieve this, museums must break free from the traditional one-way communication model, limited to announcing exhibitions and opening hours. Instead, they should adopt a more dialogical, socially engaged communication strategy.

Sustainability is not a standalone issue or something confined to a technical department. It is a paradigm that should infuse every aspect of institutional narrative. Social media content must reflect a museum's commitment to each of the five dimensions identified by Huella M:

a. Environmental Dimension

Social media is ideal for sharing a museum's efforts to reduce energy use, recycle materials, or minimise waste. But beyond showcasing eco-friendly practices, museums should create educational content that helps audiences understand environmental issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and resource management—connecting these topics to exhibitions or local heritage.

Content ideas:

Short videos explaining sustainable exhibition setups.

Stories about behind-the-scenes energy-saving measures

Visual comparisons of environmental impact before and after green initiatives.

b. Social Dimension

Museums must show how they serve as inclusive, safe spaces for

diverse communities. Content focusing on accessibility, migrant inclusion programmes, activities for older adults or people with disabilities, and partnerships with local groups helps humanise the institution and position it as a community player.

Content ideas:

Testimonials from diverse visitors.
Community-led content campaigns.
Real-time stories from participatory programmes.

c. Cultural Dimension

Museums are cultural hubs. Their social media should reflect the richness of local heritage, traditional knowledge, and living cultures. It's also a place to celebrate and protect intangible cultural heritage and marginalised voices.

Content ideas:

Short interviews with local artists or artisans.
User-generated content around cultural memory.
Behind-the-scenes development of culturally responsive exhibitions.

d. Economic Dimension

Sustainability includes economic transparency and responsibility. Communicating clearly about funding sources, ethical procurement, or sustainable practices in museum shops builds trust and educates audiences.

Content ideas:

Feature on fair trade or locally sourced products in museum stores

Campaigns explaining crowdfunding projects or how visitor fees support community programmes.

Visualisations of how museum revenue supports sustainability initiatives.

e. Communicational Dimension

This is the strategic core. Social media should be approached with the same care and planning as any curatorial project. It's not just about delivering content—it is about community building, responsiveness, and shared value creation.

Purposeful Content: Effective Formats and Strategies

Social media is fast-paced, multimodal, and emotion-driven Museums need to translate their stories into contemporary formats without losing depth.

- Microvideos and Reels

Length: 30–90 seconds.

Purpose: Share quick sustainability facts, SDG explainers, behind-the-scenes footage, or creative challenges.

- Infographics and Carousels

Explain complex concepts such as "circular economy" or "carbon footprint."

Visual summaries of museum sustainability reports.

Interactive carousels with trivia or myths about climate and culture.

- Behind-the-Scenes Footage

Exhibition teardown and waste management.

Sustainable food sourcing for museum cafés.

Interviews with curators on choosing low-impact materials.

- Memes and Cultural Storytelling

Connect heritage or artefacts with current climate debates.

Use humour and visual literacy to draw in younger audiences.

One of the core principles of Huella M is that audiences are not passive recipients—they are partners in transformation. Museums can create participatory experiences through digital platforms.

Examples:

Polls and Q&AS: Which exhibition topic matters most to you?

Collaborative campaigns: #MySustainableObject, inviting followers to share eco-conscious items.

Live streams with local leaders or activists: Build dialogues with meaning and relevance.

Transparency becomes tangible when institutions listen, respond, and act publicly. Social media can be a vital infrastructure for participatory governance.

Managing social media for sustainability goals requires clear, multidimensional indicators. Engagement alone is not enough—museums must assess how content drives awareness and behaviour change.

Recommended indicators:

Increase in sustainability-related content engagement.

Community participation in co-created campaigns.

Percentage of posts in line with sustainability dimensions.

Traffic to the sustainability sections of museum websites from social media.

Qualitative feedback from followers.

Accountability also means reporting back: sharing outcomes, acknowledging gaps, and adapting content strategies based on insights.

A key finding from Huella M's research is the lack of specialised communication staff in many museums. This undermines their ability to communicate sustainability effectively.

Museums must:

Hire professionals skilled in digital strategy and cultural communication.

Train staff in sustainability storytelling.

Develop clear communication policies around ethics and transparency.

Integrate communication into core strategic planning—not treat it as an add-on.

Ultimately, sustainability communication is not just about information—it is about agency. Museums carry symbolic authority and public trust. They must use that to push forward cultural and ecological progress.

When a museum shares its learning, admits mistakes, celebrates community voices, and highlights long-term commitments, it is not just telling a story—it is modelling the institution of the future.

Social media amplifies that impact. Done well, it allows the museum to extend its physical boundaries and co-lead the transition toward more just, inclusive, and sustainable societies.

Sustainability—as a balance between environmental, social, economic, cultural, and communicational dimensions—is not a trend. It is the new compass guiding museum practice in the 21st century.

Social media, used strategically, is one of museums' most powerful tools to build trust, foster learning, and catalyse action.

Museums must not only share content about sustainability. They must communicate as sustainable institutions: inclusive, accountable, transparent, and committed.

Because to communicate is to educate. And in uncertain times, to educate is to act—with courage, creativity, and care.

New Approaches to Sustainable Media at Turku UAS: Tools and Methods

Anna Kuusela, Pentti Halonen
Turku University of Applied Sciences

During the international SUMED project, participants at Turku University of Applied Sciences Arts Academy have surveyed several approaches to promoting sustainability in media content creation. We have incorporated ecological considerations into our film project productions and conducted research on the social and cultural aspects of sustainability in media working life. Additionally, we have explored methods for fostering a culture of safety in media workplaces. Our learning has extended to intimacy directing and promoting gender equality within the media industry. In this booklet, we highlight two examples of our development work: the development and transformation of the learning environment GuruMeedio into Media Space and the Ethics of Fiction-tool.

A feedback tree sprouted from the development of a learning environment

Text: Anna Kuusela

During her studies at Turku University of Applied Sciences, Leila Bayar developed the concept of the feedback tree. Bayar graduated from Turku UAS in spring 24. Photo: Anna Kuusela/Turku UAS

In the SUMED project, the participating higher education institutions develop sustainable practices for the media sector. Several pilot projects have been carried out by the institutions taking part in the international SUMED project.

One of the pilots in Turku UAS Arts Academy has been developing the media learning environment GuruMeedio. The focus in the development process is on developing more sustainable and responsible working methods. Students of advertising design have actively taken part in the development work.

GuruMeedio is a learning environment for marketing students where different projects are carried out in cooperation with real clients. The development work has been led by senior lecturer Antti Alanko at Turku UAS Arts Academy. Concrete tools have been developed during the pilot project and the practices created are widely applicable to workplaces in the media and in other creative sectors.

In the development work, the name of the learning environment was changed to Mediatila (Media Space).

Senior lecturer Antti Alanko handles the development of the GuruMeedio learning environment at Turku UAS. Photo: Anna Kuusela / Turku UAS

Sustainable development can mean ecologically, economically and socially sustainable activities. In the case of Media Space, the social dimensions are emphasised. Carbon footprint calculation has not been included in this development work, as the number of printed products, for example, has clearly decreased.

"We are producing more ideas, concepts and digital materials," Alanko says.

Alanko believes that there is a strong need to develop working methods in a creative field where people work with people.

"The main reason why people leave the industry or become exhausted at work is that the work community is not sustainable. There is little external load at work other than interaction between people," Alanko says.

Alanko emphasises that responsibility in the advertising industry means, above all, openness, safety and inclusivity in the work community.

The goal of the development of the learning environment was to bring more structured ways of doing things into the learning environment. Questions addressed were, for example: How to conduct a feedback discussion where one can talk openly about one's feelings? Or how to hold a meeting where no one puts off even bold ideas?

Not only teachers but also students took part in the development work. One new tool is the feedback tree, which was created by students. Leila Bayar, who developed the idea of the feedback tree, says that the purpose of the tree is to make giving feedback easier, as it can often feel difficult.

In her thesis, Leila Bayar studied psychological safety in creative projects. Bayar feels that giving and receiving feedback is an important skill, especially in the creative industries. Photo: Anna Kuusela / Turku UAS

The branches of the feedback tree guide the students to think not only about successes but also about other things. The feedback tree is used to lead the discussion on important themes such as: how was the working process, has the work been done according to the goals and has the working atmosphere been safe?

The focus is not so much on the success of the work itself as on the methods of doing it.

The tree allows the team to have a softly guided feedback discussion when a project has been completed.

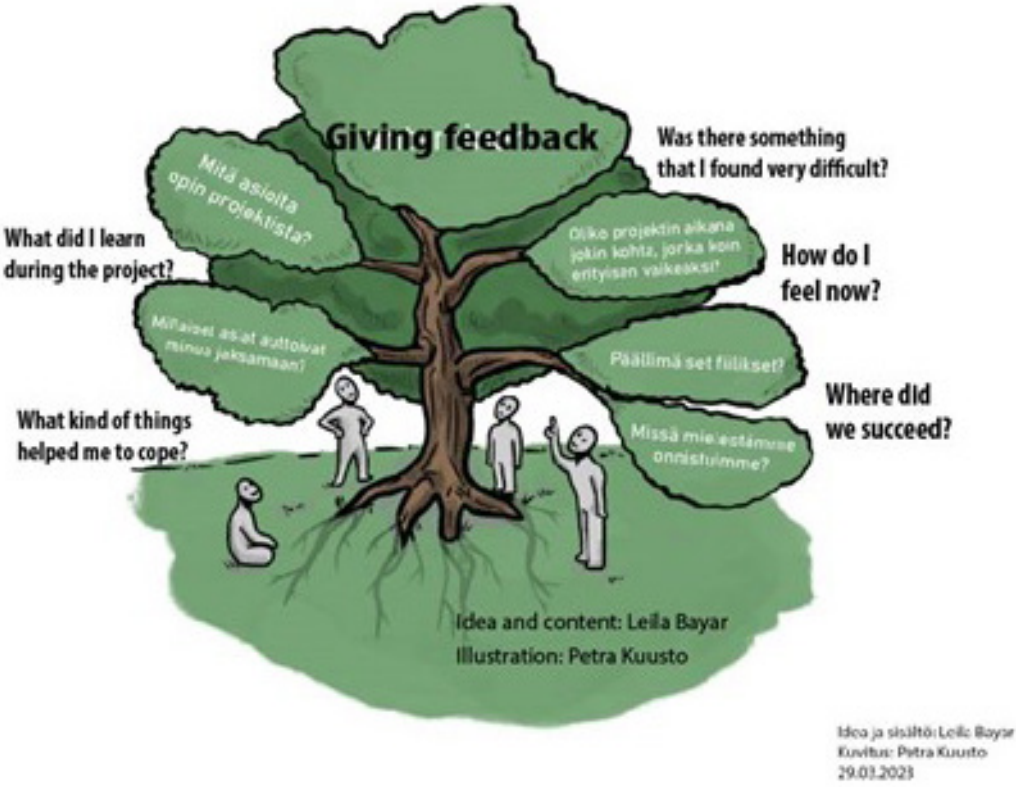
"The idea is that you can use the tree to perceive different aspects: where did I succeed, where would I have needed help or support", Bayar explains.

Bayar emphasises that not every question in the tree is meant to be answered, but the questions are meant to provoke thoughts and help to see the project.

The focus is not so much on the success of the work itself as on the methods of doing it.

"When a project is finished, we make a separate review of everyone's own participation and what kind of issues came up", Antti Alanko says.

Alanko gives examples of the questions discussed: What things helped me cope, what things did I learn in the project, was there a point during the project that I found particularly difficult?



The feedback tree can be used when evaluating a project and giving and receiving feedback. Picture: Leila Bayar and Petra Kuusto

In the feedback tree, there is also a question about feelings. Alanko emphasises that taking emotions into account is important in the work community.

"In an industry with creative brainstorming people, it is very typical that they react with their emotions," he says.

Instead of ignoring emotions, they should be dealt with in the workplace.

"Otherwise, you may end up keeping things to yourself, and this might cause long-term inflammation between individuals," Alanko says.

Leila Bayar has learned leadership skills when studying at Turku UAS. Photo: Anna Kuusela / Turku UAS

According to Leila Bayar, a particularly fruitful part of the feedback discussion can be when the finished project feels heavy, and you don't want to return to it at all.

"It's the most precious moment when you should think about why this was hard and what factors contributed to it", Bayar points out.

Bayar, who has studied psychological safety in her thesis, feels that the more aware one is of one's own actions, the easier it is to understand others. Mutual understanding creates a safe working atmosphere.

While working in various projects as a student at Turku UAS, Bayar has learned to receive and give feedback. As a project manager at GuruMeedio, she also learned to act assertively in group meetings and brought new ways of working to the learning environment. She also received positive feedback on her developmental approach from the supervising teacher.

Bayar, who graduated in spring 2024, is happy that the feedback tree is being used in GuruMeedio.

Another good practice implemented at Media Space is to make the difference between idea and pruning meetings clear.

"If we agree that we have a brainstorming meeting, it should truly be dedicated to generating ideas. We say yes to everything first, and it's only during the pruning meeting that we evaluate which ideas are not the strongest," Alanko says.

"If these things are done at the same time, people will not dare to share their ideas."

Senior lecturer Antti Alanko emphasised the importance of openness when working with students. Photo: Antti Alanko, private collection

According to Alanko, the biggest challenge in development work is that you easily skip the feedback phases and ideation phases and just start performing tasks.

"Then you don't really learn from it, and you don't develop your actions either," he says.

Feedback discussion can also be forgotten in working life.

"We are relieved when the job is finished, and then we repeat the same mistakes and bad practices in the next project."

Alanko says that before the development work, the students had a need for more clarity on the progress and stages of the entire work process. For example, responsibility issues were sometimes unclear to students.

"When we interviewed the students, many were unsure of what they had to do. That's what kills creativity and experimentation the most."

The development work clearly defined what the work process of the office is like. The division of responsibilities table helps to distinguish the roles and responsibilities.

Cooperation with educational institutions can also serve as a learning environment for the client.

In Media Space, students change often, and openness makes it easier to familiarise oneself with the work. Alanko considers openness important in all activities: for example, if a client assignment cannot be carried out, the reason is explained to the students. Alanko has also openly discussed with students that learning is the most important thing in the process, not the result. He hopes that there will be a feeling of security in the learning environment.

Alanko believes that the development of working methods will also help the clients. Cooperation with working life is most rewarding when the representative of working life is genuinely involved in the project.

"We have had very good experiences of this," says Alanko and says that her colleague, senior lecturer Minna Teittinen, has played a key role in this.

According to Alanko, cooperation with educational institutions requires a certain attitude from a representative of working life: they must want to develop their activities and want to work with students. He believes that cooperation with educational institutions can also serve as a learning environment for the client.

"There are a lot of companies that don't dare to do business with an advertising agency. They can practice that with us," Alanko says.

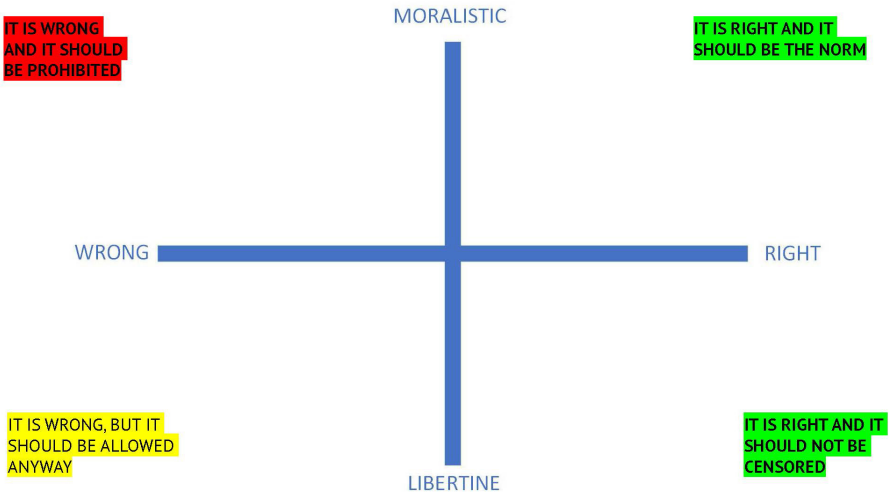
Ethics of Fictional Media Content

Text: Pentti Halonen

To discuss what kind of fictional content is ethically suitable or sustainable, we created a matrix of fictional content. Our SUMED project media education experts perused their own ideologies and morals and positioned themselves in this normative matrix of ethics in fictional content *(see next image)*.

The results proved to be surprisingly diverse and understandably subjective, which makes the normative matrix quite revealing.

In the upper left-hand corner, we had the idea that something in this world is so severely wrong that it should be prohibited from being used



Ethics of Fiction Four Square (by Pentti Halonen)

as material for fictional presentations. In this censorship corner appeared a list of severe crimes: rape, murder, and abuse. Also, milder wrongs were added to this list: acts of oppression (no matter the cause) and all that hurts. This shows how strictly divided the audience of fictional content really is. A large section of the audience demands to be able to see exactly those images listed here as prohibited, while a section of professional media educators find it strongly opposable, and those images should not be presented to any audiences.

In Turku UAS media education, we have decided to use warning signs for viewed material, so that the students and teachers can be excused from viewing anxiety-inducing media content. We use this international symbol chart to protect our internal, if all adult, audiences:

Age limit criteria used in audiovisual programme classification: Finnish National Audiovisual Institute

Some of our experts were much more lenient in their censorship listings and quoted as forbidden fictional material only content that is showing historical things, such as the Holocaust, as a myth, lie or a good thing. Censorship as such caused also strong opposition, as being seen as restrictive higher standards, written by "somebody else" to keep the establishment as it is. This section was beforehand labelled as "moralistic", a view of having the morality of society dictate the morality of fictional content. One expert thought that this kind of moralistic view should be very carefully influenced by authorities for it to really work on audiences.

In the lower left-hand corner, we had wrong opposable things, which should still be allowed in fiction, even if they are wrong in real life. Here our experts listed things like religion and drug abuse. Fictional characters should be allowed to do horrible things to be ridiculed by the audiences. They should have the freedom of doing wrongs, thinking wrongly, experimenting, and sometimes learning through their mistakes. They should be allowed to do everything that requires them to make their own decisions and act with free will. This section was labelled as the "libertine" view of media content. One expert quoted this as the "Why not?" section of content.

One of our experts sees this moralistic-libertine scale as something that shouldn't be applied to student work at all. Instead, there should be discussion not of right or wrong, but of the media content in question fitting within society without causing physical harm. Media content should never be intended to cause more than only accepted ills.

On the other hand, what are the acceptable ills of fictional content? Are they purely subjective, or is there a common limit, even for adult audiences? Aristotle writes in his Poetics that the audience desires to experience such issues on the stage that they would never want to experience in real life. But he also writes that horrible things should happen behind the scenes, not in front of the audience. Is murder OK in fiction when it is discussed and not seen?

In the upper right corner, we had the positive normative corner: fictional content of something that is right and is so fully right that it should be the norm. There we had all that society has as its accepted norms of behaviour. It includes all that saves people, versatility in human relationships, respect, human rights, animal rights, and scientifically proven facts. Here one expert noted that in fiction it is OK to feel all feelings, even uncomfortable ones. Even in this positivity corner we meet the wall of subjectivity. What is acceptable fictional behaviour in our society? In many cases this acceptability is under heated discussion.

In the lower right-hand corner, we have the things that are right, at least in a libertine way of thinking, and they should not be censored in fictional content. Here we have the absolute opposition to all censorship.

One expert wrote that "censorship is ALWAYS wrong". This way of thinking denies the superiority of moralistic good intentions and declares that "the right to freedom of expression is sacred". Other views in this corner demand tolerance of all points of view, equity, freedom of speech, all that supports our freedom and safety, and calls for tolerance of all parades for tolerance. In fiction the characters should be allowed to enjoy life the way all participants agree. But here one expert ponders if this could make a very interesting fictional story.

We know that "nobody has ever made a successful film about the village of the happy people", but the moral goal and motivation of the characters might well be the village of the happy people, even if it takes some fictional effort to reach, or almost reach, this admirable goal. The Ethics of Fiction Four Square can be a useful tool when discussing ethical choices with media students in writing, directing, analysing, and criticising fictional media works.

Less noise, more impact: sustainability in podcast creation

Raúl Terol
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In today's landscape, saturated with an overwhelming amount of digital content, the podcast has emerged as a powerful tool for creating meaningful and intimate connections with audiences—thanks in large part to its predominant consumption through headphones. In 2022, *El País* journalist Silvia Cruz Lapeña noted that podcasts were gaining relevance by offering an auditory experience that prioritised quality over quantity in a "world full of noise" (Cruz Lapeña, 2022).

The success of initiatives like the daily podcast Hoy en El País, which reached over 13 million downloads in just eight months, illustrates how podcasts can create immersive sonic atmospheres that foster deeper connections with listeners. This approach enables media outlets not

only to inform but also to emotionally engage their audience, delivering narratives with greater personal impact.

However, the ease with which these types of audio content can be produced and distributed has led to their proliferation in recent years (Piñeiro et al., 2019). Some podcasts even lack journalistic rigour, highlighting the importance of adopting sustainable practices in the creation of these sonic spaces, where quality, truthfulness, and social responsibility become essential pillars.

Sustainable podcast production means not only managing resources efficiently, but also creating content that is accessible, inclusive, and contributes positively to the media ecosystem. This becomes especially relevant in sectors like fashion, museums, and education, where podcasts can be used as tools to democratise access to knowledge and promote diverse voices.

In the fashion world, for instance, podcasts can explore topics like sustainability, ethics, and culture from alternative perspectives, offering a platform for emerging designers and communities that have traditionally been marginalised. In museums, this innovation can expand the reach of exhibitions, providing additional context and new narratives that enrich the visitor experience. In education, podcasts can become a key ally for students, encouraging autonomous learning and adapting to each individual's learning pace and style.

Adopting a sustainable approach to podcast creation also means considering accessibility. We must ensure that content is understandable

for people with different hearing or cognitive abilities. This can include providing transcripts of episodes, using clear language, or incorporating visual elements when needed.

Furthermore, sustainability means encouraging active audience participation, creating spaces for dialogue and feedback. The internet, through social media and instant messaging, has promoted this aspect—first in radio, then in podcasting. A few years after its creation, Bertolt Brecht advocated in his Radio Theory that the medium should not only distribute messages but also be able to receive them; it should not isolate the listener but involve them in the content (Terol, Pedrero & Celda, 2020). Nearly a century later, this ideal strengthens the bond between creators and their community, promoting a sense of co-creation and shared purpose.

In a media landscape marked by information overload, creating impactful, sustainable podcasts requires a commitment to quality, inclusivity, and social responsibility. By focusing on these principles, podcasts can become catalysts for change, offering narratives that inform, inspire, and empower listeners.

The Educational Podcast: More Than a Passing Trend

In an era defined by immediacy, multitasking, and mobility, podcasting proves to be an effective ally for education. Capitalising on the medium's booming popularity, it has established itself as a valuable, accessible, and adaptable pedagogical resource that aligns with new patterns of entertainment and learning consumption. Its growing presence in both physical and virtual classrooms, as well as in academic dissemination channels (Terol et al., 2019), confirms its potential to transform teaching and learning models.

Educational podcasting, also known as "educasting," involves the distribution of audio content specifically designed for pedagogical purposes. Whether to replace traditional lectures, reinforce theoretical concepts, support fieldwork, or open discussions through interviews, podcasting allows students to learn at their own pace and in the context that best suits their needs. The format's flexibility and portability make it ideal for fostering autonomous learning, while its auditory nature encourages a distinct kind of attention—less distracted than what is typically generated by conventional audiovisual content. Much like the radio's impact following the introduction of the transistor, the podcast frees listeners from the screen, offering audio content that remains powerful even without visuals.

From a technical standpoint, producing an educational podcast is more accessible and straightforward than one might think. A simple


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combination of tools—a USB microphone, a smartphone or computer, and basic audio editing software—can be enough to get started. This accessibility has encouraged many educators to experiment with podcasting without requiring a significant financial investment. Moreover, the increasing availability of institutional and educational platforms makes it easy to integrate these materials into students' virtual learning environments. For example, the Universitat Politècnica de València has implemented RSS generation for uploaded audio content in its online teaching platform.

Yet beyond the technical possibilities, what makes podcasting a powerful tool is its ability to foster a close relationship between teacher and student (Solano & Sánchez, 2010). The tone, voice, rhythm, and storytelling elements create a kind of connection rarely achieved through PowerPoint presentations or video explainers. This closeness enhances comprehension, reduces academic anxiety, and increases student motivation, as highlighted by Borges (2009) and Climent (2018) in their research.

The usefulness of educational podcasts extends beyond theoretical content. This resource fosters the development of transversal skills such as synthesis, oral expression, autonomous planning, and collaborative work—especially when students actively participate in producing the content. This is evident in project-based learning experiences where students take on the role of podcast creators, developing thematic episodes, interviews, or audio documentaries that reinforce both subject matter knowledge and engagement. A notable example of this approach is the educational innovation and improvement project (PIME) "Audioapuntes" at the Universitat Politècnica de València, where students produce podcasts on course content under the guidance of faculty. This not only deepens their understanding of key concepts but also contributes to a shared audio repository accessible to the entire academic community (Sanchis-Rico et al., 2019).

In the field of scientific dissemination, podcasting has also gained ground as a vehicle for bringing research closer to wider audiences. Traditional radio formats—such as interviews and features—adapt well to academic settings, allowing researchers to share their insights, reflections, and findings in a clear, engaging, and rigorous manner. Platforms like iVoox, Spotify, and YouTube act as global showcases, amplifying content reach, and more academic journals are beginning to embrace this format for publication outreach. Examples include Revista Mediterránea de Comunicación, Index Comunicación, and Icono14, which have started incorporating podcasts into their latest issues.

Other standout cases include Comtransmedia, by Professor Esteban Galán, and A dibujar se aprende, by Professor Antonio Fernández-Coca,

which exemplify how educators can use podcasts to both publicize their research and complement their teaching. In the former, Un café con micro features interviews with communication experts distributed across various channels and social media platforms, building a personal brand around shared knowledge. In the latter, the podcast serves as a study guide for students in Building Engineering, offering detailed explanations of architectural drawing techniques in clear and accessible audio language.

These examples demonstrate that educational podcasts can take many forms: from brief capsules of 4 to 10 minutes (ideal for maintaining attention) to longer episodes exploring topics in greater depth. Regardless of length, it's important to focus on scripting, narration, sound design, and content clarity. An educational podcast is not just improvised audio—it requires planning, thoughtful design, and sensitivity to the needs of its audience.

Ultimately, the growth of podcasting in education responds to a real need to adapt teaching methods to the information consumption habits of today's students. Podcasts align with the paradigm of interstitial learning (Piñeiro-Otero, 2012)—that which occurs in the "dead times" of the day: while walking, cooking, commuting, or resting. Using that time to deliver valuable, well-structured, and emotionally resonant content makes podcasting an irreplaceable tool for 21st-century education.

What Does It Mean to Create a Sustainable Podcast?

In a context where sustainability is increasingly discussed across all sectors—from cultural consumption to education—it is essential to ask what applying this principle to podcasting actually means. Sustainability is often associated only with environmental concerns. However, when it comes to educational and cultural content like podcasts, sustainability is a broader concept that includes pedagogical, organisational, and ethical aspects.

Creating a sustainable podcast does not simply mean producing or spending less, but doing so intelligently, responsibly, and consciously. It means designing a project that can endure, adapt, and evolve over time without depleting the human, material, or attentional resources that make it possible. From this perspective, we can identify three key dimensions of sustainability in podcasting:

Pedagogical Sustainability

A podcast is not sustainable if its content is irrelevant or disconnected from the real needs of its audience. Pedagogical sustainability requires that content be meaningful, useful, and aligned with the educational goals of the project. This is achieved not just with good intentions but through conscious planning—starting with a clear purpose, ensuring quality and rigour, and engaging with the listener. Let's explore each of these three points.

First, creating a sustainable educational podcast starts by asking the right questions. Turning on the microphone and speaking isn't enough: it is essential to clearly define the project's purpose.

What specific educational need does it address? What gaps does it fill? What does this podcast offer that other materials—videos, lecture notes, classroom presentations—do not? Clarifying this intention helps focus the content, choose relevant topics, and connect with a real, not imagined, audience.

Once the purpose is defined, content quality becomes the foundation. This is not about improvisation but about crafting solid, well-documented, and structured episodes where every minute counts. It requires research, verifying sources, intentional scripting, and thoughtful sound design. Academic rigour is not at odds with approachability; on the contrary, a well-produced podcast can educate and move its audience.

Finally, no educational project should be detached from its audience. A sustainable podcast is a living podcast—capable of listening, adapting, and evolving.

Collecting listener feedback, responding to suggestions, or recognising when something isn't working is essential to refining the approach and ensuring the content remains relevant. Being open to rethinking the

format, topics, or style is not a weakness but a sign of pedagogical intelligence and genuine commitment to those on the other end of the headphones.

Productive Sustainability

The second dimension relates to the team's ability to sustain the podcast over time without it becoming an unmanageable burden. Many podcast projects begin enthusiastically but fade after a few months due to lack of time, personnel, or resources—a phenomenon known as "podfade."

To avoid this, it's necessary to set realistic publishing frequencies, establish efficient workflows, be technically functional, and promote teamwork. Let's break these down.

One of the most common mistakes when starting a podcast is to be swept up by initial excitement and commit to a publishing schedule that soon becomes unsustainable. A key to long-term success is setting a realistic frequency that matches the team's capacity. It's not necessary to release a weekly episode if that compromises quality or causes burnout. Often, a well-prepared monthly episode has more impact than an overly ambitious calendar that leads to abandonment. In educational podcasting, as in many areas, quality trumps quantity.

Sustainability also requires good internal organisation. A clear and efficient methodology allows for task distribution, anticipation of bottlenecks, and avoidance of constant improvisation. This includes defining team roles (who researches, who writes, who records, who edits), establishing a reasonable editorial calendar, and using simple yet effective planning tools such as Trello, Notion, or Google Calendar. A well-structured plan not only improves the final product but also reduces stress and supports project continuity.

On the technical side, it's important not to fall into the trap of thinking a great podcast requires expensive equipment or professional studios. In fact, many sustainable projects are built on a minimal yet well-considered technical setup. A simple microphone, headphones, a quiet environment, and accessible editing software can be enough to produce quality content. The key is knowing your tools, maximising their use, and avoiding unnecessary tech that complicates production.

Finally, one often overlooked yet critical dimension of sustainability is collaboration. An educational podcast is more likely to grow and endure if it is conceived from the beginning as a collective effort. Promoting a culture of cooperation—where decisions are shared, knowledge circulates, and responsibilities don't rest on a single person—not only ensures continuity but also enriches the creative process. Inviting participation from students, colleagues, or other voices adds diversity of

perspectives and strengthens the podcast community.

In educational projects, involving students in production can also be a sustainability strategy: it shares the workload and makes them protagonists in their own learning process.

Environmental Sustainability

Although a podcast's ecological footprint may seem minimal compared to other formats, it should not be underestimated. Every uploaded file, every streaming session, every hosting server consumes energy and resources.

Committing to environmentally responsible podcasting is part of a broader ethical obligation to digital sustainability.

Some practices to reduce environmental impact include:

- Using hosting platforms with active energy sustainability policies (green servers, carbon offsetting, etc.)
- Avoiding unnecessary overproduction: a few well-crafted episodes can be more effective than dozens of mediocre ones
- Choosing durable, low-energy recording equipment
- Encouraging offline listening whenever possible

Additionally, incorporating ecological awareness into the content—

either through messaging or educational approaches—is a way to align the form and message of the project.

Ultimately, creating a sustainable podcast is about thinking long-term: about its impact on creators, listeners, and the environment in which it circulates. It's about designing with intention, producing with care, and communicating with purpose. In a time of sonic saturation, what's sustainable isn't just what lasts longer, but what leaves a deeper and fairer mark.

Keys to a Sustainable Educational Podcast

There is no single formula for creating a sustainable educational podcast, but there are several principles that, if considered from the beginning, can make the difference between a short-lived project and one that evolves, endures, and consolidates. These keys combine pedagogical sense, practical planning, and awareness of the current digital context.

Have a Clear Purpose

Sustainability begins with a clear sense of purpose. An educational podcast should not be born out of trendiness or technological inertia, but out of a real need: What does this format contribute to the learning process? Why use audio instead of another medium? How will it improve the student experience? These questions help shape the content, define its scope, and set achievable goals. The clearer the "why," the easier it is to keep the project on course.

Design a Realistic Production Plan

As previously discussed, a professional recording studio is not necessary to create a quality podcast. In fact, one of the most important sustainability factors is aligning production with available resources. This means choosing a manageable publication frequency, assigning clear roles (scriptwriting, narration, editing, dissemination…), and relying on accessible and free organisational tools. A podcast that exhausts its creators is bound to fade out, no matter how good the content.

Ensure Content Quality

In the educational field, content quality is non-negotiable. Each episode must be well-documented, structured, and rigorously written—but also engaging and easy to understand. Podcasting allows for a different kind of narrative: closer, more immersive, more direct. It's not about reading a manual aloud, but about telling something worth listening to. A compelling voice, appropriate pacing, clear examples, and reasonable length are just as important as the content itself.

Listen and Adapt

A sustainable podcast is not a one-way street. Listening to the audience—in this case, students—gathering feedback, identifying what works and what doesn't, and being willing to adjust the approach when needed is part of the process. Feedback helps refine tone, formats, and content depth, keeping the project alive. Additionally, inviting listeners to participate—by suggesting topics or sharing reflections—builds a community that is invested in and supports the podcast over time.

Create Reusable Content

One great advantage of educational podcasts is their potential for long-term use. An episode on a key concept, an expert interview, or a practical explanation can remain relevant beyond the course it was created for. Developing timeless, adaptable, and useful content across subjects or academic years increases its value and justifies the effort involved.

Encourage Collaboration

Finally, sustainability is also based on co-creation. A podcast doesn't have to be a solo endeavour. Involving colleagues from other disciplines, institutional technicians, students, or even external professionals enriches the project, distributes the workload, and facilitates continuity. It also opens the door to varied formats: interviews, debates, dramatised narratives, collaborative segments…

These principles are adaptable to different educational contexts. What matters most is remembering that sustainability is not just about resources—it's about approach: creating something thoughtful, purposeful, and worth listening to today... and tomorrow.

Conclusions: Toward a Sonic Ecology of Knowledge

Thinking about sustainability is not a trend—it is an urgent need that spans all sectors: from education and culture to the creative industries, museums, and the media. Podcasting, as a tool for outreach, learning, and participation, cannot stand apart from this commitment. On the contrary, it can and should become a sonic space from which to build a new ecology of knowledge—one that is more aware of its forms, means, and goals.

Throughout this article, we have explored the keys to creating sustainable educational podcasts—not only from pedagogical or technical perspectives, but also through an ethical lens that questions the social, cultural, and environmental impact of recording, editing, and publishing content. In a world that demands greater collective

responsibility, the podcast invites us to pause, listen, and build meaningful narratives—ones that move away from the dominant noise and strive to connect more deeply with listeners.

But the podcast's transformative potential goes beyond the classroom. Its capacity to build community, to give voice to those rarely heard, and to bridge disciplines makes it a powerful tool for rethinking sustainability across multiple dimensions. A great example is Atenea: Mujeres, Arte y Tecnología, a podcast created at the Universitat Politècnica de València. This project skillfully combines academic rigour with social commitment, addressing topics such as sustainability in fashion, responsible innovation in museums, and women's presence in technological discourse. Through a well-produced, approachable format, Atenea does more than inform—it sparks thought, debate, and transformation.

From this perspective, podcasts can be seen as laboratories for cultural sustainability—spaces to explore new ways of storytelling, researching, and teaching without relying on heavy structures or large investments. What they require, more than advanced technology, is an ethic of care: for the content, the people who produce it, the communities who receive it, and the environments where it circulates.

Additionally, podcasting has a unique virtue as a medium: it is capable of teaching sustainability in a sustainable way. It doesn't require screens, it can be listened to on the go, it doesn't demand split attention like so many other formats, and when well planned, it produces long-lasting content that can be reused, adapted, and shared in diverse contexts. This circular logic—low impact and high added value—aligns perfectly with sustainability principles applied in other fields, such as slow fashion, participatory museology, or responsible design.

In education, podcasting not only conveys content; it also helps form critical and creative citizens capable of planning, synthesising, communicating clearly, and thinking collectively. Through interstitial learning—the kind that happens in daily "in-between" moments—podcasts insert education into everyday life in a fluid, natural, and often transformative way.

But to realise this potential, we must foster policies and practices that support sustainable sonic creation from within educational and cultural institutions. This means providing specific training, ensuring minimum resources, promoting collaborative experiences, and recognising the academic and outreach value of these initiatives. It also means rethinking how we assess and disseminate audio production in academic settings, expanding traditional criteria to include alternative formats that are already part of the 21st-century knowledge ecosystem.

Ultimately, embracing the podcast as a sustainable educational and cultural tool is not just a pedagogical or technological strategy—

it's a political choice. It means telling stories that outlast an academic year. It means recording to share, not to stockpile. It means speaking to transform, not just to teach. And above all, it means creating with awareness, knowing that every sound we produce can be a seed for a more just, diverse, and resonant future.

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Sustainability in Media Education: From Research to Practice

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Introduction

In a time marked by environmental instability and growing concern over mental health, education must foster both sustainable practices and individual wellbeing. Media education—positioned at the intersection of culture, technology, and communication—faces particular urgency. Media professionals play a pivotal role in shaping narratives and public discourse; they wield cultural influence and contribute to societal perceptions. Educators in this field, therefore, carry a dual responsibility: to equip students with technical skills and to cultivate a deep understanding of sustainability and wellbeing.

Between 2022 and 2025, partners from Turku University of Applied Sciences, INNOCAMP.PL, University of Gdańsk, Universitat Politècnica de València, and the University of Malta conducted comprehensive research through the SUMED project. This initiative examined how principles of sustainability and wellbeing might be incorporated into media education. This article outlines the University of Malta's contribution—charting the transition from research findings to the development of practical teaching resources for media educators.

Research Findings: Challenges and Opportunities

Insights from the campus radio series Sustainability: Local Research and Experiences, featuring Professor Ġorġ Mallia and Dr Monika Maslowska, highlighted key challenges faced by educators. Chief among these was the disconnect between theoretical knowledge of sustainability and the practical realities of media production. Many students viewed sustainability as peripheral to their core discipline, rather than an integral element of responsible media practice (Mallia).

Further barriers included outdated infrastructure, limited faculty expertise in sustainability, and the rapid evolution of media technologies. Regional variations also shaped approaches: Northern European institutions tended to prioritise carbon reduction in production workflows, while Mediterranean partners placed greater emphasis on social sustainability and cultural preservation (Maslowska).

A survey of 47 media education programmes revealed that while 89% of educators acknowledged the relevance of sustainability, only 23% felt confident incorporating it into teaching. Similarly, 78% recognised the importance of student wellbeing, yet only 31% had formal strategies in place to address stress and burnout in production-heavy courses.

A Dual Focus: Content and Process

The SUMED project adopted a dual focus: encouraging sustainable content creation alongside environmentally conscious production practices. As Maslowska noted, the production process fundamentally influences the stories that can be told. Educators showed strong interest in these principles, though often lacked the tools or resources to implement them confidently. The research also underlined the need to incorporate wellbeing—mental, emotional, and physical—as a core component of media education.

Traditionally, media education has emphasised technical skills—such as scriptwriting, camera operation, editing, and design—without accounting for environmental impact or social consequences. Yet media work remains resource-intensive: video shoots require energy and materials, digital outputs rely on energy-demanding data centres, and production schedules often generate pressures that may lead to burnout.

From Research to Resources: Developing Two MOOC Courses

In response to these challenges, the project developed two Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) aimed at supporting educators. These courses translate the project's findings into practical guidance, offering flexible pathways to revise existing curricula or design new modules that prioritise ecological awareness and emotional resilience.

MOOC 1: Video Production with a Sustainability Focus

Drawing on research findings and teaching experience, this course is designed for secondary, tertiary, and community education contexts. It supports educators in facilitating video projects that are both pedagogically sound and environmentally responsible.

The course begins with visual literacy and film language, encouraging an eco-critical perspective on image interpretation. It then follows the five key stages of video production:

Story development – Encouraging narratives that are not only engaging, but also socially inclusive, ethically aware, and environmentally conscious.

Pre-production – Promoting sustainable planning methods, efficient resource use, and thoughtful sound design.

SVP - Sustainability in Video Production

First course on video production & sustainability

TAKE COURSE

0 of 11 lessons completed (0%)

- 1. SVP- Introduction - "Plan for the Planet"
- 2. SVP - Visual literacy & Film language
- 3. SVP - Sustainable Screenwriting
- 4. SVP - Sustainability in Pre-production
- 5. SVP - Sustainable Filming Techniques
- 6. SVP - Sound Design and Low-Impact Audio Recording
- 7. SVP - Sustainable Practices in Post-Production
- 8. SVP - Distribution and Exhibition
- 9. SVP - Collaborative Learning Environments in EMAS Led Video Production
- 10. SVP - Designing or Updating Your Curriculum
- 11. SVP - Conclusion

MDP - Magazine & Digital Publishing

Course description, objectives, and overview.

TAKE COURSE

0 of 12 lessons completed (0%)

- 1. MDP-Introduction: Why Sustainable Publishing Matters
- 2. MDP–Team Dynamics and Workflows in Sustainable Publishing
- 3. MDP–Visual Communication with Sustainability Focus
- 4 MDP – Purpose-Driven Ideation and Research
- 5 MDP – Circular Design Systems for Publishing Projects
- 6. MDP – Material Sourcing and Production Decisions
- 7. MDP – Sustainable Editorial Strategies
- 8. MDP – Sustainable Communications Strategies
- 9. MDP – Sustainable Marketing & Partnership Strategies
- 10. MDP –Sustainable Design Strategies
- 11. MDP – Designing or redesigning your curriculum
- 12. MDP – Conclusion

Production – Advocating for low-impact filming techniques, such as energy-efficient equipment and responsible location management.

Post production – Supporting practices that reduce digital waste and promote ethical editorial decisions.

Distribution – Exploring environmentally responsible dissemination methods and outreach strategies.

The course concludes with guidance on collaborative learning and curriculum development, grounded in the European EMAS standard and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Each lesson features teaching materials, student exercises, and quizzes. For example, a module on location scouting asks students to assess the carbon footprint of different filming scenarios, while the post-production module explores energy-efficient workflows and wellbeing practices.

MOOC 2: Magazine and Digital Publishing with a Sustainability Focus

This course adopts a meta-educational approach—empowering educators to embed sustainability and ethical thinking within their existing curricula or to create new frameworks that reflect these values.

Laying the Foundations

Before engaging in production work, the course develops students' understanding of visual theory, including typography, layout, image-based storytelling, and visual narrative. This foundation enables students to communicate ideas with clarity and intention.

Embedding Sustainable Thinking

Educators and students are encouraged to critically reflect on the environmental impacts of publishing. Topics include using recycled or FSC-certified paper, adopting digital formats such as ebooks, podcasts, and social media, and integrating eco-conscious values into editorial content.

Balancing Creative Purpose with Responsibility

While fostering imaginative and purposeful work, the course promotes the use of environmentally sensitive methods that uphold creative integrity. Sustainability is woven through every phase of the publishing process:

Idea generation and concept development
Visual proposal creation and mood boards
Production management from inception to completion

Simulated Professional Workflows

Students work in production teams reflecting real-world roles:

Editorial team – Researching, interviewing, and writing across print and digital platforms.

Communication team – Planning social media strategies and engaging with audiences.

Design team – Crafting a visual identity, designing layouts, and curating content.

Marketing team – Organising events, securing sponsorships, and developing partnerships.

The course also supports educators in rethinking their own practice, offering tools and strategies for integrating ethical storytelling, accessible design, and inclusive values across visual communication and publishing instruction.

Innovative Educational Approaches

The MOOCs reflect pedagogical innovations identified during the SUMED project. These include:

- Problem-based learning centred on real-world sustainability challenges
- Inclusion of sustainability metrics in assessment
- Modules on low-impact production methods and carbon footprint analysis
- Integration of indigenous and culturally diverse perspectives
- Wellbeing check-ins throughout production cycles
- Collaborative projects involving sustainability professionals

An industry advisory board provided ongoing feedback to maintain

relevance and rigour. Students were also encouraged to assess the environmental implications of emerging technologies. The courses' adaptable format ensures responsiveness to both technological and environmental developments.

Impact and Success Stories

Initial outcomes have been promising. One student team produced a documentary series using carbon-neutral production methods, which was later acquired by a major streaming platform—demonstrating the real-world viability of sustainable media practices (Maslowska).

Other success stories include student-led initiatives, updated institutional guidelines, and new faculty publications. Feedback has been especially encouraging: one educator in Spain noted that sustainability modules significantly transformed students' approaches to production, fostering greater reflection and creativity. A recent graduate described the experience as transformative—sustainability had become central, rather than tangential, to their creative process.

Looking Forward

Sustainability is expected to become a core component of media education rather than an optional add-on (Maslowska). Planned next steps include a digital certification scheme for media professionals and further development of modules addressing digital sustainability, such as data centre energy consumption.

Efforts are also underway to extend these tools to under-resourced regions and adapt them for various media sectors. Despite challenges such as limited funding, institutional resistance, and the rapid evolution of media technologies, the open-access nature of the MOOCs and the collaborative spirit of the SUMED network offer a strong foundation for continued progress.

While some organisations are leading change, systemic transformation remains incomplete. Persistent challenges include economic pressures, inconsistent metrics, and limited regulatory incentives (Maslowska).

Conclusion

The SUMED project demonstrates how collaborative research can produce tangible resources for integrating sustainability and wellbeing into media education. The MOOCs provide practical frameworks to support educators in preparing graduates who are not only technically skilled, but also ethically and environmentally conscious.

The call to educators is clear: there is both an opportunity and a responsibility to reshape curricula that prepare media professionals to work with integrity, awareness, and resilience. As Mallia observed, meaningful change requires

a collective effort—bringing together educators, industry professionals, policymakers, and audiences to build a media landscape capable of supporting a sustainable future.

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Cases of Sustainable Media

Booklet 3

The **SUMED** project stands for Sustainable multidimensional media contents, with partners in Poland, Finland, Spain and Malta. The third edition of SUMED's digital publication continues its exploration of sustainable ways of media content production. Building on its initial examination of sustainability in media organizations published in the first two booklets, entitled *Leading Change for Sustainability in Media Organizations* and *Sustainability in the Media Curriculum,* this publication looks more deeply at the process of creation, utilising and promoting sustainable practices.