



# **SustainaWHAT?! learnings and legacies...**

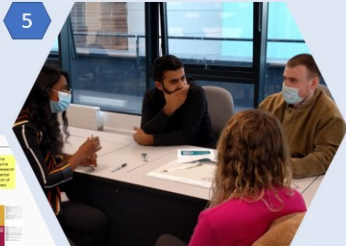
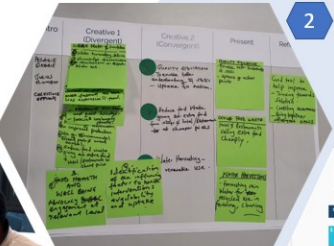
Bournemouth University

Cardiff University

Newcastle University

# SustainaWHAT? Gatherings

9-12 November 2021



- 1
- 1-2 Design Sprint
- 3 '5 Minute Thesis'
- 4 SDG mapping (via Mural)
- 5 Action Planning
- 6 SDG Gallery



## Case Study + Film

# SustainaWHAT?! The origin story



# 2023 Cross-institutional working

- AdvanceHE Sustainability Symposium 2022 as inspiration for collaboration
- Opportunity for cross-institution working
- Building on success of SustainaWHAT?! And extending it to Bournemouth University and Cardiff University PGR communities
- Co-created events



# SustainaWHAT?! 2023 Team



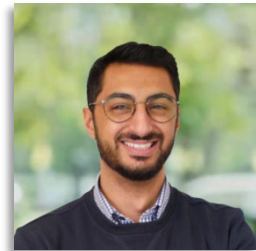
**Michael  
George**



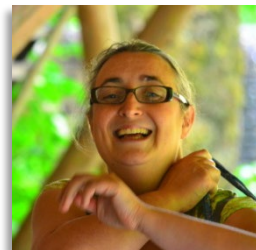
**Jack  
Olley**



**Dr Fiona  
Cownie**



**Omar  
Mohammed**



**Dr Julie  
Gwilliam**



**Sian  
Gardiner**



**Ran  
Zhang**



**Chang  
Liu**



**Rosalind  
Beaumont**



**Melisa  
Maida**



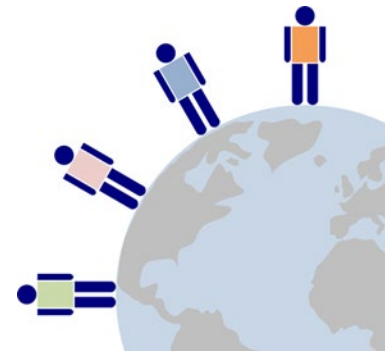
**Charlie  
Osborne**



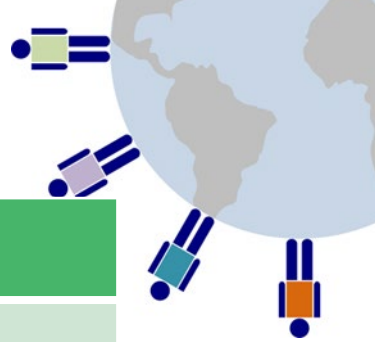
**Anand  
Roy**



**Tinatin  
Meparishvili**



# SustainaWHAT?! 2023 Aims and Events



## To provide PGRs (and PGT/ECRs) the opportunity :

1. to bring a **sustainability** lens (via UNSDGs) to their prospective research with a view to informing the rationale and **potential impact** of their research
2. to **develop** a range of competencies applicable to their own research and personal/professional contexts, including **interdisciplinary collaboration**
3. to **develop a network** of PGRs, PGTs and ECRs interested and involved in **sustainability** within and across the **three institutions**

## Aims for the PGR organising team:

4. To offer PGRs knowledge and skills development in **sustainability and event organisation** and facilitation (see [blog post](#))
5. To develop skills and competencies to **collaborative effectively** across teams and organisations



**The Gathering  
(March)**



**The Challenge  
(April)**

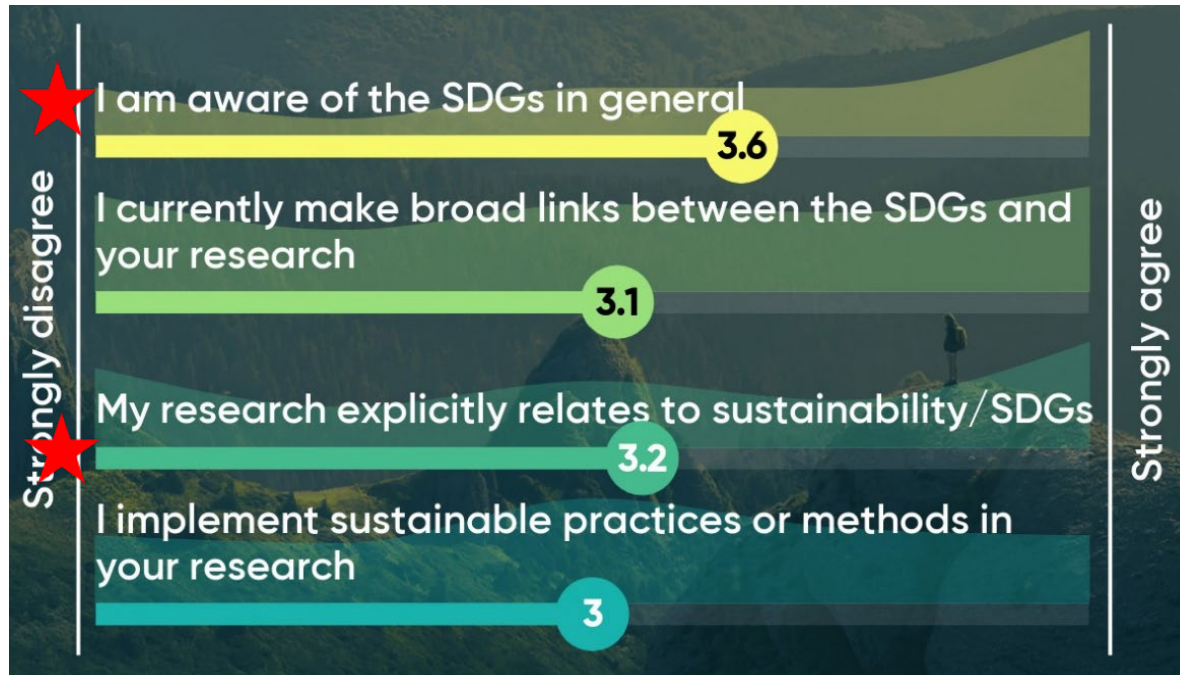


**The Celebration  
(May)**

# Evaluation - Sustainability, the UNSDGs, and You

## Before

To what extent do you agree?



## After

How likely are you to now...?



From: *The Gathering (March)*; n=51

Theme	Quotes
Sustainability, the UNSDGs, and your research <i>(Align with Aim 1)</i>	<i>“Really interesting to <u>see how easily SDGs can be implemented</u> in research as a tool and I think it is a very useful framework to see how bring to the front <u>a more sustainable way of thinking across research and other sectors</u>” (April, The Challenge)</i>
Sustainability, the UNSDGs, and you <i>(Align with Aim 1 &amp; 3)</i>	<i>“My project began by only focussing on one of the SDGs but I’m now aware that several more are linked. It’s also really beneficial to <u>hear the perspectives from people with different academic backgrounds</u>. I’ve also had insight of the process of developing a strategy/proposal.” (The Challenge, April)</i>
Developing sustainability-related skills and competencies <i>(Align with Aim 2 &amp; 3)</i>	<i>“I got inspired with many concepts and ideas on the SDGs from other fields of expertise such as business schools, biology etc.” (The Gathering, March)</i> <i>“My <u>self-awareness and critical thinking skills</u> such as questioning. More motivation to talk more about climate issues and the effects on society.” (The Challenge, April)</i>
<b><u>SustainaWHAT?! PGR Team:</u></b> Development of increased knowledge and skills in sustainability (research/career/personal) <i>(Align with Aim 4 &amp; 5)</i>	<i>“<b>Professionally:</b> <u>the competencies of sustainability have been enhanced. Becoming more 'known' for doing sustainability-related work</u> means that I get asked to contribute to more events and to <u>support sustainability within the university.</u>”</i> <i>“<b>Research:</b> know and <u>understand more case study about SDGs</u> and consider how to <u>apply sustainability or SDGs to my future research.</u>”</i>

# Value of PGR collaboration around sustainability

*“My project began by only focussing on one of the SDGs but I’m now aware that several more are linked. It’s also really **beneficial to hear the perspectives from people with different academic backgrounds**. I’ve also had insight of the process of developing a strategy/proposal.”*

(PGR participant - The Challenge, April 2023)



*“I think we have created a **strong collaborative culture** in the way we planned and the manner that we supported each other, **respected and valued** each other.”*  
(PGR organiser - SustainaWHAT?! 2023)

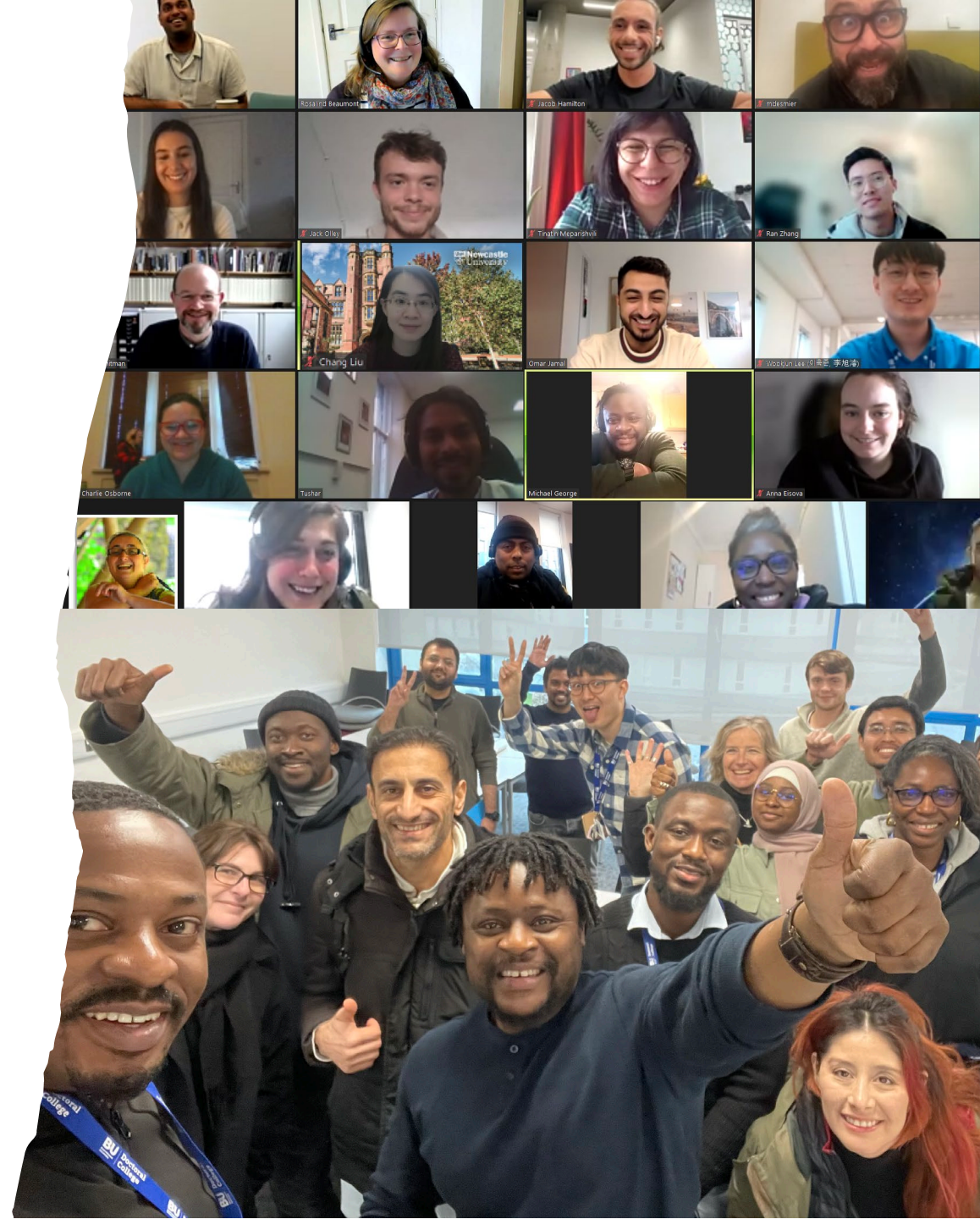




# Legacy from SustainaWHAT?!



- With two successful events behind us, we are now exploring how the concept can be expanded, through the establishment of our PGR network: 'SPROUT - PGR Sustainability Collective', alongside SustainaWHAT?!
- This will be run by PGRs for PGRs



# SPROUT

PGR SUSTAINABILITY COLLECTIVE

- A **PGR led network** to connect PGRs across UK HE, starting at Bournemouth University, Cardiff University and the University of Newcastle.
- Our mission is to connect and nurture PGRs, aspiring PGRs and ECRs who are interested in developing our understanding about how **sustainability can enhance the rationale for and impact of their research now** and in the future.



# SPROUT's mission

1. To build **confidence** amongst PGRs, aspiring PGRs and ECRs in **engaging with sustainability**.
2. To provide opportunities within a **community of practice** to develop peers' understanding about sustainability.
3. To increase awareness of sustainability's role in **employability and funding** opportunities.
4. To provide **collaborative opportunities** for PGRs and ECRs to develop a **range of competencies** applicable to their own research and personal/ professional contexts.



# Summary

- SustainaWHAT?! is a set of collaborative, multi- and inter-disciplinary events which draw on expertise from students, staff and external contributors
- Co-creation with PGR leads working with academics
- We feel that we have established the importance of sustainability in enhancing PGR research
- Adding SPROUT to the portfolio to further build and support a community of PGRs (+ECRs/PGTs/supporting academics)



# Getting involved

- We are exploring running SustainaWHAT?! again in 2025
- Interested in getting involved?

Email: [rosalind.beaumont@newcastle.ac.uk](mailto:rosalind.beaumont@newcastle.ac.uk)

- We intend to extend the Sprout network across the HEI sector in 2025
- Interested in getting involved?

Email: [sprout@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:sprout@bournemouth.ac.uk)





**Thank you for your  
engagement**

For more information please contact:  
gwilliamja@cardiff.ac.uk /  
fjcownie@bournemouth.ac.uk /  
rosalind.beaumont@newcastle.ac.uk