



## Collected short examples from all countries

Effective sustainability actors must cope with evolving circumstances – staff departures, shifting tools, or unpredictable regulations. The capacity to re-plan, troubleshoot, and learn in real time underpins the durability of interventions. This adaptability surfaced in multiple statements: ‘changes in personnel, one active teacher has left’ or ‘technical infrastructure ... can be planned so that it works and is adaptable’.

In some interventions, participants had to assimilate novel technologies or approaches. It was mentioned that those involved should be able to ‘handle new technology or methods, [and] creatively address challenges’, which implies flexibility in adopting unknown tools (e.g. sensors, applications, innovative materials) and in overcoming unexpected challenges in creative ways. This technical adaptability goes hand in hand with critical thinking:

whoever can continuously learn and reinvent their approach will contribute to smoother execution of the intervention. Conversely, although it is not frequently stated, lack of adaptability underlies many failures – as mentioned, resistance to change is a symptom of the absence of this competency.

Our pilot sites showed that using simple planning exercises – like basic future-scenario sessions and working backwards from key goals – along with easy-to-update equipment makes it easier to keep long-term plans realistic and flexible. When schools add hands-on activities to try out new tools and think about reusing materials cyclically (so nothing goes to waste), they can turn big sustainability ideas into small projects of change that give everyone hope and help the school learn and grow.

Participants at one demonstration site saw the arrival of multi-fraction recycling bins as an ‘important first step’. Both students and university leaders in the role-play recognised that even a modest intervention can unlock our capacity to shape the future: while the rector role-player framed the bins as part of a broader ambition to become a ‘green university’, classroom conversations echoed the very same goal. A comparable understanding of our capacity to act emerged in another school. After installing smart taps, students affirmed that now ‘we say no’ to excessive consumption, signalling that small, tangible changes can spark change towards a more sustainable future.

Some participants critically debated how to turn sustainability visions into reality in daily life. They discussed linking school and home habits, with some arguing that students should bring lessons home and become change agents, while others felt habits must start at home with municipal support (e.g. distributing recycling bags to residents). Additionally, participants identified structural challenges such as student turnover – each year new pupils arrive as others leave – which disrupt continuity. This led to a new insight that long-term engagement requires embedding projects into the school’s curriculum and culture, rather than relying on one-off enthusiasm.

One group emphasised clear, long-term planning: they insisted on well-defined responsibilities, schedules for monitoring, and realistic budgeting to ensure their sustainability vision would materialise and last.

Some schools noted that their solar panel and recycling projects succeeded in part because they provided replicable models aligned with school sustainability goals, showing administrators and students exactly how to implement the change step-by-step. On the other hand, several groups encountered setbacks. For example, lack of a clear maintenance plan for newly installed solar panels was flagged as a major oversight, leading to confusion over responsibilities and safety concerns.