



OXFORD SDG IMPACT LAB

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



01. Introduction



“The Lab offers a unique opportunity for our students to work with partner organisations to deliver the UN Sustainable Development Goals”

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the roadmap adopted by the international community to overcome poverty, protect the environment, and address inequalities. The 17 goals, with their 169 targets, and 231 unique indicators represent a giant “to do” list, standing between the world as it is and a sustainable, flourishing future for all people and the whole planet. Looking around the world there is much work to do.

The Oxford SDG Impact Lab equips and enables gifted and dynamic students to join with external partners in Oxford and beyond and get on with the work. The Lab was founded in 2021

on the conviction that we can make progress in addressing the challenges of our time but to do so we need individuals and organisations to take responsibility for shared challenges. We need creative, multidisciplinary thinking, and insights from research to formulate effective solutions. We need leadership that drives forward delivery so that all can benefit. And we need to work together.

Over the last 3 years we have been privileged to work with an incredible group of 28 partners, from local charities to businesses, philanthropic foundations, and international organisations. All of our partners are seeking to contribute to

the SDGs and we have enabled and equipped students with research skills and responsible leadership to add value to their work through project placements that typically last 5 weeks and conclude with the delivery of a research report and implementation plan.

We are grateful to all of our partners and to colleagues at the University of Oxford who have generously supported our work. We invite you to read on and discover what we have—so far—been able to do together.

02.

Who we are



The Oxford SDG Impact Lab trains and supports Oxford students to collaborate with organisations across sectors to deliver the SDGs. At the heart of the Lab is a diverse cohort of graduate students, who apply to join our extra-curricular programme. Our students come from around the world and are studying for degrees ranging from anthropology to data science, sustainable development, engineering, medical sciences, economics, business, history, literature, and global health (the full list is quite a lot longer!). What unites them is their desire to make an impact by applying their research skills to tackle the challenges of our time. Our goal at the Lab is to enable students to work with purpose-driven partner organisations to support their career development, provide value to partners, and deliver the SDGs.

The Lab's programme has two core elements, an educational "masterclass" series of talks, workshops, and case studies and a "field-lab" project with one of our partners. The masterclass series takes place in Oxford's Hilary (spring) Term and covers the core themes of our curriculum: ethics (character, purpose, responsible leadership); evidence (research skills for impact in organisational contexts); and engagement (project management, communication). It includes expert input from Oxford faculty on key SDG areas, along with guest speakers, and group exercises. Alumni present their experiences drawn from past projects as case studies. The practical "field lab" placement takes place during the summer term

or full-time at the start of the summer vacation. Students work with partner organisations in multidisciplinary teams to undertake research relating to one or more of the SDGs in a defined project area. They deliver evidence-based, actionable recommendations, presenting their findings to partners in meetings with senior leadership, along with a written report. We then aim to track the impact of those projects on the organisations and delivery of the SDGs, leading to an ever-growing range of case studies. Keep reading for examples of this work.

We believe that the Lab model is uniquely placed to complement Oxford's historical academic strengths, meeting a demand from students to develop practical and transferable skills, while channeling their talents in ways that make a difference – locally, nationally, and globally.

The Lab was founded in 2021, initially in partnership with easyJet holidays—a collaboration cultivated by the impact-driven imagination of the Forward Institute for responsible leadership. It has grown from 20 students in 2021 to almost 100 in our 2025 cohort, and operates based on funded collaborations with our partner organisations. The Lab is located in the heart of Oxford at Pembroke College's Albion House and is part of Oxford University's Department for International Development within the Social Sciences Division.

A woman with curly hair and green glasses, wearing a white tank top and a purple skirt, is sitting at a table. A man with blonde hair and glasses, wearing a white t-shirt, is leaning over her, pointing at a laptop screen. They are in a workshop or office setting with blurred background elements. A vertical black pole with a 'suspire' logo is visible on the left. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

“Our research is interdisciplinary, collaborative, and challenged. It aims to deliver actionable, evidence-based recommendations”

03. Year in Review; from start-up to scale-up



2024 saw the Lab significantly scale in size and ambition. After two years of piloting and developing our model, we were able to double the intake of students, and similarly scale-up the number of impact research projects and actionable recommendations shared with our partners. By 2025, we reached our target of 100 student fellows for the first time.

While all the SDGs have equal import, SDG 17 focuses crucially on good partnership and it is this goal that the Lab aims to embody and champion in all aspects of its work. The expansion of the Lab's activity would not have been possible without the support and commitment of our partners, with whom we have aligned on the shared aspiration of translating excellent research into real-world impact. During 2024, we continued our successful partnerships with BMW (p. 16 - 17), Rosberg Philanthropies (p. 18) and UN Tourism (p. 19). We also began a new partnership with the Laidlaw Foundation, enabling us to introduce our very first undergraduate programme (p. 24-25).

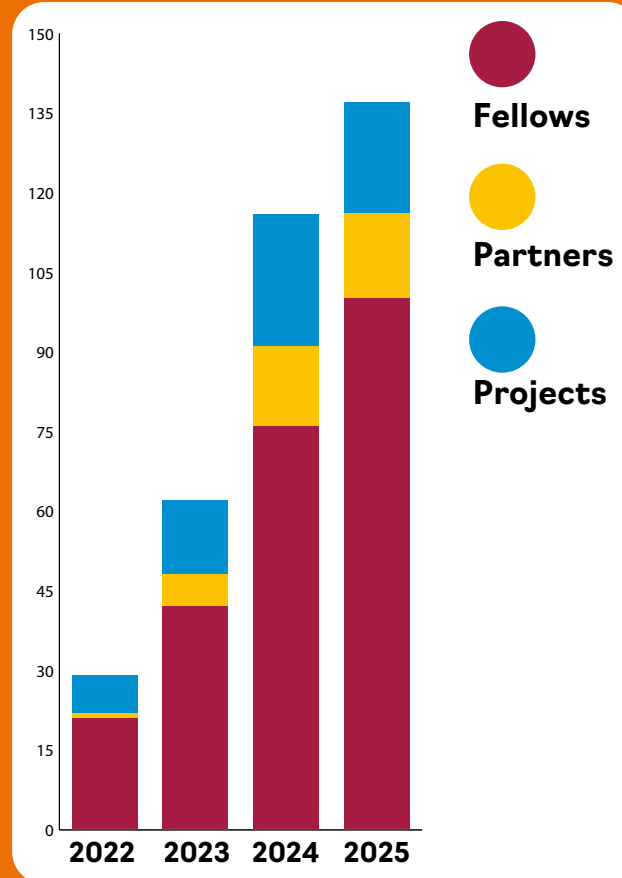
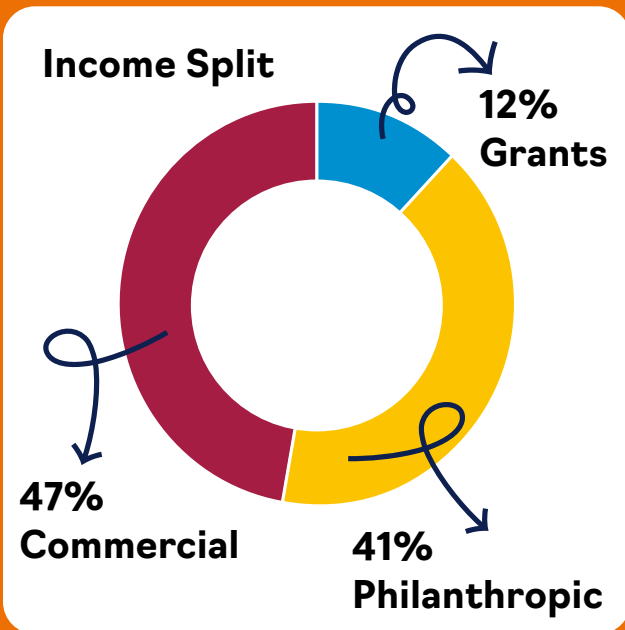
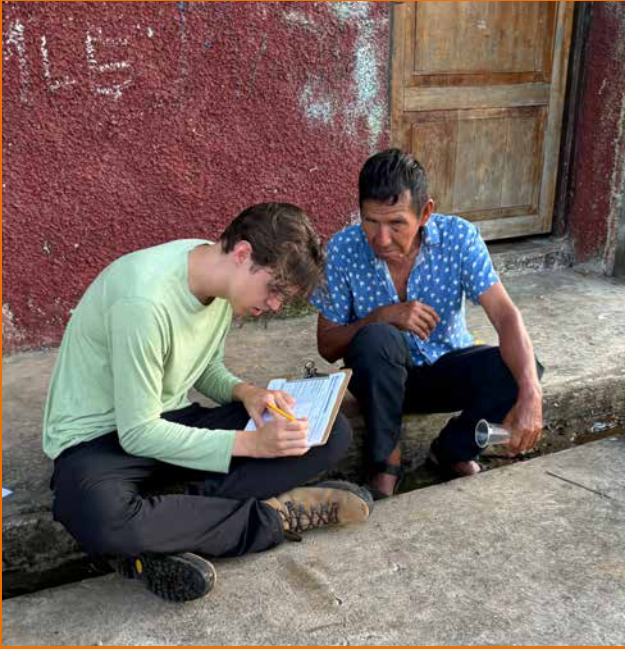
The past year also saw us introduce and pilot two new programmes with a greater emphasis on local engagement within Oxfordshire. The Community Impact Lab (p. 20-21) partnered teams of Fellows with five local community-based organisations, providing research insights and recommendations across areas ranging from social prescribing to what makes a good community hub. Our new Sport Impact Lab (p. 11) started with an innovative programme that invited 60 Year-8 pupils from four local secondary schools to visit the University and participate in a series of sports sessions combined with educational workshops. It has also worked to develop projects with a focus

on environmental sustainability and sport. Both of these programmes (as well as the creation of this report) have been made possible thanks to funding from the University's ESRC-funded Impact Accelerator Account and we are grateful for the support from the IAA Social Sciences team.

Several of our partners confirmed their continued support for our 2025 Fellowship and we are engaged in exciting conversations as we seek to forge new partnership arrangements that will enable us to be even more ambitious with our projects and deliver greater, longer-term impact.

With such expansion comes inevitable challenges relating to resources, and we are keen to move beyond year-to-year funding cycles and secure multi-year and core funding. Against the backdrop of these constraints, our core team have performed above and beyond to support our Fellows and deliver some outstanding programmes. Thanks also to the staff at our home department, the Oxford Department of International Development (ODID), who have been patient parents to the Lab during our early years.

As we grow, we hope to create a culture of learning to reflect on what we have achieved and also recognise where we can improve and strengthen. One such area is how we measure and evaluate our own impact as a Lab, as we start to see some project recommendations being implemented by our partners and witness Fellows go on to exciting futures in the world of sustainability and impact. This report is a modest first step in aiming to capture this.



“Over the past year, we have seen significant growth in our student numbers, partnerships & programmes, resulting in even more potential for transformative impact.”

04. Lab in Numbers



283
Fellows



6
Programmes



05.

Our Local & Global Impact



Partners

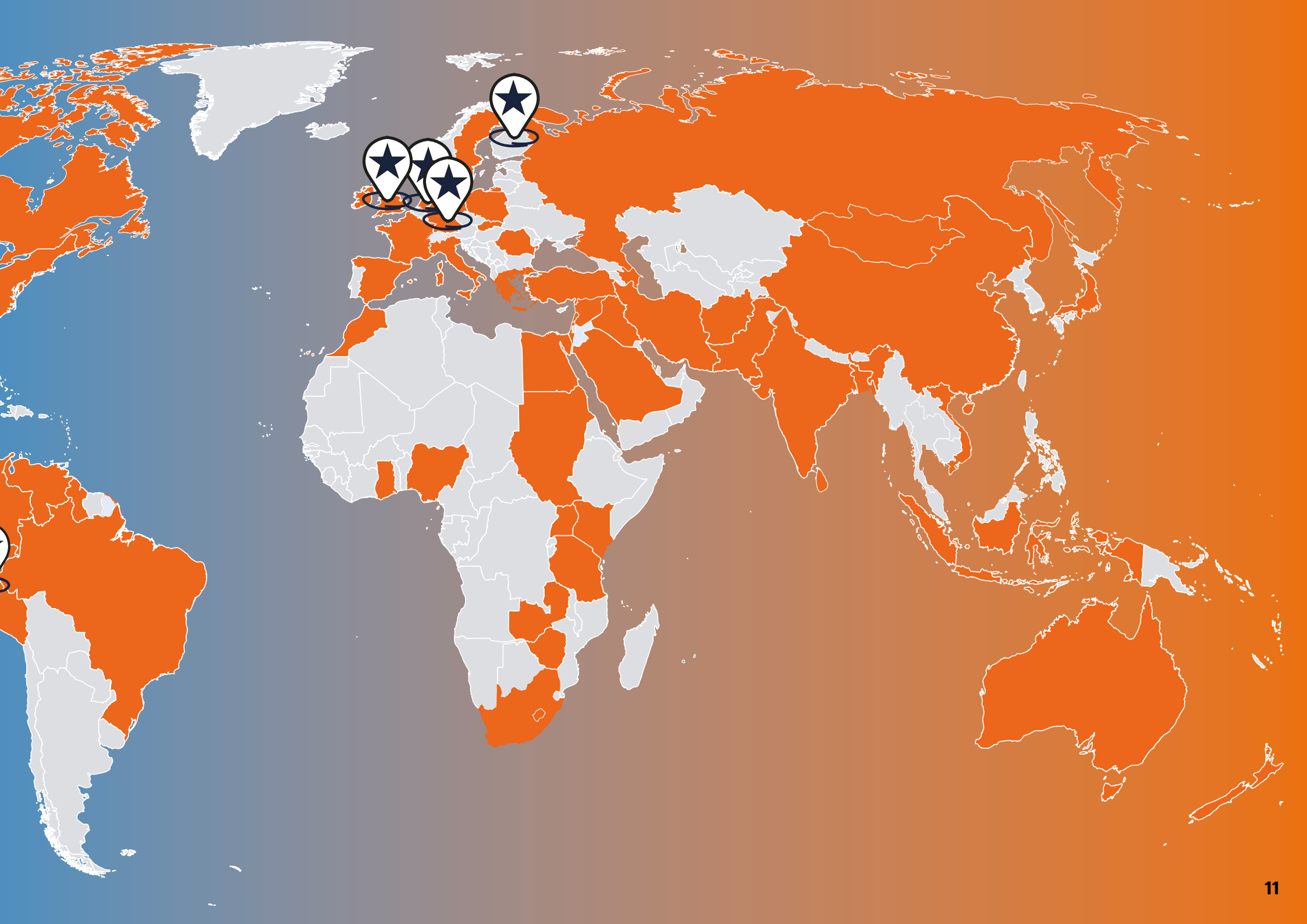
United Kingdom
Peru
Germany
Finland
Netherlands
United States



Fellows

Afghanistan	Israel	Saudi Arabia
Australia	Italy	Singapore
Azerbaijan	Jamaica	Slovakia
Bangladesh	Japan	South Africa
Barbados	Jordan	South Sudan
Bolivia	Kenya	Spain
Brazil	Lebanon	Sri Lanka
Canada	Lesotho	Sudan
China	Luxembourg	Sweden
Colombia	Maldives	Switzerland
Czech Republic	Mauritius	Syria
Denmark	Mexico	Taiwan
Ecuador	Mongolia	Tanzania
Egypt	Morocco	Turkey
France	Myanmar	Uganda
Germany	Netherlands	United Kingdom
Ghana	New Zealand	United States
Greece	Nigeria	Venezuela
Guyana	Northern Ireland	Vietnam
Hong Kong	Pakistan	Zambia
Hungary	Peru	Zimbabwe
India	Philippines	
Indonesia	Poland	
Iran	Republic of Korea	
Iraq	Romania	
Ireland	Russia	





06.

Masterclass

In 2024, we introduced our educational Masterclass series of talks, workshops, and case studies covering the core themes of our curriculum: ethics (character, purpose, responsible leadership); evidence (research skills for impact in organisational contexts); and engagement (project management and communication).



The eight-week programme is designed to equip participants with the skills, knowledge, and insights needed to drive meaningful progress towards the SDGs. By integrating the three core themes of ethics, evidence, and engagement, the programme offers a transformative learning experience that bridges academic research and real-world application.

Ethics – How do you know what's right? The ethics component of the curriculum empowers participants to address complex challenges by cultivating character and leadership. It emphasises responsible decision-making, helping attendees align personal and organisational principles with impactful outcomes. Training focuses on developing habits of mind and action that underlie decision making, balancing conflicting goals, and driving sustainable initiatives.

Evidence – How do you know what works? The evidence section centres on applied research and analytical skills. Participants are trained to apply mixed methods research skills—literature reviews, surveys, focus groups, data analysis—to critically assess what works in various contexts, including business, policy, and community engagement. This component equips students to understand the context, develop evidence-based proposals, and evaluate the impact of interventions.

Engagement – How do you get things done? A focus on engagement aims to prepare Fellows with the skills to deliver effective change at scale. An introduction to project management, organisational transformation, and effective communication equips them with the tools to translate ideas into action.

Each session focuses on a key SDG area, drawing on insight from faculty from across the University. Fellows explore practical examples and engage in collaborative group learning, case studies, and peer-led discussions. Highlights include talks by guest speakers from academia and industry with topics ranging from energy decarbonisation to sustainable food systems, and the future of digital technology.

Each session also features a case study presented by former Lab Fellows, showcasing previous impact research projects. These examples aim to inform and inspire students and provide actionable strategies for achieving impact.

Following the Masterclass series, students are invited to apply to a short-term research project with one of the Lab's partners, where they have the opportunity to put new learning and insight into practice.

“a learning experience that bridges academic theory with real-world application.”





07. Business Impact Lab



Achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 requires concerted efforts across sectors. Academia and Businesses, with their complementary strengths, are uniquely positioned to drive meaningful progress toward the goals.

Academia provides cutting-edge research, analytical rigor, and a new generation of talent eager to address global challenges. Meanwhile, businesses contribute practical expertise, operational capacity, and the ability to implement scalable solutions.

The Oxford SDG Impact Lab exemplifies this collaborative potential by fostering dynamic partnerships that help transform theoretical knowledge into real-world impact. It connects academic talent with industry leaders to work on research projects that tackle pressing societal, environmental, and economic challenges. Businesses engaging with the Lab not only benefit from innovative research insights but also demonstrate their leadership in advancing the SDGs as well as encouraging a new generation of sustainability leaders, equipped with the skills to drive positive change.

In the last three years we have been privileged to work with partners across multiple sectors. Over the next few pages, we invite you to read more about some of our most recent projects and the partnerships that have powered them.

“The Lab connects academic talent with industry leaders to work on research projects that tackle pressing societal, environmental, and economic challenges.”

This partnership between Oxford University and BMW Group MINI Plant Oxford represents an alliance between two of Oxford's oldest and largest employers, both committed to having a positive social and environmental impact on their city and community.

The Oxford plant has been part of the fabric of Oxford for more than a century and has adapted and evolved, incorporating new ideas and technology to ensure the production of quality cars such as the MINI Electric. This partnership also reflects past ties between the



University and car manufacturing in the city. The renowned British motor manufacturer and philanthropist that founded the plant, William Morris (Lord Nuffield), went on to found Nuffield College in 1937, Oxford University's first co-educational college.

In 2023, BMW partnered with the University's SDG Impact Lab to collaborate on research projects with interdisciplinary teams of graduate students. About to enter its third year, the partnership has so far supported 28 postgraduate students to work in interdisciplinary teams on 10 impact research projects, covering topics ranging from employee wellbeing to the future of hydrogen power.

The Lab is immensely grateful to BMW's continued support and enthusiasm for this partnership and we look forward to collaborating on more impactful work in the months and years ahead.

"Partnering with the Lab is helping us with our ambition to lead on the topic of sustainability as this will be the most crucial success factor for businesses in the coming decades"

Dr Markus Gruneisl, CEO, BMW (UK) Manufacturing



BMW

Research Case Study: Artificial Intelligence Powered Production.

Partner: BMW Group Mini Plant Oxford.

This research collaboration aimed to enhance production efficiency and sustainability at BMW MINI Plant Oxford, aligning with SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) and 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production). The project focused on improving the production steering process using data-driven approaches to optimise resource usage and reduce environmental impact. Key sustainability goals included minimizing water and energy consumption while enhancing operational efficiency.

A significant finding highlighted the paint shop as the largest source of energy consumption, primarily due to large curing ovens. Smart scheduling strategies, such as condensing oven use into shorter,

more intense periods or focusing production on warmer days, were proposed to reduce CO² emissions. These measures can significantly lower the plant's environmental footprint and contribute to more responsible production practices.

The research emphasised using predictive analytics for maintenance forecasting, which can reduce downtime and improve overall productivity. Scenario-based tools for smart scheduling can balance production complexities, enabling more informed decisions and optimised resource use.

The Fellows developed a roadmap for the team at MINI Plant Oxford, detailing a series of recommendations that can enhance production efficiency, reduce operational costs, and minimise environmental impact, demonstrating the transformative potential of AI in achieving sustainability goals.



Reema Mohamed

**BMW SDG IMPACT
FELLOW 2024**

"I was drawn to the Lab programme because of its unique approach to advancing the Sustainable Development Goals by fostering collaborations between academia and industry partners," explains Reema Mohamed, an MSc student in Global Governance. This curiosity led her to a transformative project with BMW Group MINI Plant Oxford's Corporate Social Responsibility team, helping to build a localised corporate citizenship strategy.

A highlight of Reema's experience was conducting primary research within the local community. *"It was really meaningful to get to speak to the local community and hear their insights,"* she shares. This hands-on approach culminated in a presentation to MINI Plant Oxford's senior leadership, where Reema's team saw their recommendations enthusiastically received. Reema has since joined the plant as part of its latest intake of graduate trainees.



Nico
Rosberg

F1 WORLD CHAMPION AND SUSTAINABILITY ENTREPRENEUR

In 2023, Nico Rosberg launched Rosberg Philanthropies, selecting Oxford University's SDG Impact Lab as its first partner and establishing the Rosberg Climate Fellows programme. Since 2023, the partnership has supported Fellows to work on environmental research projects ranging from direct carbon capture and ocean plastic pollution to alternative fuels and biodiversity conservation.

"Our goal is to bring together the brightest minds globally to challenge the status quo and create tangible impact. The collaboration between Rosberg Philanthropies and Oxford University excites me, as we continue to accelerate innovation and green tech solutions." - **Nico Rosberg**

This exciting project saw Fellows Aanchal Saxena (Masters in Public Policy), Auriane Flottes De Pouzols (Masters in Biodiversity Conservation and Management), and Pantelis Papageorgiou (Masters in Advanced Computer Science) collaborate with Formula 1 and Silverstone to enhance existing sustainability strategies at the British Grand Prix (GP), particularly around addressing fan travel emissions and local biodiversity impacts.

The Fellows conducted interviews and collected data from over 250 fans during the GP weekend to assess fan travel behaviours. Findings showed that convenience, cost, and accessibility were the primary considerations for fans, with over 80% not factoring environmental impacts

30+

**ACTIONABLE
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
SHORT, MEDIUM AND LONG-
TERM IMPLEMENTATION**

into their travel choices. Despite efforts by Silverstone to promote sustainable transport options, these remained underutilised, contributing to high levels of CO2 emissions. In terms of biodiversity, a pre- and post-event biodiversity audit was conducted, revealing a lower-than-expected insect population due to weather conditions, but highlighting opportunities for Silverstone to enhance its biodiversity initiatives, drawing inspiration from other motorsport circuits.

The team recommended several short- to long-term strategies to reduce fan travel emissions and enhance biodiversity. These included improving the clarity and accessibility of public transport information on Silverstone's website to developing a rewards programme to encourage sustainable travel. For biodiversity, the introduction of native species planting and projects such as bee hives were proposed.

Rosberg Climate Fellows

UN Tourism

Developing the first global ESG framework for tourism businesses

Tourism companies are under pressure to measure, report, and engage with their environmental and social impact. United Nations (UN) Tourism and the SDG Impact Lab partnered on multi-year research to develop a global **Framework for measuring and reporting the environmental, social, and governance (ESG) impact of tourism businesses.**

To develop the Framework, Fellows analysed current ESG practices and collected data from almost 600 tourism companies, representing a diverse range of tourism industries and geographies. Key findings included:

- 1. Need for standardised ESG reporting:** There was widespread recognition of the importance of sustainability reporting in tourism. However, tourism companies face challenges due to the complexity and misalignment of existing guidelines.
- 2. Development of a Preliminary ESG Framework:** Recognising key environmental, social, and governance challenges faced by tourism companies, preliminary

indicators were identified for the ESG Framework.

- 3. Challenges to address:** The ESG Framework must overcome key obstacles, including companies' limited resources, need for technical expertise, unreliable data, transparent oversight, and reporting-over-action bias.
- 4. Implementation strategy:** A robust implementation plan, involving ongoing collaboration with stakeholders, awareness initiatives, capacity-building, digitalisation, and a phased rollout will ensure the Framework's scalability and accessibility.

Fellows prepared a UN report and presented findings from this work at the Inaugural Event of the ESG Framework for Tourism Businesses at UN Tourism headquarters. The Framework continues to be developed, refined, and implemented with input from an advisory panel. The development of the ESG Framework marks a transformative milestone in the journey towards sustainable tourism and the contribution to this work from the SDG Impact Lab has been invaluable.



Buntu
Fanteso

UN TOURISM SDG IMPACT FELLOW 2024

"During my fellowship at the Oxford SDG Impact Lab, I had the privilege to work on the UN Tourism ESG Project. With my background in studying the impact of climate change on freshwater ecosystems, this project allowed me to apply my knowledge to real-world sustainability challenges. Over the summer, I engaged with tourism companies across five countries, gaining valuable insights into their sustainability efforts and the need for a tailored framework. This project has expanded my understanding of ESG beyond tourism and strengthened my network with sustainability leaders. It's been a transformative experience, shaping both my career goals and personal views on sustainable travel. I am eager to see how the project continues to positively impact the tourism industry"

"This invaluable
research helps
to propel us
forward"

600

TOURISM
COMPANIES
ENGAGED

Zoritsa Urosevic, Executive director
United Nations (UN) Tourism

08.

Community Impact Lab

The Community Impact Lab was piloted in 2024 and aims to combine the research talent of Oxford University graduates with local community organisations tackling environmental, economic and social inequality across Oxfordshire.



Developing stronger partnerships within communities is not only a Sustainable Development Goal in its own right (SDG 17) but is fundamental to making progress towards achieving the rest of the SDGs. The Community Impact Lab serves to deepen the partnership between the University of Oxford and many of the inspiring local social enterprises, charities, and community groups that are working to make Oxfordshire a fairer and more inclusive place in which to live and work. The Lab allows graduate students at Oxford the opportunity to translate their research skills into on-the-ground projects in their local communities while enabling local organisations to access much-needed research support and expertise.

The inaugural cohort of the Community Impact Lab brought together thirteen graduate students studying subjects ranging from Planetary Physics and Social Policy Evaluation, to Tropical Medicine and Engineering. As well as their research expertise, the international group of students (nine countries in total) also brought to bear a wealth of lived experience and diverse perspectives.

In this first year, teams of students were partnered with five local organisations to work on projects addressing topics ranging from health inequities and climate adaptation to social prescribing and community hub building. Research outputs ranged from stakeholder engagement and data analysis to running focus groups and building digital tools.

Project: Challenges & Needs of Community Hubs in Oxfordshire

Partner: Oxfordshire Inclusive Economies Partnership (OIEP)

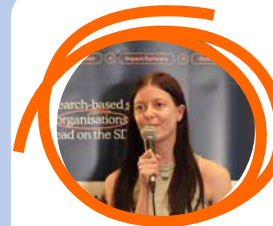
The student team consisted of Luisa Costa from Brazil studying an MSc in Social Policy Evaluation and Shawntel Nieto from the Philippines studying the Master's in Public Policy (MPP). The team looked at the contribution of community hubs to local socioeconomic development and how policies can be implemented to share best practice. The team used a mixed-method research strategy, including interviews, site visits, and web-scraping tools to build an interactive dashboard for community hubs to use. Alongside this resource the team developed a practical framework to support the effectiveness of community hubs and policy recommendations to encourage their growth. By offering these insights and resources, the team aims to support and empower the crucial role of community hubs in Oxfordshire.

“This is a real game-changer for us”

AMY LOCKWOOD
CEO - OXFORD HUB

Community Impact Lab partners 2024 - 2025

- Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership (OIEP)
- Oxford Hub
- Low Carbon Hub
- Active Oxfordshire
- Oxford City Football Club (OCFC)
- Oxford Community Action
- Tap Social Movement
- Oxfordshire Community Land Trust
- Oxfordshire FA
- Good Food Oxfordshire



Mathilde Ritman

DPHIL, ATMOSPHERIC, OCEANIC AND PLANETARY PHYSICS

Mathilde Ritman is a DPhil candidate in Atmospheric, Oceanic and Planetary Physics at Oxford and was a member of the Community Impact Lab 2024. Her academic research focuses on understanding future climate extremes and making climate information more accessible to the general public. Through the Community Impact Lab, she collaborated with Oxford City Football Club on “The Goal is Green” project, helping to research and develop practical sustainability related initiatives the club can implement to further their environmental ambitions.

“This experience has highlighted just how many dedicated people are progressing real-world applications of the SDGs at all scales,” says Mathilde. “It also showed me that you can have substantial impact by identifying and unlocking new ways forward.”

The Community Impact Lab is supported by the University of Oxford's ESRC Impact Acceleration Account (IAA). The IAA is designed to enable a wide range of knowledge exchange (KE) and engagement activities that translate social sciences research into social, economic and behavioural impact.



COMMUNITY IMPACT
SHOWCASE 2024

09. Local Policy Lab



Promoting health outcomes by vegetable growing through NHS greenspace

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL AND OXFORDSHIRE LOCAL NATURE PARTNERSHIP

This student team consisted of Michael Leadbetter, DPhil in Archaeology, and Rejoice Hassan, Master's in Public Policy student. Given the benefits of greenspace on wellbeing and community, the team researched opportunities and challenges in health promotion through vegetable growing at hospital sites. The team analysed over fifteen projects across the UK and globally and conducted interviews with key stakeholders. The team provided recommendations to the policy partners with the aim of making better use of the public estate for both people and nature and sustainably building community partnerships. Those recommendations are now in process of implementation.

The Local Policy Lab, an alliance between University of Oxford, Oxford Brookes University and Oxfordshire County Council, aims to bridge the gap between research and policy and support evidence-based public policy at the local level.

The University of Oxford is invested in strengthening links to the local community and coordinating with the county, city, and district councils. The Local Policy Lab is a new initiative that is actively working to build meaningful, long-term relationships between local policy partners, communities, and academic researchers.

The Local Policy Lab aims to connect researchers across both universities with county and district policymakers, local volunteer and charity organisations, and communities. The Lab intends to create opportunities for graduate students, supervised by academic and policy officers, to work on existing datasets, collect new qualitative data, and undertake impact evaluations to support evidence-based policymaking in Oxfordshire.

The Local Policy Lab is currently focused on two key areas of research and policy - identified in partnership with the universities and councils - addressing climate and health inequalities in Oxfordshire. In its first year, the Local Policy Lab piloted a Fellowship Programme, in partnership with the Oxford SDG Impact Lab. 19 University of Oxford graduate students across disciplines worked with the County Council and local community partners across nine project teams in the areas of climate and health in Oxfordshire.

The Local Policy Lab is supported by the [University of Oxford's ESRC Impact Acceleration Account \(IAA\)](#). The IAA is designed to enable a wide range of knowledge exchange (KE) and engagement activities that translate social sciences research into social, economic and behavioural impact.

10. Sport Impact Lab

The Sport Impact Lab uses the power of sport to advance the SDGs. We do this by bringing together the University with the community through sport to create impactful projects.



In 2023/24, the Sport Impact Lab's mission was to strengthen connections between the University and local communities through the design, delivery and research of innovative sport and education programmes.

One such initiative was the Oxford Young Sport Leaders Programme (OYSLP). OYSLP was piloted with Greyfriars School, where thirty school students in year 9 participated in a six-week one-day a week programme combining sports sessions with academic workshops. In the morning the school students had coaching in a variety of sports such as basketball, athletics, remote control car racing, flag football and rowing, and in the afternoon engaged in educational sessions delivered by leading academics at the University, covering mathematics, sociology, anthropology, psychology, and neuroscience. Alongside the programme the



The Oxford PowerHouse Games

The Oxford PowerHouse Games was a collaboration with the inclusive sports charity Power2Inspire. The Games took place in Trinity term and saw thirty school children from Greyfriars School return to the University, who were joined by twelve school children from the SEN school John Watson, as well as more than twenty University of Oxford students. The Games involved mixed teams of Greyfriars School, John Watson School and University students compete against one another across six different inclusive friendly sports with the prizes awarded by Paralympic rowing Champion Laurence Whitely.

school students had lunch in range of Oxford Colleges and spent time being mentored by current University students.

The initiative expanded in the summer to include Oxford Spire and Oxford Academy Schools in Trinity term. Over the course of the year more than sixty school students from the three schools participated, as well as more than twenty University student volunteers. Alongside the OSL programme the Sport Impact Lab also delivered the first "Oxford PowerHouse Games". This saw the same students from Greyfriars School return for a festival of inclusive friendly sports with the SEN school John Watson.

The Sport Impact Lab plans to continue with the expansion of both the PowerHouse Games and the Young Sport Leaders programme to reach all six state secondary schools in Oxford City in 2025. This expansion would enable 70 local school children to experience the athletic, collegiate, and educational opportunities at Oxford, with the ambition to continue the strengthening relationship between the University and city community.

Earlier this year, the SDG Impact Lab, in partnership with the Laidlaw Foundation, launched its first undergraduate programme. Joining 20 world-leading universities across Europe and North America, this exciting initiative enables undergraduate students to develop research and leadership skills while working collaboratively on local and global engagement.



10. Laidlaw

The Oxford Laidlaw Programme's inaugural year brought together 20 ambitious undergraduates for a transformative experience in research, leadership, and community engagement. Structured around ethics, evidence, and engagement, the programme featured expert-led seminars introducing students to research fundamentals, while guest speakers provided insights into evidence collection and community connections.

The scholars' journey was enriched by a transformative retreat run by the Oxford Character Project, fostering self-reflection and ethical leadership. Team-building activities, including attending the historic 400th annual St Giles Fair, strengthened their sense of community. Throughout, scholars engaged critically with the Sustainable Development

Goals, considering their role in driving meaningful change.

These foundations enabled our Laidlaw Scholars to conduct their first research projects while simultaneously leading five innovative educational initiatives in local schools: an Alice in Wonderland pantomime, Oxford Junior Debaters, Know Your World, Young Detectives, and Sharing Our Stories. Their work culminated in presentations at the 10th Annual Laidlaw Conference in Leeds, where scholar Katherine Ward, Human Sciences, reflected "The Laidlaw Scholars Conference left me feeling proud and grateful to be part of such an intellectually inspiring community. Sharing our research, exploring curiosity, and connecting with passionate individuals reminded me of my eagerness to apply my studies in the real world through opportunities like Laidlaw."

The interdisciplinary research groups undertook an ambitious 6-week research project exploring how extra-curricular activities influence educational and social outcomes in state schools. This multifaceted study combined rigorous academic research with hands-on community engagement, exemplifying our commitment to evidence-based social impact.

Five research groups worked collaboratively, each examining distinct aspects of the challenge. The global mapping team analysed successful programs across the UK and internationally, while policy researchers examined the current UK educational framework and state provision for new initiatives. Concurrently, our impact assessment group analysed newly collected and Oxwell data to better understand correlation and causation between social well-being, belonging and extra-curricular availability. This work was complemented by a community engagement group conducting deepening understanding and need within the local Oxford community.

Maisie Angus, Classics, reflects how

scholars “were able to gain a greater and crucial understanding of the community... Many key members shared their thoughts on the area [and] our project... It was good to hear some critical insights about Oxford’s community outreach, as it gave us a minute of pause and reflection on how our project aligned with community needs and how to continue to grow a positive relationship.”

Scholars used these observations along with those from their extra-curricular programmes as an opportunity to gather real-time data. This practical implementation informed the final group’s development of a longitudinal study framework, positioning the research for future expansion.

This comprehensive approach not only generated valuable insights for educational policy and practice but also demonstrated the potential of undergraduate research to address complex social challenges. The project established a strong foundation for ongoing investigation into educational equity and social well-being through extra-curricular intervention.

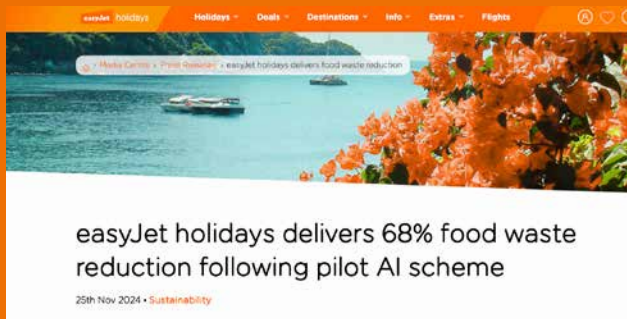


Leadership in Action

Next year, our scholars are planning on continuing their transformative journey by applying their leadership skills in an international context. Building on their experiences from the first year, and with further ethical leadership training by the Oxford Character Project, they will engage with communities to work towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). From supporting education in Chile to promoting women's health in India, our scholars are seeking opportunities that will allow them to expand their perspectives and collaborate with diverse communities tackling pressing global challenges. Through their Leadership in Action projects, our scholars will not only develop as leaders but also serve the global community in ways that drive sustainable, positive change.

11. Impact

Over the last four years, the SDG Impact Lab has evolved from a single partnership into a powerful catalyst for sustainable change, now working with 30 partners across four continents. Our journey exemplifies how academic research can drive real-world sustainability solutions when paired with committed partners and passionate students.



2024 marked a year of strategic growth as we expanded our reach through four focused initiatives: the Business Impact Lab, Sport Impact Lab, Community Impact Lab, and Local Policy Lab. Alongside these, we introduced our innovative eight-week Masterclass series and launched the undergraduate Laidlaw Scholars Programme. This diversification enables us to address sustainability challenges at both global and local levels while creating unprecedented opportunities for student engagement.

We have spent the last four years establishing the Lab model and delivering some exciting collaborative research projects that have resulted in more than 200 actionable recommendations for our partners. The challenge now is to make sure we ask 'What happened next?' How did this research result

in genuine change and create a positive impact on people and planet? As we move into 2025, we are concentrating on following up with our partners and Fellows and measuring the impact of our research collaborations, which are already starting to deliver tangible results.

One of our early projects with founding partner, easyJet holidays, resulted in adoption of new technology that has been piloted in one of their Tenerife hotels and helped achieve a remarkable 68% reduction in food waste, preventing 32 tonnes of waste and delivering €100,000 in cost savings. Our collaboration with BMW MINI Plant Oxford produced a comprehensive CSR evaluation tool that now guides BMW's community engagement across their Oxford and Swindon plants. Through our Sport Impact Lab we've successfully piloted a schools



engagement programme that is expanding to all six Oxford state secondary schools in 2025 and has attracted local sponsorship as well as central University support to help secure the programme's future and benefit many more Oxford school pupils.

As well as developing the tools and metrics to properly evaluate the impact of our work, in 2025 we are supporting partners keen to evidence and measure their own efforts to deliver progress towards the SDGs.



Innovation in Evaluation

In October 2024, the Lab was invited to speak at the National Evaluation Capacities Conference in Yanqing province, Beijing. Hosted by the UN Development Programme and in partnership with the China International Development Cooperation Agency and the Global Evaluation Initiative, 500 people attended from over 100 countries, all united by a common purpose: to use data and evaluation insights as a force for meaningful change. The Lab was part of a discussion

about how academia can contribute to the evaluation field and more specifically, how the Lab's multi-disciplinary approach, using young research talent, can provide a different model.

This meeting has led to a pilot project in 2025, with three Lab Fellows working with the UNDP's Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) to offer a fresh perspective on traditional evaluation approaches.

平行会议A4 Stream A4

主题：扩大评估体系——与学术界和VOPE合作，支持证据生成和使用的能力

Theme: Expanding the Evaluation System - working with Academia and VOPEs to Support Capacity and Capability in Evidence Generation and Use



12. Our Team



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Special thanks to the following individuals who have also played an important role in supporting the Lab team during the last year: Varun Shankar, Bryony Varnam, Amy Booth, Helen Nicholls, Laura Ballerini, Marcel Seger, Sara Sampieri, Sophia Stone, Tanya Manchanda, Corey Crossan, Anjali Sarker, Aanchal Saxena

Working in Partnership

Thanks to all the partners, collaborators, and friends of the Lab who have embodied the spirit of SDG 17.



To find out more on how you can partner with the Lab, visit <https://www.oxfordlab.org/> or scan the QR code.



13.

What's Next?



The Lab offers a unique opportunity: for students to work with partner organisations to deliver the SDGs.



For students, we offer the skills to have real-world impact and the chance to work in interdisciplinary teams with organisations striving to make a difference. For partners, we are delivering impact through evidence-based recommendations. From the UN's first ESG framework for tourism to award-winning waste management solutions and identifying pathways for reducing car travel to F1 events, we have a growing array of examples of the Lab have a positive impact.

We are ambitious and want to expand the Lab's work to involve more students, broaden and deepen our partnerships, and have even greater impact. As we look forwards, we have five key priorities for the future.

1. Diversifying opportunities

We began our work with one founding partners, easyJet holidays. Over the last 4 years, we have worked with 30 different partner organisations, expanding across sectors, and collaborating with business, government, and non-profit organisations. We are working locally, nationally, and globally. Students have had the opportunity to work across sectors - sport, education, environment, manufacturing, tourism, and community engagement. We have also gradually expanded from a focus on graduate students to include undergraduates through the Laidlaw Scholars Programme. We want to further diversify the range of opportunities available to our students – across local, national, and global levels; across business, government, and non-profit organisation; and across sectors.



“Our ambition is to involve more students, broaden our partnerships, and have even greater impact.”

2. Financial sustainability

The Lab has grown through its strong partnership model. Without the generous support of our collaborators, none of the Lab's work would be possible. The Lab's success has enabled those partnerships to broaden and deepen. The next phase of the Lab's work requires us to secure core and multi-year funding. This is especially important for staff recruitment and retention, as well as for enabling long-term strategic planning.

3. Scaling our model

The Lab's expansion over the last 4 years has been rapid. We now have around 100 students taking our Masterclass and around 50 undertaking field lab opportunities. We turnover close to £1 million per year. But how can we take the model we have prototyped and

scale, including beyond Oxford? We are keen to take the lab curriculum we have developed and make it more widely available, including through digital resources, around the world, including by collaborating with other university partners.

4. Deepening our focus on impact

We have built some extraordinary impact case studies that have delivered meaningful impact in relation to the SDGs, while adding value to our partner organisations. During the process, we have learned that one of the areas in which we have a particular comparative advantage is impact evaluation. Many organisations have a need to evidence the SDG-related impact of their work, while many of our students are eager to acquire training in impact evaluation methods. While we will retain a broad disciplinary and methodological focus on our work, SDG-related

impact measurement will become part of the Lab's USP.

5. The post-2030 agenda

As we approach 2030, there is growing debate and speculation on what the post-2030 agenda will look like. Nevertheless, it is clear that much remains to be done to deliver the SDGs, and the world is likely to be a long way off meeting all its SDG targets by the end of the decade. Regardless of whether the SDGs are renewed, updated, or replaced, there will be an ongoing need for collaborative research projects to support organisations' ability to meet social and environmental targets for the benefit of people and planet. We will engage with the post-2030 agenda and adapt as we need to, but confident that our model will remain relevant and applicable to contemporary global, national, and local challenges.



**OXFORD SDG
IMPACT LAB**

Find out more

