

*Sustainability  
in Education  
Roundtable*

EVENT DESIGN GUIDE

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Sustainability Design Thinking Roundtable: Event Design Guide  
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# Preface

I was amazed at the enthusiasm for sustainability of students who had joined the NIFTI (New Ideas from the Inside) program. The NIFTI Roundtable with a theme of Sustainability in Education was invented to offer these students an opportunity to mastermind a sustainability event.

We wondered. Why were students not learning about sustainability as a central part of their education? Why were they not being given the knowledge that is invaluable to their futures and the future of generations to come? Isn't sustainability as important to everyone's lives as math, science, languages and humanities?

“There isn't an education system on the planet that teaches dance every day to children the way we teach them mathematics. Why? Why not?”

- *Sir Ken Robinson in “Do Schools Kill Creativity?” TED2006*

The same question comes to our mind concerning sustainability. Our collective mindset deserves to have the learned awareness to take responsibility for the well-being associated with sustainability.

After almost 11 months of planning and preparation, we hosted the NIFTI Roundtable Sustainability in Education Roundtable in December 2021. This brief e-book shares the organizational experience from pulling this event together. The guidance is intended to inspire & motivate you & others to organize future Sustainability in Education Roundtable events - in the hope of better educating youth for a promising & fulfilling future on this planet.

*Read Me*



## *Overview*

Create your own Sustainability in Education Roundtable to gather thought leaders to discuss & learn about the place for sustainability as an educational subject & activity. Aim to gather input, ideas & preferences from a focus group of educators and students to design think sustainability learning innovations.

## *Requirements*

A Main Idea

Organizing Committee

An Agenda

Participants

Interactive & Engaging Activities

Meaningful Outcomes & Reflections

Action Plan

## *Optional*

Past NIFTI experience

Mentor

Sponsor

## *Organizing Committee Lead Coordinator Roles*

*Speaker Coordinator*

*Audience Coordinator*

*Agenda Coordinator*

*Web site Coordinator*

*FAQs Coordinator*

*Logistics Coordinator*

*Hosting Coordinator*

*Sponsor Coordinator*

*Social Media/PR Coordinator*

*Introduction:  
The Main  
Idea*

## *Start Here with a Main Idea*

The main idea is key to aligning the organizers, attracting participants, & focusing on a compelling issue. With it, derive the vision statement, the mission statement, & the program structure...& in turn generate the content & detailed features of the program.

In this section, a working definition of sustainability is provided which is followed by the main idea for the 2021 NIFTI Sustainability in Education Roundtable. You can re-use this main idea or compose your own.

## *Sustainability is a Life Skill*

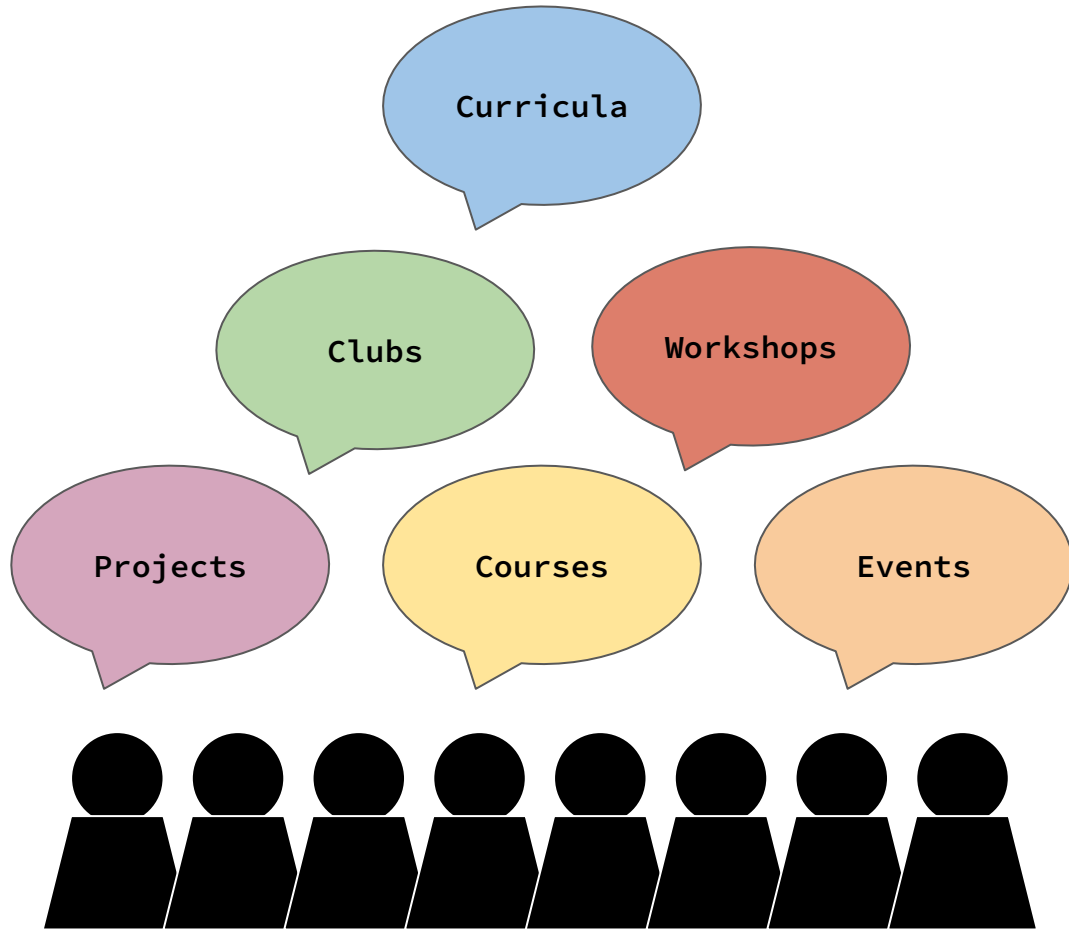
Think of sustainability as the human-centered life practice of using resources efficiently & effectively for balanced well-being. This requires everyday behaviors guided by personal & social good, & a naturally instinctive desire for each of us to preserve our quality of life.

Questioning our need for something & the consequence is critical to this life skill.

*"Envision an education where sustainability is a core academic subject. Imagine students empowered by global sustainability actions. The NIFTI Roundtable 2021 will bring together education stakeholders to brainstorm and shape a platform of curricula, courses and experiential learning programs to re-define how we learn about sustainability."*

- The 2021 NIFTI Sustainability in Education Roundtable Main Idea

# *Range of Educational Activities*





*Compose your Main Idea:*

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# *Organizing Committee*

## *Getting Organized*

Organizing a roundtable event is very much a group effort. This section makes recommendations on forming the organizing committee.

To form an organizing committee, start by listing names. Think of who would be interested in the sustainability in education topic & who would work well in a team. Invite them to a focus group meeting to see if the proposition of event leadership sparks their imagination & thought flow. Seek willing collaborators & contributors with relevant skills such as energized positivity, & aware communication.

## *Functional Requirements*

Choose a time horizon so that constraints such as holidays & examination periods can be considered. The next step would be to pinpoint a date & start time.

Create a rough draft agenda by deciding what you want to include. Then schedule the content so it fits in the length of time you want the event to last.

Each committee member takes one organizing role & one hosting role. Communicate progress & issues regularly. Work with action items.

## *Three Types of Organizational Meetings*

The On-Board Meeting - to introduce the scope of the effort, align the team, & set-up planning tools.

The Make Meeting - to design the program structure & fill in details. Set action items & seek contributions.

The Readiness Meeting - to review completeness of content & tune experiential aspects of the program.

*Your Organizing Committee:*

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*Design &  
Build the  
Agenda*

## *Design Thinking*

Applying the human-centric method of design thinking to the agenda connects the main idea about Sustainability in Education to the participants. Have a design goal to foster engagement through interactive discourse & to inspire imaginations through creative expression. Every element in the agenda should give each participant an active role to play.



## *Design-Build*

Build the agenda in three phases: open, explore & close. The open phase creates a collective sense of purpose. The explore phase facilitates collaboration & discovery. The close phase reflects on the productivity & sets action items. Insert the ideas from the design thinking step into this design-build effort.

*This is the agenda of the  
2021 NIFTI Sustainability in Education Roundtable:*

Zoom Meeting Room Open  
Welcome Address  
Sponsor Address  
Organizing Committee Introductions  
Keynote Speaker  
Panel Discussion  
Panel & Audience Q&A  
Opinion Poll  
Brainstorming Session  
Social Networking (Breakout Sessions)  
Closing Remarks  
End

*Feel free to use the same or a similar agenda.*

## *Design Your Agenda:*

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Hosts,  
Panelists &  
Audience

## *Program Participants*

The Sustainability in Education Roundtable involves three categories of participants including hosts/moderators, featured speakers (keynote, sponsor, panelists), & the audience.

As a start, the organizing committee volunteers for host/moderator roles, seeks featured speakers, & identifies an audience.

## *Featured Speakers*

Prepare an event overview to include with the invitation to prospective featured speakers. Explain the event's main idea & how you would like them to contribute (eg, keynote, sponsor, panelist). When a featured speaker accepts the invitation, provide guidance on the overall agenda & the specifics about their participation (eg, role, time, topic & interaction).

## *The Audience*

Who to invite & how many to participate in the audience is entirely up to the organizing committee. The primary segment would be fellow students especially those interested in sustainability through school or extracurricular activities. In the invitation to be in the audience, describe the main idea of centering sustainability in everyone's education & the discussion among changemakers on advancing this proposition.

*Draft an Invitation:*

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*Interaction  
&  
Engagement*

## *Engagement is Mission Critical*

An interactive & engaging environment is a critical part of the promise of the event. The 2021 NIFTI Sustainability in Education Roundtable had audience Q&A with the panelists, an opinion poll, & a brainstorming session. This was connected to the earlier presentations by the keynote speaker, panelists & hosts. The success of the program is shown in the level of engagement which is achieved through interaction.

*The panelists were provided several questions to focus their presentations:*

1. Please share with us an educational program or activity you have been involved with that promotes sustainability.
2. What should students graduating high school know about sustainability? What are the most essential topics & lessons?
3. What is needed to make a place for sustainability among the core school subjects?

## *The Opinion Poll*

1. How many years in primary & secondary school should students be learning about sustainability?
2. Is learning about sustainability just as important as learning math, science, language & arts?
3. In which way would you most prefer learning about sustainability?
4. Which sustainability issues are the most essential topics?
5. Does your school currently offer the opportunity to learn about sustainability?

## *Leadership & Ownership*

We had a Brainstorming session where students were instructed to “Imagine you are the instructor of a sustainability course.”

This activity was designed partly for purposeful interaction & ideation - to interrupt the passivity of being among the audience. Spreading a hint of ownership & creative leadership by having the students name themselves as instructors of their courses.

*Interaction & Engagement Ideas:*

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# Outcomes & Reflections

## *What happened?*

Close the program with a recount of the program - including planned activity & the threads of discovery that caused the most excitement. Acknowledge the people present & the recap the main idea. Share reflective thoughts about the productivity & the gains that resulted from the presentations & discussion.



## *What's next?*

Remind the participants of the Sustainability in Education idea, & ask each of them to continue on this quest by accepting the challenging action item to champion the change.

*Draft a Script of Your Closing Remarks:*

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*If you  
reached this  
point...*

*If you reached this point...*

*Find people to collaborate with.*

This is a project that allows you to work closely with many people on a topic that affects the future for everyone.

*Come up with a plan.*

Design your event & propose it to participants.  
Take ownership & be a leader for this change.

*Make Your Event Happen.*

Join the effort to promote Sustainability in Education by hosting your own roundtable event.

*Imagine your own Sustainability in Education  
Roundtable...*

*1. What is the main idea?*

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*2. Who will participate?*

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*3. When do you want this to happen?*

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## *And here is a starter checklist...*

- Form an organizing committee
- Develop a Main Idea (& Vision Statement etc.)
- Design an Agenda
- Assign organizing committee planning roles
- Pick a place, date & time
- Set up a “stealth” website with event details
- Invite featured speakers
- Transform agenda into schedule with timings
- Update website & publish publicly
- Invite audience
- Rehearse
- Launch the event
- Reflect on the experience & grow

**Colin Ong** is the founder and director of the Youth Creativity, Innovation & Sustainable Leadership program at Stanford University where he is an Adjunct Professor specializing in youth creativity and sustainability design thinking. He has mentored in science fairs, sports and college readiness. His hobbies include web design, gardening and food blogging.

*Congratulations!*

*By checking the back cover, you are showing a curiosity for Sustainability in Education, & perhaps becoming a part of the movement to crown the educational hierarchy of subjects with sustainability. Look inside for guidance to creatively organize & host your own roundtable in the leadership quest to recognize the universal importance of sustainability in education & to our lives.*