

Greening the Future — Sustainability in Education, Business and the Green Economy

Dr Nayanee Silva FCA FCMi FRSA

Institute for Sustainability, University of Surrey, UK

Climate change is no longer a distant threat—it is a lived reality disrupting ecosystems, economies, and human wellbeing. This session, presented by **Dr Nayanee Silva**, a business professional, founder, academic lecturer and researcher will explore the impacts of climate change and make a compelling case for why collective and corporate action is no longer optional. Organisations at the forefront of sustainability are not only reducing harm but creating value: innovating across supply chains, adapting to eco-conscious consumer demands, and unlocking new markets.

This talk will delve into how sustainability is emerging as a powerful engine of economic renewal, generating green jobs and accelerating innovation, where over 639,000 green jobs have already been created in clean energy, sustainable construction, transport, and circular manufacturing according to the latest data (UK). As the green economy expands, education in sustainability and climate science is becoming a cornerstone of workforce transformation. Universities, vocational institutions, and industry-led training programmes are embedding climate literacy, systems thinking, and ESG fluency into their curricula. From environmental engineering to sustainable finance, graduates are entering the workforce with interdisciplinary skills tailored to net-zero transitions.

In the UK, initiatives are aligning education with regional green job demand. Experiential learning, apprenticeships, and accredited graduate schemes are equipping young professionals with both technical expertise and adaptive leadership skills. Graduates can expect a future where green careers span every sector—from construction and energy to data science, finance and policy. With demand for green talent outpacing supply, those with sustainability credentials are already seeing higher hiring rates and more resilient career trajectories.

This session delivered by a UK sustainability professional working across business, nonprofit and higher education sectors, reveals how sustainability in education and business is not just about survival, but about seizing the future with purpose; emerging career pathways, upskilling opportunities, and how graduates can navigate the expanding ecosystem of climate-aligned roles. Whether you're studying business, engineering, data science, or the arts, there's a role for you in the sustainability revolution.



SPEAKER BIO

DR NAYANEE SILVA *FCA FCMi FRSA*

Nayanee Silva is an Associate Lecturer in Corporate Sustainability at the Centre for Environment and Sustainability, University of Surrey, UK. She is a Research Fellow at the Centre for Social Innovation Management at Surrey Business School and a Sustainability Fellow at the Institute for Sustainability at Surrey. She also serves as Senior Adviser in Corporate Sustainability and Strategic Partnerships at CIFAL/UNITAR (UN Institute for Training and Research) Surrey, where she is a member of the faculty for UN-certified courses on sustainability.

Nayanee completed her doctorate in Environment and Sustainability at the University of Surrey, where she developed a holistic new framework for measuring, and managing organisational sustainability. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Electronic Engineering from the University of Reading, and Fellowships with the Institute of Chartered Accountants (UK), the Chartered Management Institute (UK), and the Royal Society of Arts.

With varied experience in finance, consultancy and business management—including extensive engagement with stakeholders across both private and nonprofit sectors, Nayanee made the transition from a global corporate finance career 25 years ago to establish her own business consultancy, where she is Managing Partner. She has provided education consulting services for students and business consultancy to companies and startups for UK and international clients.

Her research, published in peer-reviewed journals and presented at international conferences and to business audiences, examines corporate sustainability management, corporate social responsibility (CSR), employee engagement, the energy transition, and approaches to sustainable development. She founded *The Sustainable Business Project*, a platform to share innovative sustainability research, best practices, and strategic insights. Through research and data-driven insights, she provides strategic consultancy and training for business.

Beyond academia, Nayanee serves on the steering group of the Surrey Women's Entrepreneurship Network and leads development initiatives as President of a nonprofit organisation she founded, focused on capacity building, women's empowerment through enterprise, and education projects in Sri Lanka. She is a mentor and accredited coach for various organisations including the King's Trust.

Nayanee is deeply committed to advancing sustainability education, supporting responsible business, and conducting research at the nexus of corporate sustainability, innovation, and collaborative social impact. She is passionate about supporting young people into careers and education, through her volunteering work at Surrey, UK-based charities and in Sri Lanka.

Connect on LinkedIn



www.surrey.ac.uk/nayanee-silva

Email: d.n.silva@surrey.ac.uk