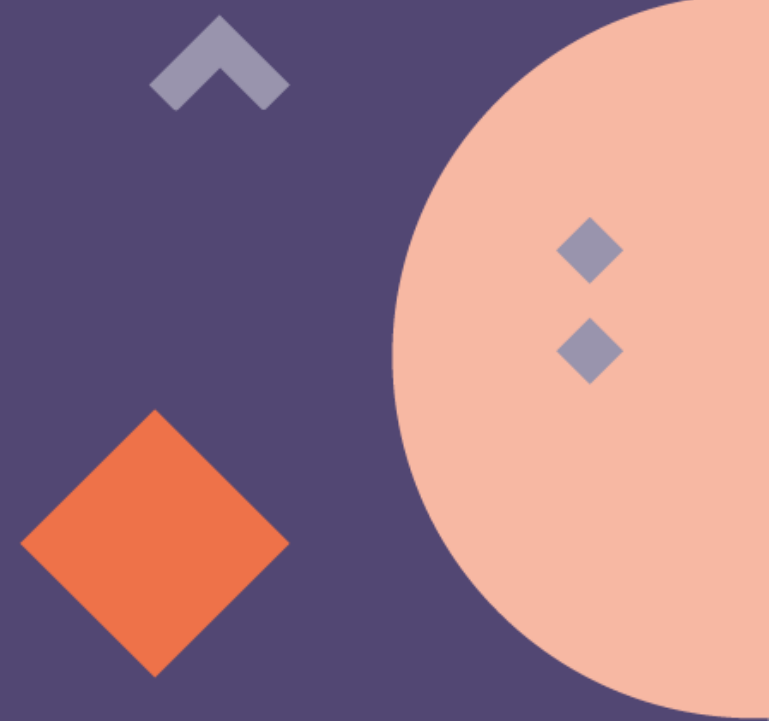




GREEN YOUTH INNOVATION LAB

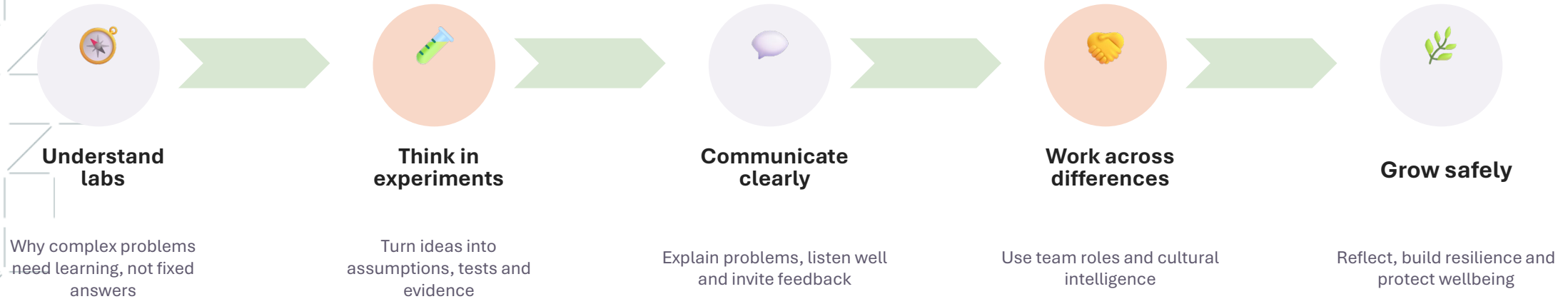
Theme 3

Innovation Readiness, Communication and Team Skills



Session	Topic	Time
Welcome	Welcome Day 3 (CTU)	9.00-9.30am
1	Understanding Innovation Labs	9.30-11.00
Break	Morning Break	11.00-11.30
2	Clear Communication	11.30-12.30
	Teamwork & Cultural Intelligence	
Break	Lunch Break	12.30-13.30
3	Group presentations	13.30-15.30
	(ENU+CTU+ASSIST+BC as panel)	
Break	Afternoon Break	15.30-16.00
4	Outcome announcement and next step and certification	16.00-16.45
Closing	CTU	16.45-17.00

What this theme helps participants do



Core message: innovation readiness is not about having perfect answers. It is about learning quickly, safely and collaboratively.

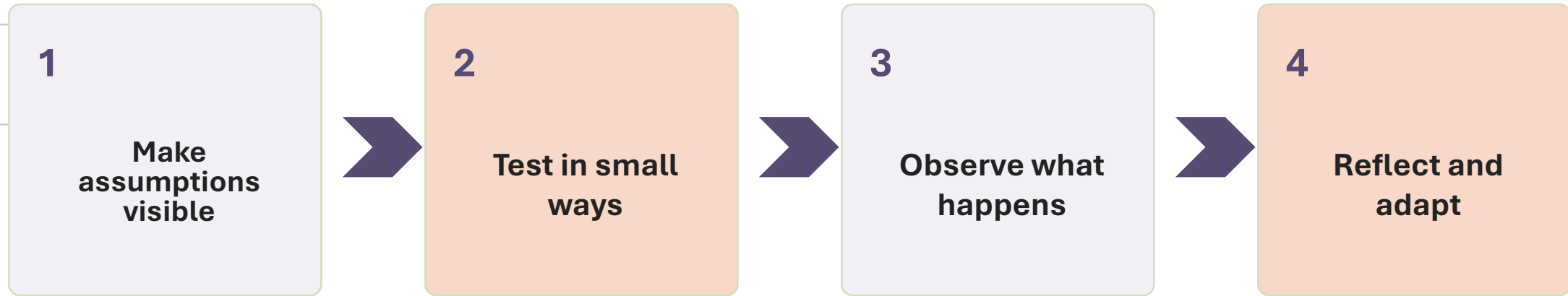
Why innovation labs exist

Modern sustainability challenges are dynamic, connected and unpredictable. A solution that looks correct on paper may not work in practice.



Innovation labs move us from “designing answers” to “learning what works”.

Innovation is structured learning under uncertainty



Testing is not a sign that the team is uncertain or weak. It is how the team becomes more realistic.

Example: a temporary refill station may reveal that the barrier is not access, but habit.

Failure as data

Instead of asking...

“Did we succeed or fail?”

Early “failure” protects teams from bigger failure later.

Ask...

“What did we learn from this?”

The only real failure is not testing your assumptions at all.

Use this language with participants: “Your test did not fail. One assumption was corrected.”



When “Failure” Is Useful

A group of students in Da Nang designed a composting system for apartment residents. They created a compact bin and believed people would be willing to use it.

When they tested it, most residents said they did not want compost bins inside their homes due to concerns about smell and space.

At first, the team felt they had failed.

But after reflecting, they realised something important: they had avoided spending months developing a solution that people would not use.

They shifted their idea toward a shared, outdoor composting model.

Lesson

Early failure saves time and resources.

What you learn is more valuable than what you build.



Unexpected Barriers (Food Packaging Pilot)

A youth team working on reusable food containers partnered with a small food vendor. They assumed that if containers were environmentally friendly, customers would choose them.

During the pilot, they found that customers were interested—but still chose single-use packaging.

After observing more closely, they realised the issue was time. Customers did not want to wait for containers to be cleaned and returned.

The team redesigned their system to make it faster and more convenient.

Lesson

A solution must fit into people's daily routines—not disrupt them.

Learning Before Scaling (Hanoi Composting)

A student team in Hanoi developed a composting solution for apartment residents. They designed a compact system and believed it would be practical for urban households.

Before investing time in building and distributing the system, they decided to test their idea by speaking with residents. They interviewed 20 people living in apartments.

Most of them said the same thing: they did not have enough space in their kitchens for composting.

At first, the team felt discouraged. Their idea, which seemed strong in theory, was not working in practice.

But instead of seeing this as failure, they recognised it as valuable information. They had learned something critical before spending time and money on a solution that would likely not be used.

They shifted their approach and began exploring shared or community-based composting options instead.

Lesson

Early “failure” protects you from bigger failure later.
What you learn can save time, money, and effort.



When People Don't Use the Solution

A youth team introduced reusable containers at a small campus café, expecting students to switch away from single-use packaging.

They were confident the idea would succeed because students had previously expressed support for environmental initiatives.

However, during the pilot, most students continued using single-use containers.

Instead of concluding that the idea had failed, the team observed more closely. They realised that students were often in a hurry and chose the fastest option available.

The issue was not awareness—it was convenience.

This insight led the team to redesign their system to make reusable containers quicker and easier to use.

Lesson

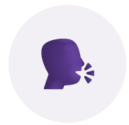
When a solution is not used, it reveals what really matters to people.





Psychological safety makes learning possible

People contribute more when they can speak honestly, ask questions and share unfinished ideas without embarrassment.



Say “I’m not sure”



Question assumptions



Give respectful feedback



Change direction early

Team norm

We improve ideas, not judge people.

A safe team learns faster because problems are raised while they are still small.



When People Don't Speak Up

A student team was working on a solution to reduce food waste in their university cafeteria. One team member had concerns that their idea—pre-ordering meals through an app—might not work for students who make last-minute decisions.

However, she chose not to speak up, worried that her idea might sound too critical.

The team moved forward with the concept and spent time developing it. When they finally tested it, adoption was low—many students preferred flexibility over planning ahead.

After reflecting, the team realised that this issue had been identified early—but never discussed.

Lesson

When people do not feel safe to speak, teams lose valuable insight.



Changing Direction Early

In an innovation workshop, a team was developing a solution to reduce plastic use in local cafés. During a group discussion, one member openly said, “I’m not sure this idea will work in small cafés with limited space.”

Instead of dismissing the comment, the team explored it further.

They visited several cafés and confirmed the concern—space was a major constraint.

Because the issue was raised early, the team was able to adjust their idea before investing too much time. They redesigned their solution to fit smaller spaces.

Lesson

Speaking up early helps teams avoid bigger problems later.

Performance Mindset vs Learning Mindset

Read the statements below. Tick the ones that feel most true for you.

Performance Mindset

- ☐ I must impress others.
- ☐ I should not make mistakes.
- ☐ I should already know the answers.
- ☐ If my idea fails, I fail.
- ☐ I feel pressure to perform perfectly.

Learning Mindset

- ☐ I want to explore new ideas.
- ☐ Mistakes help me improve.
- ☐ It's okay not to know everything.
- ☐ Feedback helps my idea grow.
- ☐ I am here to learn, not to impress.

Reflection

Which mindset do I want to practice more?

Why?

Thinking in experiments: three words

Idea

A possible solution

**“Let’s create refill
stations.”**

Assumption

What must be true

**“People will bring
containers.”**

Evidence

What reality shows

**“Only 20% returned
containers.”**

Common mistake: treating assumptions as facts.



A Good Idea That Didn't Work

A student team wanted to reduce plastic waste by installing refill stations on campus. The idea seemed simple and effective. If students had easy access to water, they would stop buying bottled drinks.

The team was confident and began planning how to install multiple stations across campus. Before moving forward, they decided to test their idea by setting up one temporary station. After a week, they noticed that usage was lower than expected.

When they spoke with students, they discovered something important: many students already had access to water, but still bought bottled drinks out of habit or convenience.

The issue was not access—it was behaviour.



Assumptions vs Reality

A team wanted to introduce refill stations for household cleaning products. They believed that customers would bring their own containers to reduce plastic use.

When they spoke with potential users, they found that many people supported the idea—but did not want the inconvenience of carrying containers while shopping.

The team realised their assumption about behaviour was incorrect.

They adjusted their idea to include optional reusable containers available at the store.

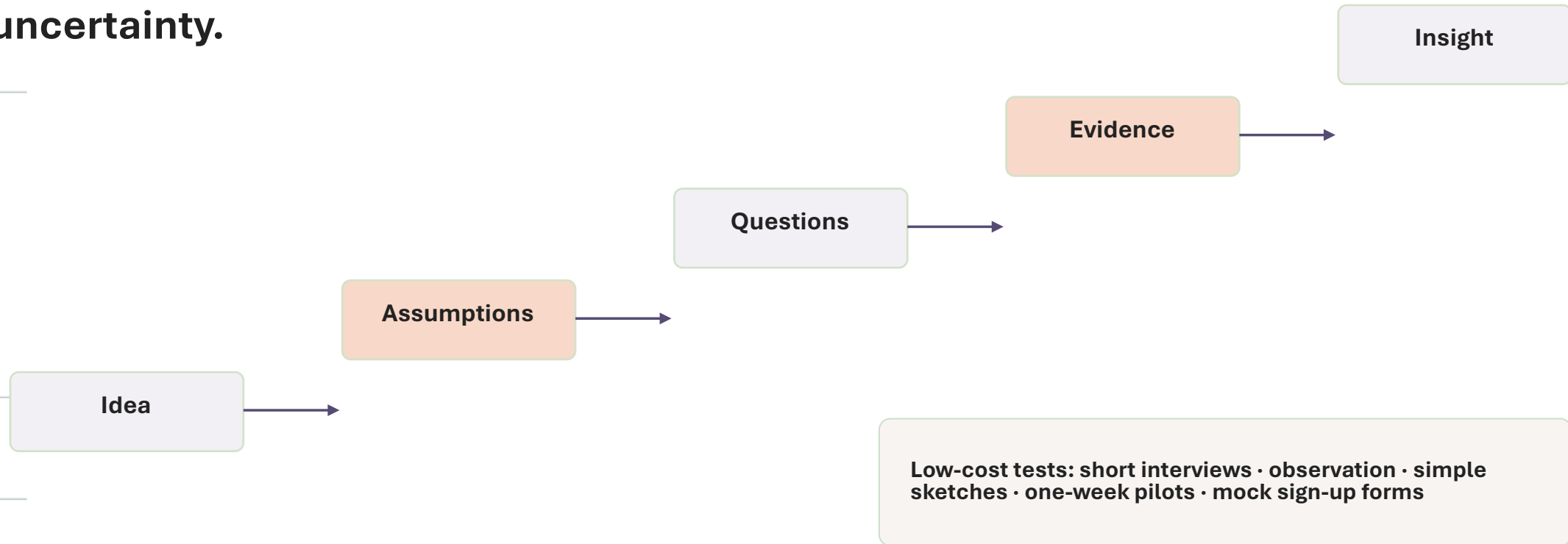
Lesson

What people say they support is not always what they do.

Evidence comes from behaviour, not intention.

The experiment ladder

A good experiment does not need to be expensive. It only needs to answer a real uncertainty.



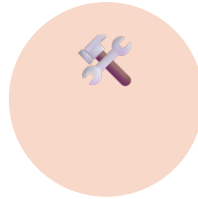
Question for teams: What do we need to learn before we build?

Three risks to test before scaling



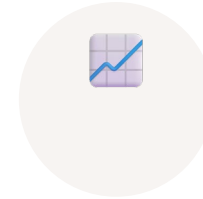
Desirability

Do people want it and change behaviour?



Feasibility

Can we build and deliver it reliably?



Viability

Can it survive financially and operationally?

If one risk is ignored, a good environmental idea may still fail in practice.

Step 1: Assumption Mapping – Part 1

What must be true for this idea to succeed?

No.	Assumption
1	Students buy or use plastic water bottles on campus.
2	Students are aware that plastic bottles create environmental waste.
3	Students already carry reusable bottles, or are willing to start carrying them.
4	Students will use refill stations if they are easy to access.
5	Refill stations are located in convenient places, such as near classrooms, cafés, and study areas.
6	Students trust that the refill water is clean and safe.
7	The university can install and maintain the refill stations.
8	The refill stations will reduce the number of plastic bottles bought on campus.



Step 2: Assumption Mapping – Part 2

Categorising the assumptions

Category	Question	Example assumptions from Part 1
Desirability	Do people want this? Will they change behaviour?	Students are willing to carry reusable bottles. Students will use refill stations. Students trust the water is clean and safe.
Feasibility	Can we build or deliver this?	The university can install and maintain refill stations. Refill stations can be placed in convenient locations.
Viability	Can it sustain financially?	Maintenance costs are manageable. The refill stations reduce plastic bottle use enough to justify the investment.



Step 3: Identify High-Risk Assumptions

High-risk assumption	Why is it risky?	What happens if it is wrong?
Students will carry reusable bottles.	If students do not bring bottles, they cannot use the refill station.	The station may be underused and plastic bottle use may not reduce.
Students will use refill stations if they are available.	Availability does not always mean behaviour will change.	Students may continue buying plastic bottles.
Students trust the water is clean and safe.	If students do not trust the water quality, they will avoid using it.	The refill station will not be used, even if it is convenient.



Step 4: Link to the Innovation Ladder

Now choose **one high-risk assumption** and move it through the Innovation Ladder.

Innovation Ladder Stage	Answer
Green Innovation Idea	Install campus water refill stations to reduce single-use plastic bottle waste.
Assumption	Students will use refill stations if they already carry reusable bottles and the stations are convenient.
Question	Is it true that students carry reusable bottles and would use refill stations on campus?
Evidence	Observe 100 students entering the café or library and count how many carry reusable bottles. Run a short survey asking whether they would use a refill station and where it should be located.
Insight	If many students carry reusable bottles and say they would use the station, the idea has potential. If few students carry bottles, the idea may need extra support, such as free reusable bottles, better promotion, or incentives.



Innovation Ladder	Your Answer
Green Innovation Idea	
Assumption	
Question	
Evidence	
Insight	

Clear communication in early-stage innovation

At this stage, the goal is not to sound impressive. The goal is to make your thinking visible so others can help you improve it.

Clarity over persuasion: “Here is what we know, what we think, and what we still need to find out.”

1. Problem

2. Who is affected

3. Why it matters

4. Early idea

5. What we need to learn

Listening and feedback are innovation skills

Ask open questions

What do you currently do?

Give feedback as inquiry

How might this work in practice?

Listen for behaviour

What people do may differ from what they support.

Focus on the idea

Improve the concept, not the person.

Useful feedback invites reflection. It does not shut learning down.



60-Second Explanation Framework

Use this structure to explain your idea clearly.

The Problem

What is happening?

Who It Affects

Who experiences this problem?

Why It Matters

Environmental, social, or economic impact.

Our Early Idea

(Emphasis on early)

What We Still Need to Learn

(Show openness and maturity)



60-Second Explanation Framework

Example: Campus Water Refill Station

The Problem

What is happening?

Many students buy single-use plastic water bottles on campus. These bottles create plastic waste, and many may not be recycled properly.

Who It Affects

Who experiences this problem?

This affects students, café users, university staff, cleaning staff, and the wider campus environment.

Why It Matters

Environmental, social, or economic impact.

Plastic bottles increase waste and harm the environment. They also cost students money. If the university reduces plastic bottle use, it can support sustainability goals and create a greener campus.

Our Early Idea

Emphasis on early

Our early idea is to install more water refill stations in convenient places, such as near classrooms, cafés, libraries, and study areas. This would encourage students to refill reusable bottles instead of buying plastic bottles.

What We Still Need to Learn

Show openness and maturity

We still need to learn whether students already carry reusable bottles, whether they trust the refill water, and where refill stations should be placed. We also need to test whether students would actually use them regularly.

60-Second Spoken Example

“Our problem is that many students buy single-use plastic water bottles on campus, which creates unnecessary plastic waste. This affects students, staff, cleaning teams, and the wider university environment. It matters because plastic waste harms the environment, and students also spend money on bottled water. Our early idea is to install more water refill stations in convenient locations, such as near cafés, classrooms, and the library. But we know this idea is still early. We need to learn whether students already carry reusable bottles, whether they would use refill stations, and where the stations should be located. So our next step is to collect evidence by observing how many students carry bottles and asking students where they would use refill stations.”



Simple Language Practice

Example: Campus Water Refill Station

Version 1: Technical

Our idea is to introduce campus water refill stations as a green innovation to reduce single-use plastic bottle consumption. The project aims to encourage behaviour change by making reusable bottle refilling more convenient and accessible for students.

Version 2: Simple – explain to a 15-year-old

Many students buy plastic water bottles at university. This creates waste. Our idea is to put more water refill stations around campus so students can refill their own bottles instead of buying new plastic ones.

Version 3: Explain to someone outside your field

We want to help people use fewer plastic bottles on campus. The simple idea is to provide more places where students can refill their water bottles for free. This could reduce plastic waste, save students money, and help the university become more environmentally friendly.

Teamwork and cultural intelligence

Complex green challenges need many perspectives: technical, social, financial, cultural and practical.



Idea generator



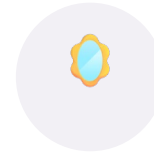
Organiser



Researcher



Communicator



Reflector

Cultural intelligence means observing without judging, asking when unsure, and adapting with respect.



Vision Driver

Sees the big picture. Motivates the team.

I relate to this role:

☐ Strongly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Not really

Researcher

Asks questions. Tests assumptions.

I relate to this role:

☐ Strongly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Not really

Organiser

Plans tasks. Keeps deadlines.

I relate to this role:

☐ Strongly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Not really

Connector

Builds partnerships. Engages stakeholders.

I relate to this role:

☐ Strongly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Not really

Communicator

Explains clearly. Synthesises ideas.

I relate to this role:

☐ Strongly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Not really

Reflector

Observes team dynamics. Encourages learning.

I relate to this role:

☐ Strongly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Not really



Difference ≠ Better or Worse

A communication strength in Vietnamese culture:

People may communicate politely and show respect for age, seniority and relationships.

A communication strength in UK culture:

People may communicate more directly and clearly, especially when discussing tasks and deadlines.

One misunderstanding that could happen:

A Vietnamese participant may avoid saying “no” directly to remain polite, while a UK participant may think this means agreement.

How we can prevent that misunderstanding:

Ask clear follow-up questions, check understanding and create a safe environment where everyone can express concerns openly.

Managing differences well

Tension is not always a problem. It can signal that important perspectives are being considered.



Move fast



Direct feedback



Gather evidence



Keep harmony

Practical habit for digital teams: end every meeting with “decisions, actions and owners”.

Practical habit for diverse teams: clarify meaning before assuming intent.

Growth mindset and reflective practice

Reframe feedback

**From “Why is my idea not good enough?”
To “What can I improve?”**

Growth begins when participants separate their identity from their idea.

What happened?

Why did it happen?

What did I learn?

What will I do differently?

Reflection turns experience into improvement.

Safeguarding and wellbeing

Safe and inclusive environments are not separate from innovation. They are what make innovation possible.

Respect

No harassment, discrimination or mockery

Inclusion

Make space for quieter voices

Wellbeing

Take breaks and ask for support

Digital safety

Respect privacy and consent

Asking for help early is a strength

From global goals to local action

SDG 4

Quality education

SDG 8

Decent work

SDG 12

Responsible consumption

SDG 13

Climate action

SDG 17

Partnerships

The SDGs provide direction. Innovation labs provide a way to act on them through testing, learning and partnership.

Small, local experiments can contribute to global change when they are tested and improved over time.

CLOSE

Participant action commitments



I will test before building



I will treat failure as data



I will communicate clearly



I will make space for others



I will reflect and ask for support



Final reflection

**You do not need to have
the right answer.**

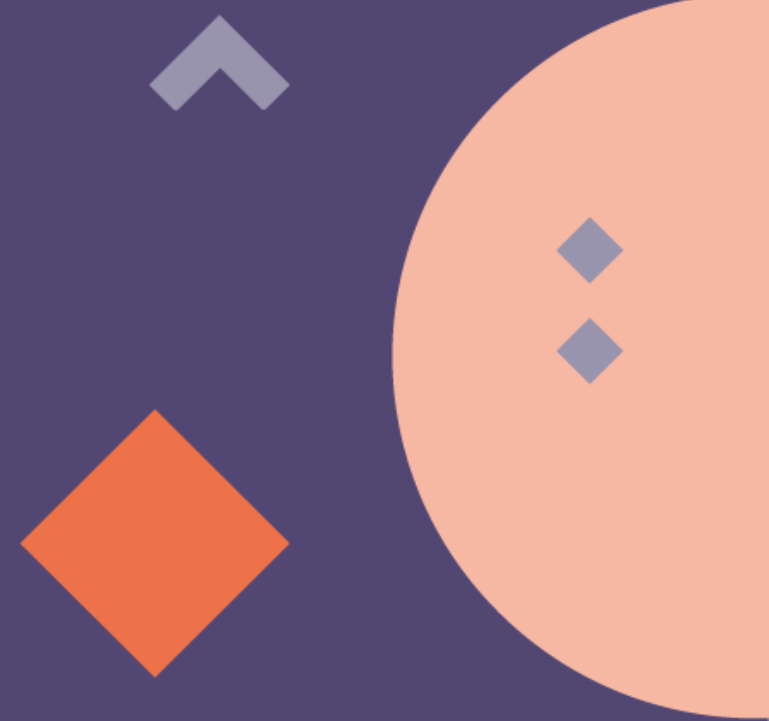
**You need to be willing
to learn your way
towards it.**



GREEN YOUTH INNOVATION LAB

Theme 3

Group Project Assignment: Green Innovation Challenge



Group Project Assignment: Green Innovation Challenge

From Green Idea to Evidence

Objective

Your group will develop a green innovation idea and show how you would test whether the idea can work in real life. The aim is not only to have a creative idea, but to prove that the idea has potential through simple evidence. At the end, each group will present their idea to the class. The strongest project will win a small prize.

The Challenge

Your group must propose a green innovation that can help reduce environmental impact in one of the following areas:

Reducing waste

Saving energy

Reducing plastic use

Encouraging sustainable transport

Reducing food waste

Improving recycling

Supporting sustainable shopping

Helping small businesses become greener

Making students or customers behave more sustainably

Your idea can be for a university, local community, small business, café, shop, event, or online service.



What Your Group Must Do

1. Choose a Green Innovation Idea

Choose one idea that is simple, practical, and possible to test.

Example:

“A campus refill station system that encourages students to refill water bottles instead of buying plastic bottles.”

You should explain:

What is the idea?

What environmental problem does it solve?

Who will use it?

Why is it better than the current situation?

2. Identify Your Key Assumption

Every innovation idea is based on assumptions. Your group must identify the most important assumption behind your idea.

Example:

“If refill stations are available, students will use them.”

Other examples of assumptions:

Customers will pay more for sustainable packaging.

Students will return reusable food containers.

People will recycle more if they receive rewards.

Small businesses will adopt the idea if it saves money.

People will use bikes or scooters if the system is convenient.



3. Turn the Assumption into a Testable Question

Change your assumption into a question that can be tested.

Example:

Assumption: Students will bring reusable bottles.

Testable question: How many students carry reusable bottles on campus each day?

Your question should be clear and simple. It should help you find out whether the idea is realistic.

4. Design a Simple Evidence Test

Your group must design a low-cost way to collect evidence.

You can use:

Observation

Short survey

Interview

Social media poll

Small pilot test

Before-and-after comparison

Simple experiment

Example:

“Observe 100 students entering the café and count how many carry reusable bottles.”

You should explain:

Who you will test with

What information you will collect

How you will collect it

How long the test will take

What result would show the idea has potential

What result would show the idea needs changing

Final Presentation

Each group will give a short presentation to compete for the prize.

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Sustainable Solutions

Presentation Time **5 minutes per group**

Your Presentation Must Include **Green innovation idea**

What is your idea?

Problem

What environmental problem are you trying to solve?

Target users

Who will use or benefit from the idea?

Key assumption

What must be true for your idea to work?

Testable question

What question will you investigate?

Evidence test

How will you test the assumption?

Expected evidence

What data or feedback will you collect?

Improvement plan

How would you improve the idea after seeing the evidence?

Suggested Presentation Structure



Slide	Content
Slide 1	Project title and group members
Slide 2	Environmental problem
Slide 3	Green innovation idea
Slide 4	Target users and benefits
Slide 5	Key assumption and testable question
Slide 6	Simple test and evidence collection
Slide 7	What success looks like
Slide 8	Final pitch: why your idea should win

Judging Criteria

Criteria	Marks	What judges should look for
1. Clear Problem and Need	20	The group clearly explains the environmental problem, who is affected, and why it matters.
2. Quality of Green Innovation Idea	25	The idea is creative, practical, and clearly linked to sustainability or reducing environmental impact.
3. Assumption and Evidence	25	The group identifies one important assumption and explains how they would test it with simple evidence.
4. Feasibility and Improvement	15	The group shows that the idea could realistically work and explains how they would improve it after testing.
5. Presentation and Persuasiveness	15	The presentation is clear, confident, well-structured, and convincing.



Judge Scoring Sheet

Group Name	Problem /20	Idea /25	Assumption & Evidence /25	Feasibility /15	Presentation /15	Total /100
Group 1						
Group 2						
Group 3						
Group 4						