EXPLORE SCIENCE
**Sustainable Futures**

## Games for the Future:
# Cards for Humanity

**Sustainability is protecting people, planet, and prosperity.**

# Games for the Future: Cards for Humanity

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

### Type of program

Short activity

### Overview

In the *Cards for Humanity* game, participants brainstorm ways that members of their community can help tackle the Global Goals for sustainable development. This game is one of three related Games for the Future, a set of activities designed to engage participants in futures thinking and learning about the UN's Global Goals for sustainable development. Check out the *Seeing Sustainability* and *Silly Sustainability Stories* games for other ways to engage your audience in futures thinking.

### Audience

*Cards for Humanity* can be adapted for different audiences and program formats. For example, it can be used during camps, school programs, as a drop-in activity on the museum floor, or as an ice breaker at a meeting or workshop. In order to play, participants need to be able to read and hold cards in a fan. As a result, the game is not suitable for very young children, though they may be able to play as a team with a partner who can read and work with them. Play the game to determine how it will best work for you!

### Big ideas

- Sustainability means healthy people, communities, and environments, now and in the future.
- The Global Goals for sustainable development challenge us to find innovative and responsible solutions to worldwide problems.
- We can work together to create a sustainable future. Everyone has a part to play.

### Learning objectives

As a result of participating in this program, learners will increase their:

- Understanding of big ideas related to sustainable futures.
- Awareness of the ways that sustainability is relevant to their lives and issues they care about.
- Sense of self-efficacy related to sustainability, including their ability to take sustainable actions and participate in conversations about sustainable futures.
- Critical thinking and problem-solving skills that support sustainable choices in daily life.

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# BACKGROUND INFORMATION

## Sustainability

*Sustainability* is a big concept. According to the United Nations (UN), a sustainable way of living "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Brundtland, 1987). People's needs include food, water, shelter, work, happiness, and respect. This definition of sustainability prioritizes equity, because it recognizes that people all over the world have needs that are equally important. This view of sustainability also emphasizes the importance of considering how our actions today will affect society, the economy, and the environment in the future.

In 2015, UN countries adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Global Goals (also called the Sustainable Development Goals, or SDGs). The Global Goals outline a pathway to a better and more sustainable future for all. They address the interconnected challenges we face, and recognize that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth, address social needs, and tackle climate change and environmental protection (United Nations, n.d. and 2015).

Quality education is one of the societal (or "people") priorities of sustainability. *Education for sustainability* "cultivates individual and collective potential…to increase the possibility that humans and other life can flourish on Earth now and into the future" (Cloud, 2017). Arizona State University's Sustainability Science Education program provides a brief introduction to education for sustainability (Arizona State University, 2014).



An international group of collaborators have created a companion set of Good Life Goals that explain how everyone can do their part to create a better future. These include 85 ways anyone can contribute toward the Global Goals for sustainable development (SDG Business Hub, n.d.). The Good Life Goals are

more oriented toward individual (personal) action, whereas the Global Goals are more oriented toward collective (government) action.

## Futures thinking

*Futures thinking* is a set of skills and ideas that help us to understand what might happen in the future, how we can get ready for it, and how each one of us can affect it (West, 2017). Futures thinking doesn't attempt to predict the future, but it does consider different ways the future might unfold. People have different ideas about what might happen and what they would like to see happen in the future, so it's important to consider multiple perspectives.

## References

Arizona State University. (2014). Sustainability Science Education. Sustainability education framework for teachers: https://sse.asu.edu/ways-of-thinking/

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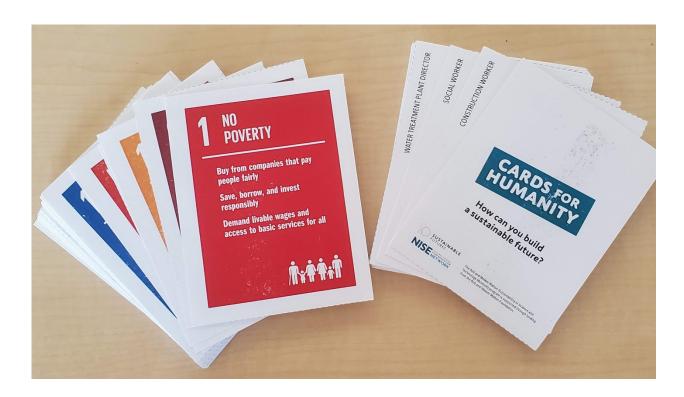
# MATERIALS & ADVANCE PREPARATION

## Materials

- Set of character cards
- Set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) cards

Graphic files for the cards can be downloaded from the NISE Network website (nisenet.org).

## Advance preparation

1. Download and print the Cards for Humanity file onto cardstock. The file is available for free download from the NISE Network website.

2. Cut out the cards with scissors or a paper cutter. Each page has four cards.

3. Optional: Laminate the cards for durability.

## SET UP

**Time needed**

5 minutes

**Steps**

1. Sort the cards into two sets: character cards and SDG cards. Set aside the instruction card for reference.
2. Shuffle each deck.

## PROGRAM DELIVERY

**Time**

5–20 minutes, depending on how many rounds are played.

**Talking points and procedure**

Gather 4–8 players together. You can invite players by asking if they'd like to play a game about how our community can create a sustainable future.

- Be sure the cards are sorted into two sets, character cards and SDG cards, and shuffled. Remove any extra cards (e.g. the instruction card and any cards that are not appropriate for your audience).

- Deal a hand of character cards to every player. Each character card represents a community organization or community member. Players should all receive the same number of cards. (The exact number depends on the size of the group or how many rounds will be played.) Set aside any extra cards.

- Place the deck of SDG cards face-down on the table. Each card represents one of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

- Pick a judge for round one. The judge flips over the top SDG card and reads the goal out loud.

- All players, except the judge, choose one of their character cards that they think best could address the SDG. In turn, players put down their character card and explain why they made that choice. (For example, "I chose the YouTuber to address Climate Action because I think she can get a lot of young people aware and involved.") If a player has a Wild Card in their hand, they can make up any character they like.

- After all players have put down their character cards, the judge chooses which one they think is best.

- If the judge picked your card, you have won that round! You are the judge for the next round. Keep the winning card to track how many rounds you win.

- Play continues as before. The game ends when you run out of character or SDG cards. The player who won the most rounds wins the game.

When the game is over, discuss as a group how these cards relate to each other:

- Was there anything surprising about the SDGs or their connections to your life?

- Was there anything interesting or inspiring about the character cards you chose to address the SDGs?

Optional wrap up: Discuss as a group what strategies helped you win a round:

- Were there things you could do to help or hurt your chances of having your card picked?

- How did your own values or those of the other players factor into the game?

Thank the group for playing.

**Tips**

This game is similar to the party game Apples to Apples®. Players who are familiar with that game will grasp the objective and rules quickly. It is also somewhat similar to Cards Against Humanity®.

You may remove some of the SGD or character cards from the deck to cater to your audience. For example, younger learners may not understand certain concepts associated with some of the Global Goals or know what certain character roles represent.

You may find that the term "Global Goals" is more accessible to participants than "Sustainable Development Goals." These names for the goals can be used interchangeably.

**Going further…**

Here are some resources you can share with program participants:

**"The lazy person's guide to saving the world"**:
https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/takeaction/

**"Goodlife goals pack of actions"**:
https://docs.wbcsd.org/2018/09/Good_Life_Goals/Pack_of_Actions.pdf

## CLEAN UP

### Time

Less than 5 minutes

### Steps

Gather and store the cards. You can use an elastic band to hold them together.

## UNIVERSAL DESIGN

This program has been designed to be inclusive of visitors, including visitors of different ages, backgrounds, and different physical and cognitive abilities. The following features of the program's design make it accessible:

- Repeat and reinforce main ideas and concepts
- Provide multiple entry points and multiple ways of engagement

## LICENSE AND CREDITS

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) logo, color wheel, and icons are used according to the United Nations guidelines: https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/SDG_Guidelines_AUG_2019_Final.pdf