

# COORDINATING ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE ACTIONS

## The Participatory Model of the University of Pavia

### RESOURCES



This poster explores the University of Pavia's sustainability transition from 2014 to the present, focusing on OSA's structure, strategies and initiatives to advance the SDGs. It highlights participatory governance and co-design processes, involving the University community and relevant stakeholders, as well as the internal perception of sustainability. The analysis draws on open-access administrative and managerial sources from the University and OSA websites.



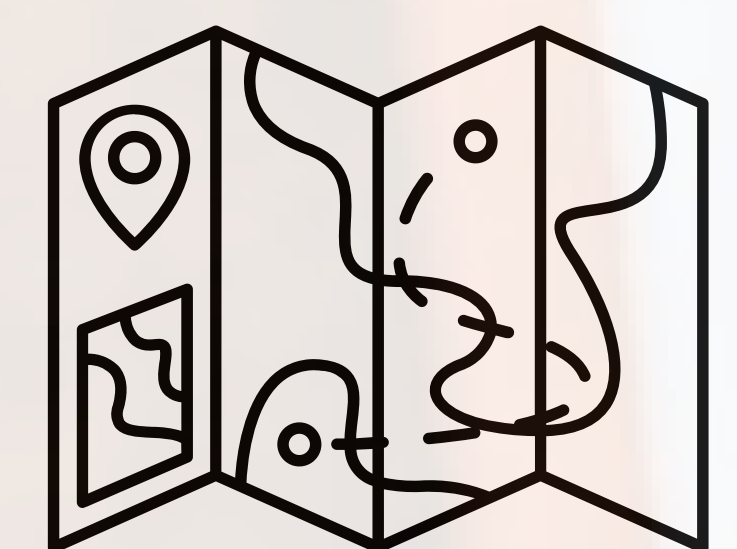
**Sara Dipietro** is a sustainability professional specialised in the public sector and higher education. Her work focuses on sustainability management, reporting, stakeholder engagement and the integration of sustainability into public-sector strategies and policies. She currently coordinates the Office for Sustainable Actions (OSA) at the University of Pavia.

### CO-AUTHORS

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## INTRODUCTION

### INTERNATIONAL

#### AGENDA 2030 SDGs



### NATIONAL

#### CRUI & RUS (2016)

- **CRUI fostered national dialogue** on sustainability in higher education, contributing to the **creation of the RUS - Network of Universities for Sustainable Development**. 88 Italian universities participate in RUS, sharing knowledge and good practices through participatory working groups.

#### RUS Lombardy Region (2019)

- **The regional network connects 11 Lombard universities**, strengthening collaboration and dialogue with regional institutions on sustainable development.

### LOCAL

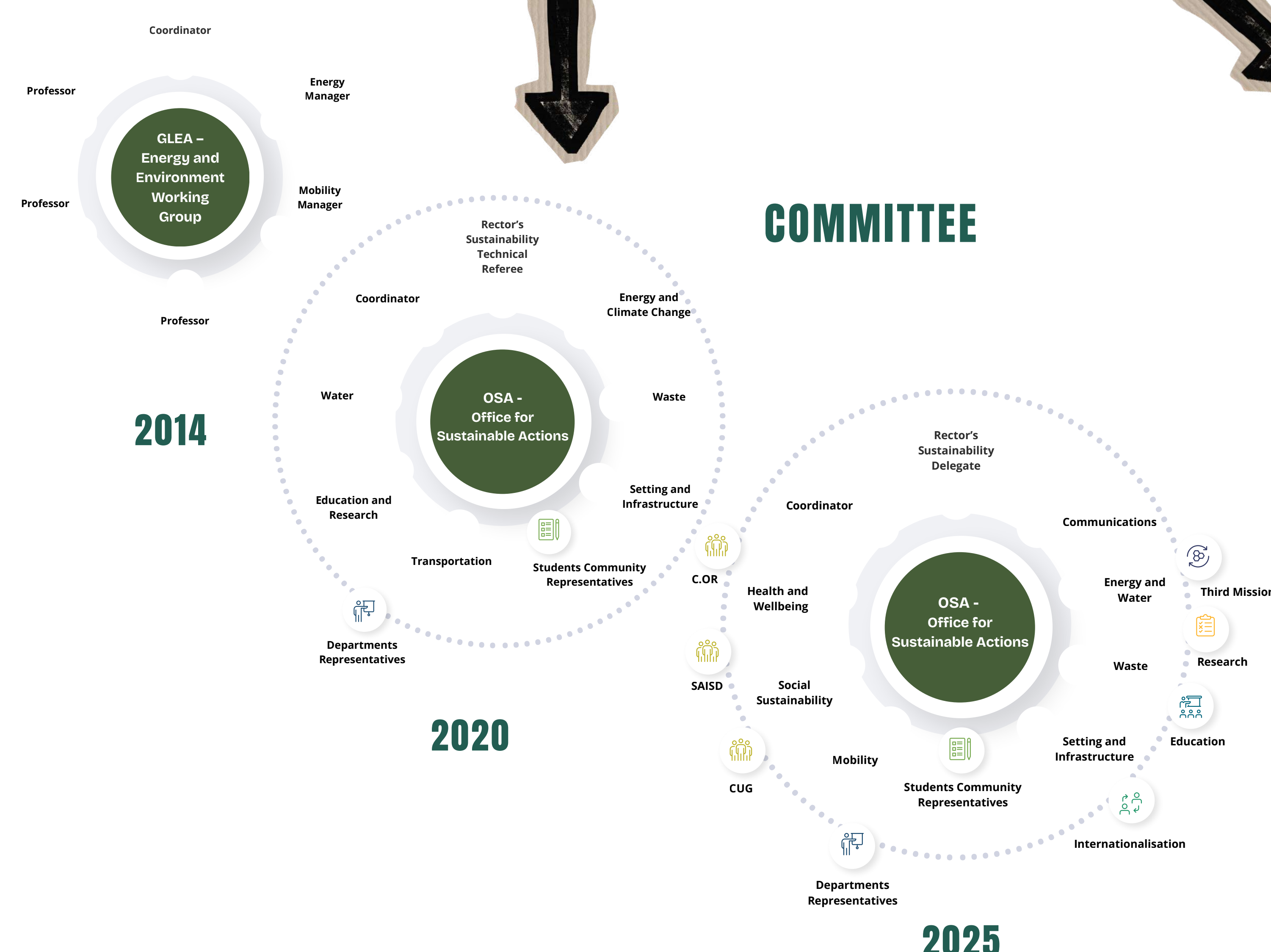
- **Historic & multi-site university**: Founded in 1361, the University of Pavia is one of Europe's oldest universities, with facilities across Pavia, Cremona and Voghera.
- **Large & multidisciplinary community**: 30,000+ students, with 42 Bachelor's, 50 Master's and 8 single-cycle degree programmes across 18 Departments.
- **Committed to sustainability**: Member of RUS since its foundation in 2016, actively participating in its thematic Working Groups and Technical Tables.

## OFFICE FOR SUSTAINABLE ACTIONS - OSA

### STRATEGY AND GOVERNANCE



- **Strategic Programme 2022-2025**: Sustainability explicitly institutionalised as Objective 20, positioning it as a cross-cutting priority across all University activities.
- **Integrated Plan for Activities and Organisation (PIAO) 2026-2028**: Further integration into the University's performance framework through specific targets on environmental impact, inclusion, and gender equality.
- **Institutional Evolution**: A progressive transition from recognizing sustainability as an external strategic goal to embedding it directly within the university's core organizational governance.



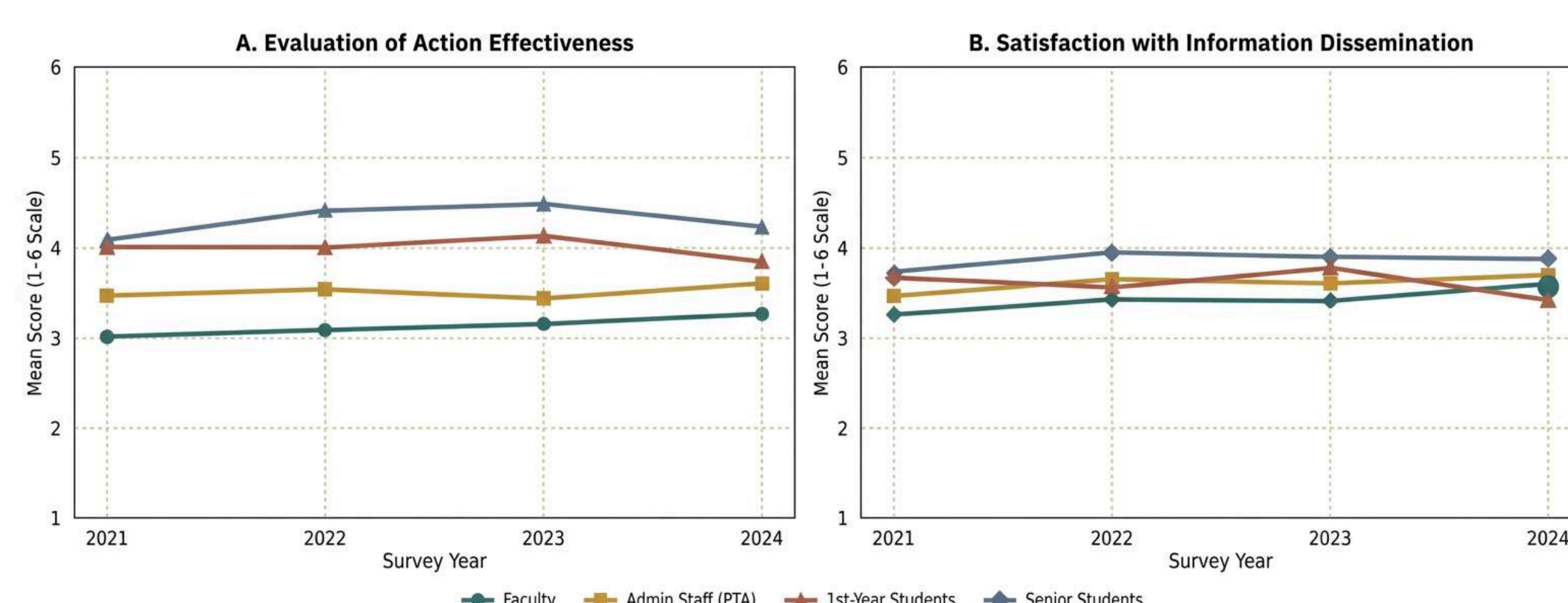
### ACTIONS

- **Institutional Dialogue**: Monthly cross-sectoral meetings to align priorities and monitor ongoing sustainability actions.
- **Capacity Building**: Dedicated knowledge-sharing sessions with external experts to foster sustainable discussions on Sustainability.
- **Participatory Reporting**: Co-development of institutional tools, including the Sustainability Report and GHG Inventory.
- **Engagement & Co-design**: Annual programmes of public events, communication campaigns, and circular economy initiatives.



## MEASURING THE TRANSITION

Multilevel Comparison of Sustainability Perception (2021-2024)  
Good Practice Survey - University of Pavia



**FROM 594TH TO 239TH GLOBAL RANKING**  
**FROM 27TH TO 6TH NATIONAL RANKING**

- **QS Sustainability**: Shows significant upward progress globally, excelling in Social Impact and Governance while leaving room for growth in specialized environmental research.
- **UI GreenMetric**: Consistently holds a solid position in the global top 350, driven by strengths in energy/waste management and education, though constrained by its historic campus infrastructure.
- **THE Impact Rankings**: Maintains a stable upper-tier performance, excelling in SDG 3 (Health) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality), with ongoing challenges in SDG 9 and 11 (Infrastructure and Sustainable Cities).

### CONCLUSION

Despite organisational changes and turnover in key roles, OSA has maintained continuity through a shared vision of sustainability. A central element of this process has been the continuous involvement of relevant and representative University stakeholders in the co-design and development of initiatives. Across different Rectorates, this participatory approach has strengthened the institutional relevance of sustainability and its integration into the University's organisational framework.



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# WHO SPEAKS FOR SUSTAINABILITY?

## Communicating Credibility Through Multiple Institutional Voices

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

#### SHORT PROFILE

Daniela Boggiani works at the Communication Office of the University of Pavia (Italy) and is the communication officer for the **Office for Sustainable Actions (OSA)**. She is responsible for sustainability communication and stakeholder engagement.



#### INSTITUTION & POSITION

OSA promotes and coordinates sustainability initiatives across the University, fostering collaboration among departments, students, staff, and external partners. As Sustainability Communication Officer, she designs and implements communication strategies, events, and campaigns that raise awareness and encourage participation in sustainability.



#### RELATION TO THE PROJECT

In the project presented, Daniela is responsible for communication, dissemination, and stakeholder engagement. She plays a key role in promoting a culture of sustainability through clear, inclusive and credible communication, connecting the University with its community and territory.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Universities are key actors in the sustainability transition. Yet, in a context of information overload and increasing mistrust, communicating sustainability effectively is a major challenge.

Messages are often fragmented, voices uncoordinated, and credibility at risk.

This study explores how a university can communicate sustainability through a distributed model of institutional credibility, where multiple actors contribute with legitimate and coordinated voices.



## 2 RESEARCH QUESTION

How can universities communicate sustainability effectively and credibly through multiple institutional voices?



We argue that credibility does not come from one spokesperson, but from the coordination of diverse, legitimate voices backed by evidence, transparency and shared governance.

## 3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### DISTRIBUTED INSTITUTIONAL CREDIBILITY

Credibility emerges from the orchestration of multiple voices and relationships.



Trust is built when diverse voices work together within a shared purpose and a transparent system.

## 4 METHODOLOGY



#### Case study

University of Pavia – Office for Sustainable Actions (OSA)



#### Data collection

Document analysis, stakeholder interviews, institutional reports, web & social media content



#### Analysis

Thematic analysis based on credibility and sustainability communication literature



#### Period

2020–2025

## 5 THE UNIPV COMMUNICATION ECOSYSTEM

### OSA at the crossroads of knowledge, people and territory



## 6 KEY FINDINGS



Distributed credibility strengthens institutional trust and effectiveness.

150+

Sustainability initiatives involving multiple units and partners (2020–2025)



Consistent communication across channels increases visibility and engagement.



Students are key amplifiers of sustainability messages.



Integrated reporting and evidence-based data are essential for credibility.

## 7 EXAMPLES OF OSA INITIATIVES



#### CLEAN & ENGAGE

Community clean-ups and environmental actions



#### SUSTAINABILITY TALKS

Conferences, seminars and public events



#### SWAP & SHARE

Circular economy and responsible consumption



#### NATURE & BIODIVERSITY

Experiences and education for the environment

## 8 RECOMMENDATIONS



Coordinate voices, do not uniform them.



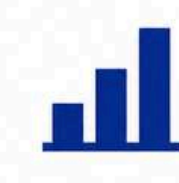
Base messages on evidence and transparency.



Involve students and staff as co-communicators.



Build long-term partnerships with the territory.



Measure, report and continuously improve.

## 9 SUCCESS FACTORS



Shared vision and values



Diverse and legitimate voices



Trust, transparency and accountability



Participation and co-creation



Consistency and continuity



Impact and measurable results



## 10 CONCLUSION

Distributed Institutional Credibility is the key to communicate with impact and build trust.

OSA demonstrates that coordination, participation and transparency can turn many voices into one credible commitment for a more sustainable future.

### REFERENCES



### LEARN MORE



OSA WEBSITE  
osa.unipv.it



UNIPV WEBSITE  
unipv.it



FULL PAPER  
(Scan to download)

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