

The Middle East & Africa Forum for Sustainability Leaders

Views You Can Use

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There's a paradigm shift for sustainability skillsets

While many sustainability initiatives will invariably involve regional flavors that conform to a specific part of the world, from the academia side, we strive to find solutions that have global relevance. When it comes to university engagement with various industries to assist in their energy transition, there are three ways in which the traditional paradigm is changing. The first revolves around the fact that the skillsets required for the workforce of the future need a sustainability focus to them. It's hard to begin work at a company and not know the discussions happening around climate change. There's also an increasing cognizance of what evolving sustainability terminology looks like – for example, the differences between scope 1, scope 2, and scope 3. The second shift is about how to package the appropriate skillset together for transformation. Sustainability professions can't work in silos but must rather have a holistic awareness of processes. The third change focuses on enabling the skillset. Part of that requires being digitally savvy and knowing how to organize and interpret data sets.

Students should graduate with an understanding of digitalization and sustainability

There are several platform capabilities which should really be a common thread throughout every educational curriculum. One of them is digital skills. All students should have a core understanding of how to become more savvy in the use of digital technologies, whether or not they intend to become data scientists or target a different profession. Sustainability is less discussed but nonetheless just as important. If someone is going to work in the corporate environment today and looking to move up the ladder and get promoted, certificates and trainings are great, but the students should already leave universities with that knowledge. I'm a big advocate of cross-cutting themes in educational programs in any university where sustainability and digitalization are taught side by side.