

# BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

***Reframing Climate Resilience***  
***The Transformative Role of Social Sciences,  
Humanities and the Arts***  
***A SHiFT Conference on Knowledge, Governance  
and Public Policy***

***CA21166 – SHiFT – Social Sciences and Humanities for  
Transformation and Climate Resilience***

***1-2 June 2026***

**NOVA University of Lisbon**  
**School of Social Sciences and Humanities (NOVA FCSH)**

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### **Action Details**

SHiFT aims to address the challenge of generating innovative and actionable pathways by engaging with the ‘critical practice’ dimensions of transformation.

A ‘critical practice’ approach explores transformation processes in practice across different dimensions which include research, policy, business, community and individual practices.

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To learn more about COST Action SHiFT, please check the following links:

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# PROGRAM

## AUDITORIUM B1 TOWER B, FLOOR 1

## DAY 1, JUNE 1ST

09:00 - 09:15	Registration
09:15 - 09:45	Opening Session: Reframing Climate Resilience – The Transformative Role of Social Sciences, Humanities and the Arts
09:45 - 11:15	Panel 1   Knowledge, Institutions and Climate Transformation
11:15 - 11:30	Coffee Break
11:30 - 12:45	Panel 2   Governance, Policies and Institutional Learning
12:45 - 14:00	Lunch Break
14:00 - 15:45	Panel 3   Justice, Democracy and Climate Governance
15:45 - 16:00	Coffee Break
16:00 - 17:30	Panel 4   Youth, Climate Citizenship and Intergenerational Governance
17:30 - 18:30	Panel 5   Climate Learning and Transformative Pedagogies
19:30	Conference Dinner

## AUDITORIUM B1 TOWER B, FLOOR 1

## DAY 2, JUNE 2ND

09:00 - 09:15	Day 2 Overview
09:15 - 10:15	Panel 6   Arts as Epistemic Practice: Imagination, Research and Climate Futures
10:15 - 10:30	Coffee Break
10:30 - 12:00	Panel 7   Community Action, Embodiment and the Affective Dimensions of Climate Resilience
12:00 - 13:15	Lunch Break
13:15 - 14:30	Panel 8   Biocultural Heritage and More-Than-Human Relations
14:30 - 16:00	Panel 9   Urban Resilience, Territory and Social Inequality
15:00 - 16:15	Coffee Break
16:15 - 17:30	Panel 10   Expertise, Measurement and the Epistemology of Environmental Governance
17:30 - 19:00	Final Roundtable   Reframing Climate Resilience: Where Next for SSH&A?

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## Panel 1 | Knowledge, Institutions and Climate Transformation

Climate knowledge acquires meaning, authority and political weight within the institutions that produce, validate and translate it — universities, research networks, Living Labs and cultural-policy organisations. Yet these institutions frequently combine ambitious transformative narratives with persistent epistemic hierarchies, metric-driven governance and organisational inertia.

This panel explores the institutional conditions under which universities, research networks and cultural organisations become capable of contributing meaningfully to climate transformation. Particular attention is given to the role of SSH&A in reshaping sustainability agendas, governance cultures and forms of public engagement.

The panel opens with an anchor presentation emerging from the SHiFT Universities for Sustainability initiative, which examined how Higher Education Institutions across more than 30 countries integrate sustainability and the SDGs through the lens of SSH&A, epistemic justice and institutional transformation. Combining survey research, comparative institutional analysis, policy dialogue and engagement with students and young researchers, the project identified both the transformative potential and the structural limitations of current university sustainability agendas.

The contributions collectively demonstrate that institutional change is not simply supportive of climate resilience but constitutive of it.

[A Common Vocabulary, an Unchanged Grammar: SDG Adoption and Epistemic Justice in European Higher Education, Ivo Veiga et al.](#)

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**Keywords:** Sustainable Development Goals; Higher Education Institutions; Epistemic Justice; Pluriversality; Metric Governance

**Abstract:** As the 2030 target date for the United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development approaches, universities face an increasingly visible tension between rhetorical commitment to sustainability and the more demanding requirements of structural transformation. While existing scholarship has examined governance frameworks, institutional strategies, and curriculum reform, comparatively less attention has been paid to the epistemic assumptions embedded in indicator-driven sustainability agendas and to the ways managerial university governance may constrain more transformative forms of engagement.

Pursuing three interconnected objectives, this study examines how the SDGs are perceived and integrated across teaching, research, and governance; explores the structural and epistemic barriers identified by respondents; and considers levels of

support for more critical and justice-oriented approaches to sustainability in higher education.

Drawing on a cross-sectional survey of 54 academics recruited through transnational COST Action networks, the study combines descriptive statistics with thematic analysis of open-ended responses. Given the network-based sample, the findings are exploratory. They suggest that institutional engagement with the SDGs is often uneven, selective, and shaped by existing organisational logics. A substantial majority of respondents favour critical reformulation of the SDGs rather than unreflective compliance, pointing to a persistent tension between technocratic approaches to sustainability and broader concerns with epistemic justice.

The findings also indicate that more meaningful sustainability in higher education may require stronger recognition of Indigenous, local, and intergenerational knowledge, as well as greater institutional capacity for critical, plural, and reflexive engagement beyond metric alignment.

## Reframing Climate Resilience through Universities: From Campus Ecologies to Policy-Oriented Transformation, **María Viota**

**University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU), Spain**

**Keywords:** Universities; Socio-ecological systems; Campus sustainability; Biodiversity; Climate governance

**Abstract:** In the context of accelerating climate change, universities are emerging as key actors in shaping sustainability pathways and influencing climate policy. Beyond their traditional roles in knowledge production, higher education institutions may operate as socio ecological systems where infrastructures, practices, and cultural narratives intersect and bridge scientific evidence, societal values, and policy design. This paper explores the role of universities as catalysts for resilience and focuses on the transformative potential of campus design to contribute together with environmental decisions and social and institutional dynamics to sustainability of the life in the campus and beyond.

Drawing on interdisciplinary perspectives, the paper situates university campuses as “ecologies” for anticipatory sustainability, where green infrastructure contributes not only to climate change mitigation and biodiversity conservation, but also to well-being, social interaction, and ecological awareness. Empirical insights are derived from a mixed

methods study conducted at the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU, Spain), combining survey data on perceptions, uses, and values of green spaces with qualitative reflections on sustainability practices and aspirations within the university community.

The findings indicate that green areas are primarily valued for their proximity and their contribution to emotional well-being, particularly through stress reduction, relaxation, and social interaction. At the same time, the data reveal a structured differentiation in how sustainability responsibilities are perceived. Individual contributions tend to concentrate on everyday behavioural practices, such as recycling and energy saving, reflecting a predominantly individualized framing of environmental action. In contrast, expectations toward institutional actors emphasize systemic interventions, including infrastructural transformation, resource management, sustainable mobility, and campus redesign. This