

## AUTHORS

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## ABSTRACT

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have a leading role in promoting sustainability and innovation by addressing the United Nations 2030 Agenda. One of the strategies used to perform their central role is through intervention projects, covering specific topics with a range of activities. Unidavi joined the Higher Education for Regional Development Programme (HE4RD), created by the Secretary of Education of the State of Santa Catarina, in 2021. The main purpose of the programme was to contribute to the development of the different regions of our state through intervention projects. The research methods included review of literature, field studies and action research. These projects were conducted by teams composed of a coordinator (lecturer) and undergraduate students, the majority, from the specific region. During the period of 2021 up until 2023, Unidavi developed 59 intervention projects in 13 of the 28 municipalities in the Alto Vale Region. The programme exceeded expectations and a significant number of quantitative and qualitative outcomes were obtained.



## INTRODUCTION

Sustainability has become a paramount topic of discussion, since the 1987 Brundtland Report, "Our Common Future". Being a regional leader in Higher Education since 1966, Unidavi has sought to collaborate to the sustainable development of the Alto Vale Region of Santa Catarina, in Brazil. This context represents the genesis for the development of projects within the programme. All projects had to include: one of more local partners and community engagement. Each intervention is planned according to the context of implementation, specific topics, community profile and expertise of the coordinator. The research / intervention design is composed of four phases. Figure 2 summarizes phases and objectives.

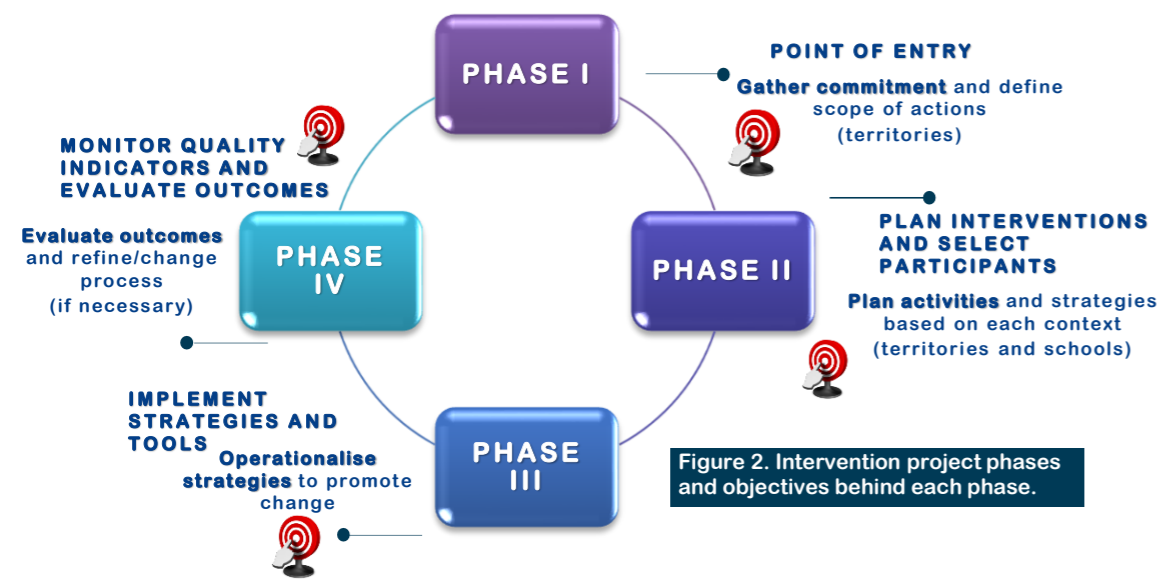


Figure 2. Intervention project phases and objectives behind each phase.

## PORTFOLIO OF PROJECTS

	SDG2	SDG3	SDG4	SDG8	SDG10	SDG11	SDG13	SDG15
Regional development observatory	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Project funding and development	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Water resources	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Solid waste management	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Cost management and distribution for rural properties	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Evolutionary garden	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Financial education	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Entrepreneurship and education	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑

Figure 3. Portfolio of projects (2021-2023).

## RESULTS

The outcomes of the projects are composed of quantitative and qualitative results. In three years, more than 1,200 undergraduate students received scholarships and actively participated in the interventions. Ten facilitators (lecturers) coordinated the operationalization of activities; around 2,212 school students were benefited in 37 schools of the 13 municipalities of the Alto Vale Region and adjacent areas with lower Human Development Indices (HDI).

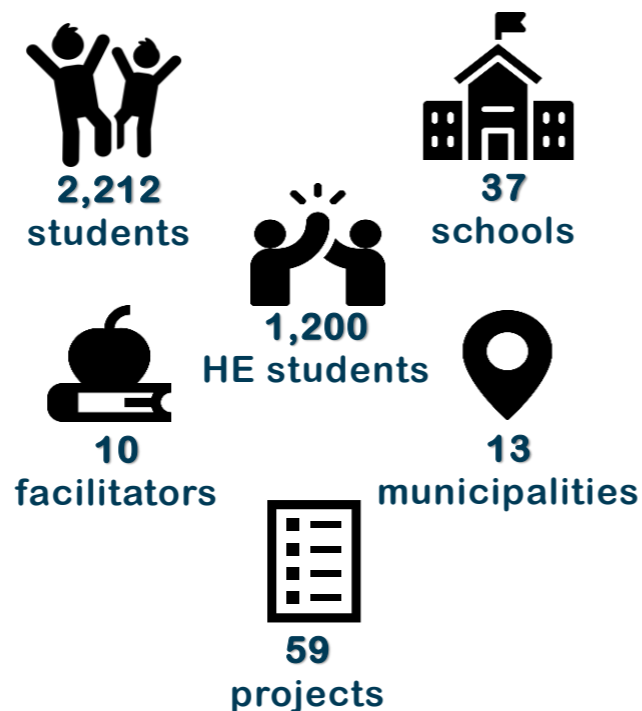


Figure 4. Main quantitative outcomes of the programme.



Figure 5. Territory of the programme implementation by Unidavi.

	<b>For undergraduate students</b> Enhanced autonomy and organizational capabilities and competencies New abilities learnt from the application of theoretical knowledge into practice
	<b>For school students</b> Awareness on sustainability concepts and environmental issues Enhanced sense of participation and the need for resilience and sustainability information dissemination
	<b>For school directors and staff</b> Newly developed proactivity and leadership among students New project outputs and improved curriculum learning related to environmental issues and Science disciplines
	<b>For solid waste workers</b> Infrastructure update, spatial organization and new sources of funding for personal protective equipment Inclusion in the municipal assistance network and structuring skills for improved management of their operations and income
	<b>For Unidavi</b> Enhanced presence in the region and impact on the scope of communities, especially those regarded as vulnerable (lower HDI) Positive feedback from students involved in the project and growing regional and state-wide leadership in sustainability and innovation topics
	<b>For participant municipalities</b> Growing participation of the population on municipal environmental policies New initiatives proposed for the micro-contexts around the schools and related to environmental awareness and shared responsibility

QUALITATIVE OUTCOMES

Figure 6. List of qualitative outcomes

	Implementation strategies
	Lectures and instructional videos
	Technical visits
	Storytelling workshops
	Dramatization
	Gardening

Figure 7. Storytelling workshop in Leoberto Leal.

Figure 8. Media coverage of the programme.

## CONCLUSION

As a result of the programme implementation, the communities have thrived on addressing sustainability and creating new approaches for public awareness and policy-making. Scholarly students expressed their gratitude for their participation in the project. New knowledge and capabilities have arisen from each phase and activities, according to them. Unidavi aims to maintain its presence in the municipalities and expand the scope of actions to other underprivileged communities and students. The programme has greatly exceeded the overall university and State expectations. It has made new strides associated with the HEI mission, representing a benchmark for intervention projects for regional development and an impactful programme implementation to forge sustainable innovation and community engagement.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

