



# 3rd World Conference on Sustainability, Energy and Environment

Berlin, Germany

08 Dec - 09 Dec 2023

## Beyond Technical Expertise: The Rising Importance of Soft Skills in the Green Transition

**Schleutker Kai (PhD, M.Sc. BA, M.Sc. Edu), Tomasini Alessandra (M.Sc.), Concia Francesca (M.Sc.), Galani Christina (M.Sc.), Bokmota Tautvydas (M.Sc., M.H.), Le Grand Nicolas (M.Sc, Eco)**

1Schleutker Kai, Senior Lecturer, Turku University of Applied Sciences, Finland,2Tomasini Alessandra, Project Manager, Politecnico di Milano, Italy,3Concia Francesca, Project Manager, Politecnico di Milano, Italy,4Galani Christina, Project Manager, Stimuli for Social Change, Greece,5Bokmota Tautvydas, Researcher & Project, Coordinator, The Critical, Lithuania,6Le Grand Nicolas\*, Senior Lecturer, Turku University of Applied Sciences, Finland

### Abstract

Climate change is progressively changing the nature of work in various occupations and the skills required of many workers even in the STEM fields. Traditionally, hard skills have been considered essential, yet, several studies highlight the crucial role of soft skills in rapidly changing working environments. Therefore, the ability to develop these skills as part of a holistic approach to the 'greening' of the economy is essential for educators, as their students are future workers and potential change agents in the green industry.

At the same time, more knowledge about the context in which soft skills are used is of great interest. This research is addressed to STEM educators and companies in the green sector in six European countries and highlights the status and teaching practices of soft skills in STEM higher education, as well as the barriers experienced by educators. Secondly, it explores how soft skills and their role in the green transition are perceived in the green industry and in which specific situations they are essential. The findings provide some interesting insights for STEM educators and managers in the green industry. The results show that soft skills are widely recognized but with notable differences between countries. Some of them, such as communication, empathy and problem-solving, are particularly useful as the green transition essentially involves changing mindsets, working in multidisciplinary environments and influencing employees and customers.

**Keywords:** Green industry, green transition skills, STEM education, Soft skills in green transition, Green transition skills gaps