



## 126. How a Living Curriculum Redefines Education with Sal Gordon of Green School Bali

**Sal Gordon:** [00:00:00] And if you combine knowledge, skills, and values through holistic education program moving towards sustainability, then you have a learning program that is real and that impacts the world right now, today.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:00:14] Welcome to Learning Unboxed, a conversation about teaching, learning, and the future of work. This is Annalies Corbin, Chief Goddess of the PAST Foundation and your host. We hear frequently that the global education system is broken. In fact, we spend billions of dollars trying to fix something that's actually not broken at all, but rather irrelevant. It's obsolete. A hundred years ago, it functioned fine. So, let's talk about how we reimagine, rethink, and redesign our educational system.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:00:48] So, in today's episode of Learning Unboxed, we have a very special treat, because once again, we are on the road out and about in the world. And so, today, super special treat, because we've never had an interview or conversation, if you will, that takes place in Indonesia. And specifically today, we are going to Bali, which is a pretty magical place. And our conversation, we are meeting with Sal Gordon today. And Sal is the Head of Teaching and Learning, and Principal at some place called The Green School in Bali. So, Sal, welcome to the program.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:01:24] Thanks very much for having me. I can't wait to have this.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:01:27] Yeah, it's going to be a great conversation. And it's evening there. For those of you that might be watching the video version of this, it's dark. When we took our moment of silence, I could hear a little bit of the jungle chirping, which makes this an awful lot of fun. So, Sal, start by sort of giving us sort of the 100,000-foot view sort of about the state of education in Bali.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:01:52] Well, the state of education in Bali probably looks quite different, depending on who you'd asked, I think.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:01:57] Yeah, I would assume.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:01:59] Indonesia itself had schools closed for a year-and-a-quarter. And I think that counts over 200 days now that Indonesian national schools have been closed to in-person learning, completely closed. So, the state of education, if you're asking for the local Indonesians, is, well, drastic. I mean, we're not talking about a loss of learning. We're talking about a changing culture, because of the long-term impact.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:02:32] But the state of education where I am right now, The Green School Bali, is quite epic. We're on the frontier of changing education, I think, in terms of what a school does, what a school looks like,

what a school wants to achieve in the community, and how education should be seen. We are definitely faced with some pretty massive challenges like anyone else at the moment in terms of this virus that apparently is going around.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:02:59] But I think the test of our school model being a real sort of community of learners, the test of really understanding an up-to-date real pedagogical sort of how to design learning experiences, the how, and even the what the curriculum that we've designed here over the past 13 years in terms of skill-based learning, values-based learning, projects, service, as well as some traditional aspects.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:03:26] We want good numeracy, literacy, scientific understandings, but the model of what we teach here, also, stood the test of time. And in a time where education is being scrutinized, probably more so than ever, people probably got a little bit more time and they're staying at home when their kids are at home, the model that we've created is working for us and we believe it's a model that parts of it should be embedded in other educational institutions as well. So, yeah.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:03:57] Yeah. We definitely believe that as well, which is one of the reasons why when we found you were like, oh, feels like kindred spirit, so so much of what I understand that's going on at The Green School is certainly what, at the PAST Foundation, we advocate for every single day. So, before we jump into the sort of nuts and bolts of The Green School, so just share with our listeners, because they do come from all over the world.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:04:16] And so, they're not necessarily going to be familiar with the ins and outs of what's happening in terms of sort of the why of The Green School. And I want to really sort of touch just a little bit about, so why you, Sal? So, why did you find yourself end up in Indonesia and sort of your role at The Green School has transitioned, somewhat would appear over time? So, before we talk about how the school works, share with us a little bit about, why you?

**Sal Gordon:** [00:04:48] Why me?

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:04:48] Yeah, why me?

**Sal Gordon:** [00:04:54] I got into education quite late, like formal education, and I finished an undergraduate degree in mid-90s. So, yeah, I'm getting older, I'm approaching 50. And I took a gap year. And in that gap year, I had worked with a sustainable development company in India. It took me like a week to realize that all of this education that I'd gained through a private school education, an awesome private school education in Australia that I loved, and then a university degree, out in the wide world, I felt completely out of my depth.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:05:31] And I felt that any chance of me impacting even having a control on impacting my own life, but impacting a community or an organization was negligible. I found I was unskilled, I was lucky, almost, to have a good family upbringing that embedded good values in me. And for some reason, I remember just knowing that I knew I hadn't learnt, and I'd gone to school for 12 years, and then university for four years.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:06:03] Really, all I got out of it was the understanding of how I learned. And so, I took that skill with me, and I turned my gap year into a gap decade, and really proud to talk about my gap decade, where I upskilled myself, I travelled around the world, I did jobs all across the spectrum of different societies, learned different languages, I sell boats, I ran offices, I ran labs, I managed bands.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:06:28] I did everything and anything I could just to travel, and to experience, and to upskill. And then, you get a bit older, and you think, what am I going to do when I grow up? And with some self-

analysis, I really realized I've been teaching and learning for a long time. Education. Not just education, but a passion for science, a passion for mathematics, and a passion for teaching and learning took me to education.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:06:54] So then, five years in the education system in Australia, where the first thought I had when I started my first job was, wow, this place hasn't really changed and this learning program hasn't really changed. Being a young father at the time, really, I was like, well, I owned a restaurant there and I didn't want my kids to eat. I was like working at a school, and I thought, well, this isn't the sort of thing I wanted even for my kids. So, I immediately made changes in my approach to education.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:07:21] I integrated units. I integrated sustainability units within a public school in Australia. But I was banging my head against a wall of bureaucracy, of rigid assessment, of curriculum that wasn't allowing me to bend. And then, one day, I saw John Hardy's TED talk, and it led me to seeing that education could be different, and that a movement in education and a revolution that I think needs to happen in education around the world is happening here at Green School Bali.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:07:52] And I did everything I could to get a job here eight years ago. And I joined the middle school and was a part of a really cool small middle school team that designed one of the most innovative learning programs you can imagine, student-centered projects, passion projects. It's, yeah, breaking the age cage lawlessness, nature-based learning, educating for sustainability, not just about sustainability. And then, I was head of middle school, and now, I'm the principal of this amazing institution and a leader amongst this community.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:08:29] I'm also known as the Peaceful Pirate Principal. I come from quite a different background in terms of education circles. There's not a lot of rooms with principals in them that we have a similar sort of pathway to where we've been, of where we are. But I'm an education revolutionary, I want the world to change, the world to be a better place. And I believe that we could all think that we could play a part in making the world a better place. And my passions are in education, teaching, and learning, like I said, and I feel really fortunate to be a part of a team here that is making a difference, I think.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:09:05] Yeah. No, I totally understand that. That's exactly the way I feel about my tribe and the work that we do at PAST. And we get to encounter the Sal Gordons of the world as we work and travel about, and sort of to experience people that have made that exact same sort of realization that you have, and then just dive in, and do things very differently.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:09:28] So, we encounter people that are spending a tremendous amount of time doing work in sustainability, and problem, and project-based learning, and inquiry, and just really, really saying, we've got to link learning to real life as opposed to the experience. I love the fact that you spent five years or a decade, I guess, really, if you will, it's the sort of that gap space of upskilling, and then you go back into a school setting, and say, nothing's changed. And I think I hear that all the time, right? It's frustrating.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:09:58] So, you would think with the massive amount of technological change, environmental change, societal change, everything changing so fast, everything that's so determinant to the health of our natural environment, to the health of our people, and the connections that we have, everything about it is changing, except for the education system. Now, I do see some parts of education changing, but they're very rigid and they're very difficult to change. It's tough to change a national curriculum.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:10:30] Yeah. It's just mass system, if you think about it, and it's a system that is super, super, super slow to change and resistant to change. And my theory, of course, is that it's because of the way

it was originally designed. So, it's working the way it's supposed to, the way it was designed. It's just that that design is no longer relevant to today and we haven't figured out how to sort of change that or flip that.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:10:55] So, let's get a little bit, Sal, into the nuts and bolts of what actually happens at The Green School, because that's really the conversation, I think, that folks will be most intrigued by, because the work, and the way, the why, and the what as you put out there earlier. So, share with us about sort of the philosophy itself or the way that The Green School works as an approach for students.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:11:18] Yeah. Well, I'm going to preface this, because in a minute, I'm going to start talking about some really awesome things in education, but I'm going to preface it with, we're not perfect here. We fail a lot. We experiment. We go out on a limb. And it's challenging and it's difficult, and we often get it wrong. But I think that's a necessary component of it.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:11:38] You learn so much in that space, right?

**Sal Gordon:** [00:11:40] Well, I think you've got it. I think intelligent valley is a real thing. So, we're a community of learners making our world sustainable. And it sounds like a mission statement and it's a sound mission statement. We try to differentiate ourselves from just being a place like a school, the concept of a school, where you drop your kids off, and they go to classrooms and learn information from teachers, and then get a number at the end of that block unit.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:12:05] And we assess students as learners and as people by one sort of final assessment, a number grade, and then the parents come and pick them up again at the end of the day. And school is just something that kids sort of have to get through, and then they have to do, because that's what the parents used to have to do. So, in terms of trying not to be just a school, but to be more of a community of learners, where our students are learners, our teachers are learners, our parents are learners.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:12:36] We connect our learning with our local community in multiple different ways. We connect wider with our Indonesian community, and then even bigger, here we are again, connecting globally, and learning, and sharing, and celebrating together. So, we're a community of learners, but we're also really making that really massive judgment statement saying that our learning is making the world sustainable.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:13:03] We believe that learning should be fun, it should be relevant to the real world, but it can have impact now. In fact, it should have impact now. When I went to school, I was told to learn something that maybe later, I would use it. I would definitely need to know it in a test to pass. But we don't think that learning really like that is relevant anymore. We believe that if we can create learning experiences for the whole community, but particularly for our students, if we can create experiences for the students that allow them to have impact with their learning now, then that is real learning.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:13:40] So then, if you put that down as your statement, I want my students to be able to activate their learning right now, then you say, well, how are we going to do this? And so then, you go to the pedagogical belief in how we structure our learning programs in terms of holistic learning programs, in terms of having proficiency, standard curriculum, learning outcomes, math, science, literacy things, a somatic learning, an integrated learning, where you don't teach an hour of history, and then an hour of geography, and then an hour of science, you teach a unit on saving the oceans or you teach your unit on social activism and you combine a lot of things.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:14:19] So, integrated concept and also experiential learning is another frame of ours. So, our three mainframes help us, we throw all of our learning experiences through that. So, experiential, we know that

students learn by doing. When we say, right, if we want learning to be real and impacted now, well, we've actually called our—our pedagogical statement is based on the word real, the acronym REAL.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:14:41] So, we believe that learning should be relationship-based, E for experiential. We know that we learn by doing. We also think that E stands for evolving as well, because we don't like our curriculum to be like printed out, and rinse and repeat every year. It evolves every year to the needs of the students and what's going on in the world. We believe that the A for real is authentic.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:15:01] It needs to be connected to the real world. It needs to have impact now and that learning starts local, L for local. Local, but can, it starts here, even a sustainable future starts here within me, and starts local, and then spreads global. So, our learning pedagogical belief is REAL. We believe that learning should be real and we've been able to define that as well.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:15:22] That's fabulous. I love that, by the way. I love it.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:15:26] Then, you go to the next step, and you go, well, how do we do that? And you go, well, we know that it's not just knowledge that we need to be teaching, because I can like tell you anything you like. In fact, everything I learned at school, I could find for you in about 10 seconds. Okay.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:15:41] On that phone that everybody has all over the world. Everyone has it. Yeah.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:15:45] Really. Accepting my White male privilege right here, that nearly everyone in the world has it. So, you go, well, knowledge is important, and having a good understanding of vocabulary and some good math skills, and understanding the scientific world, yes, definitely important. And understanding of history, really important. Some knowledge is really important. However, if you don't integrate skill-based learning, so whether you call them 21st century skills, whether you call it life skills, whatever, we've got our own Green School skills that we teach, too, actively, explicitly teach, too.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:16:15] And so, it's skill-based learning, collaboration, adaptability, the critical thinking, creative thinking, the whole series of skills that we base our learning programs on, and then values-based learning. And if you combine knowledge, skills, and values through holistic education program moving towards sustainability, then you have a learning program that is real and that impacts the world right now today.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:16:39] Absolutely fabulous. Fabulous. So, tell us about—oh, well, like I said, one of the things that appealed to us right off the get go right when we found The Green School was, oh, my gosh, this sounds just like what we talk about what we do every single day. So, the background that you see on me, this is the space we built. So, this is our hut in the jungle, right? Ours just happens to be in an old industrial warehouse in the middle of an urban center, right?

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:17:09] Same concept that when you walk in these doors, everything that you thought about teaching and learning changes, that the entire principle is this is about the kid and that we believe that kids can solve the world's greatest problems, because they are amazing thinkers if we give them the skills and the support that we just don't regurgitate to them a whole bunch of stuff, facts, knowledge, as you say. So, so many similarities. And so, yeah, I'm jazzed and excited about it.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:17:37] Unboxed, I'm like, yeah, just click on the yes thing, it says, Learning Unboxed. I'm like, great, I'm on.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:17:42] Yeah, exactly.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:17:44] We don't think in boxes. Even in grade school, we don't go into a boxed room and shut the door behind us. Ruins it. That's the other thing about Green School, awesome, epic learning program. I mean, it's accredited, too. And we do real assessments. We've got it documented. We've got WASC accreditation, we've got Indonesian accreditation. So, it's not just a program that's just do whatever you like in the jungle.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:18:10] There is a real awesome curriculum, documented curriculum here. But I forgot, I don't know if I mentioned, but we've got this epic campus that is more than 80 amazing bamboo buildings. I'm sitting in the most boring place here, but if I just move just a little bit, behind me, you'll see the heart of school. So, we build out of a sustainable material, bamboo.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:18:34] We have all this learning in terms of there are no walls in our buildings, but also, wall-less learning in terms of breaking the age cage, connecting the learning from inside the school to outside, to the community, those sorts of concepts. But it's gardens. There's a river that runs beside our school. We've diverted a little bit of that and we're trying to run a vortex there to generate some more power, some more electricity there. And has rice fields. It's an epic place. And I think schools should be epic places.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:19:07] Yeah. Well, think about how much time kids spent there, away from your family. I mean, let's just step back globally and think about the amount of time that kids spend, supposedly, in this educational, this is very formative, right? It has meaning and you want it to be epic, because you want this experience to be profound for a lifetime.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:19:28] Well, it hasn't been designed, like you said before at the start, like this system hasn't been designed to take into consideration that. I want my students here to not just think of school as a time that they had fun, but a place, that it's learning had, especially here, it's just so connected to nature, and it's terrible that we even have to think, oh, I need to connect to nature. I am nature here, right here. I'm not disassociated from it.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:19:53] I'm not disconnected. I don't have to go anywhere to connect to nature, but it's unfortunate, we have gotten to that stage, where what you do, I think schools should be like, some of my best friends are places. I wrote about that recently. And this place here is one of my best friends and I would like every person that comes to be a part of this community to remember not just the program and their experience, but the place, this epic place that is called Green School, that holds so many memories for us.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:20:24] Yeah, absolutely. I would love the chance to see it someday. It just sounds amazing. So, share with us a little bit, Sal, about the student experience. So, maybe walk us through a project or something that the students are working on right now, because we talk all the time about this idea of fully integrated, transdisciplinary teaching and learning, that you no longer go to math class for the sake of going to math class.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:20:46] And you know this completely disarticulated from your history class, your science class, that very much like what it sounds like you're doing at The Green School, that everything is fully integrated, because you're working on a thing, right? You're trying to solve a problem or you're having this experience and you're tying it all together. So, share with us just a little bit, because I can hear the wheels of gears turning. We have an awful lot of teachers that listen to the program that come from a more traditional setting.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:21:09] They come from that system that is super, super resistant to exactly what you're talking about. And even if they just grab one single nugget from this conversation, and say, I'm going to own that and make that the thing that's happening in my own classroom within the system, I can't fully change right now for better student experience. What do you want those teachers to walk away with, and say, hey, I can do this piece.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:21:34] Yeah, well, where do we start? I think one really probably like sort of foundational piece for me is that we go through our whole life learning, where we should be. We should go whole life learning and learning should therefore be fun. Number one, it should be fun and meaningful, but fun's a really important thing. Like we're humans, we like having fun. And so, I think every teacher, I would rather, and I'm always allowed to do it here, because I'm not governed and hemmed in by assessment routines.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:22:08] But I would rather my students have fun to learn anything. In fact, if they weren't having fun, I'd just give up on the learning, and go, right, so let's have some fun in here, because this is a really important time. And I think when I remember teaching Grade 8 maths, and then the next year, teaching the same stuff to the grade 9s, who were the next year, and then the next year, teaching the same stuff to the Grade 10s, and thinking, why am I having to teach this over and over again to these and they're not going to use it?

**Sal Gordon:** [00:22:35] And they weren't having any fun. And that's really terrible to think that children spend so long at school not having any fun. We have to deal with that stuff when we're older, dealing with not having fun with it. Apparently, that's part of being an adult. I haven't caught up with that yet. But honestly, I get asked this question a lot, because we do Green Educator Course Program here, where we provide our own internal professional development, but we also run now online and blended educator courses.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:23:07] Normally, there's about 50 teachers from all around the world in different school systems. And I know you've got to consider different locations, different curriculum, different regulations, but every teacher in the world tomorrow morning could go into their class and go, right, we're not going to do a lesson on photosynthesis, we're going to do a lesson on thinking creative. And we're going to look at how nature thinks creatively around our relationship with oxygen, carbon dioxide, trees, and chloroplasts.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:23:35] And we're going to create something really special to understand that, or you could go, right, today is more important for us to celebrate International Peace Day, today is, I think, International Peace Day, today is more important for us to celebrate International Peace Day and as a community to demonstrate that peace is important to us, than to stick to a schedule. So, let's do something as a community to do that.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:23:58] So, redefine what your learning experiences mean for your students, that it should be fun. They should be skill-based and they could have values-based opportunities in there as well. Even if you were going to teach an algebra lesson, make it fun. Play some music, have a quiz, talk about algebra as a math's muscle-building exercise or a problem solving, turn algebra into solve problems, let's go and learn how to solve problems better together, to fix things around instead of teaching a content into a skill.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:24:31] Next thing, I think that there is nothing more important to be educating about, at least about, but for sustainability. So, holistic sustainability, environmental sustainability, social justice, these things are more important to us than ever before. They're in front of our students' faces the whole time in through social media and everything.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:24:51] They're very well-aware that we're handing over a planet that's broken with cultural relationships that are based on mistrust, and years, and years, and years of lies. They're well-aware of this

stuff. We're not hiding anything from them. So, bring that into the classroom, allow the students to understand what the real world is about, and then provide them, again, opportunities to skill up and to be able to demonstrate values that will provide them an opportunity to move forward into that world and may have an impact.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:25:21] It's pretty hard, I know, because I know teachers are off to go to school tomorrow, for example, and they've got to cover these learning outcomes in this set amount of time, because the students are going to get assessed, and then probably even the teachers get assessed from the students' results. I mean, I don't even know how to deal with that, because that's why I'm here, because it can change. Looking at even the UN Sustainable Development Goals is an awesome first step if you want to educate about sustainability. And then, if you want to provide impact for the students, then you start solving local problems. I'll give you an example. Can I keep talking?

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:25:55] Yeah, please do. Absolutely. Are you kidding? This is awesome.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:25:59] We have examples, like our students here, a while ago, we did, instead of just doing a normal math student, we did a sustainability audit for the whole school. And this is our middle school math class. Normally, just do data collection and statistical analysis from exercise books, but we audited the school. We handed that data over the next year to a high school math guys, and I don't even think it was a math class. I think it was a thematic class that realized that there was a couple of problems and one was our transport.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:26:29] And so, there was not enough car pooling and our carbon footprint for transport to get to the jungle here was too high. And so, we decided to solve that problem by solving the used cooking oil problem, because there's a big black market issue, people just throwing used cooking oil into the river, basically. So, we collect the cooking oil, we take it to a refinery, and we make biodiesel. And now, we've got seven bio buses that run our school bus system, basically. So, taking the bad black market used cooking oil, we were even using glycerin, the byproduct in our biolab. So, you find a problem and you allow your students the opportunity to solve it.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:27:11] Yeah. And it is amazing when students do that. I don't know about you, but I will often talk about when folks come to visit what's going on at PAST, and I tell them almost every single time, I mention the fact that from an R&D standpoint, because what you're talking about is really R&D, and your kids were literally able to solve that problem using all of the same principles that those fully formed adults, as you referenced earlier, in your regular day job, should be able to have the skills to do, right?

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:27:43] So, these really, really experienced teams that are epic and some of our industry partners, that's what they do for a living. And I would argue that I will put our kids up, our middle school kids, our high school kids up against the industry's best R&D teams anywhere in the world, right? Because to your point, these kids, if you toss them those real world problems, if it's authentic and it has meaning for them, they can, in fact, solve that problem.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:28:11] Yeah. They're out of the box. We've got an opportunity right now. They haven't been boxed yet. They haven't gone fully along the conveyor belt, and at the end of being boxed out, and conveyor belted out into the world, we've got an opportunity right now.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:28:26] Yeah. I love the fact that when you toss these types of things at kids, one of the things that you, I hope, that people will very quickly discover is that because they don't have that adult world experience, they're not jaded, right? They don't come to solving a problem with all the reasons why it can't

work or the set of constraints, because they don't know what's not possible. And because of that, they are far more creative, I think, in their problem solving than most of us would be.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:28:56] Yeah. And even if it doesn't work, well, even when I was teaching sort of traditional science, the best things in a science classroom were the ones that never worked. So, often, the success isn't gauged by banning plastic bags from Bali, which has sort of started as a Green School project and taken by Green School students, or lecturing around ecophobia, or new recycling systems that we've got here, or solar hydrosystems. It's not about the success or failure of the project, it's about the learning experience and the impact that has on the student's individual and collective life. I can't imagine anything more rich. Like I can't remember a learning experience from my high school days that impacted me at all, and that's terrible.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:29:47] Yeah. No, I would agree with you. Yeah.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:29:50] And I love school.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:29:51] Yeah, I love learning, right? You have to or you wouldn't have immersed yourself and found yourself back into it, right? That's the other thing that I find about folks involved in these creative school experiences is that you'd have a tendency to be these passionate, lifelong learners that just love the exercise of learning new things, if you will.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:30:10] Well, the other thing, just before I lose track of it, there are a lot of people wanting to change and I would be surprised if anyone sitting there watching this, and going, well, I'm the only one in my school that wants to do things a little bit differently, or wants to build a sustainability committee, or wants to implement mindfulness into a curriculum, or wants to do more project-based learning, or service community learning.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:30:33] There is no way that anyone is that isolated, because I mean, when I started teaching, I thought I was isolated. And immediately, when I thought, let's do this integrated sustainability in it, there was a group going, yeah, let's do it, let's do it. And there are schools doing this. There are some pretty awesome, amazing schools around the world, but I'm just a part, like here, I'm just a part of a team, like we're not very hierarchical here, either.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:30:58] I think that's important. So, sometimes, someone's got to have sort of final responsibility, some of those normal school things, but this program was built by collaboration, creative thinking, empathy, care, motivation towards a sustainable future by a whole heap of pretty awesome people. And so, there are a lot of people around the world that want to and can change education.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:31:23] There are, and some amazing stories that I've had the privilege of being able to share out with the world and to find really innovative, creative people. I always like to close the program or the conversation, Sal, with sort of thinking about that high love, that piece, those folks that are sitting out there, wanting to be able to integrate some of the components that they heard today. So, I'm going to actually—my final question for you is really around the sort of what's next, what's coming for Sal and The Green School that you're excited about, that you're jazzed about?

**Sal Gordon:** [00:31:59] Yeah. Well, there's always so much to be excited about. For a while, it took us a few different ways of working, a lot of introspection, a lot of failure to really hold a way to document a living curriculum. It's a way to structure it so that it has strength but still is able to bend. And so, only really in the last few years, I think, in the last couple of years, we've developed new ways of working around our documentation. It might sound really boring.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:32:28] No, it's important.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:32:31] For the continued evolution of the program, we can't keep reinventing it every year. And so, that's really exciting for me to be sort of going through sort of a learning program development stage, and then through a curriculum development stage, and getting now to a point of having established ways of working, and aligned understanding of our pedagogical beliefs, our curriculum work, and our assessment strategies, and then putting all that together and practicing that a little bit more.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:32:57] But a lot of what I'm excited about is, unfortunately, we've nearly gone a whole thing without talking about COVID. But a community of learners, that experiential learning that's based on a campus, epic campus, it's been quite difficult for Green School Bali to bring their learning program that we want to, to a world that had a very high component of distance learning or home-based learning, online learning to it.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:33:23] So, there's a part of me that's just looking forward to getting back to some of the old days, because the old day was pretty good at Green School,, although we keep thinking about going forward to school rather than back to school. I think we're doing some really exciting things in terms of the development of understanding around values-based education and I think a lot of people are thinking about it, how do you learn value?

**Sal Gordon:** [00:33:45] How do you teach empathy? How do you teach equity and understanding that it's more than just watching a movie on it or reading about it and things like that, but understanding that values-based learning is action-based? So, you need to actually experience it, but not even just experience, but to see the impact of that value, whether it's peace, or sustainability, or integrity, or responsibility, or equity, to see the impact of that value is a crucial part of, and then a self-reflection, and it's all cyclical, of course, but I think we're moving forward in terms of understanding, yeah, how we learn values.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:34:23] And there's a lot of schools talking about it, but it's a little bit of a gray area in terms of, well, how do you assess for it? How do you teach? How do you know people are learning it, and things like that? I know we had our kindergarten kids do a lap of the school today, singing peace songs and throwing flowers at all the other kids, demonstrating the value of peace, and love, and caring, and compassion, demonstrating it, and those students learn what that was all about, by doing it, by seeing the smiles, and everyone cheering, and clapping, and handing out their little peace catches that they'd made and little piece postcards.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:34:58] Those five-year-olds learned a really valuable value that wasn't part of education when I went to school, but should be a part of learning. So, values-based learning is important. I was asked the other day how are we going to navigate challenges in education, technology, society, and something else through the times of COVID? Unfortunately, everyone sort of put everything in a box, which you're not going to value.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:35:29] The education's here, and that's a problem, we need to do something about that. Okay. The environment's over here, and that's a problem, too, we need to do something about that. Well, technology, we're struggling to keep up with technology or we need to do something. And let's put another box over here, it's called societal problems or cultural problems. Yeah, we need to sort of take a look at how we treat each other.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:35:53] I would propose that education comes outside of those box and goes right, if we change education and I can see it changing, if we change education, we automatically, if we start educating for

a holistic sustainability, sustainable future, we do it with values in mind, we do it with skills environment, we do it with love, and care, and fun in mind, then we are going to be solving societal problems.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:36:15] We'll go backwards. We are going to be solving environmental problems and we're going to be coping with technological change. Education itself defines civilizations, and we're on the cusp of something, like a revolution that we need, that this planet needs, the natural environment needs, people need education to change. And if we can change education, it's going to have such a massive impact on all these other challenges that we have in the world.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:36:39] And that's really exciting at Green School Bali, to think, well, I think the model of what a school is needs to change. Not just what happens inside the school, but the concept, the relationship that people have with school, the relationship the school has with the community, the relationship that learning has with kids. I think it's a critical time for us, but I can see it changing and it's exciting for us just at Green School to be sort of pushing some of that change.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:37:04] Yeah, absolutely. I agree with you 100%. And I love that the notion of taking education out of the box, as you can imagine.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:37:14] Yeah. I thought I'd slip that in.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:37:17] And I love that. Sal, thank you so very much for making time in your evening to join us at the end of the day to have this conversation. I truly, truly appreciate it. And for our listeners around the world, I really hope that they reach out, engage, and learn an awful lot from what's happening at the Green School. I certainly know that I am super jazzed for my day, as mine's getting started here in my part of the world, because of the great conversation that we were able to have today. So, thank you for what you do and for sharing with us.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:37:46] Well, thank you very much. People, check us out, whether it's on the website, I blog a little bit from crazy mind wanderings that I have. There are student projects. There are quest projects for our grade 8s. Our Grade 12s have greenstone projects that change the world. We're not perfect, but we're doing something really cool, and we're happy to connect with educators, people all around the world that want to be a part of this community in any way. There's no bamboo bubble over here. We're really open. And so, hopefully, from today, that people might be motivated to learn a little bit about us, get in contact, learn from us. Yeah, it's been great to talk to you.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:38:27] Yeah, we appreciate it, and we will be posting links and information so that folks can get to you on the website for the episode. So, thank you again. We appreciate it.

**Sal Gordon:** [00:38:35] Well, it's my pleasure. Yeah, thank you very much.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:38:39] Thank you for joining us for Learning Unboxed, a conversation about teaching, learning, and the future of work. I want to thank my guests and encourage you all to be part of the conversation. Meet me on social media @AnnaliesCorbin, and join me next time as we stand up, step back, and lean in to reimagine education.